

Easter folklore traditions live on in Slovakia

While Easter is loved by men in Slovakia it is positively hated by women. Let me explain...If you are a girl from a village in the east or centre of Slovakia Easter Monday is not always fun. Why? You are likely to be chased by the village boys who will throw you in the nearest stream. Worse - the girl is likely to be whipped by the boys in the morning using a specially decorated hand woven local willow cane with colourful ribbons.

Called a "korbáč" in Slovak it's used by the young men to whip the girls on the legs below the knees when they catch up with them. Such whips are sold before Easter outside Tesco in Bratislava! Tradition adds a ribbon on the cane for each 'victim'. This testifies the number of girls and women a lad has managed to whip or soak. In return the girls give the young boys hand painted decorative eggs or chocolate eggs. Older lads are offered a drink of spirits.

In other parts of Slovakia girls sometimes wake up to a bucket of cold water being thrown over them in their beds. By male standards this is seen to be the biggest fun! The ceremony of splash-and-whip is repeated until midday - generally. A girl can expect many visits! The good news is the girls can get their own back. In the afternoon, the following day or week - depending on the region - they can douse the boys with cold water. Good for them!

What's it all about? Fertility! It was originally thought to keep women fertile, fresh, youthful and healthy for the rest of the year. Today times have moved on...these traditions are dying out, especially in modern day cities. Most foreign visitors to Slovakia are indeed surprised by these strange pagan rituals that derive from ancient practices. Today many females are a little coy when it comes to discussing these Easter traditions, as it turns out most have had it done to them. Frankly most hated it and shudder. Maybe a chocolate Easter bunny instead, eh?

Category: Easter / Folklore Tradition / Slovakia
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

EXERCISES 1 - Folklore

1. Folklore traditions: What do you know about folklore traditions in your country? What do you know about folklore traditions in Central & Eastern Europe?

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. Folklore traditions: Think of four folklore traditions in your country. List them below. Compare and discuss with your partner.

1	3
2	4

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

7. Folklore traditions: Use your findings from No 6 to discuss the following.

Student A

- 1) What do you know about these folklore traditions?
- 2) Have you ever taken part in any of them?
- 3) How old are they?
- 4) Are these practiced solely in your country or in other countries?

Student B

- 1) What do you like about them?
- 2) Do you dress up in traditional costume?
- 3) Do you dress in traditional costume when enacting the traditions?
- 4) What is your favourite folklore tradition?

8. Let's debate: Student A believes folklore traditions should be kept alive, promoted and also physically promoted. Student B believes folklore traditions have no place in the modern world we live in and should be consigned to history books about the country. Debate this with your partner.

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9. Let's think! Think of five traditional things you might see at a folklore festival in your country. Then add five things you might do there. Write them below. Explain to your partner about it.

Five traditional things to see	Five things you might do there
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

10. Let's think! Swap partners. With your new partner on the board write as many words to do with **folklore traditions** as you can. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score one point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) What happens in Slovakia on Easter Monday?
- 2) What is repeated until midday generally?
- 3) Today females are a little *'what'* when discussing their Easter?
- 4) What is the alternative mentioned at the end of the article?
- 5) What can a girl expect?
- 6) The tradition was originally thought to keep women...

Student B

- 1) Describe the instrument used?
- 2) What do the girls give in return for being whipped?
- 3) Name the tree that cane is made from.
- 4) Who will the local girls be chased by?
- 5) Tradition adds a ribbon on the cane. Why?
- 6) When can the girls get their own back?

12. Let's talk! Radio Slovakia: *In pairs*. Imagine you are in the *Radio Slovakia* studio. One of you is the presenter. The other student is a folklore expert. The presenter interviews the folklore expert who describes their folklore and other similar folklore traditions in their country.

13. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Folklore traditions _____
- b) The boys _____
- c) The girls _____
- d) The whips and water _____

EXERCISES 2 - Easter

1. **Easter:** Think of four things to do with Easter. List them below and discuss.

1	3
2	4

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

2. **Easter and you:** Discuss the following with each other...

Student A

- 1) What did you do at Easter?
- 2) What do you normally do at Easter?
- 3) What should you have done at Easter but didn't?
- 4) What did you watch on the telly?
- 5) Was this a typical Easter for you?
- 6) Did you get any Easter eggs?

Student B

- 1) What is Easter?
- 2) Was it a religious Easter for you?
- 3) Does religion play any part of your Easter?
- 4) Is Easter too commercial now?
- 5) Should Easter be kept traditional?
- 6) Have you ever done an Easter egg hunt?

3. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- e) Easter is _____
- f) Going to church _____
- g) Easter eggs _____
- h) Chocolate bunnies _____

4. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **Easter – in my country and others**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the strong and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

5. **Let's talk! Radio Slovakia:** *In pairs.* Imagine you are in the *Radio Slovakia* studio. One of you is the presenter. The other student is a guest. The presenter interviews the guest. Today's theme is: Easter – What is it and what does it mean to you?

6. **Let's write an e-mail!** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher: **Easter**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Did you like reading this article?
- 3) Is it right to allow these traditions in this day and age?
- 4) Do you think these pagan traditions are dying?
- 5) Which other countries practice these ancient traditions?
- 6) How did you spend Easter last year?
- 7) Have you ever used a whip?
- 8) Do you know of any other pagan rituals?
- 9) Have you ever decorated an egg?
- 10) What is your favourite folklore tradition? Why?

Student B questions

- 1) Do you think it is right that boys can whip girls at Easter?
- 2) Do you give Easter eggs to anyone?
- 3) How did you spend Easter this year?
- 4) Have you ever been soaked or whipped?
- 5) Are you for this tradition or against?
- 6) What other ancient traditions do you know of at Easter?
- 7) Did anything in the article surprise you?
- 8) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 9) Did you get any Easter eggs this year?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Easter

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Discuss the following:-

Holidays at Easter	Roads at Easter
Family at Easter	Traditions at Easter
Working at Easter	Sport at Easter

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Easter folklore traditions live on in Slovakia

While (1)_____ is loved by men in Slovakia it is positively hated by women. Let me explain...If you are a girl from a village in the east or centre of Slovakia Easter Monday is not always fun. Why? You are likely to be chased by the village boys who will throw you in the nearest (2)_____. Worse - the girl is likely to be whipped by the boys in the morning using a specially decorated hand woven local (3)_____ cane with colourful (4)_____. Called a "korbáč" in Slovak it's used by the young men to whip the girls on the legs below the (5)_____ when they catch up with them. Such (6)_____ are sold before Easter outside Tesco in Bratislava! Tradition adds a ribbon on the cane for each 'victim'. This testifies the number of girls and women a lad has managed to whip or (7)_____. In return the girls give the young boys hand painted decorative eggs or chocolate (8)_____. Older lads are offered a drink of spirits.

ribbons

stream

soak

eggs

whips

knees

willow

Easter

In other parts of Slovakia girls sometimes wake up to a (1)_____ of cold water being thrown over them in their beds. By male standards this is seen to be the biggest fun! The ceremony of splash-and-whip is repeated until midday - generally. A girl can expect many visits! The good news is the girls can get their own back. In the afternoon, the following day or week - depending on the region - they can (2)_____ the boys with cold water. Good for them! What's it all about? (3)_____! It was originally thought to keep women (4)_____, fresh, (5)_____ and healthy for the rest of the year. Today times have moved on...these (6)_____ are dying out, especially in modern day cities. Most foreign visitors to Slovakia are indeed surprised by these strange (7)_____ rituals that derive from ancient practices. Today many females are a little coy when it comes to discussing these Easter traditions, as it turns out most have had it done to them. Frankly most hated it and shudder. Maybe a chocolate Easter (8)_____ instead, eh?

traditions

pagan

bunny

fertility

bucket

youthful

fertile

douse

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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(1)___ Easter is loved by men in Slovakia it is positively hated by women. Let me explain...If you are a girl from a village in the east or centre of Slovakia Easter Monday is not always fun. Why? You are likely to be chased by the village boys who will throw you in the nearest stream. Worse - the girl is likely to be whipped by the boys in the morning using a specially decorated hand woven local willow cane (2)___ colourful ribbons. Called a "korbáč" in Slovak it's used by the young men to whip the girls on the legs below the knees (3)___ (4)___ catch up with (5)___ (6)___ whips are sold before Easter outside Tesco in Bratislava! Tradition adds a ribbon on the cane by (7)___ 'victim'. (8)___ testifies the number of girls and women a lad has managed to whip or soak. In return the girls give the young boys hand painted decorative eggs or chocolate eggs. Older lads are offered a drink of spirits.

this

each

they

with

when

such

them

while

(1)___ other parts of Slovakia girls sometimes wake up to a bucket (2)___ cold water being thrown over them in their beds. (3)___ male standards this is seen to be the biggest fun! The ceremony of splash-and-whip is repeated until midday - generally. A girl can expect many visits! The good news is the girls can get their own back. In the afternoon, the following day or week - depending on the region - they can douse (4)___ boys with cold water. Good for them! What's it all about? Fertility! It was originally thought (5)___ keep women fertile, fresh, youthful and healthy (6)___ the rest of the year. Today times have moved on...these traditions are dying out, especially in modern day cities. Most foreign visitors to Slovakia are indeed surprised by these strange pagan rituals that derive from ancient practices. Today many females are a little coy when (7)___ comes to discussing these Easter traditions, as it turns out most have had it done to them. Frankly most hated it and shudder. Maybe (8)___ chocolate Easter bunny instead, eh?

to

for

it

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of

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a

by



SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings:
Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20

1	positively	11	coy
2	pagan	12	ribbons
3	especially	13	decorated
4	douse	14	colourful
5	fertile	15	thought
6	chocolate	16	traditions
7	dying	17	ceremony
8	frankly	18	ritual
9	ancient	19	derive
10	fertility	20	shudder

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