19. Multicultural society

**Holidays (sviatky), customs (zvyky) and traditions – religious (cirkevné) and public (štátne) holidays, folklore traditions and other events**

**Public holidays** (štátne sviatky) in Great Britain are called “**bank holidays**”. All the banks, offices, schools, shops and factories are closed. Bank holidays include (zahŕňajú) **Easter** and **Christmas**. In Slovakia we celebrate both (aj) public and (aj) religious holidays. On public holidays students don’t go to school and adults don’t go to work. On the 1st of January we celebrate **the** **establishment** (založenie) **of the Slovak Republic**. The Slovak Republic was established on the 1st of January 1993. Before that, we were in one state with the Czech Republic. Another important public holiday is on 17th of November when we celebrate the **Velvet Revolution** (zamatovú revolúciou) and May Day (the **Labour Day** – sviatok práce) on the 1st of May. On the 8th of May we celebrate the victory over Nazism.

In Slovakia we also celebrate **religious holidays** (cirkevné sviatky). Among the most famous belong Easter and Christmas. **Easter** is a typical spring holiday. In Britain it is celebrated over several days. At Easter we celebrate the Crucifixion (ukrižovanie) and Resurrection (zmŕtvychvstanie) of Jesus Christ. On Good Friday (na Veľký Piatok), people in Britain **eat hot cross buns** (buchtičky ktoré majú na vrchu zárez v tvare kríža) and on Sunday people give each other chocolate eggs. Parents usually hide chocolate eggs all over their house and garden and children go and look for them. There is nothing like Slovak tradition with water and willow whips (vŕbové prútiky). Boys go from house to house and they beat girls with willow whips and then they pour water over them. Girls give the boys painted eggs called kraslice (and sometimes money) and offer them some refreshment (občerstvenie). In the USA children like this holiday very much because **the Easter Bunny** (veľkonočný zajačik) comes with coloured chocolate eggs and candies. **At Christmas** houses, shops and streets are decorated with coloured lights (farebné svetielka), Christmas trees (artificial or real), holly (cezmína), ivy (brečtan) and mistletoe (imelo). **Christmas carols** (vianočné koledy) are sung in houses, cathedrals and churches. In Slovakia carol singers mostly sing in the villages. People buy presents and send Christmas cards to their relatives (príbuzní) and friends. In Slovakia people open their presents, which they find under the Christmas tree on December, 24th. In Britain children hang (vešajú) their stockings (pančuchy) at the foot of the bed (na konci postele) for Santa Claus (or Father Christmas) to fill them. In the morning on **Christmas Day**, December, 25th, children get up early to open their Christmas presents. Families have a traditional Christmas dinner: in Britain it is **stuffed turkey** (plnený moriak) with vegetables and **Christmas pudding** afterwards (neskôr, následne). The British eat their Christmas dinner on **25th of December**. The following day is **the Boxing Day** (December, 26) when many people visit other members of their families. It is called Boxing Day because in the past people gave their milkmen, dustmen and postmen money to little boxes. In Slovakia we have special traditions on **Christmas Eve** (Štedrý Večer). First we eat some fruit, followed by Christmas wafers (oblátky) with honey. Our Christmas dinner usually has two courses (chody). Some people eat **lentil soup** (šošovicovú polievku) and some eat **cabbage soup** (kapustnicu). Then we have **fish (it is usually a fried carp) and potato salad**). When we have finished our dinner we go and open our presents. A lot of people go to church to Midnight Mass service (na polnočnú omšu). On December, 26th, people in Slovakia visit their families.

In the USA **the Independence Day** (deň nezávislosti, July, 4) is one of the most important public holidays. It celebrates the independence of American colonies from Britain. The oldest American holiday is **the Thanksgiving Day** (Deň vďakyvzdania). It reminds us (pripomína nám) of the first successful harvest (úspešný zber úrody/žatvu) which helped the colony at Plymouth to survive (prekonať, prežiť) the winter. **Halloween** is a typical American holiday celebrated on October, 31. According to an old tradition, it is a witches’ holiday (sviatok čarodejníc). It is popular with both young and old people, who dress themselves in fancy costumes (karnevalové kostýmy) and go to parties to have fun. Children go from house to house, knock the door and say “trick or treat” and people give them candies and sweets.

The most famous holiday of the Irish people is the **St. Patrick’s Day**, named after the patron saint (svätý patron, ochranca) of Ireland, who brought (priniesol) Christianity to Ireland. On this day, people dress in green, eat Irish food and drink Guinness. St. Patrick’s parades (sprievody) are seen in many towns and cities in Ireland and the USA.

People all over the world celebrate the New Year’s Eve (Silvester). It is the last day of the year and people normally go to work. After work they visit their friends, have parties and stay up till midnight to see the fireworks (ohňostroje). On the first of January we celebrate the New Year’s Day. We wake up late and visit our families and wish them happy New Year. Among other holiday which people celebrate all over the world belong **St. Valentine’s Day** and **Mother’s Day**. We send cards and give presents to our lovers and mothers on these days.

**Co-existence of various nationalities in one country**

A **multicultural society** (multikultúrna spoločnosť) is a country where different cultural groups live together. They try to preserve (uchovať) their cultures, habits (zvyky) and traditions. Cultural differences (rozdiely) should be respected and tolerated. This is the official policy (politika) in Canada, Australia and the UK. **Immigrants** can have **dual citizenship** (dvojité občianstvo) they can use their **minority language** (jazyk menšiny) and they can keep (udržiavať, uchovávať) their culture and **religion** (náboženstvo. In some countries they are expected (sa od nich očakáva) to mix and integrate (spojiť sa, integrovať sa) into the national culture. A typical example is the USA where immigrants preserve their own culture but also become Americans. Cultural adaptation (prispôsobenie sa) is more difficult when immigrants have to adapt to different cultural values (hodnoty) or religion. Lack of (nedostatok) cultural integration can cause the isolation (izoláciu) of immigrant minorities. This can provoke (vyprovokovať) reactions of **xenophobia** (fear of foreigners and strangers and of everything what is foreign and strange) and **racism** which can lead to (viesť k) serious (závažný) incidents (incident).

In 2004, Slovakia became part of a larger community – the European Community. Many Slovaks decided to leave the country for study and work; a lot of them got married abroad and created **bicultural families**. Living in a bicultural (or cross-cultural) family requires (vyžaduje) a lot of **tolerance** and **understanding** from both sides (z oboch strán). Practising the traditions and habits of two cultures can be a good compromise and benefit (osoh, prospech) for the couple (pár) and their children. Nowadays, there are many **study programmes** which make student exchange (výmenný pobyt študentov) possible. Students go to live and study in a culturally different country in a “host family”. Such exchanges are usually very beneficial (osožné). People learn about new cultures, make friends and become tolerant.

**Slovakia** is also a multicultural country. The **majority** (väčšina) of Slovak population is Slovak. The country also has several (niekoľko) **minorities**, the biggest of which are **Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian** (rusínska) and **Ukrainian**. The Roma population in Slovakia has problems to adapt (má problem prispôsobiť sa) and is often a victim (obeť) of racist attacks (útoky). They are often attacked by skinheads who think they are better because their skin is white.

There are also people from other countries: Vietnamese, Saudi Arabians, people from Albania and Africa. They came to our country to work (Vietnamese work at the market and sell clothes), study and some married Slovaks and decided to settle down in Slovakia.

**Cultural contacts in the past and present –** in the past (v minulosti) we could not travel to “west” countries, we couldn’t read foreign newspapers and magazines, we could watch only Russian films and read Russian books. Nowadays (v dnešnej dobe) we travel where we want, we go on holidays abroad, try national meals (národné jedlá), read books and watch films in English, German, French, we go to festivals, concerts, students have summer jobs in England and the USA…

**Personal contact with other cultures –** I have been to Italy, Croatia, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. In Italy I tried pasta and a saw Verdi’s opera. I went to Venice and visited a lot of museums. I made lots of friends there…..

**Folklore traditions –** Slovakia is rich in (je bohatá na) folklore traditions. We keep our customs and traditions, for example on Easter Monday boys whip girls with willow whips and pour water over them. There are many folklore groups in Slovakia who sing folk songs and dance folk dances. They are dressed in folk costumes (krojoch). The most famous folklore festivals are held (sa konajú) in Východná and Detva.

* What nationalities are people who live in Russia, Hungary, on the North Pole, Bolivia, Australia, England, Scotland, Germany, India, China and Japan? (Russians, Hungarians, Eskimos, Bolivians, Australians, English, Scots, Germans, Indians, Chinese, Japanese) What is their national costume like? (Russians wear fur coats (kožuchy) and fur hats, the English wear checked coats and jackets, Scots wear checked skirts and play bagpipes (gajdy), Indian women wear sari and men wear turban, Japanese wear kimono and Chinese too. What makes it easy to identify them?
* It is believed that national stereotypes reflect the true nature of people. Do you agree? If yes or no, explain. I think it is true because for example Americans eat a lot and lots of them are fat (tuční), they love fun, they are friendly and open. British people are conservative and they love talking about weather.
* What do you think of your nationality? Slovaks are friendly, open, but they are lazy and do not work hard. They often complain about everything (sťažujú san a všetko) but don’t do anything to improve/change the situation. On the other hand, we are very hospitable (pohostinní) and helpful (nápomocní). We are patriots and we support our football and hockey teams.
* Make a list of things you would miss most about your own culture if you lived in a country very different from Slovakia. (food – potato dumplings with sheep cheese called bryndza, potato salad and carp we usually have for X-mas dinner, cabbage soup; customs – X-mas, Easter, All Saints Day; our mountains – the High Tatras with Gerlach peak, Slovak folk songs and dances)
* Do you agree with the proverb “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”? Yes, I do, if you live in a different country, you should accept their behaviour and do as they do.
* How important is to keep/preserve (udržiavať) our customs and traditions when we settle down (usadíme) in a new country? It is very important, because some of our traditions are different from the traditions of other countries and for example whipping girls at Easter is a great fun.