

Russia - The country I live in: Culture and traditions

Квантованный учебный текст с заданиями в тестовой форме¹

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Russian culture overview

Russian culture is associated with the country of Russia and, sometimes, specifically with ethnic Russians. It has a rich history and can boast a long tradition of excellence in every aspect of the arts, especially when it comes to literature and philosophy, classical music and ballet, architecture and painting, cinema and animation, which all had considerable influence on the world culture.

Keeping national traditions

Russia is a unique country, which preserves the national traditions deeply rooted not only in the Orthodox religion but also in paganism. Christianity gave Russians such great holidays as Easter and Christmas, and Paganism – Maslenitsa. Old traditions are passed on from generation to generation.

Types of holidays

Russians really love holidays. They usually celebrate them with a lot of food, presents and in big companies of relatives and friends. There are three types of holidays in Russia. They are family holidays, state holidays and religious holidays.

Family holidays

Family holidays include birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and others. Each family has its own traditions of celebrating this or that holiday.

¹Ред. докт. пед. наук, проф. В.С. Аванесов

State holidays

State or public holidays in Russia include Constitution Day, New Year's Day, the International Women's Day, May Day, Victory Day and Russia Day. During these holidays people do not work. They spend time with their families and friends or go to the centre of big cities to celebrate there. Banks, companies and some shops do not work on these days either.

Celebrating New Year

New Years is the biggest celebration for Russians. It is believed that the way you celebrate the New Year indicates how your year will be. On New Year's eve, a huge meal is prepared with an abundance of dishes. Small fir trees are put up in shop windows, in streets and squares, even on roofs of buildings. A lot of people like buying natural fir trees, others prefer plastic ones. Children like the holiday a lot.

Victory Day

Victory Day is a very important holiday for Russian history. On this day we remember those who protected our country from the German invaders during World War II. A great parade is held on this day in Red Square. Numerous war and patriotic films are shown on television. On this day people congratulate veterans and give them flowers.

Religious holidays

The so-called religious holidays include Christmas, Easter and others.

Christmas miracle

Russian Christmas is celebrated on the 7-th of January, but there is no exact date for Easter, it is different every year. Christmas is the holiday of the birth of Jesus Christ, which is celebrated on the 7th of January. Before Christmas Eve, people tidy their houses. The food for Christmas is prepared some days in advance, with turkey, stuffed pork, pies, pastries and sweets for children.

Pagan tradition

There is also a pagan holiday — Shrovetide or Maslenitsa. These holidays are not state, so people usually work and study on these days. Maslenitsa is one of the most cheerful holidays in Russia. It marks the end of the winter and the opening of new spring festivals and ceremonies. Maslenitsa is celebrated during the week preceding the Lent. Every day of Maslenitsa is devoted to special rituals.

Foreign celebrations' popularity

Nowadays foreign celebrations are becoming more and more popular in Russia. They are Halloween and St. Valentine's Day. On Halloween Day some clubs organize parties and masquerades. St. "Valentine's Day is mostly popular with young people. They usually buy presents for their girlfriends and boyfriends such as chocolate and sweets and make greeting cards in the shape of a heart.

Cuisine

Every country is also known 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.

Items in test form

You are supposed to complete items in test form, where may be 1, 2, 3 or more correct answers. Choose the answer(s) which you know is/are right:

1. RUSSIAN CULTURE

- 1) is never associated with ethnic Russians
- 2) has a very poor history
- 3) is excellent in every aspect of the arts
- 4) is associated with Russia
- 5) influences on the world culture

2. NATIONAL TRADITIONAL IN RUSSIA CONCERN

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) only Christianity | 3) neither paganism nor Christianity |
| 2) only paganism | 4) both paganism and Christianity |

3. {Maslenitsa, Easter} DOESN'T REFER TO

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1) paganism | 3) Buddhism |
| 2) Christianity | 4) Islam |

4. WHEN RUSSIANS CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS THEY

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1) cook much | 3) give presents |
| 2) don't invite anyone | 4) do it with their relative and friends |

5. THERE ARE

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| 1) three | 3) five |
| 2) four | 4) six |

HOLIDAY TYPES IN RUSSIA

6. TYPES OF HOLIDAYS IN RUSSIA ARE

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) religious, public and private | 3) private, family and religious | 2) public, private and family | 4) family, religious and public |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|

7. FAMILY HOLIDAYS DON'T INCLUDE

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1) Easter | 4) weddings |
| 2) New Year | 5) anniversaries |
| 3) birthdays | 6) Halloween |

8. EACH FAMILY CELEBRATES FAMILY HOLIDAYS

- 1) in the same way
- 2) differently

9. {State, religious} RUSSIAN HOLIDAYS

- 1) include the International Women's Day and May Day
- 2) suppose that people don't work during them
- 3) include Victory Day and Russia Day
- 4) suppose that people spend time with families and friends
- 5) include Christmas and Easter
- 6) include Constitution Day and New Year's Day

10. {New Year, Victory Day}

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) refers to our history | 5) is in winter |
| 2) concerns parade on Red Square | 6) is the embodiment of patriotism |
| 3) is the biggest celebration | 7) is liked by kids |
| 4) is associated with fir-trees | 8) is connected with wishes |

11. {Russian Christmas, Easter, Maslenitsa}

- 1) has a different date every years
- 2) is always celebrated on the seventh of January
- 3) is also called Shrovetide
- 4) celebrates the birth of Jesus
- 5) precedes the Lent
- 6) isn't a state holiday
- 7) marks the beginning of spring

- 8) demands abundant meal
- 9) supposes that people clean up their houses
- 10) is celebrated for a week

12. {Halloween, St. Valentine's Day}

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1) is a foreign holiday | 4) is popular among teenagers |
| 2) concerns superstitions | 5) is marked by presenting sweets and chocolate |
| 3) celebrates love | 6) is good for a masquerade |

13. {England, America, Russia} IS NOT FAMOUS FOR

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1) shi | 4) pelmeni |
| 2) five-o'clock-tea | 5) Coca-Cola |
| 3) hamburgers | 6) pudding |