



ЦЕНТЪР
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ
РЕСУРСИ



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



VICHO GRANCHAROV SECONDARY SCHOOL
GORNA ORYAHOVITSA
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Spring Holidays in Bulgaria

Palm Sunday – Tsvetnitsa

Bulgarian Orthodox Christians celebrate **Palm Sunday** - Tsvetnitsa-Vrabnitsa, to mark the triumphal arrival of Christ into Jerusalem.

The Bulgarian tradition is to carry flowers and willow branches, rather than palm leaves, and the day is also regarded as the holiday of the fields, meadows and forests. It is one of the most important holy days, falling one week before **Easter**, and marking the beginning of the Passion of Christ. In Bulgaria, the entire weekend is an occasion of festivity.



Saturday marked **Lazarovden** (Lazar's Day), when Christ raised the faithful Lazarus from the dead. **Lazarovden** ceremonies, called Lazaroupane, are among the best-loved Bulgarian traditions. The Saturday before **Easter** is a festival devoted to young girls, pastures, fields and woods.

In Bulgaria's village communities, **Lazarovden** was quite an event in the life of every young girl, for then she could demonstrate to the townspeople that she had already grown to be a "complete maiden". The girls would gather in groups of about ten at the house of the prettiest one and start from there with their songs to make a round of the village. The songs sung on St Lazar's Day praise the beauty of the maiden and her lover, the industry of the farmer, the purity of maternal love and express wishes for happiness and prosperity.

Lazarovden is the name day for all Bulgarians of that name, or its derivatives, while Tsvetnitsa is devoted to all who have names associated with flowers and plants.

A traditional solemn mass in the presence of State officials is held in Sofia's Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.



Easter

Easter is one of the most significant holidays in the Bulgarian calendar. Starting with Palm Sunday, the holy week leads up to the Great Day. In the country, the festival is popularly known as "Velikden", which literally means 'the faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ'. Easter traditions in

Bulgaria are a derivative of the Eastern Orthodox Church rituals. In tune with worldwide Orthodox traditions, bright red colored eggs and Easter breads known as "kolache" or "kozunak" are the prominent symbols of Easter in Bulgaria.

Easter eggs



Red, the predominant color of Bulgarian Easter eggs, is a part of pagan mysticism that pervades Bulgarian culture even today. Red Easter eggs are baked into an Easter loaf, may be blessed at the church, or may be cracked against each other to see who will be the most successful, healthy, or happy during the following year. These Easter eggs have been decorated with Orthodox designs and symbols.

Easter Celebration In Bulgaria



At midnight on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, people in Bulgaria gather at church, with red painted eggs and bread. The priest proclaims three times "Christos Voskrese" (Christ has risen) and the congregation replies "Vo istina voskrese" (Indeed he has risen). One of the Easter breads is specially decorated with one or more (but an odd number) of red eggs. After a special sequence of services, the clergy blesses the breads and eggs brought by the people.

Easter Presents

The tradition of presenting Easter eggs to loved ones is a tradition followed since ages, in Bulgaria. According to the tradition, in days preceding Easter, Christian families send a loaf of bread and 10-15 red eggs as gifts to their friends.



Traditional Easter Feast

The traditional Bulgarian Easter table is rich in taste, aroma and symbolism. Different recipes and decorations have added over the years colors and scents to our folk customs and traditions, related to festive cuisine. It is, of course based on dyed and **decorated Easter eggs**. Different techniques and methods are used in Bulgaria for drawing on eggs, but no matter whether those are modern or traditional, such as clay drawing for instance, eggs are an important part of the fest. They symbolize the re-birth of nature and spirit, victory of life over death. Traditionally some of the eggs are totally red and one of those is placed near the family icon of Mary, who protects the house. The rest are carefully arranged in the center of the festive table and in the beginning of the celebration hosts and guests engage in an egg-cracking game. The strongest egg guarantees health and luck to its owner.

Spring green salad is also typical for the festive Easter table. Lettuce, radishes, spinach, parsley, onion – those are its ingredients. "The salad is most often flavored with olive oil and lemon and is decorated with chopped hard-boiled eggs. The host chooses what to place on the table and he also selects the drinks that are suitable – most often this is traditional Bulgarian grape or plump brandy.



Of course **lamb is the preferred meal** that is a sort of a sacrifice for the fest. Young male lambs are slaughtered in the villages and are roasted on fire, or in the oven, stuffed with rice and spices. Citizens also prepare **lamb with spinach**, spicy lamb or stuffed lamb.

There is also a dish, called lamb kapama with onion, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, spinach, parsley. The spices are salt, black and white pepper and all this is braised and offered at the table.



Soups with lamb cuts are prepared in some regions, along with lamb drob-sarma – a dish in the oven with rice and cuts, that is poured at the final with a mixture from stirred eggs, milk, some flour and is roasted a bit more. Other regions replace lamb with rabbit stew. There is recipe for **Easter chicken with white wine** that requires red pepper, salt, carrots, garlic and celery. At the end the chicken is poured with

some white flower sauce, egg yolks, yogurt and parsley. The so-called **Easter cake** /"kozunak"/ is a traditional part of the festive table. Practically it is a newer version of the Easter ritual breads, prepared by our grandmothers. It is prepared with flour, milk, sugar and eggs and has different variations. Traditional Easter breads are prepared as the dough is kneaded on Maundy Thursday and their names are different in the different regions – "koshara", "harman", "kvasnik", "iaichenik" etc. Women prepare smaller Easter breads with a red egg in the middle that are gifted to the first guest, the best men and relatives. Whole families gather around the table on Easter. Traditionally parents and best men are visited with Easter breads, cookies and dyed eggs. Some Bulgarian villages have preserved really colorful



festive traditions, like the one of Mihnevo in Southwest Bulgaria, situated next to the Greek border. The tradition in Mihnevo says that ritual Easter breads, decorated with red-dyed eggs, pastries with cheese, rice meals should be placed on the table. The whole village spends the afternoon in an area, called Easter. Each family has a defined spot where its members should sit. The local priest blesses the table and women exchange food. Men sit in groups, drink brandy and eat Easter green salad. Children crack eggs and then play around the meadow. At the end all people start a chain dance.

St. George's Day



Bulgarians celebrate "Gergyovden" on 6th of May - the day of one of the most popular saints - St. George, who is among the few venerated by Christians and Muslims alike. St. George was a Roman officer during the rule of Emperor Diocletian (284-305), who became one of the martyrs for Christianity. He was tortured and then beheaded (on April 23, 306) because of his refusal to renounce his Christian faith.

The holy martyr St. George the Victor has been considered one of the most important Saints ever since Christianity became the official state religion in Bulgaria in the 9th century. In Bulgaria St. George is the patron of spring verdure and fertility, and of shepherds and farmers. His Day, May 6, is believed to set in summer and the new farming cycle. Several hundred thousand Bulgarians celebrate their name days on Gergyovden. A common ritual is to prepare and eat a whole lamb, which is an ancient practice possibly related to Slavic pagan sacrificial traditions and the fact that St. George is the patron saint of shepherds.



Special place on the table is attributed to the ritual Gergyovden bread. All sorts of bread are made for the feast - the cross bread, the shepherd's bread, the large ring-bread, as well as small ones, or the special ring-shaped bun baked by the young wife in the house.

24 May - The Day Of Slavonic Alphabet, Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture



May 24 is the Day Of Slavonic Alphabet, Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture. This day has been celebrated for 160 years now – no other holiday was so long celebrated in Bulgarian late history.

On May 11 1851 a celebration was organized by Nayden Gerov at the eparchy school 'St St Kiril and Methody' in the town of Plovdiv. This was the first time to be marked the Day of the Saint brothers Kiril and Methody – the creators of Slavonic Alphabet. Since 1857 this day has been celebrated every year in Plovdiv, Tsarigrad, Shumen and Lom and it was no by accident that May 11 was chosen - this is the common Church Holiday of the two Saints.

The earliest information for marking the 11th of May a day of the Saint Apostles and Slavonic enlighteners Kiril and Methody dates back to XII century, but they were already

acknowledged for saints at the time of IX century. The memory of St Kiril only is celebrated on 14th February and the memory of his brother St Methody - on 6th of April (the exact dates of their deaths).

The wholly Russian Synod took the following decision on the occasion of celebrating one thousand years from the Moravia mission of St St Kiril and Methody: 'To remember the millennium since the first time our paternal language has been illuminated by the Gospel and the Christen faith, let it be established to be a Church Holiday the Day of the Reverends Kiril and Methody and celebrated every year, starting from the present May 11, 1863!'. Since then that Day has been celebrated in all of the Orthodox Slavonic countries. The common Day of St St Kiril and Methody was also celebrated by Bulgarian Church in the next centuries, and through Bulgarian Revival period it became also the Day of the School and the letters created by Kiril and Methody.

This occasion was one that was giving the expression of Bulgarian strivings of spirit for Church and Political independence, for enlightenment and national rise. Through the Revival period the Day of St St Kiril and Methody was celebrated not only in Bulgaria, but also abroad – by Bulgarian revival immigrants in Rumania and Russia, among Bulgarian students in foreign lands, among Bulgarians exiled in Diarbekir.

The enthusiastic celebrating of the Day of the Saint brothers Kiril and Methody by all Bulgarian people was a positive proof for their thirst for enlightenment and science, for national self-defining and fast economical and cultural advancement.

In 1892 was written the text of the common school hymn by Nikolay Mihaylovski. It is well known by every Bulgarian with its first verse: 'Varvi Narode Vazrodeni (Go forward revived nation)'. The hymn received the name 'Hymn of the St St Kiril and Methody' and it included 14 couplets. The first six are very often performed nowadays. The music of the hymn was composed by Nikolay Pipkov on May 11, 1900. Here is a piece of the original text, written in authentic Bulgarian letters:

Върви, народе възродени,
Към светла буднина върви,
Съ книжовността, тази сила нова,
Съ будини си поднови.

Върви към мощната просвета!...
Въ световните борби върви,
Отъ длъжност неизмънна воденъ, -
И Богъ ще те благослови!

Nowadays 11th of May is celebrated as Church Holiday of the Saint brothers Kiril and Methody and 24th of May is confirmed to be the day of Slavonic Alphabet, Bulgarian Enlightenment and culture. 24th of May as the Day of Slavonic Alphabet and the Saint Brothers Kiril and Methody is nowadays celebrated in abroad too – in Russia, where it was marked for the first time in 1986 by the initiation of the Murmansk author Vitalii Maslov. In Murmansk is the farthest north point where is situated a monument of the Saint brothers Kiril and Methody.



24th of May is a Day that has no analogue among the other nations - the Day of literature, enlightenment, culture. It's a holiday of spiritual rising, perfection striving for scientific and cultural achievements. The letters created by Kiril and Methody, their translations of the liturgical books, their fight to protect the rights of all nations to do honour of God in their own languages have a historical significance to Bulgarian national developing and its prosperity. Their life work is human, democratic, and Slavonic. It becomes part of the general human idea for equality at the spiritual field

An indisputable fact is that Konstantin – Kiril - the Philosopher has created the alphabet and the first translations in Slavonic language. But one of the most interesting questions that haven't been resolved till now is the creation of the two Slavonic alphabets in such a short period of time – Cyrillic alphabet and Glagolhic alphabet. There is no united position concerning the question which one of these both was created by Konstantin - Kiril.

According to one of the more widespread hypotheses concerning the authorship of the two alphabets the Cyrillic alphabet was chronologically the second one to appear. Acoustically and also graphically it was based on a Greek uncial. The present hypothesis is that it was created by Kliment Ohridski who was Konstantin - Kiril's student and he named it to his teacher as a sign of respect. Most of the scientists associate the authority of Glagolhic alphabet with Konstantin - Kiril. There is a correspondence between this alphabet and Bulgarian language, as well as there is an original diagram and some researches show that the drawing of the letters follows the 'Golden section' (the ratio of the smaller side is the same as the ratio of the bigger side towards the whole). There is continuity between Glagolhic alphabet and Cyrillic alphabet but in the same time there are some essential differences. The Cyrillic alphabet took the place of Glagolhic one very fast. This first happened in Eastern Bulgaria, in the capital Preslav. At the School of Ohrid (Western Bulgaria) the Glagolhic alphabet had been used for longer time, as it was more widespread at that region. There are some monasteries in Croatian Adriatic seaside where it was used like cryptography even till XIX century.



According to the second hypothesis, Konstantin - Kiril– the Philosopher was the author of the two alphabets, which means that he had translated the basic liturgical books two times: in 855. He created the Cyrillic alphabet by some adjustment to the Greek alphabet for the necessity of Slavonic speech and then translated the liturgical books for the needs of Bulgarian Slavonic people at the region of Bregalnitsa river (Northwestern Macedonia). And in 862-863 he created the Glagolhic alphabet and copied already

translated books with the main purpose to give a common Christen expression of his mission in Velikomoravia.

Nowadays Cyrillic alphabet is used not only by Bulgarian people, but also by Serbians, Montenegrins, Russians, Byelorussians, as well as by many others non Slavonic nations from the USSR and many Mongolians – about 200 million people.

The life work of Kiril and Methody was continued by their students – Klieknt, Naum, Angelarii, Gorazd and Sava who came into Bulgaria and got for their saint work the support of Bulgarian king Boris I. Everyone of the five students has his own Church holiday. We also celebrate the day of the two teachers Kiril and Methody and their five students on 27th of July every year. This holiday is named the Seventh Saints. At a church in Sofia wearing the same name is kept a part of the arm of St Kiril as a priceless relic.

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