

Für einen bunten Tag!
Obarvaj svoj dan!
Colour your day!



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MORE ABOUT OUR TRADITION

Let's walk through the festive year of customs, peek in the wardrobe of traditional Štajerska clothing, listen to the sounds of traditional Štajerska musical instruments and admire traditional Štajerska dances. And to end with we will enjoy something sweet by looking in the kitchen, where there is the delicious smell of traditional Štajerska dishes. Many a part of that described exists nowadays only in the form of pleasant stories in books, whereas the others are as though intentionally for festive holidays or other occasional events in the town or countryside; some of the traditions are still alive today and therefore are noticeable to the attentive eye also on quite normal days.

THE FESTIVE YEAR OF THE SLOVENES

Epiphany – The Three Kings

The festival of the Three Kings marks the end of the Christmas season. Special bread called župnek (or poprtnik) was placed under a cloth, which in Veliki Lašče housewives as a rule baked one day earlier. Only in some individual houses was it made with other Christmas baking. In some places three loaves of bread were baked, two were decorated with the date of the present year and one with the date of the coming year. The latter was used as župnek and placed under a cloth. On this special bread along with other obligatory decorations were also birds. There had to be at least as many birds as there were children in the house. Each child had to be given a piece of bread that had a whole bird on it. The children ate the bread, but for several days they kept the birds to play with. A piece of the special bread was also given to all house visitors as well as to all of the household animals. In some particular villages housewives competed who would bake the biggest župnek. One housewife was very successful - she made such a big loaf that she was unable to get it out of the oven!

Carnival time (Shrovetide)

The period prior to Shrovetide is a special time of the year. There is a series of dances and fancy-dress balls as well as lively carnival parades. Shrovetide represents the departure of winter, and derives from the ancient belief that a visit by masked people brought good luck and good crops. At times only men and boys were permitted to dress up, but today everyone who wishes to celebrate this ancient feast day can do so. Shrovetide is enjoyed especially children because of the sweet goodies, above all Shrovetide doughnuts, which during carnival time can be found in almost every home.

In our city we organise a children's masquerade on Shrove Tuesday and all week, until Shrove Saturday, the town is full of interesting carnival masks and fancy dress.

And remember: “ He who on Shrove Tuesday butchers firewood, is all through the year in a cheerful mood!”

Easter holidays

1 Palm Sunday

There is no place in Slovenia where on Palm Sunday special bunches called butara and bunches of spring flowers would not be taken to church to be blessed in memory of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem. This is otherwise an old Christian custom, which in Europe probably hid an older, pre-Christian ritual that focused on certain species of holy plants, on trees, bushes, herbs and flowers, which were supposed to accelerate growth, productiveness, drive away evil spells and diseases. This role was then taken over by blessed wood, as with the power of Church blessings it guards against all evil things that come in contact with it

In Maribor a “presmec”, a bunch of Palm Sunday greenery that is made up of olive branches, catkins, dogwood and the evergreen Ilex aquifolium, is taken to church to be blessed.

2 Easter week

Palm Sunday is past and now Easter week begins. Preparations for the festive food begin. Good Friday is the only day in the year when mass is not held in churches. Good Friday is a day of sorrow. And likewise it is the strictest day of fasting in Slovenia.

On Easter Saturday the prepared food is taken to church and blessed, that is the Easter blessing. Since times past it has been such that a lot of work and effort was put into this feast, as even the poorest made sure they had sausages, eggs, horseradish and cake or at least white bread on this occasion. Coloured Easter eggs known as pirhi, represent Christ's tears, horseradish the nails with which Christ was nailed to the cross. And the bread represents the crown of thorns that was placed on the Redeemer's head.

3 Easter Sunday

Sunday, Easter, begins with early church mass, and then follows the big feast with blessed food, of which also the household's animals, except for cats, are given a share. Cats are left out because the devil frequently shows himself in the form of a cat. The housewife throws all crumbs, peels and bones into the fire, but eggshells are scattered around the house. The Easter holidays end with Easter bank holiday on the Monday. On this day, since days of yore, people went visiting, where a pisanka waited for them. A pisanka is any piece of blessed food.

St Martin's Day

In our region the celebration of St Martin's Day is a really special holiday! On this day new grape juice turns into wine, and every year in Maribor we prepare the biggest St Martin's Day celebrations in all Slovenia.

All customs and habits that have interwoven around St Martin's Day are in accord with the popular saying that St Martin's Day is the "autumn carnival". In old times the pagans celebrated this holiday in gratitude for their crops, they also celebrated the killing of the pig, when they prepared their stock for the coming winter months, and for that they also had their own ritual festivities, as it was necessary to render thanks for successful pasturage.

The goose represents the image of St Martin. Legend says that geese betrayed Martin, when he hid from those who were searching for him to tell him that he had been elected bishop. In Slovenia roast goose is a ritual dish on St Martin's Day, usually it is served together with flat cakes and red cabbage. And also at that time a litre of young wine is placed on the table to drink with the meal.

Christmas

Christmas has been celebrated the Slovenes for already more than 1200 years. The holiday denotes Christ's birth and thus like other nations we have also woven into the secret of Christmas our special peculiarities and customs, which we lent partly on folk religiousness, on the church and also partly on old pagan traditions. One of the most noticeable symbols of the Christmas festivities is the setting up of the Christmas crib. Since the old days the time prior to Christmas for the Slovenes was a holy time, miraculously beautiful and rich. During Advent they began to prepare for the feast of Christ's birth. In past centuries wintertime meant above all a time of rest. Nativity cribs were the centre of the Christmas spirit and families gathered around them to pray and sing on Christmas Eve, Christmas day and Christmas night and throughout the Christmas season, right through until Candlemas. Children at this time decorate the Christmas tree and adorn their homes with decorations made from paper and fruit, and housewives prepare honey cakes, a special roll cake called potica, and pastries made from walnuts and apples. At such moments we can feel frank cordiality and characteristic kind-hearted homeliness. The greatest joy and climax of Christmas Eve was and still is today - midnight mass. This is a time when all, young and old people, want to go to church to say a small prayer for their soul and for the souls of all they love. For remembrance and meditation, for warm-hearted greetings and friendly handshakes. Christmas time is our feast. It is hope and a call for love. Christmas is a prayer. It is a call for peace; it is a handshake and the tear of sufferers. Christmas is the light for all people of the world who in their hearts carry good thoughts.

*"Dearest Feast of the Nativity,
Rejoicing you are we,
A Christmas crib we are creating,
And for Jesus a sweet bed will be waiting."*

Christmas Eve is the most important holy evening. On this evening in the middle of the table in the main living room of the house were placed a loaf of wheat, rye or buckwheat bread with fruit added and a special walnut roll cake called potica. The food was covered with a cloth. The two types of bread and the potica were according to some traditions supposed to represent the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. By the covered food a cross was placed with a string of prayer beads, a bowl with holy water and a sprig for sprinkling the water. Around everything and in hidden corners there were birds made from dough, which called God into the house, "God, come to us! God, come to us!" Godparents gave similar birds to their godchildren as a Christmas gift. Housewives put these precious handmade birds into the baskets of children on the 28. December in memory of King Herod's murder of baby boys in Bethlehem.

Old and New Year

The Slovenes call the last day of the year the Old Year, although the name Sylvester's Evening has also been adopted. On the last day of the year it is the name day celebration of St Sylvester, the pope who converted the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity. Present-day dance parties and noisy events, which are highlighted with firework displays at midnight, were at times different. On that evening people remembered transitoriness, before entering the New Year they accounted with themselves and in gratitude for gifts received they prayed to God together in collective prayer. Julius Caesar denoted the 1. January as the beginning of the New Year already in the year 46 before Christ's birth. In Maribor on New Year's Eve we hold many events in the square Trg svobode, which we highlight with a cultural program, and at midnight there is a huge firework display!

On New Year's Eve a special walnut roll cake, which was usually left over from the Christmas baking, was placed under a cloth. Not every household had a Christmas tree. The decorating of the pine tree became even more popular with the New Year fir tree. Biscuits were also used to decorate trees.

According to oral tradition housewives prepared bread and cakes for all three holy evenings: New Year's Eve, Christmas Eve and on the feast of the Three Holy Kings.

Source: Niko Kuret, Praznično leto Slovencev, Družina, Ljubljana, 1989

TRADITIONAL ŠTAJERSKA FOLK COSTUME

Towards the end of the 19th century men and women wore costumes that were tailored according to the simple clothing fashion. Thus the style and some of the clothing extras bear witness to the fact that older styles and parts of clothing were still popular. Among them were the preserved mainly those, which visually distinguished the country inhabitants from the town. Thus we can also distinguish the elements of two folk costumes:

- 4 **festive clothes**, clothes which people wore only for festive occasions, and
- 5 **working clothes**, which they wore each and every working day.

Data that also many farmers economized in buying clothes or that even a lack of clothes prevailed seems today almost unbelievable. In the past it was customary, and is still today in some places, for children to wear their siblings' clothes, one after the other. At any rate in the middle of the 20th century, when there was a general lack of clothing, two or three people in some families wore the same piece of clothing.

Women's dress

was made up of the following items: scarf or peče - a national dress head-covering from white, embroidered material, a bodice, two underskirts, an apron, shoes, stockings, a skirt or dress, a blouse and a handkerchief.

Men's dress

was made up of a hat (with a black, white or green band), shirt (with a low or ordinary collar), velvet waistcoat, trousers, boots or shoes.

Source: Noše, plesi in šege, AccordiA Ljubljana, 1996

For museum lovers in the Regional Museum Maribor there is a permanent exhibition of national costumes. Numerous costumes that are characteristic for Slovenia can be seen at events such as FolkArt and municipal, intercommunity and republic reviews of folklore groups that are organised by the Republic of Slovenia Fund for Culture. The regular, annual concerts by the Academic folklore group Študent in Maribor are a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with Slovenia's folk costumes and traditional dances.

TRADITIONAL ŠTAJERSKA FOLK MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Among the best-known and preserved folk musical instruments still today are the Haloze cross flute and reed pipe. Nowadays we can find them as products of cottage and arts and crafts trades.

Trstenke

The Slovene term trstenke (reed pipe) tells us that the instrument is actually made from trstike (reeds). It is an ancient instrument. Instruments resembling the Slovene trstenke were also known on other continents and in old cultures. Its use reaches back to ancient Greece, where they were known under the name syrinx or Pan's pipe. The oldest pictorial evidence of trstenke in Slovenia is recorded on a situla from Vače, dating from the early Iron Age. In Slovenia these pipes were made mainly in the surroundings of Ptuj, Haloze, Dolenjska, as well as in Prekmurje, Porabje and in Koroška. According to the opinion prevailing today the trstenke was above all a typical shepherd's instrument.

Haloze flute

The Haloška žvegla or Haloze cross flute is truly typical and characteristic for Haloze. In this region members of the Merc family made this flute, and they made the last flute in 1962. There are no other Haloze flute makers. Characteristic of this folk instrument, which was made from plum tree wood, was its special thickened end and the fact that it was made in nine different sizes.

TRADITIONAL ŠTAJERSKA FOLK DANCES

The dance tradition in eastern Štajerska, where Maribor and its surroundings belong, is for the most part the same as the general Slovene dance tradition. It also has a lot in common with the dance tradition of its neighbouring region of Prekmurje. Of course it also contains peculiarities, which are characteristic only for Štajerska.

In the villages around the town of Ptuj and in Haloze the **figure of the Korant** is found. During carnival time groups of Korants jump and shake their bodies, which is the most elementary expression of man's movements. Similar mischievous movements are shown in the same region by the **carnival Ploughers**.

The eastern Štajerska dance style does not show any characteristic features, but it is noticeable that there is a **tendency for fast turns**, especially in the two-step dance. This is danced with hardly perceivable knee bending or low jumps, in some places with the tilting of the upper part of the body. Pairs spin alternately to the left and right. In some villages when spinning two pairs hold on to each other as a foursome. The

eastern Štajerska dance heritage is namely rich in different figures and thus affords the dancers great possibilities for them to express their temperament and character. Beside the **polka and waltz** the dances of our heritage are no longer danced, except by folklore groups. The most characteristic dances were **Štajeriš, Šošarske, Zibšnrit, Mašarjanke, and Poskakače**.

The Academic folklore group Študent presents national folk costumes in accordance with traditional dances at their regular annual concerts. The cycle of ethnographic events From Vine to Wine in Maribor are highlighted with traditional, colourful folk dances.

CRAFTS

In Slovenia we know numerous cottage industries, and arts and crafts that are distinctive and typical for each individual region. Typical cottage industries in Štajerska include designing products from wood, woollen articles and articles from clay. In the arts and crafts trade glassworks, and making of textile products are typical.

Cottage industry

Wooden products

1 Joiner's trade

The joiner's trade developed through the specialisation of former local joiner's work, where they made products such as chests, cupboards, beds, tables, chairs, benches and cradles. This furniture was most frequently made during the winter, when there was no work in the fields.

2 Sawmill trade

Commonly saw-millers can not be placed among distinctive implementers of cottage trades, but we are familiar with a lot of local – house sawmills, where wood was sawed for the millers themselves and for nearby neighbours or for the needs of their home villages. Numerous sawmills have been preserved in the region of Pohorje, and some of them are still in operation today.

Knitted articles

Linen and cotton were woven on looms from flaxen, hemp and woollen yarn. However in the second half of the 19th century this cottage industry began to rapidly wane when industrial material began to penetrate the market. Along with the making of linen the cloth trade was once very widespread. It was particularly well developed in the Alpine region, which due to local sheep breeding is understandable. Wool namely, represented

the basic material for cloth making. In other, especially flat land regions, the producing of flax and the weaving of flaxen linen was developed. Linen was woven on weaving looms, which in Prekmurje and in Bela krajina are still today called 'krosne'. Prekmurje was namely an important weaving centre, likewise also Pohorje, Koroška, Doljenska and central Štajerska.

Products from Clay

The potter's trade belongs among the oldest trades in Slovenia. Archaeological finds from the prehistoric times bear witness. The potter's trade was organised towns and market towns as a guild; it operated also in the rural regions as an immediate need of the peasant inhabitants. At the end of the 18th century conditions changed greatly and town potters began to divert mainly to stove making. Earthenware dishes were no longer suitable for the times and fashion. In the rural regions the potter's trade remained an important supplement or even independent local cottage trade branch.

ARTS AND CRAFTS TRADE IN GLASS PRODUCTION AND GLASSWORKS

There is no proof in Slovenia of medieval production of glass and glass objects. Glassworks in their greatest number arose here in the 18th and 19th century. Numerous place names bear witness to that for example 'Glažuta' (Glassworks) or 'Stara glažuta' (Old glassworks), which relate to the workshops for making glass and glass products. Preserved examples of glass products do not speak only of their production but also of the mode of enjoying drinks or the drinking cultures in individual period. In the glass workshops they namely made different glass receptacles: bottles for wine and mineral water, bowls for food and medicines as well as table and drinking receptacles, lights, various decorations and commemorative objects, which were sold at pilgrimage fairs. Products were shaped by simple blowing methods and by blowing into moulds. The majority of products were exported to the Levantine country and Italy; some products also remained here for the needs of the home market.

Products from cottage trades and arts and crafts, such as things made from clay, wool, wood, apiculture products and products made from Pohorje aggregates can today be purchased in some specialised shops as traditional souvenirs of the Maribor region.

TRADITIONAL ŠTAJERSKA CUISINE

Already medieval travellers, who passed through our region, characterized the people here as hospitable. The innkeeper's trade and the innkeeper occupation

represented an **important tradition**. In Slovenia namely inns were explicitly a family business in which the innkeeper was of high repute. For that reason the innkeeper along with the mayor, teacher and priest was one of the most important figures in the economic, cultural and life otherwise in the place where he lived.

Up to the beginning of the 20th century the culinary offer in inns was made up of completely different dishes from that which was on the everyday and festive bill of fare of the rural inhabitants. A farmer, who went to do business in the town frequently went for a drink and treated himself to a meal that was not on his menu at home. Thus he did not order **cheese dumplings or boiled corn-mush**, but **delicious roast meat, stuffed breast of veal, tripe** or something else. After the Second World War people began to give up the traditional way of feeding, inns began to add individual traditional dishes to their offer and became "live museums" of the Slovene culinary heritage. Also today numerous inns are changing not only their culinary offers but also interior images according to the model "homeliness, typicalness, Slovene" by exhibiting and hanging up different objects of rustic heritage in their rooms.

*"A good bill of fare is a signpost
in a sumptuous culinary battle,
composed, like a score from notes,
for a symphony of delights"*

Tone Pavček

Wine in everyday life can be a constituent part of a meal. Of course lunch or dinner is not good if we do not have a carefully chosen wine served with it. The characteristic wines from the Štajerska wine-growing district are mainly white, which on average contain a higher degree of acid and less alcohol. The most frequent sorts are Laški Riesling, Green Silvaner, Rhine Riesling, Chardonnay, and Pinot Blanc...

*"On account of good wine the poor man becomes a rich man
the disputed - friends, the sick become well,
and the low spirited gets will power and courage!"*

Traditional Štajerska cuisine can today be tried in many of Maribor's restaurants and above all at tourist farms, found on wine growing hills and on Pohorje.

SOME RECIPIES

Štajerska milk soup

You need:

500 g potatoes
2 dcl sour milk
1,5 dcl sour cream
1 spoonful of flour
cumin
1 l water
salt

Beat the sour milk and flour well. Boil the water; add salt and cumin to taste. Slowly pour the beaten sour milk and flour into the boiling water and mix so that it evenly dissolves. Add the cut potatoes, which have already been cooked separately, together with the potato water (add less water than too much and rather add more later if necessary). Leave the soup to boil for a few minutes, then add more sour cream and serve immediately.

Štajerska sour soup

You need:

600 g pork tails and trotters or other pieces of pork
300 g potatoes
150 g soup vegetables
40 g onion
10 g flour
1 dcl sour cream
1,5 l water
1 piece of garlic
bay leaf
vinegar or wine
salt
ground pepper

Cut the trotters lengthwise and then cut into pieces. Also cut the tails into pieces. Place the trotters and tails into water and when it comes to the boil add cut soup vegetables, chopped onion, crushed garlic and salt. When the soup is half cooked add diced potatoes and seasonings. Cook until soft. Then thicken the soup with a mixture of flour and water. Boil for another 10 minutes, so that the flour is cooked. Finally add vinegar or wine and sour cream.

Mushroom soup with sour cream

You need:

500–750 g fresh mushrooms
1 kg potatoes
3-4 tomatoes
1 dcl sour cream
5 pieces of garlic
1 spoonful of flour
parsley
marjoram

Cut the cleaned mushrooms in slices, chop the garlic and half of the parsley, and cut the tomatoes into quarters. If wished garlic can be replaced by onion. Add the garlic and parsley to hot oil, when it begins to give off an aroma add the mushrooms and tomatoes. Slowly fry and after 15 minutes add finely diced potatoes. When the juices dry, add the flour, mixing several times and add water, salt and pepper. When the potatoes are soft, add the other half of the parsley, the marjoram and sour cream. Do not boil the soup again. Add vinegar to taste.

oil, vinegar
salt
pepper

Corn mush

You need:

400 g corn flour
60 g minced lard
1,2 l water
salt

Cook the corn flour in boiling salted water in a covered saucepan. When it has boiled well, with a cooking ladle make a hole in the mush, so that it cooks better. Cover the saucepan and cook for approximately another thirty minutes. Pour off the surplus water, add half of the minced lard to the mush and mix well. In a bowl break the mush into small pieces with a fork, add the rest of the lard and serve hot.

Potato salad with pumpkin oil

You need:

1 kg potatoes
1 ladle of beef soup
1 onion
0,5 dcl pumpkin oil
0,5 dcl vinegar
salt
pepper

Cook the potatoes and peel. Slice the potatoes while they are still hot, then pour hot soup over them and add a few drops of oil. When they are somewhat cooler, but still warm, pour a mixture of vinegar and pumpkin oil, salt and pepper over them. Finely slice the onion and sprinkle on the top of the salad. The taste of potato salad can be improved if you add a little balsamic vinegar.

Potatoes with pork cracklings

You need:

800 g potatoes
20 g lard and cracklings
salt

Thinly peel the washed potatoes, cut into slices and cook in salted boiling water. Leave to boil for approximately 20 minutes, then strain, add lard and pork cracklings and serve. Salted potatoes are much tastier if they are steamed.

Buckwheat sausages

You need:

1 kg buckwheat
750 g cooked pig's head meat
500 g cooked lights
500 g kidney or heart
500 g pork lard
100 g onion
meat stock
pimento
marjoram
salt
pepper

Half cook the buckwheat in the meat stock. Cooled mix with coarsely minced meat and heart or kidney. Add salt, pepper and then add the pimento and marjoram. Add the chopped and fried onion and melted lard. Mix the prepared mixture well, fill the sausage casings and close with toothpicks. For less fatty sausages use half of the lard and more soup. Cook the sausages. When cooked place in cold water, so the sausage skins do not burst. Fry before serving.