

## The Truth About Groundhog Day

Every February 2, people gather around a hole in the ground. They wait to see a furry groundhog pop.

out of the hole. They want to know if the groundhog will see its shadow! Why are they doing this?

### An Old Legend

It's because of the legend of Groundhog Day. A legend is a story that has been passed down from earlier times.

This legend began hundreds of years ago in Europe. On February 2, people celebrated a holiday called Candlemas (KAN-duhlmuh's). They believed that animals like badgers and hedgehogs woke up from their long winter hibernation on that day.

The animals came up out of their underground burrows. If the day was sunny and the animal made a shadow, people believed there would be six more weeks of winter. But if the day was cloudy and the animal didn't see a shadow, people believed spring would come soon.

### An American Holiday

Many years later, people from Europe moved to Pennsylvania in the United States. They still wanted to celebrate Candlemas. There was only one problem. There were no hedgehogs or badgers in Pennsylvania!

But Pennsylvania did have groundhogs, and groundhogs hibernate just like those other animals. So the people decided to celebrate the groundhog on February 2.

They waited for it to come out of its burrow, and they watched for its shadow, just like they had done in Europe. They called their new holiday Groundhog Day!

### Groundhog Day Today

We still celebrate Groundhog Day today. There's a big party in the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The town has a famous groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil, and people from all over come to see him.

Will he see his shadow this Groundhog Day? Will we have six more weeks of winter, or will spring come early? You'll have to wait until February 2 to see!