

Comenius Programme 2011 – 2013

We are One – Our new Europe

Easter in Slovakia



Easter in Slovakia

Easter belongs to the oldest holidays in the Christian world. The date of Easter is different every year. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon. But Easter always comes between March 22nd and April 25th. It is the festival marking the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and lots of people go to church. It is also a welcome spring holiday.

Fasting /or Lent/ starts 40 days before Easter Monday because Jesus Christ was fasting 40 days on the desert before his crucifixion. Some Christians take this period of time very seriously and they don't organise weddings or parties. People that are fasting don't drink alcohol and don't eat meat. Lent ends with **Green Thursday**, when we eat something green /mostly spinach or broccoli/ to be healthy.



Good Friday

On Good Friday Christians commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. It's the church holiday in Slovakia. People do not go to work, schools, offices and shops are closed.

There used to be the strict fasting during Good Friday. Some people were drinking just water and were eating only bread. The soil was not allowed to move on the field. No hard works were allowed to be done, even the home work, sweeping, washing. Nowadays the rules are not so strict, but most of Slovaks do not eat meat.

The day after Good Friday is called White Saturday and then comes Easter Sunday. This day is very quiet in Slovakia, everyone is expecting Easter Monday when the big fun starts.



Easter Monday

Easter Monday is a funny day but only in case if you are not a girl. There are many groups of boys in the streets from early morning till noon. They go from house to house. When they come into a girl's house they try to find her because she is usually hiding somewhere. When they find her, they whip girls with plaited willow cane decorated with colourful ribbons and pour some water on the girl. Small boys say various traditional rhymes while doing that. If a girl wants to stay beautiful, healthy and full of life throughout the year, she will have to well accept the water soaking and whippings.

Some men are gentle and use only one or two cups of water, but some are really drastic (they throw girls in to the cold rivers or they pour huge jars of water on them). Women don't usually like this, because they get wet and they have to change clothes several times. They try to hide somewhere not to be splashed. In many regions, water buckets have been replaced with perfumes, a small syringe filled with water, a water cup, or a water pistol. And what's the sense of this habit? Water was supposed to bring health and beauty and fertility and a willow tree was supposed to bring fertility and life powers. As a reward girls would give them painted eggs but now money or sweets are more common. Girls also used to tie a ribbon to the cane and it was a proud for the boy to have more ribbons than his friends.

In some parts of Slovakia, the roles are reversed the following day - Tuesday and the girls have chance to answer the boys back. The boys are whipped and sprinkled with water, however, the girls do not receive any treats.





Easter symbols

The symbols of Easter are a whipping willow cane, painted or decorated eggs, a lamb, little chicks or bunnies, the cross or a candle.

A whipping willow cane is used for whipping girls and has its roots in ancient pagan tradition. It was believed that by whipping the girls with the willow branch, all the fertility and life giving powers from the tree would be transferred to the girl.

Easter egg is also the symbol of fertility and life. It was also the symbol of spring. Easter eggs are special eggs that are often given to celebrate Easter. The oldest tradition is to use dyed or painted chicken eggs, but a modern custom is to replace chocolate eggs, or plastic eggs.

Chicks are traditional symbol of Easter, because chickens are born in spring. And this is a reason why they became symbols of spring.

Easter bunny brings baskets filled with coloured eggs, candies and sometimes also toys to the homes of children.

Easter lamb is a symbol of Jesus Christ, because according to Christian Church, he sacrificed his life for salvation of the humankind.

Willow catkin – people decorate houses with catkins – the symbol of spring.



Easter eggs

One of the most famous habits of Easter in Slovakia is making Easter eggs. Once girls in villages were splashed with water or boys threw them into the cold water in rivers or in streams, they gave boys the painted eggs – Easter eggs, which are called „*kraslice*“.

Now Easter eggs are used like decoration in an interior. There are lots of ways to decorate Easter egg. But at first you have to perforate egg shell and blow out whites and yolks. Then you can boil egg in water with onion peel. It gets orange or brown colour. Some people decorate easter eggs with acrylic paint, wax or with stickers and skilled people decorate eggs with needle or they twist wires around the eggs. But nowadays some people buy chocolate eggs in shops instead of making their own Easter eggs.



Easter Menu

- Green Thursday:** anything green - spinach, broccoli, lettuce, peas, pumpkin – symbols of health, pasta – symbol of harvest
hot cross buns /called Judas cakes/– cakes in form of rope, because Judas was hanged on a rope/
- Good Friday:** it is a day of fasting – people used to eat only bread and drink some water. Nowadays fish is allowed to eat
- White Saturday:** White meals were allowed like white beans or milk soup. But dinner was rich – ham, sausages, eggs, poultry or jelly. Horseradish was served with meat as the symbol of crucifixion of Jesus Christ
- Easter Sunday:** Sunday lunch is delicious – hen soup, pork meat or poultry, ham, eggs, an Easter meat cake called „baba“ and an Easter ram cake
- Easter Monday:** smoked meat with mayonese salad, eggs, ham, cookies and pastries and a lot of chocolate for kids



Easter meat cake /called „baba“/

Instructions:

Ingredients:

10 breadrolls
300 – 400 g smoked meat
2 sausages
6 eggs
a bit of chives
oil
breadcrumbs
ground black pepper
1 onion
a bit of garlic
salt

1. Cut breadrolls into small pieces
2. Soak with a little water
3. Cut an onion and sausages
4. Fry sausages in a frying pan for 5 minutes
5. Put eggs, garlic and chives in a bowl
6. Add the soaked breadrolls, fried sausages cooked smoked meat and mix it
7. Pour the mixture in the roaster and cover with breadcrumbs
8. Bake for 30 minutes



Easter ram cake

Instructions:

120g butter
200g powdered sugar
are foamy and
1 vanilla sugar
4 eggs
200 ml milk
300 g flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 spoon cocoa
some oil
nuts
almonds and raisins for decoration

Ingredients:

1. Mix butter, sugar, vanilla sugar and egg yolks until it is foamy
2. Add warm milk and flour
3. Mix the white of the eggs until they stir into the batter
4. Pour the batter in a shape dish and put in the oven
5. Bake for 30 – 40 minutes
6. Decorate with almonds or raisins



Easter Rhymes

While whipping and watering, boys are telling Easter rhymes and asking for some treats:

Šibi ryby, masné ryby,
kus koláča od korbáča,
ja chcem iba máličko,
maľované vajíčko.

Ešte k tomu groš,
aby bolo dosť!

Šibi ryby masné ryby
dávaj vajcia, vykrúcaj sa!
ak mi nedáš dve vajíčka
Daj mi aspoň makovníčka.



Spring holidays

In pre-Christian times Easter was the time of welcoming spring and victory of life over death. There is still a tradition of killing the symbol of winter in Slovakia. Two weeks before Easter young girls carry the straw figurine of **Morena** – the paganish **God of Winter and Death** towards the brook or river and sing the song like that:

Morena, Morena!
Za koho´s umrela?

Ne za ny, ne za ny,
než za ty kresťany!

Then the countrymen unlace the figurine and burn her or throw her to the water. On the way back they sing the songs recalling summer.



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We hope you like it!



