



Otázka: Holidays and festivals

Jazyk: Angličtina

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TRADITIONS:

The British:

The British are said to be conservative. In addition to the well-known fact that they still use their traditional system of weights and measures, they drive on the left and they still wear traditional school uniforms at some schools, it is important to know that Britain is the oldest democracy in the world and that they consider the monarchy an inseparable part of their government.

The British are renowned for their politeness and good table manners. Unlike the Czechs, they like

to converse at the table and drink their very popular English tea with cookies. There is also typical eating fish and chips and wearing bowler hats. The English word „gentleman“ means an honest man with good manners. The British pride in ownership is well known. A house, with a front and back garden with two floors is ideal. Today, about two-thirds of English families own their homes.

They do not shake hands and kiss hello as often as we do and are famous for their dry humour. Everybody knows the English saying „My house is my castle“ which demonstrates their right to privacy. They are proud of their isles which have given them a feeling of security. They call the strait between Britain and France the English Channel and the rest of Europe the Continent.

The British are fond of pets (dogs, cats, caged birds) and children. Their mania for tea at any time of the day is world famous. Their country is notorious for rainy weather but on the other hand probably this wet and mild climate makes the English lawns so green and fresh all the year round. People in Britain are allowed to walk on the grass and you can often see them picnicking on it.

British are also advanced in science and technology. Many sports and games (rugby, cricket, golf, tennis, hockey, billiards, curling) originated or were perfected in Britain.

The Americans:

The Americans are far from having the reputation of being conservative. The saying: „Time is money“ and stories about self-made men show that they value progress, success and prosperity. The Americans are not so reserved as many British are. In general they are simple, friendly, open, honest and warm.

They are informal – they introduce themselves by their first name. It is rude to be late. Always bring flowers or gift on a party. Junk food is normal in US.

The Americans have a fondness for grandiosity, probably because they are such a vast country. Skyscrapers in many American cities and the way they competed in height may be a good example.

The Czechs:

Czechs are said to be fed up, selfish, envious and individualistic

they are said to be a nation of musicians

they don't like a formal clothes

they have traditional food and national drink – beer

they like ball games (football, volleyball, basketball, handball and tennis) and mainly ice-hockey. They adore their ice-hockey and football national teams

our country produces many sportsmen who have achieved success in top international competitions. They have excelled abroad in athletics (javelin and decathlon) and in netgames (tennis and volleyball).



BRITISH FESTIVALS

- We can divide British holidays into two groups: holidays connected with Anglo-Saxon tradition (e.g. Halloween) and religious holidays celebrated in all Christian countries in the world (Christmas, Easter, etc.).
- Bank holidays are public holidays in Britain, originally called so as banks were closed on these special days.

Remembrance Day

Celebrated on 11th November or the nearest Sunday also known as **Poppy Day**.

At the Cenotaph in London a ceremony is held and there is a two-minute silence to remember those who were killed in the world wars. The red remembrance poppy has become a familiar emblem of Remembrance Day due to the poem „In Flanders Fields“. These poppies bloomed across some of the worst battlefields of Flanders in World War I, their brilliant red colour an appropriate symbol for the blood spilled in the war.

Guy Fawkes's Day

Also called Bonfire night.

Is a day of bonfires and fireworks to remember the unsuccessful attempt at blowing up the parliament on 5th November 1605. Guy Fawkes and his conspirators put 36 barrels of gunpowder in the cellar beneath the House of Lords. But one of the Lords was warned and the conspiracy was foiled. Celebrating the fact that King James I had survived the attempt on his life, people lit bonfires around London.

Queen's Official Birthday

Is the selected day on which the birthday of the monarch of the Commonwealth realms (currently Queen Elizabeth II) is officially celebrated in those countries.



In the United Kingdom it has been celebrated since 1748. Now is celebrated on the first, second, or third Saturday in June, although it is rarely the third

The day is marked in London by the ceremony of Trooping the Colour, which is also known as the Queen's Birthday Parade. The list of Birthday Honours is also announced at the time of the Official Birthday celebrations.

Saint Patrick's Day

Is a cultural and religious and typical Irish holiday celebrated on 17 March, the anniversary of his death. It commemorates Saint Patrick, who was a Roman bishop born in the 4th century, the most commonly recognised of the patron saints of Ireland, and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.

The day is generally characterised by the attendance of church services, wearing of green attire, they are dancing and drinking everywhere. Thy symbol of the day is the Irish national flower, green shamrock.

Saint Patrick's Day is a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Newfoundland and Labrador and Montserrat.

Other special days: The Lord Mayor's Show, Pancake Day, Twelfth Night

AMERICAN FESTIVALS

Martin Luther King Day

Celebrated on the third Monday in January marking the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King.

King was the chief spokesman for nonviolent activism in the civil rights movement, which successfully protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. In 1964 he got Nobel Peace Prize and posthumously got Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977. „**I Have a Dream**“ was his

most famous speech, which was delivered by King on the afternoon of Wednesday, August 28, 1963, in which he called for an end to racism in the United States. The speech, delivered to over 200,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Thanksgiving Day

Is celebrated on the last Thursday of November and it's the second most important holiday of the year after Christmas. When Pilgrim Fathers settled in America in 1620 they suffered a lot during the first winter and half of them died. The next year the Native Americans taught them how to plant corn and other crops (pumpkins, barley, beans) so in the autumn of 1621 they celebrated their Thanksgiving Day for the first time. They also invited local Indians to the celebration. It has officially been an annual tradition since 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln made this celebration a part of the American tradition. Nowadays, the Americans eat roast turkey and pumpkin pie and they wish one another „Happy Turkey Day“. This is the day of gifts, charity and food for poor people. Since 1924 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is held in New York.

Independence Day

It's celebrated in 4th July, commonly known as the **Fourth of July**.

Is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, family reunions, and political speeches and ceremonies. Independence Day is the national day of the United States. The most common Independence Day symbol is the American flag. Its design is displayed in all possible ways on July 4 and can be seen in front of homes and buildings. Other symbols associated with Independence Day are the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island in New York.

Veterans Day

Is celebrated on November 11. This holiday was originally called Armistice Day and established to honor Americans who had served in World War I. It now honors veterans of all wars in which the U.S. has fought. Veterans' organizations hold parades, and the president places a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Columbus Day

Is celebrated on the second Monday in October. The day commemorates October 12, 1492, when Italian navigator Christopher Columbus landed in the New World. The holiday was first proclaimed in 1937 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Memorial Day

Is observed the last Monday of May. It originally honored the people killed in the American Civil War, but has become a day on which the American dead of all wars are remembered.

Labor Day

Celebrated on the first Monday of September. This holiday honors the nation's working people, typically with parades. For most Americans it marks the end of the summer vacation season and the start of the school year.

WELSH AND SCOTTISH HOLIDAYS

Eisteddfod in Wales, Burns Night in Scotland, the Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland.

EASTER - Easter, which celebrates Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, is Christianity's most important holiday.



It has been called a moveable feast because it doesn't fall on a set date every year, as most holidays do. Instead, is celebrated on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox on March 21. Therefore, Easter is observed anywhere between March 22 and April 25 every year.

Easter celebrations cannot be complete without extensive feasting. On Ash Wednesday start Christian their Lent, which lasts 40 days till Easter.

The name Easter comes from Old English Eastre meaning goddess of the dawn.

It is an ancient pagan celebration of spring and new life.

The week preceding Easter is called Holy Week and includes Maundy Thursday, which commemorates Jesus' last supper with his disciples; Good Friday, which honors the day of his crucifixion; and Holy Saturday, which focuses on the transition between the crucifixion and resurrection. The 50-day period following Easter Sunday is called Eastertide and includes a celebration of Jesus' ascension into heaven.

Easter Monday and Good Friday are bank holidays.

Britain: On Easter Sunday people give these chocolate Easter eggs as presents. People also decorate Easter eggs and parents tell their children that the Easter rabbit brings the eggs and hides them in the garden. The kids then have to run around the garden with baskets looking for these eggs. The one who finds the most is the winner (this is called Egg Hunt).

- Easter eggs, Easter Rabbit (Easter Bunny) and sending Easter cards are tradition not only in Britain. The cards are often in green or yellow or show baby animals, because lots of animals are born in spring. This tradition goes back to the 19th century. In Britain, Roast Lamb is a traditional Easter food.
- Egg-rolling: Taking colourful eggs to the top of a hill and let them roll down. The first egg to get to the foot of the hill is the winner.
- Easter Bonnets: Girls paint their bonnets or hats and put lots of spring flowers on them, and wear them in Easter bonnet parades.



- Well known i salso Morris Dance which is performed on Easter Sunday.
- Hot Cross Buns are traditionally served on Good Friday. Hot Cross buns are bread buns with currants and spices and they have a cross on top.

United States: In US is not Easter a national holiday. Most Americans spend Easter Sunday with the family. Many people ive children dyed eggs and sweets. In some families they organize an egg hunt – children look for eggs which the adults hid somewhere in the house, yard or garden.

- There is a traditional Easter Egg Roll in front of the White House in Washington on Easter Monday. During Easter traditions, there are parades, carnivals, music and much more.
- A special dish for Easter springtime in USA is baked ham, potatoes and vegetables. Another most demanding recipe is hot cross buns.
- Easter wedding is a popular trend in USA.

Czech Republic: The pagan Easter tradition is really strong here.

- Children finish school on Ugly Wednesday. Then is Green Thursday, Great Friday and White Saturday.
- Easter Sunday is a day of preparations for Easter Monday. Girls paint, color and decorate eggs and boys prepare their *pomlázkas*!
- On Easter Monday boys také their plaited willow canes and they go from house to house and whip girls using rattles as music. They also pour them with water or parfume. As a treat they get an egg, money a drink or a ribbon. When whipping they have to recite a poem. As a reward, girls give boys decorated eggs called kraslice, i.e. painted Easter eggs
- Houses are decorated with cattkins and young springs as a symbol of new life. People eat sponge cakes in the form of lamb.
- Easter meals (lamb, hot cross buns, eggs, bread and wine) are blessed and families come together to feast.



hunt - hledání, pátrání (po něčem)

chocolate - čokoláda

parade - přehlídka, průvod

ribbon - stuha, stužka

roll - valit, válet

spring - jaro

tradition - tradice

currant - rozinka, hrozinka

confectionery - cukrovinky, sladkosti

basket - koš, košík

bonnet - klobouček

bun - houska, žemle, bochánek

bunny - králíček

cross - kříž, křížek

customs - obyčeje, zvyky

decorate - ozdobit, vyzdobit

egg - vejce

fast - postit se, držet půst

CHRISTMAS is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ and a widely observed holiday, celebrated generally on December 25 by millions of people around the world.

Christmas is a civil holiday in many of the world's nations, is celebrated by an increasing number of non-Christians.

Britain: Christmas starts on 24th December on Christmas Eve when families decorate their houses with brightly coloured paper, paper balls and chains, springs of holly with red berries, ivy, mistletoe (you are allowed to kiss a person who is standing under the mistletoe) and of course the Christmas tree. On the mantelpiece there are Christmas cards wishing Merry Christmas and happy New Year. Shops are open until late in the evening so that last minute shopping for presents can be done. **Harrod's** is closed when the Queen does her shopping

there. In every house there is the nativity scene or the crib with Three Wise Man, sheperds, sheep, cows, camels, and baby Jesus. On the Sunday before Christmas many churches hold a carol service where special hymns are sung. Sometimes carol-singers can be head in the streets as thes collect money for charity.

Children hope that at night **Santa Claus** or **Father Christmas**, who rides through the air on s sledge drawn by reindeer, will come down the chimney and bring some presents fot them. So there is **X-mas stocking** hanging from their beds and larger presents are under the tree. Children get up very early in the morning to unwrapp the presents and play with new toys. They also watch TV (fairytaleas as Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Peter Pan) and sing **Christmas carols**. The most famous ones are Holly and the Ivy, Silent Night and Good King Wenceslas. The Christmas tree usually keeps standing until the Twelfth Night of 5th January.

On **Christmas Day** they have Christmas diner usually at noon or in the evening. They have roast turkey, potatoes and vegetable (Brussels sprouts) followed by Christmas pudding.

This pudding is a special cake made long time in advance and consisting of many incredible ingredients like beer, suet, carrots, treacle, breadcrumbs, sometimes brandy is poured over it which is called burning brandy. The person that bites into a piece with a coin inside shall have good luck.

The Queen delivers her traditional Christmas message to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth on Christmas day.

Boxing Day is the 26th of December and i tis the second Christmas holidayd, named after the tradition of giving dustmen, newspaper boys, milkmen, postmen, etc. Small sums of money in boxes. This day families visit they relatives and many sporting events are held.

On New Year's Eve people go to parties, they stay up till midnight to see the old year out and drink a toast to the New Eve. They gather in squares (Trafalgar), link arms and sing „Auld Lang Syne“. This song meaning old days gone is a popular Scottish song. The Scottish call New

Year's Eve *Hogmanay*. They eat haggis and they celebrate New Year with friends.

United States: is not a national holiday in the USA but since most Americans is Christians, almost all shops are closed and people have a rest day on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Americans of British origin follow the same traditions as their ancestors.

Unlike Christmas in our country, Christmas in the USA is **not a family holiday**. Families invite friends to joint hem at Christmas diner and often give parties at Christmas time. On Boxing Day most shops are open although people have a day off.

Besides the Christmas tree the Americans also decorate their houses with garlands and wreaths and **electric coloured lights** inside and outside the house or on the trees in their gardens. The January sales begin just after Christmas both in the USA and in Britain. Most large shops sell off their old stock at low or bargain prices.

- It is common to organize a special meal, often consisting of turkey and a lot of other festive foods, for family or friends and exchange gifts with them.
- Christmas Day becoming an increasingly commercialized holiday, with a lot of families spending a large part of their income on gifts and food.
- Some groups arrange meals, shelter or charitable projects for people without a home or with very little money.
- Common objects at this time of year are pine trees, holly, decorations, fairy lights, candles and presents.
- Favourite shows as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, The Wizard of Oz and Frosty the Snowman.

Czech Republic: is about the same as English. We decorate the house with advent wreaths, candles, springs and Christmas tree with chains, balls, chocolates, stars, angels and other ornaments.

Our dinner is soup, **fried carp (swimming in the bathtub for few days) with potato salad**. On the following day we eat **home-made sweets**. We have to help a lot at home; we do the cleaning for days before Christmas and help to bake the sweets.

We get our presents on Christmas Eve in the evening after Christmas dinner. After the dinner **Baby Jesus rings a bell** to announce that the presents are already there and children rush to the living room to open them. On the following two days people visit their relatives and relax

and eat. Children believe that it is Baby Jesus who brings the presents, still resisting to the strong influence of Santa Claus.

In general you **should fast** whole day until the dinner comes (to see the **golden pig**) or at least avoid eating meat.

There are many old traditions that are kept by some families. Girls used to **toss the shoe** on Christmas Eve and the direction of the tip showed whether the girl would get married or not. The future used to be predicted from **floating walnut shells with candles in basin** or **cutting apples**, a regular seed star means good luck and health and cross means death. Going to a midnight mass is another tradition. People used to **pour lead** to guess their future; they used to keep a scale of the carp in their purse to be richer in the following year.

On New Year's Eve we stay at home and watch special programmes in TV or go out to party. When the clocks strikes 12, people open a bottle of champagne, kiss each other, drink to each other's health, and make new years's eve resolutions.

HALLOWEEN

Is celebrated in 31st October, called All Hallows. It is associated with an old Celtic custom of celebrating the end of the season of the sun, disappearance of the sun god and the start of the Celtic year. In Britain it is celebrated only in the North of England and in Scotland, but it is generally celebrated in the USA and Canada.

Children celebrate it by dressing up in Halloween costumes with masks over their faces. Carrying baskets or bags they go to their friends and neighbours houses and they knock at the door or ring the bell.

When people come to the door, children say „**Trick or treat**“ which means „**Give us a treat or we will play a trick on you**“. The people treat the children with sweets, fruit or money. The most common trick is **soaping the windows** of houses and cars (i.e. drawing pictures on the window with soap).

A favourite custom is to make a **jack-o-lantern** from pumpkin which is scraped out and in which eyes, a nose and a mouth are cut and then a candle is lit inside. People sometimes give parties on Halloween, The guests wear **fancy costumes and masks** and the rooms are decorated with paper moons, **witches and ghosts, bats**, black cats, vampires. They eat



toffee apples.

There is a tradition of bobbing for apples biting apples that float in water.

1st November is All Saints Day and 2nd November All Souls Day when the Christian Church honours the dead.

VALENTINE'S DAY is celebrated on 4th of November and it is a lover's day. It is celebrated in many countries around the world, although it remains a working day in most of them.

Day when wives, husbands, friends and lovers send Valentine's card to each other. The cards can be also anonymous, often signed „Your Valentine“ or „Your secret admirer“.

It is named after an early Christian martyr who had to die because he had wedded many couples in the times of war when marriages were forbidden.

Such gifts typically include roses and chocolates packed in a red satin, heart-shaped box, jewelry.