



**Otázka:** Traditions, National Holidays and Celebrations of the Year

**Jazyk:** Angličtina

**Přidal(a):** Vermarka1

### **British holidays**

#### The Lord Mayor's Show Trooping the Colour

Is Queen's official birthday celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> June. It takes place at Whitehall with Horse Guard's Parade. On that day and on New Year's Day the Queen awards honours to important people.

Takes place on 8<sup>th</sup> November. The Mayor drives through the City in a two hundred-year old golden coach.

#### Remembrance Day

Is celebrated on 11<sup>th</sup> November or the nearest Sunday. At the Cenotaph in London a ceremony held and there is a two-minute silence to remember those who were killed in the two world wars.

#### Easter

Easter is celebrates on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the 1<sup>st</sup> full moon in spring, but actually it starts on Ash Wednesday 40 days before Easter when Christians start their Lent.

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

It is an ancient pagan celebration of spring and new life. The Christians remember Christ's

crucifixion and resurrection.

*Palm Sunday* – one week before Easter; Christ arrived in Jerusalem

*Maundy Thursday* – people remember the Last Supper

*Good Friday* – Christ was crucified on that day

*Easter Sunday* – his resurrection

*Easter Monday* – and Good Friday are bank holidays

Children believe that while sleeping the Easter Bunny has hidden eggs in the house and go searching for them. This is called egg hunt. In Britain people eat Hot Cross Buns.

### Christmas or “Yuletide”

Starts on 24<sup>th</sup> December – on *Christmas Eve*. Families decorate their houses with coloured paper, balls and chains, springs of holly with red berries, ivy, mistletoe and of course the Christmas tree. People who stand under the mistletoe should kiss. 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 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 Men, shepherds, sheep, cows, camels, and baby Jesus.

Children hope that at night Santa Claus or Father Christmas will come down the chimney and bring some presents for them. So there is X-mas stockings hanging from their beds and larger presents are under the tree. Children get up very early in the morning to open the presents and play with new toys. They also watch TV and sing Christmas carols. The most famous ones are Holly and the Ivy, Silent Night and Good King Wenceslas (about the Czech king). The Christmas tree usually keeps standing until the Twelfth Night of 5<sup>th</sup> January.

It was Queen Victoria’s husband, Prince Albert, who brought the Christmas tree tradition from Germany to Britain so the first Christmas tree was lit at Windsor Castle in 1841. The name Christmas comes from the words Christ + mass.

On *Christmas Day* (25. 12.) they have Christmas dinner usually at noon or in the evening. They have roast turkey, potatoes and vegetable. Christmas pudding is a special fruit cake made long time in advance and consisting of many incredible ingredients like beer, suet, carrots, treacle, breadcrumbs, etc. 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.

*Boxing Day* is the 26<sup>th</sup> of December – it is the second Christmas holidays, named after the tradition of giving dustmen, newspaper boys, milkmen, postmen etc. small sums of money in boxes.

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 Year; they gather in squares, link arm and sing “Auld Lang Syne”.

### Guy Fawke's Day

Is a day of bonfires and fireworks to remember the unsuccessful attempt at blowing up the parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> 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 failed.

### **American holidays**

#### Martin Luther King Day

President's Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January to commemorate a black clergyman who tried to fight for civil rights of his people, the blacks, and who was assassinated in 1968.

Is the official birthday of all American presidents since the first one – George Washington. The ceremonies take place every third Monday in February.

#### Memorial Day

Commemorates the dead in all wars on the fourth Monday in May.

#### Independence Day

Commemorates victory over the British in the American Civil War and the signing of "Declaration of Independence" in 1776. It's a day of picnics, parades and flying the flag, parties, barbecues, concerts and fireworks. It's celebrated on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

It is celebrated on 11<sup>th</sup> November. It is in memory of the soldiers who died in World War

#### I.Labour Day

It is celebrated on the first Monday in September.

### Columbus Day

It is celebrated on the second Monday in October.

Reminds Columbus' landing in the New World on 12<sup>th</sup> October in 1492.

There are parades in the streets but the Native Americans often protest against celebrating this day.

### Veterans' Day

### 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. 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.

## **Czech Holidays**

### Easter

The pagan Easter tradition is at the moment stronger than the Christian one. In the Czech Republic boys prepare plaited willow canes and on Easter Monday they go from house to house and whip girls using rattles as music. As a treat they get an egg, money, a drink or a ribbon. When whipping they have to recite a poem. There are many variations of this tradition according to the region, especially in decorating eggs. In some parts there are straw ornaments stuck to the shell, in others ornaments are engraved into the coloured eggshell. Houses are decorated with catkins and young springs as a symbol of new life; people eat sponge cakes in the form of lamb.

### Christmas

Czech Christmas 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. However, there are a few differences: our dinner is carp with potato salad and 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. In every family there are many kinds of home-made sweets. Children believe that it is Baby Jesus who brings the presents, still resisting to the strong influence of Santa Claus.

The first superstition is fasting to see the golden pig on Christmas Eve. 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 a basin or cutting apples; a regular seed star means good luck and health and decayed cross means death. Going to a midnight mass is another Christmas 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. Hanging the washing on 24th or 31<sup>st</sup> December or leaving the table during the Christmas dinner is considered to be bad luck. It is believed that eating lentils in the New Year will make you rich. There are a lot of sweets on the table, as well as fruit: oranges, bananas, tangerines, apples, etc. Each family has their own recipes for the day but in general you should fast until the dinner comes (to see the golden pig) or at least avoid eating meat. For dinner most Czechs have soup, carp fillets fried in flour with egg and breadcrumb coating, and potato salad. On the following day there is often a roast goose or duck with sauerkraut and dumplings.

We have to help a lot at home; we do the cleaning for days before Christmas and help to bake the sweets. On Christmas Eve we usually have sauerkraut cream soup for lunch and then for dinner we have fish soup, carp and potato salad. After the dinner we cut apples to see our future but my mum always makes sure she buys healthy ones. Then we open the presents, listen to carols, talk and watch TV and eat open sandwiches. Our grandmother always spends Christmas with us. On the following day we usually visit our relatives or they come round for lunch or afternoon coffee.

The Foundation of the Czech Republic is celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

5<sup>th</sup> July – arrival of Slavic missionaries Cyril and Methodius in 863.

28<sup>th</sup> September – St. Wenceslas's Day or the Day of Czech statehood. 6<sup>th</sup> July – Master Jan Hus burned at stake in 1415.

17<sup>th</sup> November – anniversary of Fights for Freedom and Democracy in 1989/1939

### **The other and international holidays**

#### **St Valentine's Day**

It is a lovers' feast 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.

#### **Mother's Day**

On Mother's Day children give small gifts or cards to their mothers.

#### **Halloween**

It starts on 31<sup>st</sup> 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 the evening children light pumpkin lanterns called jack-o'-lanterns to chase away witches and evil spirits, they dress up as saints, angels, devils, witches, goblins and ghosts. They knock on the door and say: „Trick or treat“ and if they are not given candies, popcorn or cookies, they will play a trick. There is a tradition of bobbing for apples biting apples that float in water. On that day people give parties, decorate their houses with paper moons, witches, bats, ghosts, black cats, etc. They eat toffee apples.