

MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

- A) sviatky - zvyky a tradície (cirkevné a štátne sviatky, folklórne tradície a rôzne podujatia)
- B) spolunažívanie ľudí rôznych národností v jednej krajine
- C) zblížovanie kultúr (kontakty kedysi a dnes), osobné kontakty s inými kultúrami, tolerancia

A) sviatky - zvyky a tradície (cirkevné a štátne sviatky, folklórne tradície a rôzne podujatia)

Slovak people have a lot customs and traditions which have roots in their history. Some of these traditions are connected with family life, some with religion, especially Roman Catholicism or with the year as it was passing by. At present most of these customs are slowly disappearing, but in villages most of these traditions are still alive.

Public holidays:

People usually don't go to work/school; banks and most shops are closed.

- January 1 - the independence of the Slovak Republic
- February 14 – *St. Valentine's Day* – “celebration of love”, a modern holiday in our country
- August 29 – *a Slovak National Uprising* against the Nazi Germany started

Religious holidays:

- *Easter* – a Christian festival in Slovakia. People go to church to commemorate Jesus Christ crucifixion/death on the cross on Good Friday which is the greatest religious festival of the year. On Saturday afternoon or early Sunday morning they carry baskets full of traditional food that is eaten during Easter (e.g. bread, sausages and smoked ham, hard-boiled eggs, cakes). Even small children have their baskets with sweet baked lamb, chocolate eggs and bunnies in it. During the special mass the priest walks among people and consecrates the food. Then people pray to Lord, go home and eat this food during the whole festival. Easter Monday is a special day in Slovakia. On that day boys and men go from house to house and splash girls with plaited whips and wash them with water so that they will be healthy and strong all the year around. The boys are given coloured eggs, chocolate eggs or bunnies or some money as a reward. At present alcoholic drinks are also offered and it is quite common to see drunk boys and men in the afternoon.
- Easter is the most significant Christian holiday. Because it is a moveable holiday, its date changes every year. Christians begin Easter celebration on Holy Thursday. Good Friday is a state holiday in Slovakia. While many people usually do not go to work, stores and supermarkets are usually open. On Good Friday, the day of abstinence, Christians commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. Then on Easter Sunday then celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; however, not only Christians celebrate Easter. Easter preparations begin days before Easter. To be ready for the feast, people bake pastries, cookies, and do extensive grocery shopping. Easter dinner menu is always festive: potato salad with mayonnaise, cooked ham, cold cuts, and sandwiches are served on Easter Sunday as well as on Easter Monday. Cookies and pastries cannot be excluded from the Easter menu.
- “Oblievacka” (water pouring) is a typical Easter Monday custom in Slovakia. The character of oblievacka slightly varies from region to region. On this day men visit their female relatives and friends and pour water on them or spray them with perfume, and whip them gently with special whips made of braided willow rods. According to tradition, pouring water on women will guarantee their beauty and good health throughout the year. Recently oblievacka and sibacka (whipping) have not been as intense as they used to be in the past decades. In many regions, water buckets have been replaced with perfumes, a small syringe filled with water, a water cup, or a water pistol. However, in some villages you may still see young men, sometimes riding on the horses or dressed in traditional folk costumes, who come with rattles and braided whips decorated with colorful ribbons. They may take females out of the houses and douse them with a bucket or buckets filled with cold water. During this tradition men may sing songs and play the accordion. After oblievacka and sibacka, women reward men with sweets, fruit, money, or painted Easter eggs. Easter eggs or kraslice are quite popular in Slovak tradition. Kraslice are painted, dyed, or otherwise decorated blown eggs. Many decorate kraslice at home or buy them at market or at the craft store. While it is not required to

give Easter eggs to visiting males on Easter Monday, only a few men will leave the house without a drink or small refreshment.

- *All Saints' Day* (November 1st) – people go to cemeteries to commemorate their relatives and friend who died. They light candles and pray for their loved ones rest in peace. The cemeteries are beautiful that evening with hundreds of candles burning at night.
- *Christmas*- for most Slovaks, both children and adults, the nicest festival of the year.
 - Christmas Eve* (24th Dec): people decorate a Chr. Tree and prepare a special Chr. dinner which is served in the evening (thin wafers eaten with honey and garlic, nuts and apples that are cut in two, sauerkraut soup with mushrooms and sausage, potato salad, fried carp or fish). After dinner - go to the Chr. tree to take and unwrap presents, sing carols, at midnight they go to church for a midnight mass
 - Christmas Day* (25th Dec)
 - Boxing Day* (26th Dec)
- *New Year's Eve* (31st Dec) - people stay up till midnight to see the old year out, celebrate the coming of the new year singing and dancing, colourful and beautiful fireworks at midnight
- *New Year's Day*

Family holidays: birthday, wedding day

B) spolunažívanie ľudí rôznych národností v jednej krajine

C) zblížovanie kultúr (kontakty kedysi a dnes), osobné kontakty s inými kultúrami, tolerancia

Many countries, including Slovakia, are multicultural, which means that people from several different cultures, colours, nationalities, languages, beliefs and customs live together in one community. We cannot judge people by these features and we have to try to bring people of different races together so that they live and work peacefully together. When people learn about different ways of life, it helps to break down barriers between ethnic groups which are caused by ignorance. Living with different cultures brings a better understanding of world beliefs and cultures and helps to encourage religious and social tolerance. Slovakia is also a country that has become open to people from other countries. Apart from Slovaks, the territory is inhabited by Hungarians in the south, smaller groups like the Ruthenians in the east, some Ukrainians, Czechs and Germans. There is one special ethnic group – Romanians who can be found almost all over the world. At present the country faces the problems of Vietnamese guest workers. A new phenomenon has appeared in Slovak tradition. More and more women get married to men of different religion and colour. There is still a certain amount of prejudice, but most young people are tolerant.

There are many big cities which are cosmopolitan where nationalities are mixed up - people of one nationality live next door to people of other nationality. Their children attend the same schools and grow up shoulder by shoulder. In some cities nationalities are not so mixed, they stay in their own areas (e.g. Chinatown): London, New York, San Francisco, etc.

Picture - Tasks:

- Describe the pictures and say what event they show.
- Compare and contrast these holidays giving your opinion about them (time we celebrate it, way we celebrate it, if you like it, etc.)

Topic - Tasks:

- Talk about customs and traditions in your country (public/religious/family holidays).
- Do you know when and how these holidays are celebrated in different countries: Valentine's Day, Easter, All Fools Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day? Choose at least two of them and compare the way they are celebrated in Slovakia and abroad.

Role-play:

Your Afro-American friend is arriving in Slovakia for a visit. He is going to spend Christmas with you and your family. He telephones you to get the following information:

- weather in winter
- Christmas tradition