

Holidays and Festivals

Introduction:

Many of festivals are connected with religions

Christianity: Christmas celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Easter celebrate death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, All Souls' Day

History of each country

Independence day, 28th October, 1st May, Jan Hus Day, End of the WW II. – 8th May

Special events

The end of the Year, Birthday of the head of the state

People's lives

Birthday – all family is together, the honoured person becomes presents and flowers, children often give parties for friends

Name day – only small celebrations, small gifts or just congratulations

Wedding anniversary

International

Teachers' day, Children's day, Mothers' day

Bank holiday (state)

1st May; 6th July; 28th October

Important days 17th November

Festivals in the Czech Republic

1st January - New Year's Day

14th February - St. Valentine's Day

28th March - Teacher's Day

March/April – Easter

Boys have stock whips, water and some sprays and they goes from house to house and hit girls with stock whips, pour water on them and they usually become painted eggs, sweets, chocolates

1st April - Fool's Day

1st May - The Day of Work

The day of Work and workers, they do not go to work, they have holiday. In 1889 Communistic International said that 1st May is the day of workers and since then it is still celebrated.

5th May - May's rising of Czech nation

8th May - The end of WW II.

The forces of Alliance came in Prague and beat Germany in Czechoslovakia

The Second Sunday in May - Mother's Day

1st June - Children's Day

5th June - The Day of Constantine and Method**6th June - The Day of Jan Hus**

Jan Hus had been burned in 1415.

28th October – The Independence of The State of Czechoslovakia

Austria-Hungary had been beaten on 27th October 1981.

17th November - Day of Students' fight for freedom**24th December - Christmas****31st December – New Year's Eve**

Big celebrations, till the morning, at 24 o'clock New Year's Toast, fireworks, with family or with friends

How I celebrate Christmas

We dress a Christmas Tree one or two days before. Sometimes we have live tree, but sometimes we have plastic one. We usually put glass baubles, silver chains (tinsel) and colour lights on it. We also decorate our house with Christmas decorations and tree branches. On a Christmas Day we eat breakfast together. This breakfast consist from a Christmas Cake and anything to drink. We have to eat a lot because we don't eat whole day, just fruits. Then we usually watch TV or just do nothing while my mother is preparing dinner. When it gets dark we practise some Christmas traditions. We for example cut an apple and when there is a star we will be happy. We make small ships from walnuts and candles and sail with them in a bath and my sister throws a shoe over her head. Then we have a dinner. Fried carps, potato salad, pea soup and anything to drink. Then we put all the dishes into a dishwasher and go to living room to see presents. Than my sister plays the piano and we sing carols. After that we go to see our grandma and stay there till night and drink and eat biscuits. Next day we go to see our second grandma and there is usually whole our family and we celebrate together.

Festivals in Great Britain and in the USA**New Year's Day – 1st January**

- it is a day of new resolution
- in USA it is a day of shopping because there are New Year's sales everywhere around

Valentine's Day – 14th February

- the day of love and lovers
- people try to express their love for each other by sending Valentine's cards
- cards usually have a lots of red hearts and pink flowers on the cover and a romantic message inside

Mother's Day - Second Sunday in March**St. Patrick's Day – 17th March**

- this festival come to the USA from Ireland
- everything turns green on this day – green food, green clothes
- millions of three-leafed shamrocks (representing the Holy Trinity) are used for decorations
- in some places there are parades

Easter – March/April

- recall the events leading to Jesus Christ's death and resurrection

- Palm Sunday – first day of Holy Week
 - many churches spend this Sunday remembering and celebrating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He was greeted by crowds of people waving branches of palm trees and celebrating his arrival.
 - today many churches are decorated by palm branches to remember this event
- Maunday Thursday – remember the Last Supper – the last meal of Jesus
 - also on this day all decorations are removed from the altar in the church
- Good Friday – the most solemn day of Holy Week
 - commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the leaders of Jerusalem
 - the songs and mood of the service reflect the sadness believers feel for the death of Jesus Christ
 - many Christians hold a lent (eat little or no food)
- Easter Monday – Americans celebrate only Easter Sunday, there is no Easter Monday
 - this cheerful Monday is a sharp contrast to Good Friday
 - it is a joyous celebration of Jesus' resurrection from death
 - churches are decorated with colorful banners and Easter lilies
- eggs, rabbits and chicks are three symbols of new life, fertility and Spring
- the Easter version of Santa Claus is Easter Bunny – he brings colored eggs, candy and chocolate eggs and rabbits to the children
- in our country boys go from house to house and whip girls with a willow canes, then boys get some sweets.
If a girl was whipped on Easter, she would be healthy all next year.

Independence Day – 4th July

- It commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which was the official founding of the United States of America
- people are dressed in national colours, houses are decorated by national flags
- in every town (even the smaller ones) there are parades. Sometimes the military join in, too.
- every town organizes the fireworks displays. People also set off their own fireworks.

Halloween – 31st October

- Halloween = Eve of all hallows
- Children go from house to house in costumes (often dressed as ghosts, skeletons, animals or fairy tale heroes) and say "Trick or treat!"
 - If the neighbour says "Trick", the children play a trick
 - But people usually says "Treat" - then gives the children sweets or some even money
- people decorate their houses with spiders webs, coffins, bats and pumpkins
- pumpkins have a cut out faces and people put the candles into them (pumpkins called "jack-o'-lantern")

Guy Fawkes Day – 5th November

- In 1606 in London a man called Sir Guy Fawkes plotted to blow up King James I. and the Houses of Parliament. The plot called "The gunpowder Plot" was discovered on 4th November and Guy Fawkes and his friends were executed on 5th November.
- Since then every 5th November the British people let off fireworks, light bonfires and burn a "guy".
- Guy is a large doll, made of straw. Children put old clothes and funny masks on the doll. Then they go into the streets and say "penny for the Guy, please". When they have enough money, they buy lots of fireworks.

Remembrance Sunday – the nearest Sunday to 11th November

- it remembers the end of the 1. world war
- symbol is poppy – it symbolized a blood in a battlefield
- the money from poppies goes to war veterans
- people hold a 2-minute silence to commemorate a victims of war
- the queen lays a wreath at the Cenotaph in Whitehall (London)

Thanksgiving Day – the last Thursday in November

- 1620 – the first permanent settlers in the USA – named Pilgrim Fathers were puritans and were persecuted from England, came to the USA and started to build a new settlement, very hardworking people
- The first winter was for them, terrible half of them died, but with helping of the Indians the second year was better and they had got a very good harvest – big celebration, since 1621 Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day
- In modern times it is the day when whole families get together and enjoy themselves and enjoy good food.

Christmas – 25th December

- there is Christmas Eve on December 24 in the USA, but people get their presents on December 25 in the morning
- it's day when Jesus Christ was born
- a lot of people decorate trees with colourful ornaments, cupping-glass, sweets, silver chains and lights
- streets, shops and important buildings are also decorated, there are often carol singers of the streets
- the traditional food in Britain is roast turkey with stuffing, roast potatoes, vegetable and sauces and Christmas pudding for desert
- in the Britain the presents give Father Christmas (live in Lapland), in the USA Santa Claus (live in North pole)

New Year's Eve – 31st December

- this day everyone waiting for the end of the old year
- there is a lot of fireworks in our country