

St. Patrick's Day

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The history of the holiday.

According to legend, St. Patrick came from a well-to-do and very religious English family, and he was waiting for a comfortable future. However, when he was 16 years old, he was kidnapped and sold as a slave to Ireland, where he spent 6 years herding cattle for an Irish "master".

Before the abduction, the young man was not very religious, despite the fact that his father and grandfather had spiritual orders. Strong faith in God, by Patrick's own admission, came to him in slavery, when he offered prayers daily and nightly, praying for patience and salvation.

It is believed that St. Patrick, using the example of a shamrock (a leaf of clover), explained the principle of Christianity to the pagans: just as three leaves have grown together on one stalk, so the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are united in one faith. Since then, the shamrock has become a symbol of Ireland.

Another legend tells that St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, collecting them at his feet, he ordered them to leave the country forever. However, according to another version, this legend should not be taken literally, since Patrick fought primarily against paganism and "expelled" from Ireland not snakes as such, but the cult of the Celtic (Druid) god of fertility Cernunnos, who was just depicted as a large snake. And, by the way, this is more likely to be true, since there were no snakes in Ireland even then due to climatic conditions. For several centuries, the day of the saint's death-March 17-is celebrated as a national Irish (and not only) holiday.



Green color.

In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day begins to be celebrated on March 12, and almost the whole year is being prepared for it. Costumes are invented and sewn, souvenirs are produced, music is written and new dances are learned. Between March 12 and 17, Ireland turns completely green. Even the hair and beards of respectable citizens acquire a green, emerald or light green color. There is a belief that if a person does not have at least one green detail on the holiday of St. Patrick, then any passer-by can pinch him. Americans in this case went even further – in Chicago, in honor of St. Patrick's Day, even the river is painted green. Also, in all countries where this day is celebrated, green beer is incredibly popular.



Shamrock.

A special place is occupied on St. Patrick's Day by the shamrock-it is painted on the cheeks, pinned on hats or on clothes, embroidered on flags and pennants. There is a belief that if you find a leaf of clover with four leaves on March 17, then the whole year a person will be accompanied by incredible luck. By the way, there is an opinion that shamrock (also called shamrock) is not a clover at all, but what we call "sour cabbage" or "hare cabbage". However, in the snow-covered March Russia, there are few places where you can find both clover and sour cherry, so we can only draw and embroider a shamrock with four petals, hoping that this image will bring us happiness.



Last glass of beer.

The celebration takes place over a glass of ale or whiskey. And the last glass of alcohol consumed on St. Patrick's Day is symbolic and is called "drown the shamrock". There is a legend that if you throw a leaf of clover into this glass, drink it, and then pull out a shamrock from an empty glass and throw it over your left shoulder, then for a year life will be rich and successful.



A leprechaun.

Recently, another symbol of St. Patrick's Day has become a leprechaun-an Irish folk character, a small man as tall as a child. One of the fairy tales says that he mends the boots of the fairies. This red-bearded man has a bad temper and knows where the treasures are hidden. Therefore, it is believed that if you catch a leprechaun on March 17 and keep an eye on him, then in exchange for his freedom, he will definitely tell you where the pot of gold is buried, for which Ireland is so famous. The most interesting thing is that leprechauns "live in Ireland" for a very long time, but they began to associate them with the holiday only after one company that produces souvenir products needed a funny character as a symbol, and the stern St. Patrick was not suitable for this role. And then they remembered the local dwarves. By the way, it is believed that although dwarves and leprechauns are very similar in appearance, they are not only not friends, but also enemies – dwarves believe that leprechauns disgrace the name of an honest dwarf, weaving boots, and not mining gold and precious stones. And the leprechauns, with their usual grumpiness, note that the dwarves smell bad.



The end.

St. Patrick's Day is a very interesting and fun holiday that takes place in those countries where there are Irish communities and diasporas. These include: the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, sunny Australia, and many European countries. On this holiday, you can dress up in outfits from Celtic mythology, dance a jig, drink beer and Irish whiskey, and you can try to master the bagpipes. If you happen to visit this holiday, then try to catch at least one leprechaun.

