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Посібник пропонує велику кількість матеріалу про свята в Україні та українські традиції.

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HOLIDAYS IN UKRAINE

The Ukrainians are just fond of celebrating holidays. They strictly observe the traditions of Orthodox and Soviet holidays and readily accept Western holidays like St. Valentine Day, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day and so on. Ukrainians love their numerous holidays and love to "celebrate" those holidays in grandeur fashion. It's not uncommon for Westerners to be taken aback at just how many "days of note" they observe, and the amount of fireworks and revelry that goes along with them, not to mention the vast amount of spirits consumed. Ukraine's history that included Paganism and later Christianity can be attributed to the evolution of many of the current holidays and festivities. A great number of holidays can be divided into several groups — public, religious and just holidays. Public holidays are marked with red in the calendar for you not to forget to have a good rest. When a holiday falls on a non-work day, Saturday or Sunday, the nearest Friday or Monday is a day-off.

STATE HOLIDAYS

January

New Year's Day

I. Read the text.

1st January — New Year's Day is the most favorite of all holidays in Ukraine. As in Western countries on Christmas Eve, Ukrainians give New Year presents; children receive their presents under the New Year Tree on the morning of the 1st January. Traditionally just prior to midnight there's a Presidential speech broadcast nationally. When the clock strikes midnight, people pop open their Champaign bottles and raise a toast. With the first glass they congratulate each other as the clock strikes 12 times and fireworks fill the sky. The week before the New Year is a busy one with shopping, parties at work, decorating pine and fir-trees, and cooking the year's most delicious meals. The main folk heroes of this holiday are Father Frost (Did Moroz) and his grand-daughter "Snigurochka" (The Snow Girl). The tradition of predicting fortunes on this night is very popular among young people.

A peculiar tradition includes writing down on a piece of paper your wish for the coming year, then dropping it in to your champagne and drinking it as the clock strikes twelve times. Another “fun” folk tradition practiced mainly in the villages on New Year night is for the unmarried girls to go outside and throw one of their boots over the Hosts’ fence. Whichever way the toe of the boot ends up pointing indicates where the future husband will come from. Nearly all businesses remain closed from December 31st to January 8th.

II. Do the tasks.

1. Find the English equivalents:

- отримувати подарунки,
- феєрверк,
- Снігуронька,
- бити (про годинник),
- народна традиція,
- вітати один одного,
- пророчити майбутнє,
- проголошувати тост.

Make up dialogues with them.



2. Tell your classmates about the New Year traditions in your family. Ask them about it.
3. Tell your classmates about the New Year celebration in your childhood and nowadays.
4. New Year's Eve Phrasal Verbs

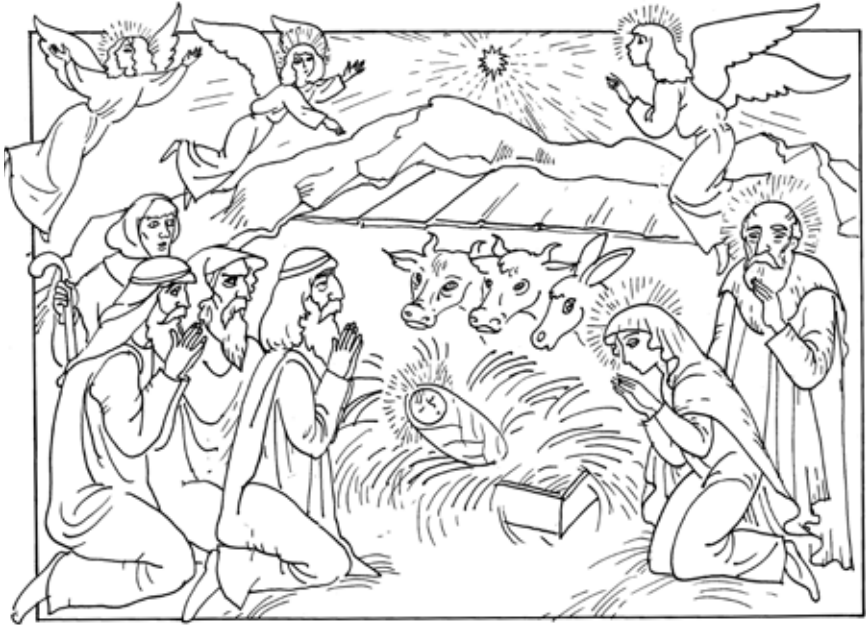
III. Complete the sentences.

1. One New Year's Eve, my neighbors asked me to come __ to their house for a party.
2. I invited my friend to go with me. At first he didn't want to go, but I talked him __ it.
3. We put __ our party hats and went to the party.
4. We showed __ late.
5. By the time we got there, they had already opened __ a case of champagne.
6. Everyone was getting __ very well.
7. The guests were talking __ what they had done for the year.
8. We thought __ different things we wanted to do for the upcoming year.
9. So we wrote __ our New Year's Eve resolutions.
10. As we counted __ to the New Year, everyone started to get excited.
11. At the stroke of midnight, the fireworks went __.
12. The sky was lit __.
13. At the party, my friend ran __ his boss.
14. So my friend took __ as soon as he could.
15. I got __ home when the sun came __.

Orthodox Christmas

I. Read the text.

The period from the 7th until the 14th of January is Saint Christmas week. During this week people go from one house to another, singing songs and wishing good wishes to health, prosperity, etc. and just having a good time. Most usually are dressed in folksy or carnival type costumes. Such activity is called "Kolyaduvannya" and "Schedruvan-nya". The songs are called "kolyadky" and "schedrivky". When somebody is singing these songs and greeting you, as a rule you should give them sweets or food or drinks or whatever you have as a token of appreciation. It is believed that everything that the people have sung in their Kolyadka and Schedrivka will come true.



Also during the New Year holidays, up to the 14th of January it is common for kids (and sometimes adults-in the villages) to go from one house to another wishing the owner of the house New Year wishes, new happiness, health, etc. All those wishes are usually said in rhymes and with the spreading of seeds, such as wheat or other grains. This shows a wish of prosperity for the house. This practice is called “Posivan-nya”. Some token, usually food, drink, sweets, or money, is usually given in return.

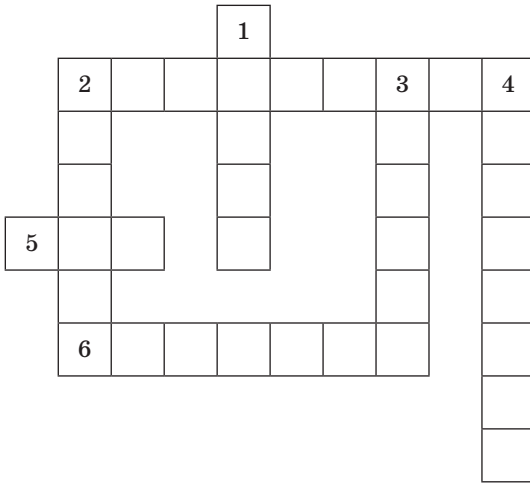
II. Complete the crossword.

Across

2. It's celebrated on December 25th.
5. It's a child's plaything.
6. Santa rides in a ___.

Down

1. The same as “presents”.
2. Christmas songs of joy.
3. ___ Christmas and a Happy New Year.
4. Santa fills it with presents for the children.



Carols

I. Read the text.

While many of the Ukrainian Christmas Eve customs are of a solemn nature, the custom of caroling is joyful and merry. Ukrainian Christmas songs or carols have their origins in antiquity, as do many other traditions practiced at Christmas time. There are two main groups of Christmas songs in Ukraine: the *koliadky*, whose name is probably derived from the Latin “*calendae*” meaning the first day of the month and which are sung on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; the second group of Christmas songs is called *shchedrivky*, which is a derivation from the word meaning generous. The latter are sung during the Feast of the Epiphany.

Both *koliadky* and *shchedrivky* have pagan elements in them, but many have been Christianized. For example, one pagan carol tells of a landowner who is awakened by a swallow and told to make preparations, because three guests are coming to his house: the sun, the moon and the rain. In the Christianized version the three guests become Jesus Christ, St. Nicholas and St. George. The very popular Ukrainian carol in the United States, “Carol of the Bells”, in its originality is a *shchedrivka* and tells of a swallow (herald of Spring) that has come to a landowner’s house and asks him to come out and see how rich he is, how many calves he has, and so on.

The themes of Ukrainian Christmas songs vary. Many, of course, deal with the birth of Christ and that occasion’s joyful celebrations,

and many of them have apocryphal elements. Another group of carols contain purely pagan mythological elements. Still another group deals with Ukrainian history of the 9–12 centuries, mostly with the heroic episodes in the lives of some of the princes that were favorite among the people. One of the largest groups of carols is glorification songs — glorifying the landowner, the farmer, his wife, his sons, his daughters, and every member of the family. These songs glorify their work as well as their personal traits.

Caroling required extensive preparation. Each group had a leader. One member dressed as a goat. Another as a bag carrier, the collector of all the gifts people would give them. Yet another carried a six-pointed star attached to a long stick with a light in its center, which symbolized the Star of Bethlehem. In some places the people even had musical instruments, such as the violin, *tsymbaly* (dulcimer), or the *trembita* (a wooden pipe about 8–10 feet long, used in the Carpathian mountains by the *Hutsuls*).

Caroling was not a simple singing of Christmas songs; it was more of a folk opera. The carolers first had to ask for permission to sing. If the answer was yes, they entered the house and sang carols for each member of the family, even for the smallest child. Sometimes they



even performed slow ritualistic dances. They also had to present a short humorous skit involving the goat. The custom of the goat accompanying the carolers has its origin in the pagan times when the goat represented the god of fertility. The skit showed the goat dying and then being brought back to life. This also symbolized the death of Winter and the birth of Spring. The caroling always ended with short well-wishing poems, appropriately selected for each home.

II. Answer the questions.

1. How many main groups of Christmas songs are there in Ukraine? Name them.
2. What is a very popular Ukrainian carol in the United States?
3. What is it about?
4. Tell about the themes of Ukrainian Christmas songs.
5. Tell about the origin of Ukrainian Christmas songs.
6. Describe the preparation to Caroling.
7. Tell about the symbols of Caroling.

III. Complete the sentences.

1. There are two main groups of Christmas songs in Ukraine: ___ .
2. In the Christianized version the three guests become ___ .
3. Each group had a ___ .
4. Caroling was not a simple singing of Christmas songs; it was more of a ___ .
5. In some places the people even had musical instruments, such as ___ .
6. The caroling always ended with ___ .

March

International Women's Day

I. Read the text.

8th March — International Women's Day is considered the first Spring Holiday in Ukraine. It is an official day off as both men and women look forward to this holiday. It originated as a day of fighting for women's rights, when on the 8th of March 1897 women (workers of sewing and shoe factories) gathered in New York demanding 10 hour working days, light and dry work places and equal salaries with men. In 1910 at the International Conference of Women Socialists in Copenhagen, Clara Tsetkin proposed celebrating the International Women's day on March, 8th which sounded an appeal to all women of the world to join in the struggle for equality.

The International Women's Day on March 8th has been a State Holiday of the Former Soviet Union since the countries inception. Beginning in 1965 it was recognized as an official day off. The Holiday enjoyed vast celebratory rituals, including public meetings involving officials at various levels of government in an attempt to report the government's efforts in supporting Women's Rights and issues concerning them. Gradually International Women's day became less political and more personal. After disintegration of the Soviet Union , March, 8th has remained on the list of State Holidays in nearly all of the CIS countries including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia as the "International Women's Day". In Uzbekistan it is referred to as the "Day of Mother". In Armenia it is celebrated on April, 7th as the "Day of Motherhood and Beauty". Currently in the CIS it is also thought of as the "Day of Spring" and the "Day of all Women", mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, wives and girlfriends. Unlike Mother's Day "every" woman expects to receive flowers and gifts.

II. Answer the questions:

- What is your mother's favorite dish?
- What color dresses does your mother prefer?
- Who is your mother's favorite movie star?
- What kind of books does your mother like to read mostly?
- What does your mother like to do best in her leisure time?
- How old was your mother when she got married?
- Who has been the greatest influence in your mother's life?
- What angers your mother most?
- Which is your mother's dream destination?
- What is your mother most afraid of?
- What is your mother's star sign?

April–May

Orthodox Easter

I. Read the text.

Two weeks following the Catholic Easter Holiday is the main Christian Orthodox Holiday established to honor the Resurrection of Jesus Christ following his crucifixion on the cross and to the coming out of the Jews from Egypt. The date of Easter is usually determined



by the Church calendar and calculated according to the so-called “Paskhalias” (the name for the “special tables”). Before and during Easter Ukrainians buy or bake Easter cakes (biscuits with raisins), and hand paint eggs widely known as Pysanka. It is a very important holiday. On Easter night people go to their local church, spending the entire night in Church services! Usually they take with them Easter cakes, painted eggs, and bottles of wine. In the morning (about 4 am) the service concludes with the clergyman sprinkling all food with sacred water which is believed to give strong healing powers. At this time people return home to continue the celebration with food and drink throughout the day. The traditional greeting on this day is: “Khrystos Voskres!” (Christ has arisen) and the answer “Voyistynu Voskres!” (Truly arisen) followed with kisses and the exchanging of gifts.

II. Choose the right answer

1. Easter is a religious holiday that is celebrated in:
 - a) summer
 - b) winter
 - c) spring
 - d) fall

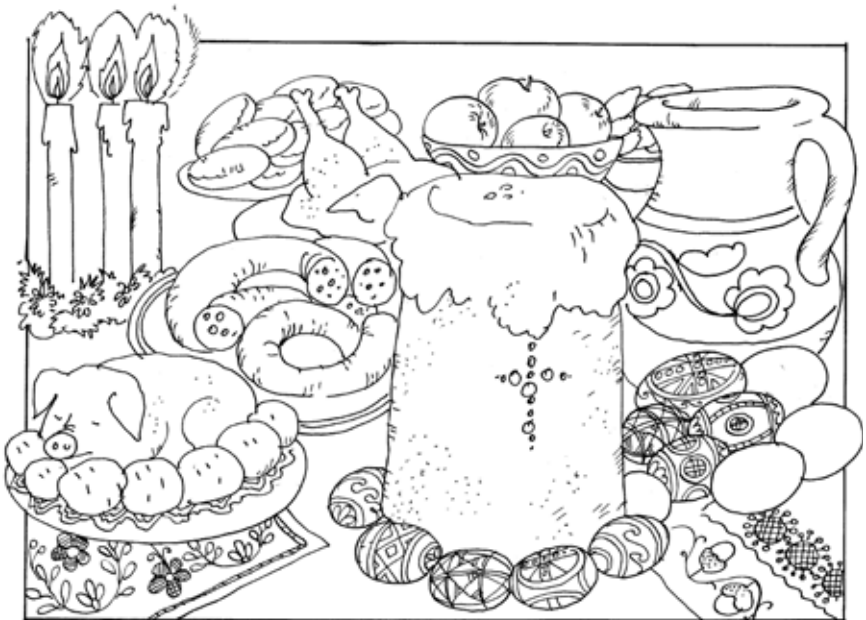
2. Easter is always celebrated on the first ___ following the first full moon that appears on or after the spring equinox.
 - a) Monday
 - b) Sunday
 - c) Saturday
 - d) Friday
3. Historians believe that the legend of the Easter Bunny originated in ___.
 - a) Germany
 - b) United States
 - c) Mexico
 - d) Sweden
4. The Easter ___ holds eggs or candy left by the Easter Bunny.
 - a) nest
 - b) cap
 - c) bonnet
 - d) basket
5. In the Western church, Easter is the celebration of the ___ of Jesus Christ.
 - a) death
 - b) birth
 - c) life
 - d) resurrection
6. Good ___ is the anniversary of the Crucifixion, the day Christ was crucified and died on the cross.
 - a) Sunday
 - b) Friday
 - c) Monday
 - d) Tuesday
7. Children find Easter eggs during an Easter ___.
 - a) egg hunt
 - b) egg roll
 - c) egg dye
 - d) egg toss
8. Easter this year is on:
 - a) March 23
 - b) April 16
 - c) March 30
 - d) April 8

9. The White House Egg Roll is held on the White House lawn on Easter ____.
- a) Sunday
 - b) Monday
 - c) Tuesday
 - d) Wednesday
10. The eggs at the White House Egg Roll are made of ____.
- a) plastic
 - b) styrofoam
 - c) wood
 - d) candy

Paska — Easter Ritual Bread

I. Read the text.

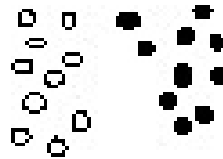
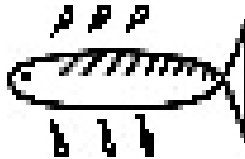
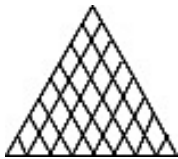
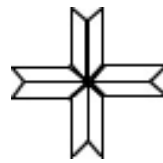
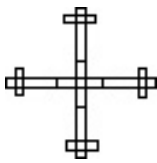
Paska baked by Lubow Wolynetz (The Ukrainian Museum) as seen on Martha Stewart, April 2000. The most honored Easter bread was the paska and the preparation and baking of paska was considered one of the most important tasks of the year. People believed that the future could be predicted, depending on how this holiday bread turned out. Every homemaker wanted her paska to be the best and the biggest,



therefore while baking it she performed various magical gestures and used incantations. The dough for the paska was kneaded in a trough which rested on a pillow so that the bread would be light. During the preparation the homemaker had to maintain pure thoughts. While the paska was in the oven no one was allowed to sit or make a loud noise for fear it would collapse in the oven. In some regions of Ukraine the man of the house stood guard in his front door lest someone entered and cast an evil spell while the paska was baking. A successfully baked paska brought great joy to the family. Wrapped in a rushnyk (ritual cloth), or placed in a basket, the paska was carried to church by the master of the house to be blessed in a ceremony following the Resurrection Mass on Easter morning. Other foods such as cheese, butter, salt, pork fat, horse radish, eggs, pysanky (Ukrainian Easter egg), ham, sausages, as well as various seeds were also brought to church for the blessing. Immediately after the ceremony the family would hurry home to share the blessed paska and thus begin Easter breakfast.

II. Tell about paska using this text.

III. Match the symbol and its description.



1. Any form of the cross signifies the Resurrection of Christ, death and suffering.
2. Animals, mostly deer, signify prosperity. The animals are usually those found in and near the Carpathian Mountains.
3. Dots depict stars and Mary's tears.
4. The fish is the sign of Christ.

5. Before the Ukrainians accepted Christianity the eight pointed star was a symbol of the god of sun. Later the star would represent Christ.
6. The Trinity is represented by a triangle. Netting signifies Christ fishing with men.
7. Designs circling the egg, with no beginning or end signifies eternity.

IV. What other symbols of egg decoration do you know? What do they mean?

V. How to make pysanka

Things you'll need:

- Pencils
- Pencils
- Pencils
- white, raw eggs
- Cardboard
- Cardboard
- Blow Dryers
- Beeswax
- Candles
- Candles
- Wide Rubber Bands
- White Vinegar
- White Vinegar
- Tablespoons
- Facial Tissues
- Kistky
- Ukrainian Easter Egg Dyes
- Finishing Nails

VI. Put the instructions in the right order.

- Dab the egg dry with a tissue.
- Allow a white, uncooked egg to reach room temperature.
- Hold the dried egg under a hair dryer to heat the wax. Wipe it off with a tissue when the wax looks wet.
- Wipe the egg down with a solution of 1/2 c. water and 1 tsp. vinegar.
- Use the heated kistka to scoop up a bit of beeswax.
- Melt the wax in the kistka over the candle.

- Draw your design on the egg lightly with a pencil.
- Hold the head of a “kistka” — a copper stylus — over a candle flame for a half-minute or so.
- Dab, don’t wipe, the egg dry.
- Draw the melted beeswax over the pencil design for the first color.
- Put the egg into the lightest color dye for around 15 minutes.
- Let the egg dry on a stand made from three finishing nails poked up through a piece of cardboard.
- Use a tablespoon to fish the egg out of the dye.
- Continue waxing and dyeing from lightest to darkest color dyes.

Try it!

Holy Trinity Day

I. Read the text.

50 days after Easter — Holy Trinity Day (Svyata Troyitsya) (or “Green Sunday”). This holiday is dedicated to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of



Christ (Easter). This event gave rise to Christianity. The meaning of the Holy Trinity is thus: God the Father laid the basis for the church in the Old Testament, the Son brought its meaning into words, and the Spirit acts within it. On this holiday people decorate their houses and apartments with Calamus (an herb) and assorted green branches.

This tradition comes from ancient Judaism, in which the Pentecost, the Feast of Harvest, was celebrated outside amongst flourishing Nature. On Holy Trinity Day people go to a cemetery to visit the tombs of relatives and friends who have passed away. In this holiday has emerged the custom of leaving food on the burial tombs of loved ones though no one claims it's significance or relevance to Christianity. Traditionally people leave some vodka or other alcohol and something to eat along with it, such as a piece of bread or candy. It is considered a good sign to find that the food and drinks have disappeared upon your next trip to the cemetery! Holy Trinity Day is a very important religious holiday in Ukraine.

II. Agree or disagree.

1. This holiday is dedicated to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Christ (Easter).
2. This event gave rise to Buddhism.
3. This tradition comes from ancient Judaism, in which the Pentecost, the Feast of Harvest, was celebrated outside amongst flourishing Nature.
4. On this holiday people decorate their houses and apartments with toys and assorted green branches.
5. On Holy Trinity Day people go to church to visit the tombs of relatives and friends who have passed away.
6. Traditionally people leave some vodka or other alcohol and something to eat along with it, such as a piece of bread or candy.
7. Holy Trinity Day is a very important religious holiday in Ukraine.

III. Tell the class why people celebrate Holy Trinity Day.

May

Labor (May) Day

I. Read the text.

1st–2nd May — Labor (May) Day. The 1st of May historically has been the traditional holiday of spring. During the Industrialization of the Nineteenth Century, it became an International Day of Solidarity for workers of all countries.

The 1st of May began to be widely celebrated with various groups of workers joining together and paying tribute to the memory of victims of oppression and for the rights of all oppressed workers irrespective of their nationality, sex, age and / or profession. In its convention of 1888 the “American Federation of Labor” declared, that May the 1st should become a day for the active struggle of workers for the eight-hour work day. Strikes and Demonstrations were held worldwide. Later, in the former Soviet Union, this holiday was widely and actively celebrated with huge parades and political speeches on Red Square in Moscow and in all other cities.

All workers of the Soviet Union including university and school students were obligated to attend the parades, bringing flowers, balloons and posters. Non compliance was met with severe persecution.

Now in many of the CIS countries, including Ukraine, you can still find some political gathering to celebrate May Day. At this time however, this holiday has become a celebration as the day of triumph for “Nature”, from which is a full bloom with birds’ singing, trees budding, and multicolored flowers painting the countryside. In this celebration people look forward to warm weather and the joys of summer.

II. Do the tasks.

- Which holiday does NOT occur in the month of May?
 - May Day
 - Mother’s Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Mardi Gras
- “Mother, May I?” is the name of a ___ :
 - song by The Rolling Stones
 - children’s game
 - Preakness-winning thoroughbred
 - all of the above
- The first May Company department store opened in 1888 in:
 - Colorado
 - Louisiana
 - Vermont
 - Minnesota
- What Spanish painter’s best-known works include The Second of May 1808 and The Third of May 1808?
 - Velázquez
 - Dalí
 - Picasso
 - Goya

5. The 2002 film *May* is loosely based on what horror classic?
 - a) Frankenstein
 - b) The Wolf Man
 - c) The Phantom of the Opera
 - d) Dracula
6. A “May-September romance” involves two people of different:
 - a) nations
 - b) races
 - c) ages
 - d) religions

Victory Day

I. Read the text.

9th May — Victory Day. Victory Day (Russian: День Победы) marks the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union in the Second World War commonly referred to in the Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War. This capitulation was signed late in the evening on May 8, 1945 (May 9 in the Moscow time zone), following the original capitulation Germany signed earlier to the joint Allied forces. The Soviet government announced the victory early on May 9th after the signing ceremony in Berlin. The May 9 Victory Day is celebrated in most of the successor states to the Soviet Union, especially in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. (However, the Baltic States, which claim that Soviet Union has used its defeat over Nazi Germany as an opportunity to occupy them for next 40 years, celebrate the victory day on May 8th.) The day is traditionally marked by ceremonial military parades with the most prominent one being traditionally held in Moscow Red Square.

This is a holiday of both joy and sorrow. A great tribute is bestowed to those who gave their lives during World War II resulting in today’s peace and happiness. The eternal memory of those lost will last forever throughout the generations. Veterans gather together remembering those who perished. Every city has an area on this holiday in which people gather called “The Eternal Fire”. In Kyiv it is located near the famous WWII museum and the “Motherland” Statue and Monument.

II. Put verbs in brackets into the correct form.

1. Victory Day (to mark) the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union in the Second World War commonly referred to in the Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War.

2. The Soviet government (to announce) the victory early on May 9 after the signing ceremony in Berlin.
 3. The May 9 Victory Day (to be celebrated) in most of the successor states to the Soviet Union, especially in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.
 4. A great tribute (to be bestowed) to those who gave their lives during World War II resulting in today's peace and happiness.
 5. The eternal memory of those lost (to last) forever throughout the generations.
 6. Veterans gather together remembering those who (to be perished).
- III. Write about the celebration of Victory Day in your city.
- IV. "This is a holiday of both joy and sorrow". Speak to your classmates about this description of Victory Day.

June

Constitution Day

- I. Read the text.

28 June — Constitution Day. On this day in 1998 the Constitution of Independent Ukraine was adopted. Fireworks and various concerts and musical events are common throughout the country.

In the morning of June 28, the Ukrainian Parliament finally adopted the new Constitution by 315 in favor to 36 against, marking probably the most important event of the last year in Ukraine. The adoption came about, after a continuing session starting at June 27, 10 AM, and lasting exactly one day. The events leading up to the adoption have been changing rapidly within the course of a few hours.

On June 26, it looked like the constitutional process would arrive at a dead end. The left factions in Parliament again declared themselves against the issues dealing with symbols, state language and private land ownership. The centrist and right factions insisted that the Constitution is a complex document and is the discussed articles would not be adopted; the parliamentary debate would be just an imitation of the time-long preparation of the document.

On the same day, meetings of the Security Council and the Regional Council, headed by President Kuchma, took place. During the meetings, it was decided to advise the President to hold a nation-wide referendum on the adoption of a new Constitution. In the evening of the 26th, Kuchma signed a decree confirming this decision; the date of the

referendum was fixed at September 25 of this year. However, in the referendum was also included the plan prepared by the constitutional commission in March of this year, in which, a dictatorship by the Head of State was not excluded; at that time, as could be expected, many democratic deputies came out against this plan. The decree literally shocked politicians and political scientists. After signing the decree, Kuchma met with the leaders of ten parliamentary factions and groups. As was also expected, the leaders declared that they were against the March plan.

In the morning of the 27th, the factions gathered in Parliament and discussed the situation. It was decided to continue the work on adoption of the final text. Work groups were formed to reach agreement on those articles which were disputed: on the state symbols, state language, ownership, and the government.

After this day-long session, in the morning of the 28th, all difficult questions were solved. According to analysts, from now on, a democratic and market-oriented Constitution has been put into force.

II. Do the tasks.

1. Look at these dates and numbers. What do they mean?

June 28; September 25; 27, 10 AM; 315; 36; June 26; 1998.

2. Find the Ukrainian equivalents: Independent, adoption, market-oriented, state language, nation-wide referendum, private land ownership, declare. Make up a short story about the history of Constitution Day.

August

Independence Day

I. Read the text.

24 August — Independence Day. It is Ukraine's largest State holiday, which commemorates the adoption in 1990 of the "Declaration of Sovereignty" of Ukraine. Impressive fireworks displays and noteworthy concerts throughout the capital Kyiv and the rest of the country.

The Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine (Ukrainian: Акт проголошення незалежності України) was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament on August 24, 1991. The Act established Ukraine as an independent, democratic state.

The Act was adopted in the time when the conservative Communist leaders of the Soviet Union committed a coup attempting to restore the Communist party control over the country. In response, the parliament

of Ukraine on its special session overwhelmingly approved the Act of Declaration. The Act was passed by 321 votes in favor, with 2 votes against, and 6 abstain. The author of the text was Levko Lukyanenko.

The same day, August 24, the parliament called for a referendum on support of the Declaration of Independence. The proposition for calling the national referendum came jointly from the majority leader Oleksandr Moroz, and the opposition leader Ihor Yukhnovsky.

In the referendum on December 1, 1991, the people of Ukraine expressed widespread support for the Act of Declaration of Independence, with more than 90 % votes in favor. Shortly after, the independence of Ukraine was recognized worldwide.

24th of August is celebrated in Ukraine as Independence Day.

II. True or false?

1. The Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament on August 24, 1991.
2. The Act didn't establish Ukraine as an independent, democratic state.
3. In the referendum on December 1, 1991, the people of Ukraine expressed widespread support for the Act of Declaration of Independence, with more than 100% votes in favor.
4. The proposition for calling the national referendum came jointly from the majority leader Oleksandr Moroz, and the opposition leader Ihor Yukhnovsky.

III. Tell how people celebrate Independence Day in your town or city.

OTHER HOLIDAYS

Old Calendar New Year

14th January — Old Calendar New Year celebrated as a family holiday. See more above under 7 January — Orthodox Christmas.

Ukrainian Unity Day (Den Sobornosti)

22nd January — Ukrainian Unity Day (Den Sobornosti) is an important historical event in Ukraine. It goes back to the date when Eastern and Western Ukraine were united. On this day in 1919 the “Treaty of Unity” between Ukrainians was signed and the unity of all Ukrainian lands previously belonging to the Russian Empire (UNR) and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was solemnly proclaimed on Sofiivska Square in Kyiv. “Den Sobornosti” is the symbol of territorial and spiritual unity of Ukraine as a unified sovereign state.

Students Day

25th January — Students Day otherwise known as “Tatyana’s Day” Tatyana’s Day is a pleasant and upbeat holiday highlighting the best, brightest, and most carefree years in the life of every student. On this day, all former classmates tend to grow nostalgic, and recall their fellow students, Deans and Principals as well as recalling memorable student years. The holiday’s origin goes far back into history.

On the 12th of January according to the Old Calendar (Jan 25 New Calendar) in 1775, being the day of “Maiden Tatyana the Martyr”, Empress Elisabeth Petrovna signed the regulation “Concerning the foundation of Moscow University”. This project was developed by the famous Russian Scientist Mikhail Lomonosov and later continued by Ivan Shuvalov. Shuvalov chose this day to sign the regulation not by accident as he desired to present it as a gift to his mother Tatiana Petrovna on her Name Day. “I am giving you a University”, said Shuvalov. On Easter, 1791 the “Church of Tatyana the Martyr” was opened. Later, Nikolay I disposed in his Decree to celebrate, not the opening of the University, but the signing of the regulation regarding its foundation. On this holiday all kinds of distinctions — of age and class, grades and ranks, were cancelled, Rich and poor were equalized — All felt themselves as fellow citizens of the “Scientific Republic”. On this holiday the kitchen was preparing for the students cold snacks along with vodka, cheap wine, and beer. You could find seated at the table favourite professors, popular journalists, students, lawyers, and administrative figures. Vladimir Giljarovsky, describing Tatyana’s Day, truthfully recalls the popularity of a rhyme “Pyana — Tatyana” which translated means “Drunken Tatyana”. Yes, it was a loose, and at times a disgracefully loose holiday. So, thanks to the love of Mother by an omnipotent favorite of Shuvalov, and the decree of emperor Nikolay “I”, Sacred Martyress Tatyana has turned into a “Patroness” of the students, and the day of her commemoration turned into a reckless revelry. Nowadays, on this winter day we congratulate students of all generations. With feelings of gratitude we recollect the teachers who opened the Temple of Sciences for us. Even though this holiday is considered more of a Russian holiday, students in Ukraine are celebrating it also as a youth holiday, for all of those who keep the fire of creativity in their souls, with a thirst for knowledge, search and discovery.

St. Valentine's Day

14th February — St. Valentine's Day inherited from Western culture, is now very popular in Ukraine.

Men's Day

23d February — Men's Day (formerly known as The Soviet Army Day) It is a tribute of respect to all the generations of Soviet soldiers and military people who defended courageously our Motherland from invaders. All men, including boys, receive heart-felt greetings and gifts. Now, this holiday is considered as an opposite to Women's Day on the 8th of March, as all men get an opportunity to have their own holiday as well. So, women have an opportunity to say the warmest and sweetest words to the men they love and to flatter them with attention.

Fool Day

1st April — Fool Day (the Day of laughter) This holiday is celebrated everywhere in Ukraine with people attempting to get the best of each other through trickery and jokes. But nowhere is this holiday taken more seriously than in Ukraine's port city of Odesa where an impressive and light hearted parade is held annually to celebrate both April Fools Day as well as Odesa itself as the "Humor Capital" of the CIS.

Mother's Day

13th May — Mother's Day. This is a day when Ukrainians express their love, respect, and appreciation to the Mothers of Ukraine.

Europe Day

Third weekend of May — Europe Day. On this weekend, Ukraine celebrates a day to show unity, respect and an opportunity to magnify the public will and determination to join the Union of European Nations. This holiday weekend is a major cultural event. The Central Squares of Kyiv and other large cities of Ukraine host concerts, performances and shows highlighting European musicians, artists, along with European cuisine as well.

Kyiv Day

Last Sunday of May — Kyiv Day Kyiv (Kyiv). The beautiful capital of Ukraine celebrates her day. This is a time when chestnut trees — the

symbolic tree of Kyiv — are in full bloom and sporting their wonderfully eloquent “white candles”. Spring is a great time to visit Ukraine’s Capital Kyiv and see it with your own eyes.

International Child Protection Day

1st June — International Child Protection Day Children are the future of the mankind. And this day is their day. Kids’ right for life and dignity must be respected and defended. What is sunnier, joyful, and memorable than the childhood? A child gets to know the world with the help of adults, learns and finds out new interesting things. A child is happy when he is loved, warmed fed and understood. A lot of different concerts, shows and games are held on this day.

Day of Journalists

6th June — Day of Journalists. There are many professional holidays in Ukraine, and this is one of them. Being an independent journalist can be dangerous. But at the same time, it is one of the most important and interesting professions in providing people with unbiased information that they need to understand the world around them.

Day of Medical Workers

20th June (Third Sunday of June) — Day of Medical Workers. Another important professional holiday. People in white garments are receiving greetings and due respect for their hard and important work. But, try not to get sick on this day, as all doctors, nurses, and health care administrators will be getting together for some very, merry festivities.

Day of Sorrow and Remembrance of Victims of War

22nd June — Day of Sorrow and Remembrance of Victims of War. This day was the beginning of World War II for the USSR. On this day in 1941 began one of the darkest pages of mankind, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. A long four years of war were marked with the heroic battles of the Soviet people and their allies for liberation. Many were killed. Nearly every family lost one of their loved ones. This day is to remember those who fought for freedom and defended their families and their country. This day is to remind us also about the terrible human mistakes of the past and to prevent them in the future.

Youth Day

24th June — Youth Day. Youth is celebrated with a lot of fun, fireworks and concerts!

Graduation Day

Last Friday of June — Graduation Day. The end of June is well known as graduation time for schools, institutes and universities. It is the time when all exams are passed and young girls and boys receive their certificates or diplomas and thus enter their new life.

Navy Day

1st August (first Sunday of August) — Navy Day. If you are in Crimea, especially in Sevastopol, don't miss this day and the opportunity to witness an expressive and impressive festival. Parades, concerts and fireworks. A good time for all guaranteed!

The Day of Knowledge

1st September — The Day of Knowledge. This is a serious holiday called the “Day of Open Doors” and includes all Schools, Colleges, Universities and Institutes. It is celebrated as the time when all students begin their New Year studies. After a fun filled hot summer students are going back to the “Land of Knowledge”. The day starts with meetings held next to each school. You'll see many nicely dressed students carrying flowers everywhere.

World Tourism Day

27th September — World Tourism Day. A wonderful time to visit this site and Ukraine!!

Teacher's Day

October 5th — Teacher's Day. This special day was created to focus the World's attention on the contributions and achievements of teachers as well as their concerns and priorities. Teachers receive special appreciation for all the hard work they do.

Lawyer's Day

8th October — Lawyer's Day. Another holiday in Ukraine that celebrates the legal profession.

Ukrainian Army Day

6th December — Ukrainian Army Day. In 1991 the Decree regarding the establishment of the “Armed forces of Ukraine” was signed and is annually celebrated.

Christmas Catholic Christmas

25th December — Christmas Catholic Christmas is also celebrated in Ukraine, especially in its western regions.

1. Match the date and the holiday.

1) 13th May	a) World Tourism Day
2) 25th January	b) Mother’s Day
3) 27th September	c) Students Day
4) 24th June	d) Youth Day

2. Put the holidays in the right order.

Day of Medical Workers,

April Fools Day,

Day of Journalists,

Europe Day,

The Day of Knowledge,

Youth Day,

Teacher’s Day,

Old Calendar New Year.

3. Tell the class about one of these holidays.

UKRAINIAN FOLK HOLIDAYS

Malanka

Malanka is a Ukrainian folk holiday celebrated on January 13th, which is New Year’s Eve in accordance with the Julian calendar.

Malanka commemorates the feast day of St. Melania. On this night in Ukraine, carolers traditionally went from house to house playing pranks or acting out a small play, with a bachelor dressed in women’s clothing leading the troop.



Malanka caps off the festivities of the Christmas holidays, and is often the last opportunity for partying before the solemn period of Lent which precedes Easter.

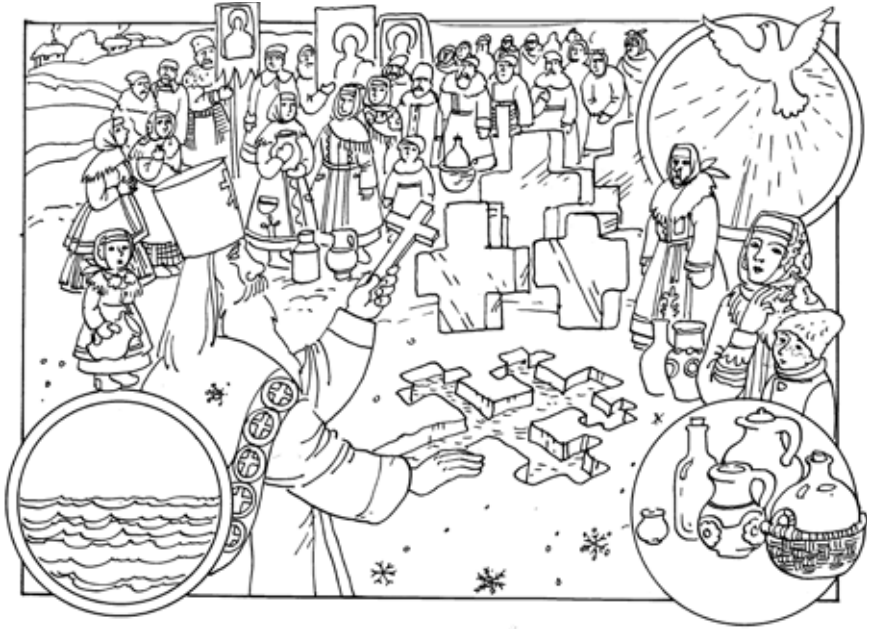
Jordan day

January 18 — Jordan day. On the eve of Jordan the family sits down to another vechera similar to the “sviata vechera” prepared on Christmas Eve. This night is called “Schedrij Vechir” which, loosely translated, means “bountiful night”. Jordan day commemorates the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan. In observance of this holiday, churches offer blessed water to their congregations which is kept in a vessel in the home throughout the year.

Shrovetide

Shrovetide (1)

Shrovetide (Maslenitsa) is an ancient festival dating from pagan times. At first, it was a festival dedicated to the God Volos to celebrate the arrival of spring and the start of work on the land. This festival, originating in people’s worship of nature, included various rituals (burning of a straw effigy of Winter, lightening of fires, leaving of festival food on the ancestors’ graves, etc) and feasts, the main dish at



which was blini. Blini (very similar to thin large pancakes) were made from a thin batter, and they were round and golden like the sun.

Later, the Orthodox Church included Shrovetide into the list of its own festivals. Shrovetide had lost its ritual significance and became a purely symbolic festival of seeing off winter and welcoming spring.

Blini, on the other hand, are so popular in Russia even nowadays that people make them all year around.

The Shrovetide (2) (pancake week)

It is an archaic Slavic feast, which have inherited from the pagan culture and is a funny winter send-off, illuminated with happy anticipation of the coming warmth and spring renewal of nature. Pancakes, the obligatory attribute of the Shrovetide, had a ritual meaning: round, ruddy and hot — they were symbols of the sun, which was kindling everyday brighter and brighter, making days longer.

Centuries passed by, life changed and after Ukraine has been converted to Christianity, appeared new, church holy days, but the Shrovetide kept on living. It was met and sent off with the same irrepressible daring as in pagan time.

The most important day of the Shrovetide week was Sunday — the last day before the Lent. In Ukraine this day was called the Shrove



Sunday, and all people asked their relatives and friends for forgiveness for all dealt insults and troubles. In the evenings it was used to go to the cemetery and say good-by to the dead.

The main event of the last day was “The Shrovetide’s Send-off”, often accompanied with fires. To this day in Ukraine people made a dummy of Winter from straw and dusters and wore it in the ladies’ wear, carried it through the whole village and sometimes set it on the wheel, stuck in atop the pole. Peasants went out of the village and drowned the dummy into the ice-hole, or burned it, or just dismembered it and remained straw threw on the fields. Sometimes, instead of the dummy along the village people drove a nattily wore girl or a woman, an old lady or even an old drunkard in junks. After that, under screams they were driven outside the village and throw out to snow (“sent-off” the Shrovetide).

Triytsya

The Feast of Triytsya, (Trinity Sunday), which commemorates the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles (Pentecost) falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter. In English, it is also called Whitsunday, and in Ukrainian it is also known as Pyatydesyatnytsya (derived from

the word p'yatdesyat, that is fifty) because it is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. In Ukraine, a predominantly Orthodox Christian country for more than a thousand years, there are many age-old traditions connected with church holidays which combine the Christian spirit with the pre-Christian folk customs and lore.

The time when Triytsya is celebrated coincides with the Feast of Zeleni Svyata, Green Holidays (also called Klechalni Svyatky), and though the latter is definitely of a pre-Christian origin, in the collective consciousness of the people the two feasts have merged.

Triytsya is the time when the vegetation comes into full force in Ukraine; the grass is mowed for hay, the meadows, liberally sprinkled with wild flowers, are a joy to behold. Peasant houses and village squares used to be and still are adorned with leafy branches of birches, maples and ash-trees. The gates and the rooms were festooned with flower garlands and fragrant grasses which were believed capable of protecting against the evil forces. The icons were adorned with garlands of flowers and grasses too, and the floors were covered with carpets of wild flowers and grasses.

The day before Triytsya, that is Saturday, was called Didova subota, the day of the commemoration of the dead. It differed from all the other commemorative days of the year. On that day prayers were said for all the dead — baptized and not baptized, those who died of old age and those who took their life. Bread or honey or other sweets were taken to church to be blessed; the old and disabled were treated to food, and at the cemeteries food was left near the graves for the dead to take part in the festive repast.

In the central square of the village a whole tree, the bole of a tree or a large branch was erected and adorned with garlands of flowers and grasses, and the place was the focal point of the Zeleni svyata week-long holidays, particularly popular with the young. The girls would cook food — fried eggs with bacon, pies stuffed with cottage cheese or cabbage, bread in the shape of braided ropes, and sweet pastry, and the young men would bring beer and other drinks. The girls spread tablecloths on the ground and laid the food on them, and then everybody would sing and dance in a ring. You were supposed to touch the leaves or the branches every so often. The picnic over, everyone proceeded back home to continue celebrations.

Traditions in different parts of Ukraine differed but little; in the lands of Slobozhanshchyna and Poltavshchyna, usually the trunk of a dead tree was erected instead of a leafy one, and a wheel was fixed to

the top of the trunk. The wheel and the songs about nature's revival in the spring symbolized the change of seasons with the sun being the major force, the life giver.

In the Land of Polissya, a good-looking girl was chosen to be the central figure in the rite of kust (bush). She was adorned in leaves, flowers and herbs which were sewn and fixed together so as to form a green skirt and a green shirt. Her head was crowned with a garland of flowers, fragrant grasses and ribbons. The festive crowd of the villagers would then walk around the village with the "bush" girl at the head of the procession. Songs were sung and dances were danced.

"We take this bush
To the river.
Oh river,
Give us water,
Give us rain,
Golden and copious,
So that we have a harvest Rich".

In the lands of Poltavshchyna and Slobozhanshchyna instead of "the bush", the festive processions were led by "the poplar" (there is a Ukrainian phrase, "slender as a poplar" to describe a svelte girl). Though honorary, the role of the poplar also involved a considerable physical strain — the girl had to be walking around with her arms raised straight up, all wrapped up in garlands, beads and decorative shawls. The celebrants wished those they met on the way a good harvest and well-being, and were given in return ribbons, beer and other drinks, pies and pancakes.

"We walk the poplar
We drink mead and beer.
Grow, poplar, grow,
Be strong to withstand the wind,
Never break,
Only bow to the field of grain".

The week of Zeleni svyata was the time of meat eating — right after it was over, another period of fasting began which lasted until the Day of St Peter. In addition to meat, a lot of onions, garlic and reddish were consumed too. Soups were made with sorrel, spinach, pigweed, nettles, tops of beets; these green things were also used as stuffing for pies.

Triytsya was — and to a great extent is — one of the major Christian feasts in Ukraine. There are many churches in Ukraine which are

dedicated to the Holy Trinity. In Kyiv alone there are several churches of the Holy Trinity, the best known of which is the one which is situated right above the gate to the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra Monastery. It was built in the twelfth century.

Ivan Kupala Day

6th June — Ivan Kupala Day is one of the great and enigmatic holidays signifying a celebration in honour of the “God of the Sun” (or “Dazhbog”). It is believed that during this time of summer solstice, the sun is strongest, before turning to the winter. They say that the Sun is a personification of light, celebrating its victory over dark forces, so as it rises it’s “playing”, “leaping” and feeling joyful. All Nature is also joyful because of this, becoming special and charmed. The name of the holiday is bound to the name of “Kupajla”, who is the “Divinity of Fertility”, of the harvest, welfare and medicinal healing herbs and plants. Traditional ceremonies are timed so as to celebrate in honour of youth, beauty, love and purification. On the 6th of July people set off for the gathering of medical herbs and plants. They gather healing herbs at dawn, far from the settlements and paths, all in a good mood and praying. Folklore has it that besides medical properties Kupal’s’ki plants have a considerable magical effect. The main Kupal’s’ki cere-



monies were taking place at night 6–7 July. Kupala night is a special night.

Not only is it the most mysterious and enigmatic but also the most dissolute night of the year. The people believed that all Kupala's articles like chaplets, sprigs of sapling, ash, dew and other items had had not only healing properties but also considerable guarding forces from impure spirits as well as witches, which were thought to be very active on Kupala's night. All night long people keep Kupala bonfires burning, leaping over the flames, cleansing themselves of ill and bad luck. The remnants of the bonfire are distributed to the participants, and maybe taken home, to protect against evil forces. It was considered a good sign for their future if young people, while jumping over the fire, would keep their hands locked and their clothes unsigned. Mothers burn shirts of ill children in the Kupala fire as illnesses are believed to burn away with it.

The next ceremony consists of purifying by another element, water. Girls try to dive in the water in such a way, that a chaplet from their hair would float on the surface of the water. Sometimes girls were sending their own personal chaplet with candles alit floating to the other side of the river or lake as the young men would try to capture the chaplet of his favorite girl. If not able to reach it from shore, some would impatiently jump in the water and retrieve the girls' chaplet. A kiss awaits the bearer of each chaplet.

Especially enigmatic were recitals relating to fern blossoms on Kupala night. In order to see it, you have to go at night to the fern bush to spread under it a linen or towel on which the Easter cake was sanctified. Next you must draw around yourself a circle with the knife sanctified in the Church, sprinkle the plant with sanctified water and read a prayer. Impure forces then try to drive away and scare the man; wind, noise, blowing small rocks and twigs. It will not, however, be able to overcome the outlined circle. This is why you need to "fear not".

At midnight the fern begins to bloom and fall on the linen. This is when you need to quickly rap the linen and hide it with the fern blossoms in your bosom. Such bravery rewards the person who did this to inherit the power to see how trees walk from one place to another. To understand the language of birds, animals, plants and trees. He will be able to locate treasure hidden in the ground and retrieve it.

The highlight of the ritual is a decoration of the sacral sapling — "kupaily" (kupailytsi, gil'tsya, madder). Usually it is the branch of a willow, cherry or ash tree, decorated by field flowers, paper ribbons,



and burning candles. Girls dance and sing about love and marriage around the “Kupaly”. It is then dipped in water and broken into pieces and given to the girls, “so they would attain riches”.

The Kupal’ska ritual is highly symbolic. Kupal’s’ki fires symbolize a cult of the Sun. Kupal’s’ka water is a symbol of healing power. A fern is a symbol of a happy future. Magic Ivaniv’s’ka dew provides beauty and love, and the Kupala tree denotes fertility and happiness.

The Kupala ritual, as with Ukrainians, was widespread not only among the Slavic people, but also included other segments of Europe and even India. In particular, Bulgarians believed that on Kupala the Sun is “dancing” and “twirling the sabers”. Polish girls baked ceremonial “sun” cakes while Englishmen sought out the fern, not for the sake of the blossom of a burning flower, but for its seeds which can make a man invisible.

Spas (Savoieur)

There are three holidays in August that have the name Spas (Savoieur). The First one is on August, 14 and coincides with Christian Day of the seven Martyrs Makoveyi (Maccabees). It is also on this day that Prince Volodymyr the Great Christianized the old Rus-Ukraine in



988 BC. On First Spas priests in churches consecrate water, plants and poppy-seeds (mak in Ukrainian, it sounds as mac from Maccabees that may have given rise to this tradition).

Second Spas (August, 19), or Great, or Transfiguration of Christ, is also referred to as Apple Spas. This day people celebrate as harvest festival, with blessing of vegetables, fruit and honey.

Third Spas (August, 29), also Gorikhovy (Nut), named so since at this time nuts are gathered in the gardens, is preceded by Christian holiday Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of the God (August, 28). Folk name of this holiday is Persha Prechysta (First Purest), when fruit is almost picked in the gardens.

On the 14th of September a new church year begins. Then follows Druga Prechysta (Second Purest), day of Birth of the Most Holy Mother of the God. (September, 21).

“Obzhynky”

“Obzhynky” is the Ukrainian Thanksgiving, and the culmination of the harvest. The basic word is “zhaty”, to reap, to harvest. From it we have “zazhynky” — the first reaping, “zhnyva” — harvest, “obzhynky” — the harvest feast and “zhentsi” — the reapers.

The root of the word means “to cut”. If we were to transport ourselves to early pre-industrial agricultural times, before combines and other modern farm equipment, we would know that the harvest cannot be completed in a day or two, especially when you’re reaping with sickles and scythes. The result of the harvest is and was so important — food itself — that, as with all Ukrainian traditions, the harvest rituals are recorded for us in the early oral literature, the “obzhynkovi pisni” (harvest songs) and in some unique items of material culture. The ritual songs accompanied practically every action of obzhynky; much of what is mentioned is no longer carried out — only remembered in songs.

Zhnyva, the process of harvest, was long and hard, with only hand implements with which to work — the “kosa” — the scythe, and the “serp” — the sickle. Men used the former, women the latter. People wore loose white clothing to work in the hot August sun, with wide-brimmed straw hats for the men and kerchiefs for the women. Ritual songs were sung about the sun, the grain, the implements, the birds living in the grain, about being tired and aching backs, about the abundant harvest for this year and next, and about wreaths (“vinochky”) for weddings.

The last day of the harvest was the holiday, obzhynky. The last sheaf of the best grain, “ostannii snip”, was ceremoniously reaped, tied and decorated with flowers and ribbons. This became the “didukh” for “Sviat Vechir” (Christmas Eve). Along with the sheaf, in some regions of Ukraine a large “vinok”, or wreath of grain stalks was also prepared and decorated with field flowers. In the Poltava region a large cross, the “obzhynkovyi khrest”, was woven out of grain.

The major ceremony in the field centered around the last clump of uncut grain. The spot was located near the boundary or dividing furrow between two fields. These stalks (“kolosky”) were tied and braided in such a way that even though the roots were still in the ground, the braided stalks no longer reached up, but faced down, towards the earth. This clump of still-rooted grain formed an enclosure, like a short tent with a flat roof, at the front of which was an opening, with the braided stalks hanging down over the opening. This living structure had many names, depending upon region: “Spasova Boroda”, “Didova Boroda”, “Tsapova Boroda”, “Vlasova Boroda”, “Velesova Boroda”, “Illi Boroda”, “Boroda”, “Koza”, “Perepilka”, “Perepelytsia”, Prokipia”. Most of these names have the word “boroda” (beard), recalling that the braided stalks hanging down look similar to an old man’s or a goat’s beard.

Into this enclosure the “hospodar”, the owner of the particular homestead, placed a round loaf of bread, salt and water. He knelt before it while the women reapers recited, “Rody Bozhe, na vsiakocho do liu — bidnoho-bahatocho, vdovytsi i syroty...” (God, let the earth provide for all, the poor and rich, the widows and orphans...) The hospodar stood up, bowed to the Boroda and to the four directions of the field, and blessed the field. He took a few grains from the Boroda and sowed them into and around it, reciting: “Siisia, rodysia, zhyto-pshenytsia, vsiaka pashnytsia, krascha nizh toi rik”. (Sow and grow, rye and wheat, and all grain, even better than this year.) Games were played and other rituals were carried out by the zhentsi, to ensure a good harvest next year and to foretell the yield.

During this time, in addition to plaiting the grain wreaths and crosses, the female zhentsi picked a “kniahynia”, their queen of the harvest. She stood in the center of their circle, placed a sickle on her left shoulder, and held a “iurok” (a short stick used in binding sheaves) in her right hand, and bowed to the people. The oldest male zhentsi tied a “pereveslo” (a band of straw used to tie sheaves) around her waist, and crowned her with the wreath of grains and flowers. She bowed again, and led the procession back to the hospodarstvo, carrying the didukh. Everyone followed, the young women first, and then



the other zhentsi, all with their harvesting implements decorated with grain stalks and flowers. The harvest songs continued.

At the gate to the house, the zhentsi were welcomed by the owners. Now they were not field workers, but guests. Outside, in the yard, the table was set with white tablecloths, bread, salt, water and horilka (Ukrainian vodka). After the welcome, the table was moved closer to the house. The kniahynia stepped forward, bowed, and said: “Dai Vam, Bozhe, schoby ste schaslyvo dochekaly na toi rik siyaty, oraty, a my, zdorovi, zbyraty”. (May God grant that you happily live until next year, to sow and plow next year, and that we may harvest for you.) The hospodar replied: “Dai, Bozhe, dochekaty v dobrim zdoroviu! A ty, moloda, Boh Day, zdorova rosła i shliubnoho vintsia dorosla!” (May God grant that we survive in good health. And you, young lady, may God grant that you grow healthy and get married!) The words varied from region to region, and village to village. The kniahynia gave the hospodar the vinok, which he hung in the house on a peg at the “pokuttia” (the central and ritual corner of the house). The didukh was ceremoniously carried into the home, placed on the pokuttia, along with bread, salt, water and honey or horilka. Then all sat down for a well-deserved meal, which had to include varenyky.

So what does all this mean? In Ukrainian traditions, some of the basic elements are the ancestors, nature, holy mother-earth and bread. The belief is that every aspect of nature has a soul and is part of the clan, the extended family. In prehistoric times people believed that if they carried out certain actions and rituals, chanting or singing specific words, then they could have an effect on the world of nature around them, and ensure that what they say will happen will actually come true because of their actions. The sun must be praised and reminded to return every spring. Mother earth must be thanked and praised for her bounty, and entertained and honored so that next year the harvest will be even better. The ancestors who have departed stay around protecting and helping the living, and they, too, must be praised and thanked.

In the rituals of obzhynky these elements are obvious, as they are in other rituals of the yearly cycle. In the harvest songs, the sun and rain are praised and thanked. Ritual prayers and incantations are offered for future bounty and fertility, and for protection from hail, fire, drought and flood. Veles is an important god, the protector of cattle and other animals — hence one of the names for the clump of grain, Velesova Boroda. To the people it was obvious that where the animals were, through natural fertilizer, the grain grew more bountiful.

The sun and rain were not the only powers responsible for a good harvest. Some of the souls of the ancestors who had departed this world lived in the fields. They protected and nourished the “nyva” (field), they ensured that the crops grew well. The souls also had to be thanked. In the songs and in their actions, the zhentsi pay homage to the departed. With the end of harvest, the souls go in different directions, some into the rivers and lakes, some into the woods and forests. Some become birds — that is why the “perepilka” (quail) is mentioned so often in the harvest songs. The souls closest to each family came home in the *didukh* — that is why making it, decorating it, and carrying it home in a procession was such an important part of *obzhynky*.

The *Boroda* was another vital aspect of this feast, and is a custom that reaches into agricultural prehistory, when humans first realized that seed from a plant will grow into another plant. This realization, this paradigm shift marks the beginning of agriculture, in the Neolithic period, approximately 7,000-3,500 B.C. (depending upon the region). While most archaeologists consider the Near East the cradle of agriculture and the source of its spread into Europe, there are some indications that there were local discoveries of agriculture and animal domestication.

At present, we have no way of knowing whether some agricultural discoveries happened on the territory of Ukraine. But the continuation of the rituals of *obzhynky*, especially the *Didova Boroda*, indicate that the birth of agriculture was remembered by the population on Ukrainian territory, and that these rituals were so important that they were passed on to future generations. There is still no indication of if or how these Neolithic residents were ancestors of the later Slavs, and then Ukrainians (with DNA analysis, we may know soon enough). By plaiting the rooted grain clump in a way that the stalks point downward, the Ukrainian farmer of a few centuries ago echoed the prehistoric realization that grain actually seeded itself. A continuation of this symbol is the tree of life (so elegantly and simply depicted by the late Jacques Hnizdovsky in one of his woodcuts), with the seeds falling to the ground, sprouting and growing into a plant that blooms and produces flowers, then seeds — which fall to the ground.

When the *hospodar* symbolically sows a few grains from the *Boroda* around it, we have reinforcement and the progression from the seed seeding itself (as it did in the Paleolithic) to agriculture (Neolithic). As a beard / *boroda*, it also took on the symbolism of the old respected mem-



bers of the family, the ancestors. (I had tried to envision what the Boroda really looked like, and had a vague idea based on the descriptions in the various books. But it was only during my visit to the museum located within the fortress at Kamyianets-Podilskyi that I saw an actual Boroda in the obzhynky display. (The members of my tour group could not figure out why I was so thrilled about seeing a clump of wheat!)

The vinok / wreath has a double meaning. Along with its meaning of eternity, honor and glory, it also signifies goodness, beauty, chastity, purity and innocence. Standing under a vinok means to get married (the Ukrainian word for the church ceremony is “vinchannia” from the root word, vinok). That is why the hospodar tells the kniahynia that he hopes to see her in a vinok next year — he wishes she will marry then.

With the harvest came the end of the hard field work. People had more time, and fall was the time of “vulytsia”, “vechornytsi” (match-making) and “vesillia” (weddings). Blended into the Obzhynky songs are many references to being under the vinochok. The procession back from the fields takes on the appearance of a wedding procession, with “druzhky” (bridesmaids). By blending the obzhynky and vesillia motifs (the latter motifs appear in all annual rituals), people wished bliss and fertility to both the fields and the families.

The obzhynky songs are special. They recreate what the people believe. I especially like the wishful thinking — by singing that the stodoly (barns) are full, the zhentsi are hoping they will be.

One harvest song that has become a regular folk song is “Oi litaye sokolonko po poliu, tai zbyraie cheliadonku dodomu. Idy, idy cheliadonko dodomu, vyhuliala vse litechko po poliu. Vyhuliala vse litechko, sche i zhnyva, zabolila holovonka sche i spyna. (The young falcon is flying over the field, and calling his family home. Come home, family, you spent all summer and the harvest in the field. The head hurts, and so does the spine.) Symbolically, this shows the ancestors being called home from the fields.

In other songs, the singers sing about their aching backs, about the moon and stars (indicating that they worked well into the night), about the number of sheaves, the girls in their vinky, the field birds, the farewell to the fields for the winter, and the high hopes for good fortune and a full harvest next year.

There were even special songs for the road they walked along going to the hospodar. As they got closer to the house and to the gate, the lyrics turned to more basic things: We’re tired, we’re hungry, pay us, feed us and give us horilka to drink.

The pioneers who settled the Canadian prairies celebrated just as they did back home, although in a much harsher climate. For those who came to the cities, the harvest holidays were the first to be forgotten, because they did not have relevance in an urban setting. The National Ukrainian Canadian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba, at the beginning of August, still has obzhynky rituals as part of the opening ceremonies.

Nonetheless, while urban Ukrainian families are not that close to the rural soil, the *didukh* of Ukrainian Christmas is a reminder of harvest, its bounty, our ancestors and the beginning of agriculture.

History of Ukrainian Pokrova

According to old tradition, Pokrova (lit.translated as Coverage, Protection) is celebrated 5 weeks earlier than the American holiday on October, 14. After the popular calendar, October was the last month of autumn, especially in northern areas of Ukraine (and in Russia). This month symbolized a transition time between autumn and winter.

The Pokrova holiday was regarded as the turning day, when the first gust of cold winter air reached the Ukrainian land. Surprisingly, but the popular observations of the old past were correct — every year October,14 is an unusually cold day with first snow and cold wind,



which may be followed by another fortnight of warmer weather, but the welcoming warm sun of autumn is gone till the next year.

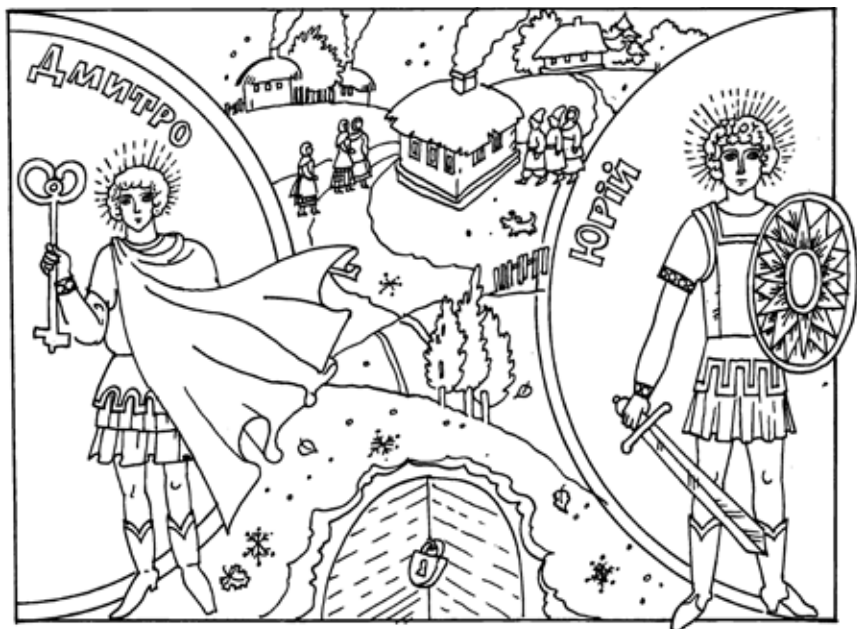
The transition day from autumn to winter was regarded a Holiday of Holy God Mother and Virgin Maria. The faithful Ukrainians have always started this day in churches, and prayed: We, Orthodox people, are celebrating the joyful holiday, holified by your, God Mother, appearance. Raising our eyes to your wonderful pure icon, we pray for your protection: Cover us with your Cover of sincerity and purity; relieve us from evil, and let Jesus, your son, our God, save our souls.

Before Christianity, the pagans celebrated the same day with a traditional cult of memorizing their ancestors. They prayed for the soul of the dead and the happiness of their families; they praised the harvest, for mid-October was the time when the field works were over.

This was also the time of marriages in villages. The marriages season lasted till the end of November. The God's Mother, who was also called Pokrova, was also the idol for Zaporizki Cossacks.

Dmitry's holiday

It is an autumn holiday which was celebrated on October, 26th according to old style, on 8th November — to new style. Saint Dmitry



finished agricultural year and brought winter. He held keys from spring and passed them to saint Jury. Mass youth walking on the nature were before Jury, and after Dmitry there were small assemblies in houses.

Katherine's holiday

Katherine's holiday. Katherine's holiday was celebrated on November, 24th according to old style and on December, 7 to new style. On this holiday girls guessed on the future destiny, marriage, health. Under icons they put cherries' or plums' branches and waited, when they would blossom.

On this holiday of the girl cooked porridge from millet and a poppy, and then got on a fence, holding a pot with porridge, and invited: "Destiny, go to us to have supper!"

Feast of St. Nicholas

December 9 — Feast of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas history in Ukraine goes back to the 10th and 11th centuries. He is the familiar winter saint, who brings the first snow by shaking his beard. This is the holiday for young children, for they would receive gifts from St. Nicholas,





the patron saint of children. He is often accompanied by “angels”. Schools have plays telling Nicholas stories and the saint visits local churches. He makes people believe their most cherished dreams will come true one day, endows their hearts with kind feelings and inspires them to do well.

On this day parents and relatives try to surprise their kids by placing small gifts, toys, or books into symbolic shoes or stockings or even under their pillows. St. Nicolas is the most well known Saint from the Kyivan Rus era. People consider him first to help with any appeal and trouble. On December 19 he was beautified. Relics of St. Nicolas are kept in Bara city, Greece where people are believed to be cured by a single touch. This day opens the chain of winter holidays. Every child who behaved during the year will receive a present from St. Nicolas on this day. Nowadays it has become traditional to present gifts to every child.

TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS IN UKRAINE

Ukrainians no longer pray to pagan gods, believe in the evil eye, or see danger and demons lurking in every corner of the natural world. Nor do they depend on fortune-tellers or prophetic dreams to guide their future. Nonetheless, Ukrainians the world over, however modern they may be, cling passionately to traditions that retain external similarities to, if not the internal.

Nowhere is this truer than among Ukrainians in the international diaspora. But in post-Soviet Ukraine, a significant renaissance of folk traditions is also under way. Ukrainians are proud to live in Ukraine, a free and sovereign nation now that their homeland is no longer labeled “the Ukraine” and regarded as a mere republic of the USSR. Their foremost challenges in rebuilding their country since independence have been political and economic. But more subtle and perhaps more difficult is the challenge of reestablishing Ukraine’s languishing cultural identity, an identity in which folk traditions play a pivotal role.

These traditions reflect the legacy of the Ukrainians’ long history as a people. That history can be directly traced to the Kyivan state in the ninth century A.D., but archaeological evidence also suggests that what is now Ukraine has been inhabited since the Paleolithic era. The Trypillian culture that flourished from 4500 to 1500 B.C. between the Dnieper and Dniester rivers (in Ukrainian, the Dnipro and Dnistro), left fragments of decorated female figurines, incised mammoth tusks, tools, and petroglyphs.

Much of the symbolism of Ukraine’s folk heritage derives from this transition from the nature-worshipping world of the early Slavs to Orthodox Christianity. A long period of dual belief ensued as people struggled to grasp Orthodox practice while retaining emotional commitment to customs and traditions held fast for untold generations. Many pagan holidays and old beliefs were quietly folded into Christian calendar and canon. Even today, folk custom reflects the close connection to nature felt by pre-Christian Slavs. For example, the earth itself was considered holy, and oaths may still be solemnized with the ritual eating of soil. “What? You don’t believe me?” goes the saying. “Should I eat some soil?”

LIFE-CYCLE CEREMONIES

Ukraine's traditional celebrations mark the annual cycles of planting and harvest, the wet and dry months, times of leanness and abundance, of fasting and feasting, the coming of the New Year, and the rebirth brought each spring. Elements of the ancient winter festival, Kolyada, when people gathered outdoors to feast and sing, can be found in contemporary Ukrainian celebrations of Christmas, and the midsummer bonfire festival, Ivana Kupala, also retains pre-Christian elements. But it is in celebration of the great events of human life—birth, courtship, marriage, and death—that anciently derived customs may have survived. Rural people maintained traditions in their purest or most authentic forms, but urban dwellers and intelligentsia, though keeping the forms, lost the original content of folk ritual over time.

Birth

Childbirth was a time of rejoicing for the whole community in pre-Christian society. A feast was offered to the gods, who had dominion over the destiny of the newborn. Seers looked for unusual birth signs, and kumy, ceremonial godparents who undertook lifelong obligations to the child, were chosen. Priests and prayer givers would weave a complex network of rituals to protect the child from the evil eye, demonic possession, and death.

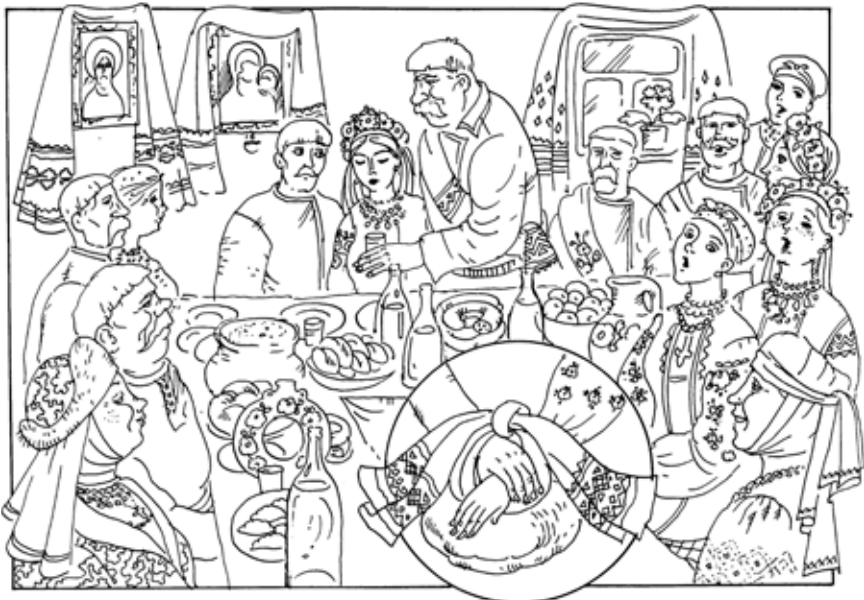


Many of these practices were incorporated into early Christian ritual, and the feasting and choosing of kumy persist as christening customs to this day. Moreover, the child's first haircut (five to seven months after birth) is now part of sanctioned church ritual. The baby is placed on a soft cloth, and the kum (male godparent) trims the hair. The father then throws a few coins on the cloth to ensure the child's prosperity and happiness.

Wedding

The favored time of year for weddings was after the autumn harvest, and marriage ritual recognized three distinct phases: *svatanya* (courtship), *zaruchyny* (engagement), and *vinchannya* (wedding). The single most important event was *pobrannya*, the pairing of marriageable youths in elaborate, supervised courting games. The bride and groom chose each other. Marriages were not arranged, although the eldest daughter married first. Sometimes, courting couples who had publicly chosen one another lived together before the engagement and wedding. However, the marriage was not valid until the *vinchannya* ritual had taken place.

In the Christian era, although wedding ceremonies became exclusively a church sacrament, vestiges of ancient practices were incorporated



into the ritual. Today's starosta, an elder who conducts rituals on behalf of the family, is a throwback to an ancient caste of ritual sacrifice givers called zhertysi. The vesillya (wedding feast) was considered the happiest time in a person's life, and the customary offering of wedding bread by the bridal couple is of ancient origin. Vesillya literally means "making merry", and wedding songs are among Ukraine's happiest music. The parents of the bride did not attend the wedding but waited for the bridal couple to return home and then sprinkled them with grain.

Today, ritual aspects of wedding customs are upheld in courtship and engagement ceremonies and the church wedding and feasting that follow. In the United States, some elements of Ukrainian custom are blended into the traditional American wedding ceremony and make for an unusual but delightful amalgam of traditions.

UKRAINIAN WEDDINGS

Given their common Slavic roots and culture, it is not surprising that Ukrainian weddings are very similar to Russian weddings. Having said this, there are still some differences.

Like in Russia, Ukrainian weddings traditionally began with a courtship whereby the parents of the groom would choose a bride for their son. This would have been carried out with the approval of the bride's parents. However this tradition is no longer observed. Nowadays, the couple may sometimes request their parents' approval of the union but they choose their partners themselves.

On the day of the wedding, the groom's first duty is to pick up his bride from her house. Before he meets his loved one he is met by relatives and friends who will demand a ransom for the bride. This is the most special and exciting part of the whole affair. The groom must complete several tasks in order to demonstrate his strength and intellect. If he fails to complete a task, then he must give out money, sweets and liquor to the guests. The result of his efforts is the possession of his loved one. This tradition remains popular to this day. After the groom's challenges, the young couple will go to the ZAGS (Registry Office) and then the church (if they so choose). A celebration of the events usually follows the registration of the marriage.

In the past, Ukrainian weddings would begin with a celebration in the bride's home once the groom had paid his ransom for the bride. At the house there would be a celebratory meal and several traditional activities. For example the guests may untie the bride's braid or some-

times even cut it off and replace it with a wreath. After observing these traditions, the young couple will go to the groom's house, where the bride will cover the table with her rushnyk (ritual towel). Nowadays this tradition has become outdated and Ukrainian weddings have become more equated to the European style of wedding where the reception is held in a restaurant or banqueting hall.

Despite the loss of some traditions, the guests still present the young couple with a karavai loaf. As a rule, the loaf is baked only by those women whose family life has been very successful as it is said to bring good luck to the young couple in their own family life. On the way to the wedding or directly in front of the building where the wedding feast is held, the groom and bride will release two doves.

One of the distinguishing parts of a Ukrainian wedding is that a giltse (a large wreath which is decorated with flowers and ribbons) is placed on the table next to the karavai loaf. This symbolizes maidenly beauty and innocence.

On her head, the Ukrainian bride will wear a wreath with different colored cascading ribbons. At the end of the festivities, the bride will throw the wreath into a crowd of unmarried girls. The person who catches the wreath will become the next bride. This tradition is very similar to the European tradition where the bride throws her bouquet



into the crowd. It has been said that the European tradition of throwing a bouquet into the crowd came from the Ukrainian tradition of throwing wreathes, however, nowadays Ukrainian weddings usually conform to European traditions.

Like in Russian weddings, in Ukraine there is a tradition to steal the bride. The groom must then search for her. Also, the witnesses must drink liquor from the bride's shoe; although this is a modern tradition and has no obvious symbolic meaning. Ukrainian weddings usually last for not one but two days. On the second day, the guests will dress up as the bride and groom, gypsies, grandfathers, grandmothers and doctors and wander about the streets singing songs.

Like all weddings, Ukrainian marriage ceremonies involve much noise and happiness with music, dances, toasts and shouts of "gor'ko" after which the couple must kiss. The host of the occasions will organize fun games, poems and little ditties. Guests usually give the couple useful, practical gifts, which will be helpful to the couple in their married life. Accepting the gifts is no easy matter. The bride and groom must show interest in every gift. They must unwrap the present, study it and then express their gratitude to the guest. The money usually goes to the groom, and other items and flowers go to the bride.

The Ukrainian Marriage Ceremony

A Ukrainian marriage is filled with traditions that originate in both Eastern Rite Christianity and in Ukraine's ancient pagan past.

Part of the Ukrainian marriage takes place at the bride's house. If you are not a close family member, you will most likely miss this part of the wedding. Before the church ceremony, the bride, the groom and their families meet at the home of the bride's parents for the blessing, the *blahoslovenya*. At the blessing, the parents express their approval and good wishes for the couple.

The Betrothal part of the wedding ceremony takes place in the vestibule of the church, at which time the bride and groom affirm that they are entering the marriage freely. The priest then blesses the rings and places them on the fingers of the bride and groom.

In a Ukrainian marriage, the father does not walk his daughter down the aisle. Rather, the bride and groom enter the church together. One reason for this is that the father has already "given away" his daughter at the *blahoslovenya*. Another reason why the bride and groom enter arm in arm is that it represents an equal partnership.

The second part of the ceremony takes place at the front of the church and it includes the Crowning. Here, the bride and groom place their right hands on the Gospel and exchange vows.

The hands of the bride and groom are joined with an embroidered cloth, the *rushnyk*, which signifies their new union. Once bound to one another, the couple circles the small altar, the tetrapod, three times. This procession is called the “Dance of Isaiah”. These are the first steps taken by the couple as husband and wife.

During the ceremony, the couple will drink wine three times to acknowledge the importance of the Holy Trinity and to remind us of Christ’s first miracle at the wedding at Cana.

Toward the end of the ceremony, the priest escorts the bride to the icon of Mary in the church. As the priest offers up prayers on her behalf, the bride kneels in front of the Virgin Mary and presents her with a bouquet of flowers.

Ukrainian wedding traditions

Ukrainian wedding traditions have a long history. Unfortunately, at the present times, fewer and fewer of ancient wedding customs and traditions take place at a contemporary Ukrainian wedding. However, the most interesting traditions have remained. We will describe



a contemporary Ukrainian wedding, and employees of our agency will demonstrate to you some customs and traditions. Some photos presented on this webpage are already 15 years old, and some are rather new — less than 2 years.

So, the wedding ceremony begins 30-40 days before the wedding itself. The bridegroom, his parents and friends must ask the bride's parents for her hand. The bridegroom's parents come with a Ukrainian round loaf (homemade, round, big bread beautifully decorated). The round loaf is delivered on an embroidered towel made by the bridegroom's mother, and on top of the bread there is some salt.

The bridegroom's father and friends ask for "bride's hand". Usually, her father gives an answer, after asking his daughter about her decision — whether she wants to marry the young man or not. If the bride wishes to take this guy as her future life partner, the bridegroom's and bride's parents discuss the time and place of the wedding party. But... if the girl does not wish to marry the guy, she gives him a pumpkin!

The wedding day...

Dressing a bride is a special ritual. Bride's friends have been with her since early morning. They put a gown on her, make a hair-do and put on a bridal veil... The bridegroom comes to his bride in a car decorated with flowers, ribbons and balloons. Sometimes, a doll dressed like a bride is placed on the car's hood. When the car (or cars) comes up to the house of the bride, they start to honk. It means that the bridegroom and his relatives are ready to take the bride, her parents and friends to the church and city hall, to get married and register their marriage.

When the bridegroom and bride walk out of the bride's house, the bride's mother throws seeds (symbol of wellbeing) onto their heads, as well as roseleaves (symbol of prosperity and health) and coins (symbol of financial stability in a family).

The official registration of marriage in the City Hall starts with the sound of fanfares. A Ukrainian embroidered towel is spread at the feet of the couple, they stand on it and the ceremony begins. In fact, at this place, the bridegroom and bride become husband and wife. Exactly, in the City Hall, the long awaited phrase "Zoya, do you agree to take Oleg as your husband, to be with him in sadness and grief, to be faithful until death separates you?" is pronounced. After the ceremony, the spouses receive congratulations from friends and relatives. The "newly-made" husband takes his wife from the City Hall in his arms.

The next stage — getting married in church

The most touching and important moment to the couple, their parents, friends and relatives. The priest blesses the new family for happiness, health, luck, faithfulness, understanding, love and respect for one another. God's blessing is the most serious blessing for the new family. There are many prejudices connected with the ceremony in church. They say that if the bride's dress catches the fire from a candle, it means that the marriage is doomed. So it is quite understandable that the bride's mother is always very careful in church, and does her best to prevent any of such things.

The third stage — celebration

The most joyful, surprising and unexpected things may happen this evening. The party takes place in a restaurant, cafe or at the home of the bridegroom or bride. All the guests come with gifts. In Ukraine, ordinary things can be presents at a wedding, which first of all, will be necessary in a young family: kitchen utensils, linen, home appliances, etc.

The party starts with congratulations from relatives and friends. After each toast, the guests shout "Gorko! Gorko! Gorko!" It means that the guests want to see the married couple kiss one another. One must note that the number of kisses at the wedding, as some bridegrooms



have noticed, exceed the number of kisses received throughout the whole period of dating.

When the guests have paid enough attention to the married couple, their attention goes to the bride's and bridegroom's best friends. To be the best friends of the couple at the wedding is a very honorable and responsible task. The bride chooses her best friend (unmarried girl) who helps the bride with all pre-wedding preparations. It is she who puts down her signature in the document certifying the marriage.

So, what is the role of the bridegroom's and the bride's best friend? They are called "witnesses". When the guests shout "Gorko" to the witnesses, it means that the guests want to see them kiss, too! At one of international weddings which took place in our city, there was a funny thing. The guests were shouting "Gorko" to the witnesses. The bridegroom's best friend spoke no Russian, so he was not really paying attention the shouts and continued to enjoy the delicious meal from his plate. When the interpreter explained to him what was required, the guy blushed. Anyway, he did not refuse from a kiss from the bride's best friend. Later on, at the end of the evening, he asked the guests to shout "Gorko" to the witnesses again.

During the party, dancing is a must. Everybody dances — the guests, the parents, the newly-married couple. But... a dance between the bridegroom and his mother-in-law and between the bride and her father-in-law is a must at each wedding party. Moreover, the bridegroom must prove that he will take good care not only of his wife, but also of his mother-in-law. In the presence of all the guests, the bridegroom declares that he will also be kind to his mother-in-law, and as a sign of his attention, he presents her with a pair of boots, which he puts on her!

However... a trial is expecting the bridegroom. It may happen that the bride may be stolen, and the guests will ask the bridegroom to pay 50–500 grivnas (10–100\$) for her shoes, or even for the bride herself — even a bigger sum.

All guests are sure that the newly married couple will be the happiest family. But it stirs everyone's curiosity — who will be the head of the family — He or She? National tradition helps to clear up this issue. The newly married are given traditional bread and they try to break it apart. The head of the family will be the person who has got a larger part of it left in the hands! This ritual is more like a joke on the wedding party, but as time goes by it becomes obvious that traditional ceremonies are telling truth!

At the end of the party

The custom of turning the bride into wife takes place. The bride is dancing waltz with all the young, unmarried girls present at the party. This is a sign that every young girl has the right for happiness, family and children. However, which of the present young girls will be the first one to get married depends on who catches the bouquet thrown by the bride backwards, over her left shoulder!

After the bride says “good-bye” to her friends (young girls), a bride’s mother’s friend brings the round loaf to the bride and uncovers her bridal veil. Instead, a Ukrainian national kerchief is placed on her head. A young bride has turned into a married woman!

The wedding is over! Long live the new family!

THE RECEPTION

The reception starts with the welcoming of the bride and groom. The parents and starosty (two official witnesses) meet the newlyweds at the door. They offer them gifts of bread, salt, honey and wine. The newly-formed family then joins in a toast. In accordance with tradition, the father of the bride will drink the most wine out of the group.

Instead of a traditional wedding cake, Ukrainian weddings have their traditional korovai, a wedding bread symbolizing community. It is decorated with ornaments of baked dough. There are two birds which represent the couple and the other ornaments represent friends and family. In the middle of the korovai is a hiltse, a tree of life representing life and fertility.

Throughout the wedding reception, the traditional Ukrainian dance called the kolomeyka will take place as well as the singing of a song called Mnohaya Lita. It is a song of good wishes and means “many happy years”.

Marriage and Family

Young couples usually marry in their early twenties. A marriage is legal only if performed in a “Wedding Palace”, but most couples today also have a religious ceremony. Wedding parties in urban areas tend to be elaborate but do not involve much tradition. On the other hand, weddings in rural areas are big events that usually last for three days. Most weddings include the traditional trio music of the violin, tambourine, and dulcimer.



The average family has two children. Both parents usually work outside the home. Child care is expensive and in short supply; however, many elderly parents live with their adult children and often assume responsibility for child care during the day. Women do most household chores.

It is common for parents to support children until they reach adulthood and even after they are married. In turn, children expect to care for aging parents when it becomes necessary. It is also common for those who have settled in the city to send their children to stay with their grandparents in the country for several weeks during the summer.

Most families in urban areas live in small one- or two-bedroom apartments. State-owned apartments are the most affordable; private rented accommodations are expensive. Few people own their apartments. Homes in towns and cities have such utilities as electricity, gas, and water, while houses in rural areas are much simpler.

Death and burial

Death required a dramatic, ritualized system of ceremonies to bring resolution and closure in the family and the greater community. It was also a final opportunity to acknowledge someone's power and rank. The ancient Slavs believed in an afterlife and that the human soul was eternal. It was the community's duty to help the deceased live comfortably

in the next world and attain paradise as quickly as possible. The dead were cremated, buried, or laid on top of the ground and covered by mounds. Cremation was popular in some regions because of the belief that the fire purified and the deceased went straight to heaven.

A wealthy man was prepared for burial over a period of ten days. One-third of his wealth was given to the family, one-third for the preparation of burial clothes and objects, and one-third for the beverages consumed on the day of burial. There is evidence of voluntary “sati” (ritual suicide) in pre-Christian Ukraine as well as ritual murder of the widow. In some cases, the body was carried to the burial site on a sleigh. Burial was accompanied by ritual lamentations and songs, called *plachi*, rendered by lamenters called *plakal’nytsi*. Both words derive from the word meaning “to cry”.

The *tryzna* (a post-burial ceremony) was both a memorial feast and an occasion for play and war games. The Christian church fought against this ritual, but it was preserved and exists to this day (without the war games). The feasting and memorial aspects are preserved by visiting the grave, spending time remembering the deceased, eating from a dish of grain and honey, and drinking in his memory. Sometimes, blessed foods are left on the grave and spirits are poured onto it.



Today all such rituals and traditions are part of the fabric of national custom and accepted within the church calendar. Although few folk customs survive in unadulterated form, a fundamental sense of Ukrainian self-definition has grown out of their persistence. Despite terrible oppression and massive migration to distant lands, Ukrainians simply won't let their folk culture and identity die.

FOLK-CRAFT TRADITIONS

Ritual in turn called for ceremonial clothing. Consequently, embroidered handmade linen and homespun cotton clothing was fashioned for ceremonial, holiday, and everyday use. Heavy outer clothing was made from wool and sheepskin for severe weather. Ornamental embroidery was also considered to protect against evil spirits. All edges of a garment—neck, wristbands, front openings, and hems—were embroidered to prevent spiritual access to the wearer.

Regional variations are found in clothing style, color, and ornament. Dyes were made from vegetables and plants. Headdresses were made of flowers and ribbon for children and maidens and decorated linen for married women. Men also wore elaborate headgear, adorned by feathers, tassels, and beads. All decorated clothing was produced within the household.

Bright colors and ornamentation came to typify what was acclaimed the world over as “high folk” culture. With the onset of the Soviet era, craft traditions began to die out except as a narrow field of study for ethnographers and preservationists. Machine manufacturing took over, and modern styles supplanted traditional costumes. Much of the folk tradition was preserved only in the diaspora. Today, however, Ukrainian folk arts are experiencing an amazing revival. Thousands of people are relearning their cultural history, reconnecting with their roots, and recharging their ethnic batteries.

Embroidery

By far the most popular Ukrainian folk art is embroidery. Its colorful designs reflect regional styles, motifs, and stitching. There are more than one hundred types of stitches. One uniquely Ukrainian stitch, the *nyz* or *nyzynka*, is an imitation weaving stitch. The basic design motifs, with thousands of variations, fall into several categories of ancient origin. For example, solar symbols, in the form of a sim-

ple circle with rays or hooks, provided a powerful talisman against the evil eye as well as protection from illness.

Meander symbols, known as “snake” and “gypsy road”, invoked prosperity and everlasting life. Botanical symbols in the form of stylized leaves, flowers, fruit, and entire plants expressed a connection to and love of the earth. The cherry tree symbolized beauty; roses meant love and caring; sunflowers stood for the warmth of the sun; pine branches called up youth and everlasting life. Animal symbols and totems were meant to provide the owner of animals with strength and endurance and provide health and fertility to his livestock. Sometimes, only a part of an animal’s anatomy was depicted: a foot, horn, tail, ear, or neck. The ram stood for wealth and prosperity, the bee for spiritual purity.

Geometric symbols provided a rich field of possibilities for pattern, ornamentation, and representation. Pagan talismans were adapted and given Christian meanings. The fish, originally a symbol of health, came to represent Christ, as did the cross, also an ancient image. Dots symbolized the tears of Mary as “Mater Dolorosa”, and triangles represented such variations of the Trinity as heaven, hell, earth; air, fire, water; and father, mother, child. Crisscross patterns contained within triangles recalled a casting net and Christ’s instruction to the apostles to be “fishers of men”. The “forty triangles” is a design element that represents Christ’s forty days in the desert and the forty days of Lent.

Testaments in cloth

In the Soviet era, a tragic testament to the resilience of Ukrainian nationalism appeared in miniature embroideries fashioned by Ukrainian women held as political prisoners. Threads carefully gathered during hard-labor sentences and dyes made from plants were fashioned into masterpieces, picture-poems of a people’s religious and political longings. Under Stalin, thousands were imprisoned for merely owning embroidered articles that demonstrated a national consciousness. Such “heresy” was ruthlessly punished. But we now know that among the most cherished possessions preserved by Ukrainians condemned to exile and hard labor in Mordovia, Siberia, and Kazakhstan were embroidered blouses and shirts.

Today, embroidered cloth can be found in almost every household where Ukrainian is spoken and national traditions are recognized and practiced. It is proudly displayed in places of honor in the home, and

rushnyki (ritual cloths) are used during holy and solemn occasions. The rushnyk is the single most important ceremonial cloth in a Ukrainian household. Simply described, it is a homespun piece of linen or cotton, three or four yards long and twenty-four inches wide. The ornamentation, either woven or embroidered, is on both ends. Sometimes, designs run along the long edges. In ancient times, ritual cloths marked the trees where pagan ceremonies took place. The cloth itself was regarded as a protection from evil, and every home had a special hook for the cloth. All the symbols discussed might be embroidered on the rushnyk in red, the color of life, blood, the sun, strength, and vitality. Black was the color of mourning.

Later, colored embroidery was introduced as various regions developed their own motifs and color schemes. The rushnyk was used from cradle to grave. Newborns were swaddled in special rushnyki. Matchmakers identified themselves and their authority to bring couples together by wearing rushnyki around their shoulders. Newlyweds knelt on rushnyki while taking their vows, and brides wore rushnyki around their waists to ward off evil. New homes and their support beams were hoisted into place with rushnyki. Icons were draped in rushnyki, and coffins were lowered with them.

As a gift, the rushnyk signified respect and honor. It held the traditional greeting of bread and salt, and young girls wove and embroidered rushnyki for their dowries. Today, all over Ukraine and the diaspora, the familiar ritual cloth appears in churches and homes. Gracefully draping icons and present at wedding ceremonies and holidays such as Easter and Christmas, it is used to wrap and present food after it has been sanctified in liturgy.

Wood carving

Also highly developed as folk art were wood carving and ceramics. Wood items were carved and inlaid as well as painted. Musical instruments were fashioned for local amateur musicians. Carving traditions were passed from father to son to grandson. In time, the carving became more detailed and exquisite and was admired for its purely artistic value. As with all ancient art forms, decorative symbols and designs originally held ritual meaning and protected against evil.

The best examples of wood carving are found in Carpathian Ukraine. There, the mountain people called Hutsuls brought Ukrainian wood carving to its highest level of expression. Motifs are primarily

geometric but include low-relief carving as well. Entire church interiors are carved and inlaid, and homes are beautifully decorated with swirling geometric designs and inlay.

Ceramics

Among the oldest artifacts discovered in Ukraine are ceramics dating to the Neolithic era. All regions of Ukraine have wealthy reserves of clay in different hues and textures, and pottery became a highly evolved craft. Pottery was decorated according to its function. Some objects were glazed and others left unglazed. Both monochrome and polychrome ornamentation was applied to everyday objects: bowls, pitchers, flasks, candle holders, tiles, toys, and much more. Extremely ornamented items usually were reserved for special and specific ritual use. The clay-tile stoves made in Kyiv in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were masterpieces of decorative harmony and function.

Amateur performers

One persisting tradition is that of amateur and itinerant performers. In Kyiv today, the tradition of caroling is being revived after a long silence by students and faculty of the Mohyla Academy. In some localities, there are festivals and revivals of the bardic traditions and instruments. In Ukraine, the bardic tradition survived from the thirteenth century until the first decade of the Soviet era. Male children who were born blind or had congenital eye diseases that made them blind were adopted by adult blind bards who taught them the entire musical tradition. The adult teachers were masters with their own signature style. They passed on what they knew of Ukraine's history and events of the day through song.

In the diaspora, music and instruments were preserved largely through the work of groups such as the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus. This all-male ensemble performs classic Ukrainian folk, battle, and epic songs, accompanied by an ancient instrument, the bandura. Songs such as the *plachi* (cries) have not been revived; they depended on the existence of professional lamenters, and that skill has vanished.

Every town also had a chorus, musicians, and dancers. In the diaspora, this tradition continued in the form of dozens of amateur folk-dance and song ensembles, as well as choirs and choruses. These performed on all church and historical days of remembrance, when Ukrainians would gather to honor holy days, anniversaries of great battles, or martyrdoms of patriots. In the Soviet Union, musicians and

dancers were encouraged. They were an endless reservoir of talent for the great, state-controlled showcases of Soviet talent, like the world-renowned Virsky Ensemble and Veryovka Choir, named for their director and conductor, respectively.

Loss, persistence, and revival

By the twentieth century, most surviving pre-Christian traditions were virtually indistinguishable from the Christian practices into which they had been incorporated. But in post-Soviet Ukraine, things that were once part of the spiritual and emotional fabric of a people now must be taught all over again. It will take time, but there is definitely an interest in recovering that which was lost, eradicated, or forbidden under repressive Soviet Russification, homogenization, and urbanization policies.

Moscow pursued policies designed to crush any sense of Ukrainian national identity. Officially, Slavs were considered one people and Russia the repository of all Slavic culture. Ukrainians, although fellow Slavs, were considered inferior — as was their language — and were targeted for discrimination. Stalinist policies engineered periodic brutal repressions and a widespread famine that claimed over seven million lives. The human cost of the Soviet occupation exceeds ten million deaths.

In Soviet Ukraine, demonstrations of Ukrainian identity were unacceptable unless serving the purpose of the Communist Party. Anyone who was not a linguist or philologist had no reason to aspire to mastery of Ukrainian, because Soviet policy was to create a “Soviet Man” who conversed only in Russian. Many educated urbanites, fluent in Russian as a first language, chose to distance themselves from Ukrainian.

But the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States and Canada is rooted in hundreds of years of dogged cultural survival. The same can be said about western Ukraine, especially in rural regions. Self-awareness persisted there despite a succession of Austrian, German, Polish, or Hungarian rulers, or the proximity of Catholic Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians. If compromise of any sort was made, it is found in the unique form of Ukrainian Catholicism, which recognizes both Rome and the pope but practices Eastern Orthodox rites.

Probably the diaspora’s greatest contribution has been the preservation of language. Among immigrants to the West, for example, one’s “Ukrainianness” was totally intertwined with language. In the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s, emigrants from Ukraine who spoke Russian,

the language of the state-controlled schools, as their primary tongue usually made a decision of convenience to join the Russian community. At that time, the Ukrainian diaspora would not accept Russian speakers into its fold, as it does today. Then, the signifier of one's Ukrainian's was language. Today, that definition has broadened.

Diaspora's contribution. The diaspora preserved many important institutions and created others that would help constituents survive and prosper in their "nationless" world. The Enlightenment Society, or Prosvita, was nurtured, and cooperatives flourished. Free scholarship and independent scientific and academic research blossomed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, and Germany after World War II, as well as in American, Canadian, and Australian universities and museums established solely to preserve Ukrainian culture. The church, whether Orthodox, Greek Catholic, or Protestant, remained active. The diaspora made possible the existence of independent political thought and dialogue, as Ukrainians in diaspora did not recognize the legitimacy of the "criminal" Soviet regime. The governments of the world would not have known about the special needs and concerns of Ukrainians were it not for their participation in the political process of the countries in which they settled. Most Ukrainian immigrants to the United States achieved citizen status as quickly as the law allowed, usually in five years.

The Ukrainian diaspora community also made generous financial bequests to endow chairs of Ukrainian scholarship at institutions like Harvard and Yale, and the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies in Edmonton. In 1992, in a solemn ceremony at the seat of power in the Mariyinsky Palace in Kyiv, the leadership and individual members of the Ukrainian National Republic in Exile transferred all symbols of power and authority to the legitimately elected president and government of Ukraine. It was both an end and a beginning.

OVERVIEW OF UKRAINIAN CUISINE HISTORY

The history of the Ukrainian cuisine is long and tumultuous, and there were numerous outside elements that influenced it profoundly. Until the 17th and 18th century, the Ukrainian cuisine was mostly characterized by peasant and rural made dishes. Simple and economical soups, without much ornament, and consistent yet very easy to cook meals were the main parts of the Ukrainian diet. Things changed when the tsars began calling French and Italian chefs to cook for their

banquets and celebrations. The luxury and festive style of the dishes prepared by foreign chefs soon began to influence the existing Ukrainian cuisine. Although most dishes were kept in their traditional form, modern variations of those dishes are present in most Ukrainian homes today. New spices and herbs were used to improve the flavor of the existing traditional Ukrainian dishes and today you shouldn't be surprised to find plants that are not characteristic to Ukraine used in traditional, home made dishes. As for finding American food, the large cities have specialist restaurants with Western cuisine for tourists, and these are beginning to filter down into the medium sized cities. Small towns and villages may not have any public food services at all, although grocery stores and street markets are common.

Ukrainian cooking uses black pepper, red pepper, salt, bay leaf, parsley and dill (usually in spring and summer), garlic and onion. Staples include potatoes, cabbage, fish, pork, beef and sausage. Ukrainian people eat many dishes made of potato. During the Soviet era, there were chronic shortages of food. However, as Ukraine is an agricultural country, today there is much meat in the market (beef, pork, chickens, turkey) as well as cheese, butter, bread and milk. However, for some items, notably cheese, prices are still very high. The core of the Ukrainian cuisine originates in the peasant dishes based on grains and staple vegetables like potatoes, cabbage, beets and mushrooms. Meat is an important ingredient in most Ukrainian dishes, and it is prepared in different ways, either as stewed, boiled, fried or smoked. Popular Ukrainian snacks include the varenyky and the most appreciated traditional dish is pig fat, called salo. The fact that Ukrainians preserve and age salo as one of their most prized national cuisine elements should give you an idea about the overall style of the Ukrainian cuisine — it is not a suitable one if your goal is to stay thin. Borscht originated in Ukraine and it is the national soup — although bortsch is now an international dish that is also very popular in surrounding regions, such as parts of Russia and Romania. Ukrainian restaurants are not the number one place to go when you are looking for a traditional Ukrainian meal — the best way to experience the Ukrainian cuisine is at a home made meal.

Cuisines of Ukraine

There are no distinguishable cuisine types in Ukraine, but a variety of different influences can be noticed by a careful eye. The neighboring countries have influenced the Ukrainian cuisine, much as the

Ukrainian cuisine influences the regional and national cuisines of the neighbors. The Lviv or Luts'k regions of Ukraine, for example, display a cuisine that resembles the Polish cuisine, with pork meat being the main ingredient for most dishes. The north-eastern provinces, such as Sumy, Kharkiv or Luhansk show influences from the Russian cuisine, while the southern part of Ukraine has several recipes that are specific to Moldova and Romania. Agriculture has always been used extensively in Ukraine and wheat, rye, oats and millet were the main ingredients for any meal for centuries. Bread was and still is one of the food elements that are never absent from a Ukrainian meal. Bread is used with soup and the main course, although sometimes it may be left aside if the dish contains potatoes or pasta. Bakery was also present since immemorial times and all grain based food products used in the past are still present today, in one form or another. Meat is yet another essential element in the Ukrainian cuisine. Hunting was extremely popular in Ukraine and it ensured a large proportion of the meat that Ukrainians consumed. Wild animal meat was gradually replaced by farmed animal meat. Fish is also popular with a large variety of dishes, and there are hundreds of fish species that are used in delicious dishes.

Preparation methods of Ukrainian cooking

The simple and rustic cooking style that characterizes a large percentage of the Ukrainian cuisine is also complemented by modern dishes that are extravagant and unique, most of them developed by international Ukrainian chefs. The Ukrainian cuisine uses elements from various cooking traditions borrowed from their neighbors and developed from their own traditional dishes. While there are no specific or unique preparation methods for Ukrainian cooking, we should point out that attention to detail is important in the Ukrainian cuisine. Each traditional dish has a special cooking method, which is more or less general in all of the country's regions. Meat is one of the main elements of most Ukrainian dishes and cured and smoked hams, poultry, pork and beef fillets, and bacons are often parts of delicious dishes. Smoked fish as well as other fish meat types are widely appreciated, and cooking styles may differ from highly specialized restaurant cooking to simple, rustic cooking methods. Although the traditional cooking styles for most Ukrainian dishes go back to hundreds, if not thousands of years ago, today most cooking is quite similar to any western European cuisine.

Special equipment of Ukrainian cooking

Here are a few of the equipment items you might find in a Ukrainian kitchen: cake pans, can openers, colanders, egg rings, poachers and holders, food dishers and portioners, food pans and food containers to other kitchen utensils, such as food scales, food scoops and fryer baskets and accessories. The Ukrainian cuisine needs diverse cooking equipment set in order to produce the most sophisticated Ukrainian dishes, but the traditional recipes can be cooked with only a fire source and a few pots and pans. Essential utensils like serving spoons, spatulas, forks, turners, scrapers and tongs should also be part of your cooking “toolbox”, especially if you are determined to make the most out of any meal you prepare and serve. Here are a few other items that will come handy while cooking Ukrainian food: juicers, kitchen knives, kitchen slicers, kitchen thermometers, measuring cups and measuring spoons, miscellaneous utensils, mixing bowls and skimmers and strainers. All of the enumerated items can and will be useful at some point, but they are more likely to be specific to restaurants, rather than traditional Ukrainian homes.

Ukrainian food traditions and festivals

Although most Ukrainian festivals involve the culinary arts to a certain extent, Christmas is the most predominant holiday where food plays an important role in the festivity. Ukrainian Christmas customs are based not only on Christian traditions, but to a great degree on those of the pre-Christian, pagan culture and religion. The Ukrainian society was basically agrarian at that time and had developed an appropriate pagan culture, elements of which have survived to this day. A kolach (Christmas bread) is placed in the center of the table. This bread is braided into a ring, and three such rings are placed one on top of the other, with a candle in the center of the top one. The three rings symbolize the Trinity and the circular form represents Eternity. Kutia is the most important food of the entire Christmas Eve Supper, and is also called God's Food. A jug of uzvar (stewed fruits, which should contain twelve different fruits) and is called God's Drink, is also served. After all the preparations have been completed, the father offers each member of the family a piece of bread dipped in honey, which had been previously blessed in church.

Salo

This is a favorite Ukrainian delicacy. We use it in many forms- uncooked and fried, smoked and salted, baked and boiled. Also, we fry it, cook crackling and even eat it with honey!

Ukraine's widespread fondness for pork products results from its historical conflicts with two of its neighbors — Tatars and Turks. Cattle were a much-prized spoil of war so they were often in short supply, and bullocks, which were used to pull ploughs, were not exactly edible. Pigs were both available and relatively delicious and tender, so pork became a staple.

Borsch

A choice for First Dish is Borsch. Although the word “borsch” is not translatable, it is famous all over the world. It is difficult to imagine that there is a person on the planet who has never eaten borsch! It is famous, popular and delicious — a must-do on everyone's list of dishes to experience.

So, what is this famous dish? How it is cooked and what should it be eaten with? At first glance, everything seems simple. Sugar beets are the signature ingredient and borsch is a kind of beet soup. But not everything is as simple as it looks. There are more than thirty varieties of this dish in Ukraine alone, and other versions are prepared in Russia, Poland and even in the United States! So, there are different types of borsch — meat and meatless, hot and cold, with mushrooms, with kidney bean, with prunes, with marrows, turnips, and even with apples! Meat borsch is also varied — it may include beef or chicken. Some recipes recommend the addition of mutton, or goose — grease, and sometimes ham or sausages.

The cooking process for borsch is unique in that all ingredients, including the beets, are prepared separately! Beets should be sprinkled with lemon juice or vinegar in order to preserve their color and then they should be cut and roasted. Afterwards they are peeled, diced and added to the borsch. In the beginning, onions, carrots, parsley are fried together for 15 minutes and tomatoes (or tomato paste) is added at the end. Other vegetables should be cooked separately. All ingredients should be put in bit by bit, at the proper time and in the right order. Cooking time for borsch is approximately 2–3 hours. Let the flavors mingle for 20 minutes before the borsch is served. Prepare to feel giddy when you lift the lid from the saucepan — the aroma is truly delicious! A good accompaniment to borsch is small buns flavored with garlic. This is a temptation you will not want to resist!

Varenyky

Another favorite Ukrainian dish is varenyky. Great Hohol in his “Evenings on Khutor near Dikanka” described a charming story about Kozak magician named Patsyuk who bewitched the varenyky, so that

they dove into the sour cream and then flew into the mouth! Such a legendary reputation should alert you to the fact that these delicious dumplings must be tried. Even better is the fact that there are unbelievable numbers of recipes for the fillings. Pastry for varenyky should be prepared with icy water. Varenyky cannot be frozen, unlike pelmeni or ravioli. Cooks have unlimited possibilities for improvisation. Varenyky can be filled with potato, cabbage, mushrooms, meat, liver, boiled buckwheat and cracklings, kidney beans, or with cottage cheese, apples, plums or poppy-seeds. In summer they are made with berries. Varenyky are served with sour cream; sweet varenyky are served with syrup or honey.

Galushky

Sometimes varenyky and galushky are hyphenated: galushky-varenyky, but this is a mistake because galushky is a dish which stands on its own! Even though it appears to be very simple, it is a very tasty meal. Recipes for it have not changed for hundred of years and have been passed down from one generation to another. Both galushky and varenyky should be eaten hot only! This is a rule! Galushky can be made from different types of flour — wheat flour, buckwheat flour, from manna-crop. It is also possible to add cottage cheese, potato or apples to the pastry. They are boiled in water, milk, or broth. Galushky are served either with fried onions and cracklings or sour cream.

Second dishes are meat, poultry, fish, and of course, pork. Ukrainians also respect poultry, especially when it is stewed; but chicken and goose are cooked more often as holiday dishes. Fish is also popular in Ukraine. Even the names of popular fish dishes stimulate the appetite-stuffed pike, stewed carp with onions and sour cream, pike with horseradish, jellied pike. It is very difficult to list everything!

Pork is a big winner. Huge numbers of dishes are made from pork in Ukraine. It is fried, baked, stewed, goes into sausages, and various delicacies are prepared with chopped and minced meat. But the perennial party favorite is pechenya (stewed meat). To say pechenya is just stewed meat is to say nothing. Pechenya is tender, flavorful and fantastic. Besides, the traditional way of preparing pechenya leaves a tremendous space for every cook's creativity. Although the cooking time for pechenya is long, the outcome is worth it!

Uzvar

There are plenty of fruits and berries in Ukraine! You can gather a luxurious harvest in every garden. This remarkable harvest provides

the basis of many desserts — varenyky, pyroghy, knedlyks, jellied berries, fruit babkas, and jams. And also drinks — Uzvars. We may say that uzvar is a kind of fruit compote, but it is really much richer and more concentrated than fruit compote. It is delicious mixture of raisins, prunes and spices- cinnamon, cloves, and dried citrus peel.

Cabbage rolls

A cabbage roll is a savory food item made with a variety of fillings wrapped in cabbage. The filling usually includes meat, often beef or pork, seasoned with onion, tomato paste, salt, black pepper, and spices. Other fillings vary and may include mushrooms, vegetables, sauerkraut, or rice. Other ingredients may also be used. The filling is stuffed in cabbage leaves, which are tucked around it like an egg roll. It is simmered or steamed in a covered pot until cooked, and is usually eaten hot.

Cabbage rolls are part of the traditional cuisine of many Central European, Eastern European, and Balkan countries. They are known as holubki in both Czech and Slovak, halubcy in Belarusian, golubtsy in Russian, holubtsi in Ukrainian.

Mlyntsi

Mlyntsi are thin pancakes which are often served in connection with a religious rite or festival in several cultures.

The word “blin” comes from Old Slavic mlin, that means “to mill” (compare the Ukrainian word for blin, mlynets’). Blins had a somewhat ritual significance for early Slavic peoples in pre-Christian times since they were a symbol of the sun, due to their round form. They were traditionally prepared at the end of the winter to honor the rebirth of the new sun (Pancake week, or Maslenitsa). This tradition was adopted by the Orthodox church and is carried on to the present day. Bliny were once also served at wakes, to commemorate the recently deceased.

Syrniki

In Ukrainian cuisine, syrniki are fried curd fritters, garnished with sour cream, jam, honey, and/or apple sauce. They can be filled with raisins. In Russia they are also known as tvorozhniki.

Syrniki are made from the full-fat, creamy cottage cheese, crumbled and mixed with flour, egg, milk, and sugar and fried, generally in a flavorful unrefined sunflower oil. The outsides become very crispy, and the center is warm and creamy.

The name “syrniki” is derived from the word syr, meaning “cheese”.

Solyanka

Solyanka is a thick, spicy and sour soup in the Ukrainian cuisine. It may have originated in Ukraine in the 17th century.

There are mainly three different kinds of solyanka, with the main ingredient being either meat, fish or mushrooms. All of them contain cucumber pickles with brine, and often cabbage, salty mushrooms, cream and dill. The soup is prepared by cooking the cucumbers with brine before adding the other ingredients of the broth.

For meat solyanka, ingredients like beef, ham, sausages, chicken breasts, and cabbage, together with cucumber pickles, tomatoes, onions, olives, capers, allspice, parsley, and dill are all cut fine and mingled with cream in a pot. The broth is added, and all shortly heated in the stove, without boiling.

Fish solyanka is prepared similarly, but soup vegetables are cooked with the broth. The meat is replaced with fish, like sturgeon and salmon, and freshwater crayfish. Finally, some lemon juice is added to the soup.

For mushroom solyanka, cut cabbage is heated in butter together with vinegar, tomatoes, and cucumber pickles, with little brine. Separately, mushrooms and onions are heated, and grated lemon skin is added. Cabbage and mushrooms are put in layers, breadcrumbs and butter added, and all shortly baked.

Kutia

Kutia is a sweet grain pudding, traditionally served in Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian cultures. Kutia is often the first dish in the traditional 12-dishes Christmas Eve Supper. It is rarely served at other times of the year.

It resembles koliva from Serbia or Romania (used usually for funerals), but the latter is mixed only with walnuts, sugar and raisins.

Kutia was also part of a common Eastern Orthodox tradition in the Russian Empire, which has become extinct in Russia during the times of the atheistic Soviet Union.

Traditionally it was made of wheat, poppy seeds, honey (or sugar), various nuts and sometimes raisins. In many recipes milk or cream was also used.

Nowadays other ingredients (which were unavailable or just too expensive in earlier centuries) like almonds and pieces of oranges are added. On the other hand, the wheat grain, that is now relatively rarely available in the food stores in an unprocessed form, is sometimes replaced with barley or other similar grains.

Restaurant “O’Panas”

If you want to taste Ukrainian cuisine you can go to the Restaurant “O’Panas”. It is the best place for learning Ukrainian culture, traditions and life of Ukrainian people. Comfortable small house with a roof made of straw, a real tree, growing inside of the restaurant, and a special interior, presented in the local country style, would bring guests to the old, kind and light-hearted times.

There you can taste such dishes as varenyky with potatoes, mushrooms and cracklings, varenyky with cabbage and cracklings, deruny with home-made sausage, real Ukrainian borsch with sour-cream and pampushki, pancakes with poppey seeds, wall-nuts and honey and many other dishes.

VISITING SOMEBODY'S HOME

- It is not a bad idea to bring some gift if you are invited to visit someone's home. You can never go wrong with a cake, flowers (odd number of flowers only!) or a bottle of wine, but a gift that will remind them about your home country would be greatly appreciated by your hosts. If there are kids in the house, bring some small gifts for them (chocolate, fruits or souvenirs).
- When eating dinner at someone's home, casual dress is recommended.
- Most of Ukrainians live in a small apartment or house. To keep them clean they don't wear shoes inside. It is traditional to leave your shoes at the door when you enter a home. Most likely your hosts will provide you some slippers. If they don't, it's normal to enter the room without shoes.
- It is considered bad luck to shake hands across the threshold of a door. Take your gloves off your, when shaking hands! Sure, it is superstitions, but you are in Ukraine.
- Ukrainians love to demonstrate their natural and generous hospitality. It's a big thing for them to feed everyone who comes to their home. Be ready at least to try all food and drink offered you when visiting somebody's home. In most cases food prepared at home is delicious.
- According to Ukraine traditions of hospitality, most likely you will be asked to give a toast at dinner. Be prepared to say something nice about the home and its hosts.
- It is not that great idea to demonstrate your feet putting them on the furniture. You might be able to do it in your own house, but not in somebody's house or in a public place. Don't force anyone to jump over your legs stretched in the aisle, please.
- Offer to share your cigarettes with those around you if you smoke.
- It is considered an extremely rude gesture if you demonstrate your thumb between your second and first fingers. They call it "dulia". For centuries this gesture has been used as a sign of defiance against numerous Ukraine's invaders. If you really feel you must make this gesture, be sure nobody can see it!

- According to Ukraine traditions of hospitality it is quite acceptable to ask very personal questions about your life, earnings, and relationships. Even if you are not used to such types of questions, try not getting angry and do not shy away. People are sincere and just do not know that in your country it might not be considered very polite.

Socializing

When meeting informally, men and women usually wave the hand and give a verbal greeting such as *Pryvit* (“Hi”) or *Dobryj den’* (“Good day”). *Dobryj den’* is also appropriate in formal situations, in which case people often shake hands. Men wait for women to extend a hand before offering to shake it. In official situations titles are used, including *Pan* (“Mr.”), *Pani* (“Mrs.”), *Panna* (“Miss”), or *Panove* (“Sirs” or “Gentlemen”), as well as professional titles.

Relatives and close friends often hug and kiss cheeks when greeting. They address each other by first name. A respectful form of address is to use the first name followed by the patronymic, which is the father’s given name, and a gender-specific (for son or daughter) suffix.

Because of the Ukrainian tradition of hospitality, visitors, whether expected or not, are nearly always made welcome. Friends, neighbors, and relatives often visit. However, visits arranged in advance are preferred whenever possible. Guests invited for dinner will usually bring a gift of some kind: flowers, a cake, a bottle of liquor, or candy or toys for the children. Guests usually remove footwear when they enter a home, and they do not sit on the floor or put their feet on furniture.

Etiquette

Ukrainians are very hospitable. As their guest, you will receive red-carpet treatment. This includes heavily-laden tables, gifts, and many toasts.

These rules of etiquette may be useful:

- Men in Ukraine will always shake hands when they greet for the first time during the day. However, it is taboo to shake hands with your gloves on. Ukraine is one of the many countries where this handshake tradition is rigorously upheld.
- In Ukraine it is not a custom to shake hands with a woman. Kissing her hand will make you very gallant.
- If invited into a family home, it is traditional to bring a gift. A bottle of wine, a cake, or a bouquet of flowers are customary.

- If there is a child in the house, it is appropriate to provide him/her with a small gift as well.
- If you bring flowers, make sure the number of flowers is uneven (3,5, etc.), because even numbers are brought to funerals.
- Do not whistle; some believe it will “blow your money away”.
- Do not shake hands or give things across the threshold of a door. It is considered bad luck.
- It is impolite to point with your finger. But if you must point, it’s better to use your entire hand instead of your finger.
- Be prepared to remove your shoes upon entering a home. To keep apartments clean, most hosts will provide you with a pair of slippers. On public transportation, give up your seat to mothers with children, the elderly, or the infirm.
- At the entrance of upscale restaurants and theaters, expect that your coat, briefcase, or baggage will be checked if it is possible, have business cards printed in Ukrainian on one side and English on the other.
- When eating dinner at someone’s home, casual dress is accepted unless otherwise specified.
- It is traditional to always propose some kind of toast when drinking. Refusing to drink alcohol on certain occasions or to a certain toast may sometimes be considered rude. For instance refusing to drink alcohol at a funeral banquet is considered unacceptable. However you never toast in honor of those who have died or on Easter (for the same reason). Your glass cannot touch the table from the time a toast is proposed to the time you drink. Your glass should remain on the table when it is being refilled.
- Offer to share your snacks and cigarettes with those around you.
- Be prepared to accept all food and drink offered when visiting friends. Turning down food may be considered rude. (If you find you cannot eat it all, keep something on your plate to avoid having it replenished!)
- For business, dress should be conservative. Men should not take off their jackets unless asked.
- In Orthodox churches, women should wear scarves or hats, and men should take off their hats
- Be careful when complimenting a host’s belongings, he or she may offer them to you
- Don’t put your thumb between your first two fingers; this is a very rude gesture.

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