

## HOLIDAYS AND TRADITIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

### What is a PUBLIC HOLIDAY?

A public holiday is a **special day** when we celebrate a **significant (=important) historical or religious event**. [re-li-dži-@s](historická nebo náboženská událost) It is days important for the country. / when **people have a PAID DAY OFF work** (=placený den volna)/ **when schools / shops are closed (=zavřené)**. Public holidays are also **called bank holidays in the UK and Canada**.

#### • The 28th of October CZECHOSLOVAKIA INDEPENDENCE DAY

On this day the Czechoslovak state **declared independence at the end of the 1st world war in 1918 (WW1)**. Until that time the Czech and Slovak republics were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK became the president of this country. On this day the president gives honours [ánrs] (pocta) to people who did something special for others, for the country, who did special deeds [dýds](skutek). **President předává státní uznání.**

1918



• In 1939 Germany invaded [invejdyl] Czechoslovakia, the 2nd world war started. In 1948, after the war, the Communist Party and Russia took power.

In 1989 the 'VELVET REVOLUTION' ENDED THE COMMUNIST REGIME [režim] IN A PEACEFUL WAY. **Václav Havel became the first president of the new democratic Czechoslovakia in 1989**.

Since then, the Czech Republic celebrates the 17th November not only as the INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' DAY (9 students were executed in concentration camps on 17th Nov 1939) but also as **remembrance day of the tragic events in the Wenceslas Square that led to the Velvet Revolution**. Our school annually (každoročně) organizes a charity day – Students' Day in costumes, with sports and fun games.



#### • January the 1<sup>st</sup> the CZECH REPUBLIC INDEPENDENCE DAY

The 1<sup>st</sup> of January is **NEW YEAR'S DAY**. Also, on this day **the Czech Republic started to exist in 1993** after Czechoslovakia separated into two countries, the Czech and the Slovak Republics.

**Václav Havel became the president of the CR.** **The 1st of January is celebrated** by people who stay awake (zůstanou vzhůru) after a long night of drinking alcohol, eating chlebíčky – open sandwiches, watching the New Year's

1993



Eve (Silvestrovský) TV programme. People usually gives thanks to their family members and friends, they wish everyone happy new year. People usually try to get over their hangover. We celebrate both the beginning of the new year as well as the Czech Republic Independence Day.

#### • 14th February VALENTINE'S DAY also called Saint Valentine's Day

It is celebrated annually (každoročně) **on February the 14th**. Valentine's Day is a big **cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and romantic love** in many countries around the world, although it is not a public holiday in any country.

Old written stories say that Saint Valentine of Rome was imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to get married (oddával vojáky, kteří měli zakázané se ženit). The legend says while he was imprisoned, he cured a blind daughter of the judge (vyléčil zrak dceři soudce)/ he restored sight to the blind daughter of the judge, and before his execution he wrote her a letter signed just „Your Valentine“. Since then, **people celebrate the 14th February as the Day of lovers. They give flowers, chocolate, they have special dinner, send Valentine's greeting cards or just messages saying I love you to people they love – boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands or wives, friends or the parents.**



#### Other holidays people in the Czech Republic celebrate are:

##### • 1st May International WORKERS' DAY

to remember the **strike of workers in Chicago** in 1886. They **wanted an 8-hour working day**. It is a day off (volno), **in the Czech Republic, it is the DAY OF LOVE**, when all lovers kiss under a blooming (=rozkvetlý) cherry tree, as a tribute to **Karel Hynek Mácha and his love poem Máj**.

• 12th May Mother's Day giving honour to the mother in the family

• 16th June Father's Day

• 8th May LIBERATION DAY the end of the 2nd World War is celebrated, our country was liberated (=osvobozena) by Soviet and American troops (=jednotky)

• 28th October Saint Wenceslas Day celebrating the main patron of the Cz. State

• July 5th Cyril [saj-rl] and Methodius Day 2 brothers who brought Christianity [krys-č-nyty](=křesťanství) to Central Europe, they used the **Slavic language** (používali **Slovanský jazyk**), created the alphabeth (Glagolitic-hlaholici).

**Christmas and Easter are the biggest holidays for both religious [reli-dži-@s] and non-religious (=věřící i nevěřící) people in the Czech Republic.**

• **CHRISTMAS 24th DECEMBER**  
**How do people celebrate Christmas?**



In our country we celebrate Christmas **on December the 24th, in the evening**, unlike (na rozdíl od) many other countries where Xmas is celebrated on December the 25th. We always **decorate the Christmas tree with glass/ straw/ handmade decorations** (skleněné/ slaměné/ ručně vyrobené ozdobičky) Some families decorate their Xmas (=Christmas) trees on morning the 25th, while watching the Xmas traditional fairtales (=pohádky), some families decorate the Xmas tree a few days before Xmas.

Our **traditional Christmas dinner is fried carp [karp] (kapr) and potato salad** / Many people fast (drží půst) / **do not eat all day** before Christmas dinner, **to see the golden pig**. At midnight **some families go to the church, to see the midnight mass (=mše)**.

**How did you celebrate Christmas?** What did you eat on Christmas Day? What presents did you get for Christmas? Did you like them? Do you prefer getting or giving presents? Why? I stayed at home, I **celebrated together with my family/ with my friends/ with my relatives**. I didn't stay at home at Xmas, I travelled to.. / We flew to.. /I travelled to.. by train/ by coach/ I celebrated Xmas in.. **In the morning we decorated Xmas tree/ we watched traditional Czech fairytales/ We watched TV/ we went for a walk/ we visited the family/ our relatives. At lunchtime/ At 1.m./ At noon we had.... for dinner/ for lunch**. We didn't have carp, we had.. **In the evening we had Xmas dinner. We had carp and potato salad for dinner**. We traditionally have..... for dinner. In the evening/ **At 6p.m. we sat by the Xmas tree and unwrapped/ opened the presents**. I got..... for Xmas./ I liked .. most/ I didn't like ... because.....



• **EASTER SUNDAY and EASTER MONDAY – the dates differ (=liší se) every year (21st and 22nd April 2019)**

Easter is **the most important Christian [krys-čn](=křesťanský) holiday**, celebrating **the resurrection [re-s-rek-šn](=vzkříšení) of Jesus Christ [dži-zis krajst]**. **Jesus was crucified [krusifajd](=ukřižovaný) on the cross on Good Friday and came back to life on Saturday**.

**Before Easter**, girls **DECORATE** eggs, make hand-made eggs with candle wax (=vosk ze svíčky), colour eggs in onion skin (=barví je v cibulové slupce), or they decorate them in a funny way (=legračním způsobem), they **BAKE Easter lamb (beránek)**, men **MAKE WILLOW STICKS (=vyrábí pomlázky/vrbové proutky) or buy them in shops**.



**On Easter Monday**, boys and men come from house to house and **WHIP [wip](=vyšlehají) symbolically women to stay healthy, drink alcohol, get decorated eggs and children chocolate**. The egg is a **SYMBOL OF a NEW LIFE**.

