



Otázka: Holidays, festivals and traditions

Jazyk: Angličtina

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Intro

- - every year, there are days which are socially or religiously outstanding and significant
- - people celebrate them regularly acc. to particular traditions
- - those habits along with celebrated days aren't usually common and the same for the whole world
- → a day very important for one country can be absolutely ordinary for the others
- - furthermore: one festival which originates from the same basis or event can be celebrated in diverse ways
- - apart from national holidays and festivals, also days connected only with a certain person have their significance - by this I mean various anniversaries, B-days and as for the CZ, name days as well
- - I don't come from a wide family
- - we celebrate almost every anniversaries or birthdays together
- - we always gather at my uncle's flat or we book a restaurant
- - one of the advantages of holidays → set aside by law (people don't have to work and have time with their families)

As for the CZ

- - 8 national holidays connected with our history
- - an interesting situation occurs at the beginning of July though we (students) don't realize it so much in summer holidays



- → two national holidays in a row (5th and 6th)
- - 5th July - reminds us of the arrival of Slavic apostles Cyril and Methodius from 863
- - important → influenced cultural development in our country
- - 6th July = the day when Jan Hus was executed
- - he was protesting against the church which was too greedy and corrupted
- - after a trial when he refused to take back what he said about it, he was burned to death
- - 28th October - we commemorate the establishment of the independent republic of Czechoslovakia in 1918
- - in this year, the borders of new state were set according to the Treaty of Versailles
- - result of the World War I and culminating dissatisfaction of both Czech and Slovak nation in the Austro-Hungarian Empire
- - 17th October 1989 = the day when students went to the streets to protest against the communist regime
- - the demonstrations developed into an event called Velvet Revolution and led into the fall of regime and establishment of the Czech Republic 4 years later

THE USA

- - despite the fact they have common history with the UK, they celebrate a few special festivals which they put emphasis on:

4th July: Independence Day

- - the most important holiday for American (each state its own ceremony, parade)
- - commemorates Declaration of Independence in 1776 and establishing USA
- - concerts and fireworks in the evening take place
- - politician and celebrities give public speeches about America's freedom

Thanksgiving day (4th Thursday in November)

- = day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest
- - remembers the first settlers who came to America 1620



- - brought by the ship called Mayflower
- - the winter was cold, they were starving, half of them died
- - in spring - thanks to the help and advice of Indians - planted corn
- - in autumn they could harvest for the 1st time
- - they celebrated the success with a great feast and a lot of food which called Thanksgiving
- - nowadays a national holiday in the USA and Canada
- - families gather to give their thanks for their happiness and good being, many of them begin dinner with a prayer
- - traditional food: turkey + pumpkins, squashes, cranberry sauce
- - curiosity: tradition - president of the USA gives pardon to the turkey → saves bird's life and ensure that it will spend its whole life roaming freely on farmland

BRITAIN

5th November: Guy Fawkes Night (Bonfire night)

- - 1605: Guy Fawkes, a leader of the Gunpowder plot (unsuccessful plot of Catholics to assassinate Protestant king James I)
- - G. Fawkes was betrayed, tortured and executed
- - people lit bonfires around London celebrating the fact that the king had survived
- - nowadays> set off fireworks, light bonfires with effigy called The Guy

11th November: Remembrance Day (Poppy Day)

- - people remind soldiers who died in WWs
- - it has been celebrated since the year 1920
- - *symbol*: poppy - according to a poem - were growing in Flanders
- - people tack them on their clothes or tie them to wreaths
- - let's move to internationally celebrated festivals. To start chronologically:

14th February: St. Valentine's Day

- - also called Lover's day, Sweat-heart's day
- - commemorates the Roman priest Valentine
- - in that age, Caesar Claudius forbid the soldiers to marry women (afraid that they wouldn't go to war)
- - Valentine didn't obey and secretly married couples
- - this was revealed and he was executed
- - now: time to show your feelings to your beloved ones
- - people send Valentine cards anonymously + gifts (tulips)
- - serious or just a joke

Easter

- - celebrated after the 1st full moon in spring → usually in April
- - thought it's considered to be strictly Christian festival, it has pre-Christian roots (people celebrate the arrival of spring and awakening of nature)
- - the faithful people commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ
- - *Good Friday* = day when Christ was crucified
- - people all around the world go to church and some of them fast
- - on the other hand: *Easter Sunday* = day of the resurrection of Jesus
- - children wake up early and look for dyed and decorated eggs or various sweets hidden in the house
- - *symbols*: cross, Easter bunny, eggs - symbol for fertility and rebirth

31st of October: Halloween

- - important esp. in USA. Conn. to witches and ghosts. People go to parties wearing strange or scary costumes and play games. Sometimes: group children - wear sheets - streets - knock on the door - Trick or treat. When they don't get anything - play a trick - very noisy or spill flour on the front of the doorsteps. Symbols: Jack O'lantern - hollowed out pumpkin with a candle inside. Christian celebrated it as the Eve of All Saints Day - 1st November - people remember the death ones.

24th December: Christmas

- - derived from the words Christ's Mass = the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ



- - combination of Christian + pagan habits, born of Jesus
- - *symbols*: Christmas tree = eternal life (evergreen throughout the year)
- mistletoe = love, reconciliation
- candles = light (pre-Christian roots)
- - people give each other presents and gifts - Roman saturnalia, good luck gifts were given: fruit, pastry or gold
- - in Britain presents are given on 25th December, 26th = Boxing Day (priests of Middle Ages opened alms boxes to give to the poor)
- - spend pre-Christmas time by listening to carols, decorating their houses (nativity scene, trees decorated by coloured ornaments...)
- - traditional meal of GB: minced pies (raisins, currants, sugar, candied peel and apples), pudding (currants, raisins, sultanas, eggs, spices, suet + COINS)
- - story about Santa, hanging stockings on beds, larger gifts are to be found under the tree, leaving minced pies for Santa

New Year's Eve, New Year's Day

- - celebrating starts several hours before the midnight of 31st December
- - parties, drinking alcohol with friends
- - "official" celebration starts at midnight (set off firework, toast with champagne)
- 1st January (New Year's Day) - sleep long to recover from the hard partying
- - eating lentils will bring money, in the CZ: some people don't eat poultry = luck would fly away
- - people make New Year's Day resolutions and then try to fulfil them