

Maslenitsa Festival



Seven weeks before Easter are the week-long Maslenitsa festivities – Russia's pancake week.



They combine the pagan tradition of marking the end of winter and the beginning of spring with the Christian tradition of feasting and merrymaking before Lent

In the old days Maslenitsa was for remembrance of the dead. So the burning of the figure of Maslenitsa means her funeral, and blini (pancakes) – coliphia. But with time the Russians longing for fun and entertainment turned the sad holiday into jolly Maslenitsa



Monday

On Monday Maslenitsa was welcomed. On that day people made the straw-stuffed figure of Winter, dressed it in old women's clothing and singing carried it on sleigh around the village.



Tuesday

Tuesday was called “zaigrysh” (game day). From that day on the whole village started all sorts of activities: sleigh riding, folk festivals, skomorokh (traveling actors) and puppet shows.



Pancake Week in 18th century Moscow was hard to imagine without bear shows. Bear fun was very popular among all classes of the population of towns and cities, towns, and villages. Trained bears amused the audience, imitating girls putting makeup are in front of the mirror or women baking pancakes.



Wednesday

Wednesday - gourmand – opened feasts in houses with blini and other dishes. Each household had tables with delicious food, baked pancakes, and brewed beer.



Thursday

On Thursday – revelry – came the climax of games and fun. It was then that the hottest fistfights took place.



Friday

f on Wednesday sons-in-law were treated with pancakes in their mothers-in-law homes, on Friday it was their turn to arrange evenings with blini.

A special attention during Maslenitsa was paid to conjugal relations: the couples, married the previous were honored and celebrated.



Saturday

Saturday was devoted to the visits of relatives paid to young wives.



Sunday

Sunday was named “forgiveness”. On that day people asked each other for forgiveness for all grievances and troubles; in the evening people went to cemeteries and “bid farewell” to the dead.



On the last day of Maslenitsa comes the most interesting event – saying goodbye to Maslenitsa - a solemn burning of the stuffed figure of winter. People threw the remnants of pancakes and food to the huge bonfire explaining their children that all the nourishing food disappeared in fire to prepare them for the Lent.



Thank you for your attention!

