# Ïðàçäíèêè è òðàäèöèè â Ðîññèè è àíãëî-ÿçû÷íûõ ñòðàíàõ /english/

**Holidays and tradition in Russia and English-speaking countries**

Every nation and every country has its own customs and traditions. But there are also international holidays which are celebrated in all countries world-wide. They are: Christmas, New Year, Easter and St. Valentine's day. Christmas comes but once a year. Christmas is a traditional family reunion day. On this day, many people attend a church service, open their presents and eat a Christmas dinner. In Britain, Christmas is the most important public holiday of the year. It combines the custom of giving gifts with the tradition of spending this day with the family. Every year a huge Christmas tree, the gift of the Norwegian people, graces Trafalgar square. In Russia Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January. On this day people celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. New Year is a public holiday but it is not marked with any particular custom in Britain and America, yet it has a joyful celebration in Russia. People stay awake until after midnight on December 31st to watch the Old Year out and the New Year in. Many parties are given on this night. Theatres, night clubs and streets are crowded. Easter is one of the most important Christian holiday. It is traditionally associated with Easter eggs and with the coming of spring, and most churches are specially decorated with flowers for the service held on Easter Day. There is a popular belief that wearing three new things on Easter will bring good luck. St. Valentine's day is not the official holiday in most countries. February 14 is the day of lovers. Boys and girls, sweethearts and lovers, husbands and wives, friends and neighbours, and even the office staff exchange greetings of affection. Valentine's day is a whirl of hearts, candy and good wishes in the form of bright, lacy, colorful cards, with loving emblems and amorous doggerel, saying: "Be my Valentine".

There are also some special holidays which are usually celebrated in a particular country. Let's start with the traditional British holiday Pancake day. But people don't only eat pancakes on this day, they run with them. In many towns in England pancake races are held every year. These races are run by housewives.

The most American holiday is Thanksgiving day. It was first celebrated in early colonial times by Pilgrim Fathers after their first good harvest. Thanksgiving is a day when the family eats a large traditional dinner, usually with turkey and pumpkin pie.

In Russia we celebrate Women's day on the 8th of March. On this day men are supposed to do everything about the house and cook all the meals.

Every country has its own traditions, customs and superstitions. Someone once said: Don't be superstitious, it will bring you bad luck. I think it is very important to follow special traditions, because they untie people. In Britain traditions play more important part in the life of the people than in some other countries. English are proud of their traditions and carefully keep them up. There is a big difference of people between America and Britain. An Englishman in America is respected, Americans love his accent and his country. An American in England is thought to be a little strange because of his behavior and his language. To the English their private lives are important, their holidays are important, their garden are important, their animals are important. For American the work is the most important thing in life. And in England you can hear the most extraordinary excuse not to go to work, for example "My dog's got a cold". In Britain pets can send Christmas or birthday cards to their friends. There are special animal hotels at the airports. In English houses the fire-place has always been the centre of interest in a room. For many months of the year people like to sit round the fire and watch the dancing flames. Fire places are decorated with woodworks, there is a painting or a mirror over it. Above the fire there is usually a shelf with a clock and some photos. The English are a nation of stay-at-homes. There is no place like home. The Englishman is never tired to say "My house is my castle". The Americans are different. I think they are more open, they speak their minds, so if they don't like something, they actually tell it directly. Not like the British, who might think one thing and say another. Americans start conversations with people in the street, in the subway; they are more enthusiastic. American customs underline independence and freedom of the nation. Russia is the country of the dramatic beauty. To my mind, the main traits of the real Russia character character are hospitality, "open heart", "golden hands", wise Russian fairytales reflect their wisdom. The Russians are a very talented nation. Russia gave the world beautiful names of Pushkin and Lermontov, Chaikovsky and Repin, thousands of names of world famous poets, writers, composers, scientists.

Every country is also know for its food. England is noted for its pudding, bacon, marmalade, porridge and five-o'clock-tea. America is the country of Coca-Cola, hamburgers and chewing gum. Traditional Russian cooking is world-famous for such dishes as okroshka, shi, pelmeni and kvass.