

# Shrovetide



**IN LATE FEBRUARY AND EARLY MARCH,  
RUSSIA CELEBRATES SHROVETIDE, THE  
MOST ANCIENT FESTIVAL OF THE  
SLAVONIC PEOPLE.**





**In the old days, Slavs believed that the change of seasons was the struggle between Yarilo, god of the sun, and the evil spirits of cold and darkness. People believed that they had to help Yarilo fight against winter and bring in the spring.**







**So, for the whole week, ancient Russian villagers had fun and games. They went sledding. They usually went for troika rides. They often built castles out of ice and snow. They built a straw dummy of the Shrovetide Maid, then put it on a sledge and pulled it around the village.**





**On the last day of the festival, they burnt it and chanted: “We are seeing off Shrovetide and waiting for the sun to come! Come to us, spring, with your joy and kindness!”**





**The most important part of Shrovetide week was making and eating pancakes. The hot, round pancakes symbolized Yarilo. The Slavs believed that by eating pancakes, they got the power, light and warmth of the sun.**





# **Shrovetide in modern Russia has strong traditions, too. So, how is it celebrated nowadays?**







**Monday** is a meeting day. It starts at 12 o'clock. Mothers make pancakes, children build snow fortress, make snowmen. There are snow battles, tobogganing, singing songs, dancing.







**Tuesday is  
attracting maids and  
guys' day. Girls sing  
songs and dance in a  
ring. Young men fight.**



**Wednesday is Dainty Day. People eat pancakes the symbol of the sun, long life and fortune.**





**Thursday is Broad Shrovetide. It is the top of the holiday. There are maskers, buffoons, merry-go-rounds, games.**





**Friday is Mother-in-law's parties 'day.  
Children play snowballs, toboggan.  
Grown-ups visit wife's relatives.  
Mother-in-law's pancakes are most tasty.**







**Saturday is a day of Daughter in law's sitting. The day has 2 parts. The first part is for making snow and ice fortress. In the second part of the day they go to see husband's relatives.**





**Sunday** is the day of Saying goodbye. It is Forgiving Sunday. People ask for pardon. People arrange rich Festivals. They say good bye to winter and meet spring.

