

## Groundhog Day Celebrations



**Groundhogs Day** is a day celebrated to start the countdown until Spring! The **first day of Spring 2010 is March 20**, the **Vernal Equinox**. February 2,



typically represents the **mid point between Winter**

**and**



**Spring.**

**Groundhogs, also known as Woodchucks**, hibernate during the Winter. It is believed that their internal clocks are aware of seasonal changes. Therefore, if they become active around **February 2**, that represents an earlier Spring. If not, then it is believed Winter will be longer.

Groundhogs usually live in **open fields, meadows, and wooded areas**. Groundhogs are most active in the **early morning to the late afternoon**. They **hibernate from late October to mid February**. Therefore, spotting one during



this time can be next to impossible.<sup>1</sup>

Because there are not any large Groundhog Day celebrations and events, like they one in [Punxsutawney, PA](http://www.punxsutawney.pa.gov), mimic some of their celebrations as shown on [www.groundhogday.org](http://www.groundhogday.org), and in general.

Because kids are in school and many parents are working on the official day, February 2, **plan your Groundhog Day celebrations the weekend prior this year: January 30 and 31!** On actual Groundhog Day, school aged children, or children in daycare, will likely have Groundhog Day activities. Perhaps there will

be Groundhog Day food, leftover from the weekend, to eat the night of February 2!

## ***Weekend Celebration***

First start the day off with eating and meal preparation:

### ***Dinner Preparation***

If you have a slow cooker, prepare [Slow Cooker Italian Sausage with Peppers and Onions](#)<sup>2</sup>. If you have young children, you may want to omit the hot Italian Sausages the recipe calls for, and use just more of the mild ones.

Or, make Slow Cooker “Groundhog Stew” ([Beefstew](#) just called Groundhog Stew)

### ***Breakfast***

For breakfast, make the family, “Groundhog in a Hole”:

What you need

- Bread (the same amount as servings you plan to make)
- Butter, or butter spread
- A round cookie cutter, or ¼ cup measuring cup
- Eggs (the same amount as servings you plan to make)
- A very large frying pan, skillet, or electric griddle

### **What you do**

1. Heat pan or griddle on medium
2. Butter the slices of bread on one, or both sides (your preference)
3. Use the cookie cutter or ¼ measuring cup to cut circles out of the center of the bread slices.
4. Position the bread slices, butter side down first (if you only buttered one side) in the pan.
5. Crack an egg, and drop the yolk and egg whites in the center of the circle. Do this for each bread slice on the griddle.

6. Cook until the egg is set on the one side, and flip over. Do the same of the other side.
7. Cook until the eggs are of your liking (over easy, over medium, fried)
8. Move to a platter and serve immediately, or place in a warm oven until serving time.

**Other breakfast ideas:** Since Groundhogs dig holes, you can serve bagels, perhaps with a slice of bacon sausage, or fruit in the hole, and say it is the groundhog, or you purchase donuts to represent Groundhog Day.<sup>3</sup>

Serve with fresh fruit

### ***Lunch and Snack***

Groundhogs love to eat vegetables. Make a big salad, of your choice (chef, Caesar, garden), and call it Groundhog Salad.<sup>3</sup> To do something different, try a unique dressing your family has never had. Serving slices of Swiss Cheese, is also a good idea for lunch and snacks because it has holes.

### ***Dessert: Groundhog Day Dirt Pie***

- 1 box of instant pudding
- 4 chocolate graham crackers squares

Mix pudding according to package directions. Place into four bowls. Crush graham crackers until to find crumbs (and resembles dirt). Sprinkle crumbs on top of the pudding.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Activities:***

After breakfast (or before, for you early risers), head out to a park with a big field, preferably one by a wooded area, and see if you can spot a Groundhog. Do this by the afternoon.

Download cut outs for young children to color, especially while you are preparing meals:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/groundhogday/mask/>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/mammals/rodent/Groundhogprintout.shtml>

<http://familycrafts.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&zTi=1&sdn=familycrafts&cdn=parenting&tm=16&f=22&tt=14&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.kidsturncentral.com/coloring/xqhcolor.htm>

<http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/winter/color/groundhog90.gif&imgrefurl=http://tumasoff.blogspot.com/2008/02/groundhog-wiarton-willie-predicts-early.html&usq= cTGK0ve6TwegzU0LLfVotfbK8rU=&h=895&w=670&sz=12&hl=en&start=15&tbnid=msNcTY7mDolH4M:&tbnh=146&tbnw=109&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dgroundhog%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official>

**When the sun goes down**, play a game of shadow tag with family and/or friends.

Through out the day, sing [Groundhog Day Songs](#).<sup>5</sup>

Return to a warm home, and eat a hearty, warm dinner of Italian Sausage or “Groundhog” Stew, that has been cooking all day.

Watch the movie, **Groundhog Day**, starring **Bill Murray**. If you have a DVR, you can set it to record it. It comes on **TVLand (Cox Channel 37)**, **Direct TV Channel 301) February 29, at 9pm and 11:30pm**. It is also available from **Netflix.com** in rental or “Play Now” format, if you have a subscription; same is true with **Blockbuster.com**.



### **Sources:**

1. [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2175443\\_identify-woodchuck.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2175443_identify-woodchuck.html)
2. [http://seasonalcooking.suite101.com/article.cfm/groundhog\\_day\\_groundhog\\_recipe](http://seasonalcooking.suite101.com/article.cfm/groundhog_day_groundhog_recipe)
3. <http://www.childfun.com/index.php/holidays/winter-holidays/groundhog-day/361-groundhog-day-recipes.html>
4. [http://ccb\\_themes.tripod.com/themes\\_groundhogday.html](http://ccb_themes.tripod.com/themes_groundhogday.html)
5. <http://familycrafts.about.com/cs/februaryholidays/l/blfeb2nd.htm>