

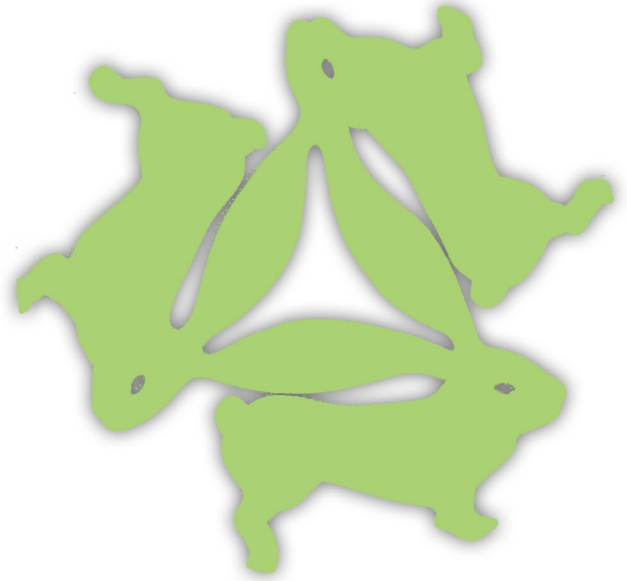


Easter Hare Quiz



In many people's minds Easter is the season of Easter Bunnies and Easter Eggs. This Easter quiz offers a variation on the theme - hares and cosmic circles!

The image, right, shows three circling hares. In recent years this strange image, which can be found carved on roofs and painted in windows of medieval English churches, has generated a lot of interest and speculation. In this quiz you can find out more about this mysterious emblem and to learn about the significance and meaning of the hare around the world. The origin of the three-hares image lies far from the green fields of England and it provides a link between Christianity and the religions of the Far East, Buddhism in particular.



1. From which country does the three-hares symbol originate?

- a. Mongolia
- b. China
- c. Scotland

2. Why do we say 'as mad as a March hare'?

- a. Lewis Carroll coined the phrase in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- b. Spring is boxing time for hares
- c. Hares only hop on one leg in spring

3. The flag of the Isle of Man bears a symbol similar to the three-hares image. What is its name?

- a. Triskelion
- b. Clach Ard
- c. Merkið

4. The three-hares image features on the beautifully painted ceiling of a building in Gwoździec in Ukraine. What type of building is it?

- a. Eastern Orthodox church
- b. Catholic church
- c. Jewish synagogue



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5. **A German folk rhyme which translates as ‘The hares and ears are three and yet each hare has two’ celebrates the cloister window in which building?**
 - a. Cologne Cathedral
 - b. Paderborn Cathedral
 - c. Ulm Minster

6. **A folk tale from which country tells the story of a hare that scared a wolf by dressing as a government official?**
 - a. Tibet
 - b. Romania
 - c. Wales

7. **In an Indian Buddhist legend Lord Buddha, incarnated as a hare, travelled with which other two animals?**
 - a. A fox and a cow
 - b. A cow and an ape
 - c. An ape and a fox

8. **Who is the patron saint of hares?**
 - a. Saint Hardoin
 - b. Saint Melangell
 - c. Saint Mamelta

9. **Which saint once gave a hare a bundle of vegetables?**
 - a. Saint Godric
 - b. Saint Harlindis
 - c. Saint Hedwig

10. **Which animal was used before the hare in the three-hares symbol?**
 - a. Rabbit
 - b. Monkey
 - c. Deer



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11. What does this Ancient Egyptian hieroglyph mean?



- a. To exist
- b. Solitude
- c. Fertility

12. In which English county is the three-hares symbol most common?

- a. Cornwall
- b. Dorset
- c. Devon

13. What is the collective term for a group of hares?

- a. A spring of hares
- b. A congress of hares
- c. A parliament of hares

14. Which 16th century German artist painted this beautiful watercolour of a hare?



- a. Albrecht Altdorfer
- b. Georg Pencz
- c. Albrecht Durer



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15. Which of these is a Devonshire name for the three-hares symbol?

- a. Tinner's Hares
- b. Miner's Hares
- c. Spinner's Hares

16. The earliest example of the three-hares symbol is painted on the ceilings of Buddhist cave temples near which Chinese city?

- a. Xi'an
- b. Chengdu
- c. Dunhuang



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ANSWERS



1. B - China

The three-hares symbol began in China then at some point travelled westwards along the Silk Road, perhaps during the time of the 'Pax Mongolica' in the 13th and 14th centuries. The symbol may have been carved on decorative items or embroidered on expensive cloth. A copper coin, minted in Urmia, Iran, in 1281/1282 AD, bears the three hares on its reverse. The image is thought to reinforce the heavenly mandate of the Mongol rulers. The Mongols have had a fierce reputation in Europe but in the thirteenth century they converted to Buddhism. In Mongolia today 96% of the population are Vajrayana Buddhists in the Tibetan tradition.

2. B - Spring is boxing time for hares

Normally a shy animal, the European Brown Hare changes its behaviour in spring, when hares can be seen in broad daylight chasing one another around meadows. This is the origin of the phrase 'As mad as a March hare'. During this spring frenzy, hares can be seen "boxing": one hare striking another with its paws. For a long time it had been thought that this was more internal competition, but closer observation has revealed that it is usually a female hitting a male; either to show that she is not yet quite ready to mate, or as a test of his determination.

3. A - Triskelion

The three-hares image is similar to the triskelion – the three-armed spiral pattern which is most familiar to British people as the three-legged emblem of the Isle of Man. This pattern seems to appeal to people across times and cultures. A triple spiral pattern can be found on the Bronze Age site at Newgrange in Ireland.

4. C - Jewish synagogue

The three-hares image features in a Jewish context. The image is seen on an 18th century painted ceiling panel in the Gwozdziec synagogue in the Ukraine and is known to have been painted on the walls of several eastern European synagogues of the same time. The symbol also appears in a 1309 Jewish manuscript.

5. B - Paderborn Cathedral

A very famous European three-hares image is carved in stone in the cloister window of Paderborn Cathedral. This window dates from about 1500 and is commemorated in a local folk rhyme:

"Der Hasen und der Lffel drei und doch hat jeder Hase zwei." [The hares and ears are three and yet each hare has two.]

6. A - Tibet

In many societies the hare often appears in tales as a trickster - sometimes good, sometimes bad. Here is an example from Tibet, of a tricky hare in a good guise:

'A ewe asked the hare to help defend her and her lamb from a wolf. Hare got dressed up as a government official and rode the ewe towards the wolf, holding a pen and paper in his hand. He told the wolf that the king of India had sent him to fetch ten wolf skins. He then ostentatiously wrote down 'one' on his piece of paper. The wolf was so scared when he saw this government official with all the power of the state behind him write, that he turned tail and ran away ...'

7. C - An ape and a fox

In a Buddhist legend, from India, Lord Buddha was a hare in an early incarnation, travelling in the company of an ape and a fox. The god Indra, disguised as a hungry beggar, decided to test their hospitality. Each animal went in search of food, and only the hare returned empty handed. Determined to be hospitable, the hare built a fire and jumped into it himself, feeding Indra with his own flesh. The god rewarded this sacrifice by transforming him into the Hare in the Moon.

8. B - Saint Melangell

In folk tales witches often turn into hares, but hares are not always associated with dark powers. Saint Melangell once rescued a hare that was being hunted – she is now known as the patron saint of hares. In the folk tale 'The Three Wishes' a man rescues a fairy that is disguised as a hare, which grants him three wishes, but when he gets home he and his wife argue over what to wish for. They accidentally wish for a black sausage – then the man loses his temper and wishes that his wife's nose would turn into a sausage. Finally, they have to use up their last wish to have the sausage removed. A sad tale of human greed and stupidity!



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ANSWERS



9.A - Saint Godric
 Saint Godric of Durham was, like most monks of the time, vegetarian. He planted a vegetable garden and lived on what he could grow. Unfortunately, something kept eating his vegetables. One day Godric caught the guilty party – a hare. He ordered the frightened animal to stop – and then gave it a bundle of vegetables and let it go (though with a warning not to come back!). An early example of Christian stewardship of the environment? Or just plain foolishness?

10. C - Deer
 Some have suggested that the first examples of the three-hares symbol may not have shown a hare at all, but a deer. The symbol first appears in a Buddhist context. The Buddha's first sermon took place in the deer park or Sarnath (or Isipatana) near the holy city of Benares. In this sermon the Buddha taught about the Wheel of Dharma, the eight spokes of which represent the Noble Eightfold Path. Buddhist images and sculpture sometimes show the wheel of Dharma with a deer at either side. Might the first triple hare image have shown three deer gathered around the wheel?

11. A - To exist

In Egyptian hieroglyphs an image of a hare with a ripple of water below means 'to exist'.

12. B - Devon

The symbol of the three-hares is most common in Devon. The Three Hares Project says that there are seventeen parish churches in Devon which contain at least one roof boss depicting the three hares. There are twenty-nine bosses in total, of which nineteen are medieval.

13. C - A parliament of hares.

Hares are solitary creatures, but sometimes they can be seen gathered in a circle. Some stand on their hind legs, others squat on their hunkers and others run and frolic in the centre. The purpose, if any, of these gatherings is unclear. They are called a Parliament of Hares.

14. C - Albrecht Durer

Albrecht Durer's A Young Hare (1502) is one of the earliest pieces of observational art and it is a celebrated masterpiece. The hare is almost lifelike with every little detail – every hair – captured with masterful brushstrokes. Durer also included three hares in The Holy Family with Three Hares (1496) – a woodcut of Mary and the baby Jesus. A sign of fertility? Or even, as some have suggested, a symbol of the Holy Trinity! Perhaps it was just a whimsy.

15. A - Tinner's hares

In Devon the three-hares are sometimes called the 'Tinner's hares', because the symbol is supposed to be associated with the tin miners of Dartmoor. But the reason for associating the hare with the tinner is unknown – and probably is of recent origin.

16. C - Dunhuang

The earliest known examples of the three-hares motif are painted on the ceilings of Buddhist cave temples near Dunhuang in China. They date from the Sui Dynasty (581-618 BC) through to the end of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 BC).