

St Patrick's day - holiday traditions

Our life is full of bright moments, interesting events and unforgettable experience. Holidays play very important role in our lives and in history of different countries. There are those which are celebrated all over the world and which are unique for certain countries.

And now I would like to tell you about St Patrick's Day. It is a national Irish holiday which has become popular all over the world. This occasion is celebrated on March 17. The holiday has long gained much popularity far beyond the Emerald Isle. On March 17 the residents of Argentina, Great Britain, Russia, the USA, Japan and other countries have become "a little Irish."

The holiday is dedicated to the patron of Ireland – St. Patrick (ca. 389-461 AD). He is the patron saint of Ireland in the same way as the patron saints of England, Scotland and Wales. He was a real person.

Patrick's family lived in Britain. In those days, Germanic tribes often invaded the land. During one of those raids, Patrick was captured and taken as a slave to Ireland. He was brought up in a Christian, though not very pious family. The legend has it that one night he heard a voice telling him to escape from Ireland whereby Patrick returned to Britain. Some time later he studied for the priesthood and again went to Ireland, that time as a bishop. His duty was to convert the Celtic people to the Christian religion. He performed his mission astonishingly well. Ireland, unlikely any other country in Western Europe, was converted to Christianity very peacefully, without the shedding of martyrs' blood. The legend says that he died at Saul, near Downpatrick, on March 17th, the day now celebrated as the national holiday.

Today festive parades are held all over Ireland and indeed wherever the Irish have gathered up in their wandering around the globe. A lot of people dressed in green extravagant costumes go to the streets and take part in this solemnity

The Irish are a musical nation. They recall the national music and dance, stage plays and also lively celebrations. In Ireland the parade is held in more than 30 cities. Major parades are held in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Dublin. In St. Patrick's Day everybody is supposed to drink a glass of alcohol at least in an Irish bar. On this day all the bars are Irish and all the musicians are Irish too. You can arrange the competition (not abusing) drinking glasses in honor of St. Patrick and "Emerald Countries." Pota Phadraig is the Irish name given to the traditional drink of whiskey to be taken on Paddy's Day, as told by Patrick himself.

The official symbol of the holiday is Shamrock. There is a legend about the shamrock which is connected with St Patrick. When Patrick was a missionary in Ireland, he was traveling and talking about his faith. Once, several members of the tribe approached Patrick and told him that they found it difficult to understand and believe in the Holy Trinity. Patrick thought and

picked one shamrock. «Here are three lives», he said, yet it is one plant. Imagine the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit as each of these leaves. Here they are, yet they are one plant». The tribesmen understood everything and from that time on, the shamrock has been a revered symbol of Ireland.

So if you see shamrock and a lot of green, you will know it is Paddy's Day. But what about pots of gold and smiling little elf?

This funny-looking creature is the leprechaun, another symbol of St Patrick's Day. The leprechaun is often bad-tempered and plays tricks on people. He is traditionally portrayed as a small, stocky man, who wears green clothes.

So we can see that holidays make our lives interesting and varied and St Patrick's Day is not an exception.