

March 2022, Melč

Dear friend,

I hope you are doing well.

I would like to tell you about spring in my country, the Czech Republic.. Although spring is not my favourite season, I actually like it because it becomes warmer and colourful.

I think that nothing marks the end of winter like a cheery spring flower. I love planting spring flowers. After all the dreary browns and greys of winter, is there anything more exciting than the bright colours of spring blooms? From the first snowdrops and daffodils and primroses to hyacinths, tulips, lily of the valley. We plant all of them in our garden and I really enjoy it.

April Fool's Day is an annual custom on 1st April consisting of



practical jokes and hoaxes. Jokesters often expose their actions by shouting "April Fools!" at the recipient. On this day I usually tell jokes and make pranks upon other people. In my opinion it is relatively common custom all over the world.



In the Czech Republic, the 1st May is a Day of love. On this day there is tradition to kiss your love one under a blossoming cherry tree. I haven't tried it yet but my parents do it every year, because we have a cherry tree growing in our garden. According to the Czech tradition, it will ensure that the upcoming year will be a good one. Some people in Prague go to Petřín (beautiful forest park in the middle of the city), where there is a statue of a poet Karel Hynek Mácha. He wrote the famous poem "Máj" which is telling the tragic story of two lovers. Here is a small part of it:

Late evening, on the first of May –

The twilit May – the time of love.

Meltingly called the turtle-dove,

Where rich and sweet pinewoods lay.

What's your favourite poem about love?

That's all I wanted to write you about. Enjoy your spring.

Adéla Černínová

Hello my penfriend,

I ended my last letter with telling you about Lent time. Lent time lasts 40 days. It's preparation to Easter. Last Lent Sunday is called "Květná" (Palm Sunday). On this day Jesus came to Jerusalem and people threw palm twigs on the way and they welcomed him. Holy week follows. Thursday of Holy week is called "Green" (Maundy). This day Jesus had last dinner with his apostles. Past last dinner Judas betrayed Jesus.



On Maundy Thursday we eat some green food and we go to church in the evening. In the evening bells stop to ring, we say that bells fly to Rome. Instead of ringing we go to clap with the wood tool, I don't know how to say it in English (see on the picture). We also clap threetimes on Friday (morning, noon, evening), and twice on Saturday (morning and noon). Good Friday it's a day when Jesus died for us on cross. At three o'clock we go to church, where The Passions of Jesus are read. Holy Saturday follows. It's a day when Jesus lay in the grave. After sunset Easter

Ceremonies start. Holy Saturday is named after the white robe, it's the symbol of christening. On this day the Easter candle is blessed. It's the symbol of Jesus Christ, who is light of the world.

The next day is Easter Sunday, on this day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. On this day we go to church with the baked lamb. On Easter Monday boys visit girls in their homes, boys have willow canes and bottles of perfume or water. The girls are often hidden somewhere in the house. Boys whip them and pour perfume or water on their heads. Then the girls give them chocolate or ornamented or dyed Easter eggs.



This is what we usually do in the spring, but this year I must study for entrance examination to high school, and I don't have much free time. I kept doing Easter traditions but will limit my free time activities.

In Spring nature wake up. Everything flourishes again and animals come out of their winter hiding places. The March is said "Březen" in Czech. This name is derived from the word "bříza" (birch) because birches sprout in this time. The April is said "Duben" in Czech. The name is derived from the word "dub" (oak) because oaks sprout in this time. On the 1st April we try to trick each other. The May is said "Květen" in Czech. This name is derived from the word "květ" (blossom) because everything is in blossom.



In spring there is very beautiful nature in the Czech Republic, so we like going to nature. In this time people like to do sports. I like to ride the bike and longboard.

Kind Regards

Filip Jedlička, Czech Republic, 15 years old

Dear penfriend,

My name is Aneta and I come from a small village called Radkov in the Czech Republic. Spring is about to come. It is my favourite of all seasons. I think it is the most beautiful time of the year, full of beautiful nature, animals, love, colours and flowering plants and trees. We celebrate many festivals such as Easter, The burning of Witches, but I personally like those connected with love or fun and that's why I would like to share with you: the Love Day and Mother's Day. The first day of May celebrates the achievements of workers and it is called the Labour day. However, in our country, May 1st is traditionally seen as a holiday for lovers and all of May as a month of love. On this day, couples in love kiss under a blooming tree. Cherry, apple or birch are the most suitable ones. If a girl is not kissed under a tree on that day, it is said, that she will wither and die in twelve months! This is a bit scary, don't you think?



There is also another tradition held in May and that is Maypole. The night before May 1st, single men go to the woods to cut a tall tree. They remove the branches and decor the trunk with different things such as scarves, ribbons, and flowers. I also help with other girls from the village to make a wreath and decorate it with flowers. Then the maypole is erected in the village square and it is guarded during the night because men from the surrounding villages intend to steal it. If the maypole is not stolen, single men are allowed to go to single women's houses and give them little presents. Having your maypole stolen or cut down means that the village can't celebrate at the end of the month when maypole is being taken down. But nowadays it doesn't happen very often because the stealing or damaging maypole is illegal as it is a property of the village and you could receive a fine. As long as I remember this happened just once in our village about 3 years ago and we were all very sad about it.

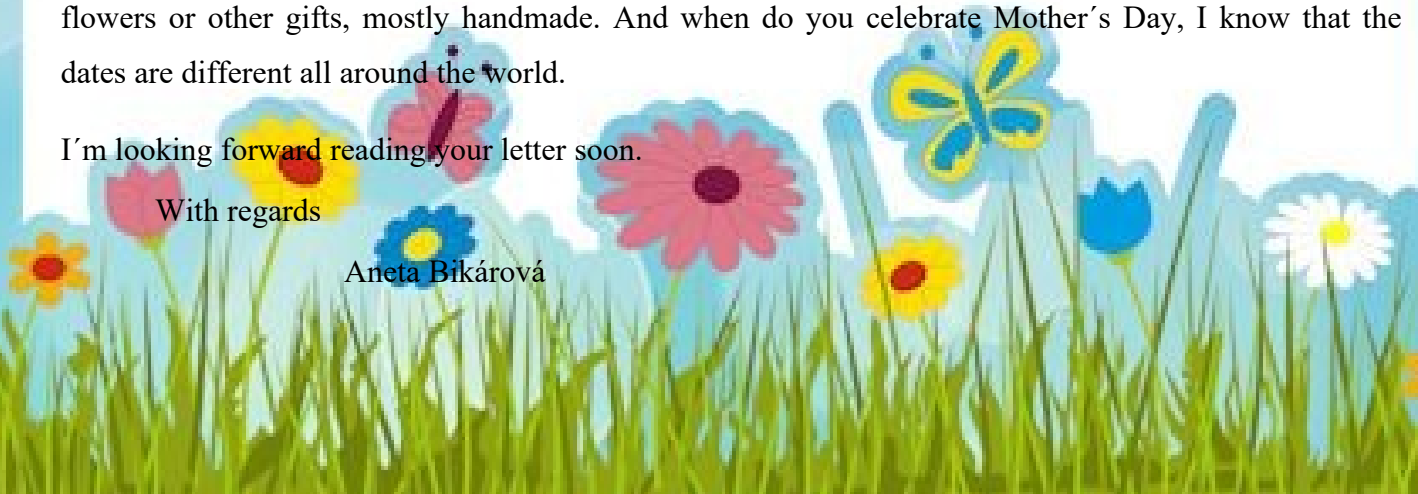


I also like Mother's Day. It is a day to pay homage to mothers and motherhood. It is celebrated on the second Sunday in May in the Czech Republic. On this day, children (even grown ups) give their mothers flowers or other gifts, mostly handmade. And when do you celebrate Mother's Day, I know that the dates are different all around the world.

I'm looking forward reading your letter soon.

With regards

Aneta Bikárová



Hi my dear foreign friend,

my name is Eliška and I am 15 years old, I live in the Czech Republic and I would like to tell you a little bit about spring in our country.

Spring is a beautiful time when all plants and animals wake up from a winter sleep. Everything turns green and changes into all kinds of colours. In spring, I usually start planting different plants in the garden (peppers, peas, tomatoes....) Do you enjoy gardening? I love it 😊



I will also tell you about our customs and traditions. Spring begins on the twentieth of March and ends on June 21st. The most important days in spring are those of Easter. Easter is celebrated from the dead rising of Jesus Christ and it is the most important Christian holiday. It lasts for four days, Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Sunday and Easter Monday. At Easter, the boys go to the girls for a carol and the girls give them eggs (dyed and boiled) and some candy. The girls are also watered (sprinkled with fresh cold water), the tradition says that the girls will not dry out and will stay alive and fresh for the rest of the year. It's crazy, don't you think?



This is a happy season, and I'm definitely going to enjoy it. I also like to do sports when it's beautiful outside, I like to ride a bike or roller skate. Do you like sports? I hope you learned a little bit about our spring here in the Czech Republic.

Wish you a happy springtime.

Sincerely, Eliška Kudlová



Melč, March 2022

Dear penfriend

Hi I'm Karolína, I'm 14 years old. I am from the Czech Republic; I live in a small village called Melč. I want to tell you something about spring in our country.

Easter begins on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon. For Easter a lot of people bake an Easter lamb or decorate eggs. For Christians, Easter is the most important holiday of the year and a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Did you know that every day during Easter has its name? Palm Sunday „květná neděle“, on this day the churches are decorated with flowers by people which greeted Jesus Christ. Blue Monday in Czech „modré pondělí“ this day means a Day off for Christians. Grey Tuesday in Czech „šedivé úterý“, this day means that the housewife has to clean the whole house. Ugly Wednesday „škaredá středa“, on this day chimneys are swept away from ashes. Then Green Thursday „zelený čtvrtek“, follows. Big Friday „velký pátek“, White Saturday „bílá sobota“, Easter Sunday and Monday.



April 30th is a special day in the Czech Republic burning of witches, in Czech „pálení čarodějnic“. Burning witches is a folk custom associated with burning fires and believing in witches. This custom marks a farewell to winter and welcomes spring. On this Day, I get dressed as a witch and meet others from our village and gather to meet on the field, where the adults burn an effigy of the witch. After burning the witch, everyone celebrates until late night. We believe that the power of witches would weaken as the weather got warmer. That's why we gather to build a bonfire and burn the effigy of the witch who keeps winter so long and then to finally get rid of the cold weather. While the bonfire is blazing, many young girls dressed as witches dance around, sausages are roasted over fires surrounded by many people singing and laughing.



I love spring because everything blooms and smells. The sun is shining and I can go out with friends and do what I enjoy. I hope you like Spring, too.

Have a happy springtime.

Regards from Karolína Černínová

March 2022, Domoradovice

Hello my penfriend.

My name is Filip and I live in a small village called Domoradovice. I am 15 years old and I would like to write you something about how I spend my spring.



Normally I spend most of my free time outdoors in the spring. I hang out with my friends or I visit my girlfriend. We walk in the park and enjoy the spring nature.

I also like to plant some vegetables in our garden for example peas or radishes. It is relaxing activity for me and I enjoy the warm weather outside.

But my biggest hobby is riding a motorcycle around my neighbourhood. I am really keen on motorbikes. Have you ever ridden any?



Spring is also full of traditions. I like Mardi Gras best. A feature of Mardi Gras is the wearing of masks, The multitude of masks are present in the traditional parades. The most popular human characters (costumes) are



devils, chimney sweeps, cow herders and ring masters (jugglers). The most popular animal characters (costumes) are bears, goats, dogs, sheep, rams, pigs, chickens or a horse who carries a bag in his mouth and collects doughnuts into it. While noisily singing, shouting and dancing, the costumed characters make their way from house to house, where they're treated to food and drink. The procession usually ends in the pub, where the eating, drinking and merrymaking often continues.

What's your favourite tradition in your country?

Kind Regards, enjoy the springtime.

Filip Vladař

Dear penfriend,

I hope you are doing well. I would like to tell you about spring in my country, the Czech Republic. After a long and grey winter, it's time to say Hello Spring. Parks become pleasantly crowded with people as soon as the sun is shining. Spring is full of beautiful colours, flowers and I really like this time of the year.



I want to write you some basic information about less known traditions held in our country in spring, mainly about "The Burning of the Witches."

The end of April is memorable each year with the burning of witches. April 30th is a special day in the Czech Republic as it is a celebration of "Pálení čarodějnic" which means "Burning of witches". This custom marks a farewell to winter and welcomes spring. You might know this celebration under the name of "Walpurgisnacht" in German – which is also celebrated in many European countries. In the evening we gather to build a bonfire and prepare an effigy of



the witch that kept winter around so long. We believe that the power of witches would weaken as the weather got warmer. So we think that if we make something that looks like a witch and burn it, we could finally get rid of the cold weather. First, we tie two large sticks together to form a cross. The older kids of our village are placed in charge of building the biggest pyre they can with whatever they can find to burn.

Then we stuff old shirts, pants and socks with straw and place it on the top of the stack. The witch is tied to a broomstick and set aside until darkness falls. When the fire is roaring, everybody roasts sausages on sticks, strums guitars, and sings favourite songs. Everyone looks forward to nightfall, when we will face the spirits of the witches. As soon as it's dark, the effigy of the witch is brought out and held up for everybody to see. Then it is thrown on top of the bonfire. As the witch burns, so does the last of winter's chill. It is so much fun.

Have a lovely springtime.

Best wishes from

Petra Wankeová