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Holidays in Russia and the USA

Holidays are traditions that have existed for centuries. Moreover, they have a theme reflecting history of people, the country and the world.

Both Russia and the USA have a great number of holidays. Christmas is considered the most favorable holiday in the US. Americans always put emphasis on Christmas that is celebrated on December 25. They prepare for it responsibly and carefully. They traditionally spend time with their families [2]. A Christmas chant is an important part of Christmas in the USA. Children come to the front door and start to sing in the evenings. Christmas is celebrated in a different way in Russia. Special services are held in churches at night from the 6th to the 7th of January. Many people perceive this day as another additional day off. Nevertheless, people walk, play and have fun in the evening of Christmas.

Easter is another famous holiday in the world. There is a belief in the Easter Rabbit in the US and there is no in Russia. It is one of the main differences. Americans do not bake Easter cakes. They give each other chocolate eggs instead. It is common to organize Easter egg hunts in America [4]. Eggs of some form are hidden, supposedly by a rabbit or hare. Then children search for them.

International Women's Day is one of the most popular holidays in Russia. It is celebrated at the state level and is a day off. Women are given flowers, postcards with poetry, chocolate, and other pleasant gifts. Popular Russian entertainers organize concerts and performances to create the festive mood on March 8. However, the traditional way to celebrate it is at home among friends and family. International Women's Day is not celebrated in the USA. Although the holiday is known there as in the other North American countries.

Another holiday, Labor Day, has a similar name but is celebrated differently. It is celebrated on May 1 in Russia. Russians usually go to their country homes to work in the garden. Labor Day lost its socialist meaning after the Soviet Union's collapse, but some political parties and labor unions may still organize demonstrations on this day. Americans celebrate Labor Day as a symbolic end of summer on the first Monday of September. As a rule, Americans spend this day either with their families or in a small company of friends [2]. In some neighborhoods, people organize fireworks displays, barbecues and public arts or sports events [6].

Also Americans have holidays that are not typical for Russians. Thanksgiving Day is one of them. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. Families and friends get together for a meal that traditionally includes a roast turkey, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy, and pumpkin pie [7]. In some cities and towns, there are parades during the Thanksgiving weekend.

Nevertheless, there are similar holidays in the USA and Russia. For example, Memorial Day and Victory Day. Memorial Day is celebrated on the last Monday of May in the United States. People remember all Americans who has died on the battlefields. There is a tradition to lay wreaths on soldiers' graves [3]. A red poppy is a symbol of this day. We can compare Memorial Day with Victory Day in Russia. People congratulate veterans, who has participated in the Great Patriotic War, and lay wreaths on soldiers' graves too. Many people attend a local military parade and watch the fireworks at night. The biggest parade is in Moscow's Red Square. At home, most families may watch favorite Soviet films based on the events of the war.

Independence Day is also a significant event in the United States. It is dedicated to declaration of independence of the country on July 4, 1776. Independence Day is a day of family celebrations with picnics and barbecues, showing a great deal of emphasis on the American tradition of political freedom [5]. Some communities arrange fireworks that are often accompanied by patriotic music. Many politicians appear at public events to show their support for the history, heritage and people of

their country. There is a similar holiday in Russia. It is called Russia Day and celebrated on June 12. People may attend concerts and fireworks that take place in many cities throughout the country. Prominent Russian writers, scientists and humanitarian workers receive a National Award from the Russian president on this day.

There is a difference in celebration holidays in Russia and the USA. But the main principle is the same: it is consolidation of society.

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