



ЦЕНТЪР
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ
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VICHO GRANCHAROV SECONDARY SCHOOL
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LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME A COMENIUS PROJECT - MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS



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Spring Holidays in Poland



Catholic holidays are significant markers of the Polish springtime festival calendar, and pagan festivals may be celebrated for fun. Film festivals and national celebrations also occur during Poland's spring season.

April Fool's Day - April 1

April Fool's Day is celebrated in Poland with jokes, tricks, and costumes. This holiday is largely celebrated by children.



Palm Sunday Observation

Poland, a predominantly Catholic country, celebrates religious holidays according to the Catholic calendar. Palm Sunday, which falls a week before Easter Sunday, is observed all over Poland. Polish people cut branches of willow, evergreens, or other plants that will dry naturally and hold their shape when placed by the cross.

Easter Sunday Festival - March

While mass is attended by many on Easter Sunday, this holiday is also celebrated with the consumption of Easter foods, gathering of family and friends, and with pisanki, Polish decorated Easter eggs.

Easter



It is the major Christian festival celebrated in order to commemorate the holy resurrection of Jesus Christ after his crucifixion. Like the other central-European nations, Easter is a prominent festival in Poland also. The rich cultural heritage of Poland is reflected in the Eastertide celebrations. While religious ceremonies follow the rituals of the Christian church, Easter celebrations have imbibed elements of native Polish culture. There are several such traditions that seem to be the confluence of the Polish and Christian culture.



Therefore apart from some regular Easter rituals, there are certain Polish rituals which make Easter celebrations, a little different in the country.

The "blessing basket" is one of the unique Easter traditions in Poland. The blessing basket is prepared the Saturday before Easter Sunday. The basket, stashed with colored eggs, bread, cake, salt, paper and white colored sausages, is taken to the church to have it blessed. This tradition stems from the



belief that the Great Lent, which is the forty day fast before Easter, is not over until the basket has been blessed. Hence it is called the Blessing Basket. It is considered to be sanctified and auspicious.

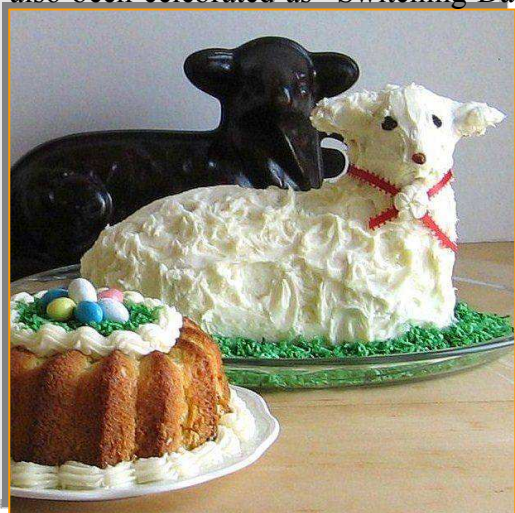
The family breakfast on Easter Sunday morning is an important part of Polish Easter celebration. On the breakfast table, each of the participants wishes the others of the family good luck and happiness. The table is decorated with green leaves and a sugar lamb may be placed as a centre-piece. As no smoke is allowed, no warm meals were served. Sharing a boiled egg with one's relatives is a national tradition of Poland on Easter breakfast table. A piece of egg with salt and pepper, sanctified by priest, is a vital item on this occasion.



Another traditional ritual is Dyngus or Smingus Dyngus, celebrated on the first Monday after Easter. On this day boys roam around the neighborhood to sprinkle girls with water or perfume. This custom of watering has its roots in pagan traditions since the

pouring of water is an ancient spring symbol of cleansing and purification. Easter Monday has also been celebrated as "Switching Day" because on this day boys switch girls with a small

willow branch. So, apart from the regular Easter norms, the special rituals of Easter make it unique in Poland.



Spring holidays in Spain

Palm Sunday and Easter



Easter is celebrated throughout the world with great pomp and show. It is a major Christian festival which marks the resurrection of Jesus after the crucifixion. This day does not only mean festivity and celebrations rather it stands as the epitome of one's faith in goodness and religion. It is one of the holiest days according to the Christian calendar and is celebrated in many different ways across the world. Though the spirit of the festival may be same, the traditions may observe a slight change as per the religious variations. In this article, we have explored about the Easter celebrations in

Spain. Read on to know more about the Easter festivities of Spain, through this article. Easter celebration in Spain is a manifestation of ancient rituals that provide glimpses to the country's fiercely religious history. The Easter Week, known in Spain as Semana Santa, begins with the Domingo de Ramos (Palm Sunday) and end with Lunes de Pascua (Easter Monday). The holy week of Easter consists of days - Ash Wednesday, Lent and Good Friday. Easter traditions and rituals are marked by regional flavors across the length and breadth of Spain. On Palm Sunday, people go to mass in the morning and children carry palm leaves to be blessed by the priest.



On Palm Sunday most churches organize a parade to mark the arrival of Christ into Jerusalem. Instead of the small crosses fashioned from part of a single palm frond that are popular in many Protestant churches, the congregations in Spain carry huge, leafy palm or olive branches that have been blessed in the church.

As Ash Wednesday is the first day of the penitential season of Lent in Spain, the day is marked by a special ceremony where the ashes are placed on the foreheads of the worshippers as a sign of remorse. In the Roman Catholic churches, these ashes are specially made by burning the palm branches of the previous Palm Sunday. The philosophy behind the celebration of



Ash Sunday is that if 'you are dust, and unto dust you shall return' symbolizing the return of Christ. The phase of Lent begins in Spain like other places after the Ash Wednesday. During this duration, the worshippers are asked to observe a phase of penitence and observe fasts on the day of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. At the end of Lent arrives the happiness and festivities of Easter. On Easter Sunday, in Almaden de la Plata near Seville, rag and straw effigies of famous people are placed at different locations of the village. These dolls are finally

torn apart and the pieces thrown into the air. In Castilblanco de los Arroyos, they place similar



dummies in the streets which are later set on fire. The dolls are known as 'Judas dolls'. The feast of Easter Sunday on Spain is also special. On this day, the godfather presents his godchild with a cake known as 'La Mona'. These are generally traditional pan shape found in various shapes from simple round or oval to Disney characters, toys and anything else. Another popular Spanish Easter dish is the torrijas. It is a lovely blend of slices of warm bread soaked in milk, sugar and egg, then fried in olive oil. They are served along with wine, syrup,

honey, sugar or cinnamon for extra touch of festivities.

Fiestas de Las Fallas



Las Fallas is undoubtedly one of the most unique festivals in Spain. Las Fallas take place from the 15th-19th of March (St Joseph's day) in Valencia and in many other towns of the region, such as Alzira, Cullera, Gandía, Sagunto, Játiva. However it is naturally Valencia's Fallas that attract the most interest. What started as a feast day for St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters, has evolved into a 5-day, multifaceted celebration involving fire. Valencia, a quiet city with a population of just over 1 million, swells to an estimated three million flame-loving people during Las Fallas celebrations.

destruction of ninots ("puppets" or "dolls"), which are huge cardboard, wood, paper-maché and plaster statues. The ninots are extremely lifelike and usually depict bawdy, satirical scenes and current events. A popular theme is poking fun at corrupt politicians and Spanish celebrities. The labor intensive ninots, often costing up to US\$75,000,



are crafted by neighborhood organizations and take almost the entire year to construct. Many ninots are several stories tall and need to be moved into their final location of over 350 key intersections and parks around the city with the aid of cranes on the day of la plantà (the rising).

The ninots remain in place until March 19th, the day known as La Cremá (the burning). Starting in the early evening, young men with axes chop cleverly-hidden holes in the statues and stuff them with fireworks. The crowds start to chant, the streetlights are turned off, and all of the ninots are set on fire at exactly 12am (midnight). Over the years, the local bomberos (firemen) have devised unique ways to protect the town's buildings from being accidentally set on fire by the ninots: such as neatly covering storefronts with fireproof tarps. Each year, one of the ninots is spared from destruction by popular vote. This ninot is called the ninot indultat (the pardoned puppet) and is exhibited in the local



Museum of the Ninot along with the other favorites from years past.



Saint George's Day

St. George's Day has been celebrated since 1436. St. George is the patron Saint of Catalonia

The Legend

The 23rd April is a date that has always been linked, either directly or indirectly, to literature and popular traditions. The Catalan knights that set off towards the Orient could never have guessed the repercussions that their tales would have with relation to a local saint: St. George. Later the tale would be changed to fit in with the mediieval traditional Knight in shining armour fighting evil. The legend that was born is infamous: St. George fighting the wicked dragon that held the princess captive. Finally St. George kills the dragon and on the spot where the dragons blood was spilled a rose grew as a symbol of love and friendship.



But what has really given importance to this date is that it is now considered to be the "World Book Day".

The role played by the "Renaixença" in the resurrection of the "Jocs Florals"

Thanks to the insistence of Antoni de Bofarull among others, the literary competitions were revived in Catalonia in 1859. It was from then on that there began to appear new authors and ideologists and there was an important increase in the number of newspapers published as well as political and ideological works. After the interruption of the "Jocs Florals" because of the Civil War they began to become very popular again from 1978. The idea of these annual literary competitions was basically to stimulate young people to cultivate and take a delight in the Catalan literature and language. Ever since then this tradition has been celebrated and is actually one of the most important in Catalonia, it has gradually spread to the Spanish language and also to the English language. In 1996 this Catalan tradition became an International one, taking one step more towards the unification of peoples all over the world, even the mythical rose was given in the United States, Japan and France as well as other countries when a book was bought.

Why this date?

April 23rd was not only famous because of the legend of St. George, but also because it is the anniversary of the death of two great writers: CERVANTES and SHAKESPEARE. These grand writers have passed into history for their great works, becoming an important symbol in their respective countries. One way of acknowledging the work of these geni was to name this date as being the Book Day, and so it happened like that. On 23rd April books are sold in the streets on long stalls prepared specially for the grand occasion. Many people take advantage of this day, even though they may not normally be regular readers, to buy and enjoy a book. It is one way of encouraging people to read. This is also a popular date to launch new novels onto the market and many authors take advantage of the fact in order to promote their latest book. Last, but not least, there is nothing



nicer than lovers exchanging a book and a rose.



April Fair, Seville

The biggest spring fair held in Andalusia is the Spring Fair of Seville. The fair generally begins two weeks after the Semana Santa, or Easter Holy Week.

The fair officially begins at midnight on Monday, and runs six days, ending on the following Sunday. During past fairs, however, many activities have begun on the Saturday prior to the official opening. Each day the fiesta begins with the parade of carriages and riders, at midday, carrying Seville's leading citizens

which make their way to the bullring, La Real Maestranza, where the bullfighters and breeders meet.

For the duration of the fair, the fairgrounds and a vast area on the far bank of the Guadalquivir River are totally covered in rows of casetas (individual decorated marquee tents which are temporarily built on the fairground). Some of these casetas belong to the prominent families of Seville, some to groups of friends, clubs, trade associations or political parties. From around nine at night until six or seven the following morning, at first in the streets and later only within each caseta, you will find crowds partying and dancing "Sevillanas", drinking Jerez sherry, or manzanilla wine, and eating tapas.



Groups meet in "casetas" (entertainment booths) to drink and dance "sevillanas" all night. Every day handsome couples (the elegant, traditionally dressed riders on horseback with mantilla-crowned ladies behind them) parade riding beautiful horses and dressed in the Andalusian ruffles, country finery and broad-brimmed hats, whilst other women show off their finery in open carriages and the brilliantly decorated coaches with bells on their reins which leave their marks in the dusty paths.

For a little over a century, the April Fairs of Seville, which were originally only a market for livestock, have become one of the most fascinating spectacles offered in Spain, especially late at night, when the "spirit" takes over the throats of the "cantaors" (flamenco singers) and the legs and arms of the "bailaoras" (dancers) and the Real de la Feria blazes with multicolored tents, wreaths and paper lanterns outlined against the sky.

The city, which is always beautiful, is entirely transformed during these days. The song and dance and drinking never end, and a gaiety pervades everywhere.

During the afternoons important bullfights are held in the Plaza de la Maestranza.

The Patio Festival

The Patio Festival is a unique opportunity to step into private homes, whose owners-after caring for hundreds of plants and flowers all year long-open their patios to the public in early May. People from the city and abroad enjoy their hospitality and marvel



at the variety of the decorations and plants, just when the geraniums, roses, carnations and other flowers are in full bloom.

For travelers in search of authentic experiences, this tradition is ideal. Cordoba's streets and plazas are a delight to explore, but the city's private houses--many hundreds of years old--shelter beautiful little corners which are waiting to be discovered.



Cordoba's patios capture the essence of Andalusia in a tiny space, isolated from the rush and hurry of modern life. The aroma of lemon blossoms, the exuberant vegetation, and the cool trickle of a fountain make them tiny oasis. The festival is the city's most emblematic event of the year.

In the words of Manuel Garrido Moreno, president of the Amigos de los Patios Association, "the Patio Festival is to Cordoba what the San Fermines is to Pamplona." Both government and the private sector have made efforts over the last 50 years to save these beautiful private spaces, which are an integral part of the city's architectural and social heritage. As a small incentive, the city hall offers several prizes to the best patios.

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