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Women's Day

Activities

By Amanda Allbritton

Recently, I was sulking about not having a spring break for the second year in a row when, out of nowhere, Women's Day appeared. In the spirit of the holiday, the benevolent Goddess of Women heard my sorrowful cries and granted me, and the rest of our group, a three-day, two-night excursion to Vladimir and Suzdal, Russia. Actually, Women's Day is a holiday that is celebrated each March 8th around the world and in Russia. Friends and family usually shower women with flowers, cards, gifts, and attention. This holiday is similar to America's Mother's Day, only all women are honored.

My journey-mates for the Spring Break/Women's Day road trip included eight American students and Dr. Buffington, seven Russian students, a tour guide, and a bus driver. We set out at noon on Women's Day, March 8. After a four-hour ride out of Moscow and through Russia's countryside on a very nice charter bus, we arrived in Vladimir.

This was an exciting trip because it was everyone's first trip to Vladimir and Suzdal, including the Russian students. These towns were amazingly beautiful with many churches and histories that span a millennium. We heard a bell concert at a monastery and had an excellent tour guides who detailed the history, buildings, and artwork. Both towns offered an array of inexpensive and quality souvenirs. During the trip we also got to experience several traditional Russian meals.

The weekend was completely magical with sights of glistening snow, cozy villages, and horse-drawn sleighs. This was most definitely not a typical spring break, but this look into Russia's past left us with many memories to treasure and pictures to

Russian Culture-Food

Culture

By Masha Pospeshnova and Matt Kreifels

The culture of a country is comprised of many components that have been developed over hundreds of years. Russian culture is very rich and consists of many interesting specialties. Food is one thing that greatly varies and makes up a lot of a country's culture. Almost every country has a special dish, which reflects its historical and cultural heritage (Mexican burritos, Japanese sushi, Italian pasta, etc.). Tourists want to try the culture of Russia and many do so through food.

Here in Moscow, American and Russian students introduce their culture to each other by cooking some traditional dishes to let each other taste and experiment. American students cook hamburgers and sandwiches and have taken Russian students out to American restaurants. However, most of *this* audience would probably like to hear about Russian traditional food.

For the most part, Russians have three meals a day. The biggest and most important is dinner (lunch as most Americans know it). For dinner Russians usually have three courses. The first serving is soup. The most famous is cabbage soup with meat broth. Another alternative to cabbage soup is beetroot soup (borsch) with some sour cream.

The second course usually consists of different kinds of meat and potatoes, macaroni, or rice. However, these are fairly modern dishes. A dish with a greater national heritage is blini, pancakes with different fillings. The most famous and traditional food of Russia is red caviar. Another favorite is pelmeni, which is a cross between dumplings and ravioli.

share with our friends and families. *Bolshoi Spaceeba* (big thanks) to the Goddess of Women.



The Women of Women's Day

Spring is Coming...Maybe?

Weather

By Nila Kreidich

Even with 12 inches of snow on the ground, Muscovites are ready to celebrate the coming of spring. At the end of February, Russians celebrate Maslennista, the feast of blini-making before Lent. This is a festival with pagan roots that are now combined with traditions from the Russian Orthodox Church. It is similar to Marti Gras in New Orleans and Carnival in Brazil. Russians indulge in blinis (flat pancakes), Mongolian barbeque, vodka, and pivo (beer) before Lent begins.

Students went to Kolomenskoe village, located along the Moscow River, on a Saturday afternoon to see Maslennista in full action. This park used to be a favorite country estate of the tsars until the Revolution, when it was designated as a museum for architecture. Wooden buildings, such as Peter the Great's cabin from Archangel, were moved here from areas all around Russia. At this park you could see singers, dancers, and people dressed in strange costumes. You could stop to watch a game of tug-of-war being played or children frolicking in the snow.

Along with Maslennista, there are other signs of spring. Daylight is steadily increasing, a pleasing change to the dark, dreary days of January and

The third and final course consists of a desert and drink. The most famous drink is kvass. It is prepared by taking yeast, bread, and water, sealing it in a jar, and letting it ferment for three days. Otherwise one might finish his or her meal with a simple cup of hot tea.

From a foreigner's perspective, the Russian diet has been interesting to adapt to. The proportions are slightly smaller than most Americans are used to finding in US restaurants. Sometimes the drink is not served during the main part of the meal and we have to wait until tea is served at the end. Otherwise water might be served, however, this is usually carbonated water, which is also popular among most Russians.

While food may be a forgotten part of the culture when looking from the outside, it plays an important role when one looks at a country from within—especially over the course of four months!

The History of Vladimir

By Wade Taylor and Oksona Anisimova

If you ask Russians what the oldest city in the country is, the majority of them would answer Vladimir. It has been mentioned in Russian chronicles that prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich established the city of Vladimir in 990A.D. Others argue that Vladimir Monomakh founded it in 1108. Vladimir didn't attract much attention until the reign of Andrei Bogoliubsky. In 1158 through 1165, the new capital was transformed enormously: cathedrals were constructed, protective oak wood walls were built around the city, and the grand entrance named the Golden Gate was erected.

Vladimir had remained the capital of Russia until 1328 when it was moved to Moscow. Vladimir suffered many invasions from Tatar-Mongol hordes that burned the city and continued attacks from the fourteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. In the eighteenth century Vladimir's main street was part of the famous route those banished to Siberia took on their long walk

February. In fact, the sun does not set here until almost 6:30 in the evening now.

With spring comes lots of melting snow from Moscow's record-breaking amount of snowfall in February. You have to watch your step as you walk through the streets or you might submerge your foot in a deep dark puddle. Many of us have wondered why Moscow does not have a more efficient drainage system. Because of this lack of drainage, wooden pallets are used to help pedestrians cross the street.

We have gotten used to the cycles of thawing and freezing here. We either slip on ice or get our jeans wet stepping through puddles. The great thaw will continue throughout the month of March. Spring will fully arrive someday, for now we will enjoy the end of winter in Russia.



Amanda Playing in the Snow

Losing an Aggie Gaining a Nittany Lion

Education

By Noah Handley

Dr. Gary Briers, of Texas A&M University, finished his Russian experience Friday March 2, 2001. The group of students liked Dr. Briers quite

eastward.

Located 120 miles east of Moscow, Vladimir now covers an area over 22 square miles and has a population of 360,000 people. Its rich history and architectural beauty attract many visitors from all over the world.

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Photo Editor: **Theresa Lynn**

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Matt Kreifels, Graham Rupe, and Casey

well. His many sayings and comparisons, not to mention his contagious smile that seemingly never left his face, made class enjoyable and interesting. His teaching style was very much like his personality: informative, talkative, and funny. Dr. Briers, *Thank You* for the enjoyable and educational experience that you shared with us.

On Monday, March 5, 2001 we began our next course, Environmental Impacts of Biological Systems, under the guidance of Dr. Dennis Buffington. He is part of the Agriculture Engineering Department at Pennsylvania State University. This new course is very appealing to me with the introduction of various environmental influences of biological systems such as animals, plants, harvested produce, and microbes. Then once the influences are identified we will take a look at requirements of engineering systems to enhance efficiencies of the biological system. Keeping a system in its comfort zone is beneficial to produce as much of the commodity with the least input and with the least impact on the surrounding environment. With this course, both American and Russian students will be able to analyze and determine the requirements of a facility to optimize the production of the plant or animal production system that they are going to be working with in the future. Look for the next issue to get an update on the achievements of this course.

Saxton

Special Note: This week we decided to try something new. Some of the articles are written with the help of our Russian friends. If this goes well, we hope to incorporate a completely new website with the "Russian" perspective on our project.

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