

**Maslenitsa**

**or**

**Shrovetide**

**or**

**the blini week**

**or the pancake's week in Russia..**

**Have you heard of such a day?**



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The tradition of Maslenitsa dates back to pagan times, when Russian folk would say farewell to winter and welcome spring. The religious Maslenitsa celebration activities consist of 3 weeks starting with omnivorous week, with no limitations in the diet, followed by “ryabaya”, freckled week with ferial and fast days and culminates with what we know as Maslenitsa week or Cheese week.

The church has long been trying to eradicate the pagan side of the holiday, But only managed to reduce the week from 14 to 7 days in the XVII century.



# Pancakes

The name of the holiday, Maslenitsa, means butter or oil, owes its existence the tradition of baking pancakes (blini – in Russian). They are essential to the celebration of Maslenitsa.

On the one hand, round, golden pancakes, as people believed, embody a little of the sun's grace and might to warm up the frozen Earth. In old days pancakes were cooked from buckwheat flour, lending a red colour, making the significance more evident.







**You can eat these tasty  
pancakes  
with red or black caviar.**





You can enjoy eating them  
with jam and berries.





Масленицей!



On the other hand, the circle has been considered a sacred figure in Russia, protecting people from evil. Hence is the habit of going horseback around the settlement several times, decorating a cartwheel and carrying it on a pole along the streets, and dancing the round dance – “horovod”.

Pancakes also symbolize birth and death; in old Russia a pancake was given to a woman in labor, and is a ritual funeral repast in many homes.

At Maslenitsa pancakes are used in almost every ritual throughout the week.



activities to be used daily all through



# TRADITIONAL MASLENITSA

## SCHEDULE:

*Monday – welcoming.*

Children and grown ups assemble a Maslenitsa doll out

of straw and old woman's clothes. They place it on a

pole and go dancing in horovods, after that the doll is

carried to the top of the snow hill, while at the same

time people enjoy sliding down it. People start baking

the pancakes.

Traditionally the first pancake goes to beggars to pay

the tribute to the memory of deceased relatives.

It was a common knowledge that if one







**A Maslenitsa  
doll.**





## Tuesday – Playing

From the early morning, the youngsters would chute down ice-hills and eat pancakes. Petrushka show are out in balagans. Groups of mummers go from

home to home and surprise everyone with on-the-spot performances.

Men can kiss any passing woman on the streets during the day. Groups of friends drive around in sledges. Single guys sleigh rides to look

out for young beautiful girls. The whole purpose of these games and activities

was to make the match-makers find couples to get married

on The Krasnaya Gorka. After Easter, traditionally for couples to be married





## Wednesday – the Sweet tooth day.

On this day sons-in-law would pay a visit to “enjoy their mother-in-law’s pancakes”.

## Thursday – Revelry

This is the time for Broad Maslenitsa to start. In old times people were not

allowed to work, and all the fun reached its boiling point. On this day first fights traditionally take place. First fighting was said to

commemorate military history, when soldiers fought each other in hand-to-hand combat “Never hit a man when he is down”.

It is a Russian proverb. This Maslenitsa.



### Friday – Mother –in-law's eve.

Sons –in-law are inviting their good-mothers to their gatherings. Newlywed couples in old times were dressed in their best and rode sledges to show off prosperity and well-being.

### Saturday – Sister-in-law's gatherings.

On this day young wives would invite their sisters-in-laws for a feast. If husband's sisters are single young men are expected to attend the party. If they are married, she would invite all her married relatives along and the whole train would travel from one household to another.

This ritual was important, since the relationship between the young wife and her sister-in-law initially was expected to be rather tense. Even the origin

Of the Russian word denoting “sister-in-law” is pretty self-explanatory. In Russian it stems from the word “evil” (“zolovka” from the word “zlo” – “evil”).

Sisters-in-law initially were always suspicious and hostile towards her husband's

sweetheart, who in Russian is called “nevestka” meaning “outsider”.



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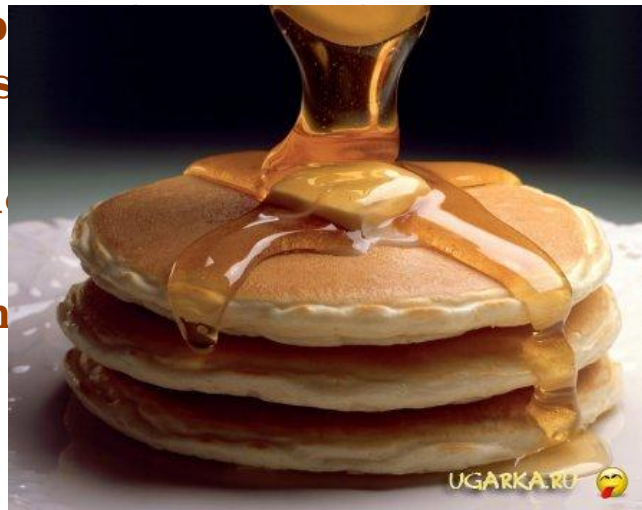


## Sunday – Forgiveness Day.

It is a day to ask for forgiveness. Young married couples would visit their relatives, present gifts to their matchmakers, parents and friends, who cheered them at the wedding. The most honorary gift was a towel. For a woman it was a piece of soap.

In the evening made a doll of Maslenitsa and burn it, so that spring will come faster. In the old times people even threw away the remnants of pancakes and food to the huge bonfire explaining their children that all the nourishing food disappeared in fire to prepare for the new year.

Maslenitsa ended with the first Monday which was considered the day of purification. Clean Monday people usually wash in them from remained forbidden food.



Today not all of the traditions are followed by most people during the blini week as we call it, but what is for sure – we are looking forward to this event every year, we bake blini with relatives and friends, go to watch different games and the burning of the effigy. The Maslenitsa decorations







## Источники материалов

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