



Stories from the Hearth

A product of “Learning at the Hearth”, a Grundtvig Partnership Project
with partner organizations from Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Lithuania,
Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom



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Introduction

There is an old Scottish Proverb – “Stories are told eye to eye, mind to mind and heart to heart!” So please open your eyes, open your minds and open your hearts.

Suspend your disbelief and enjoy the stories from the Hearth!

The Learning at the Hearth Project celebrates traditional methods of learning through stories, songs, wisdom, recipes and crafts which were once handed down from generation to generation at the fireside.

The project extends the literal setting of the hearth as a metaphor for a place where core learning once took place. We compare and contrast the way hearths have been used across Europe to preserve and transfer traditional wisdom within generations and across generations. While connecting with others in such meeting places, we develop our sense of being and our identity. The stories we share and other cultural “offerings” connect us to our environment, revealing who we are, where we come from, how we should behave and how we navigate through life.

Storytelling is a special way of transferring knowledge and values to others, of understanding our experiences and of co-constructing meaning for our life. It is a tool for motivating and empowering people; promoting social inclusion and the feeling of belonging. The sharing of common experiences with “the other” (when cultural, linguistic, generational differences exist) invites the creation of understanding, tolerance and respect.

The partner organisations work in cities, regions or countries emerging from division, occupation or disunity and seek to find "common ground" both Nationally and as Europeans, through familiar experiences. The project shares stories and histories and builds intra-cultural and intercultural bridges. The project also shares good practice in non-formal and informal adult learning.

Partners have carried “Embers”, (the glowing coals often used to light another fire or keep the fire alive) which in our project are the ideas that we take from each hearth we visit to add to those we have in the hearth that we call home. So these embers from our own fires contribute as “fuel” to the partnership; as part of the “give and take” of our sharing of knowledge and wisdom. It is a symbolic contribution that each of us will bring to our partnership, a synergy of wisdom and learning.

These Stories from the Hearth are some of our embers ...

The partners

- 1) Interacting UK Ltd (UK, partnership coordinator) - Promotes language learning and international understanding. Operates in severely disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland and the North of England.
- 2) Asociația de părinți a elevilor Liceului cu Program Sportiv Suceava (Romania) - A Parents Association supporting a specialist sports college. Organizes activities of general interest and promotes intergenerational and family learning.
- 3) Zukunftsbau GmbH (Germany) - Youth work facilitator and accredited apprenticeship company. Offers vocational training and counseling to disadvantaged young people and the long-term unemployed for integration into the job market.
- 4) Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Lithuania) - A major teacher training (pre - service and in service) institution in Lithuania with over 7000 students. It actively participates in EU and international projects, LLP and Erasmus Exchange programmes. In cooperation with other educational institutions, Embassies it organizes educational, cultural and sports events, different countries' and nations' cultural weeks, especially representing national minorities and hard - to - reach groups.
- 5) Escuela de Formación UNOAUNO (Spain) - School for Adults, dedicated to Education for Leisure. Themes: Healthy lifestyles. Use of the outdoors as a learning environment. Active leisure and working for the benefit of the community.
- 6) Associazione Culturale ALLELAMMIE (Italy) - Works in a very disadvantaged region (Basilicata) with a high level of unemployment (about 22%). It operates with persons (young and adults) with economic and job problems (unemployed) and at risk of exclusion.
- 7) Rooftop Theatre Group (Cyprus) – A multi-communal theatre group, which aims to bring together all the communities living on the island of Cyprus and to bring about an understanding between them through the use of sharing experiences. The group's performance texts are the result of interactive workshops on current socio-political themes.

Our local hearths

Cyprus: places in Cyprus that have been traditionally identified as a “hearth”, include: around the table (during meals), around the water fountain, in the village square, in the coffee shops, out in the fields, in church (during, before and after the service), on the beach, in the army, in schools, in cafés, inside/outside buildings, around the coffee machine in offices...

Romania: the church, where important rituals take place, people learn respect, songs, how to behave, Schools, Families, Forest, public spaces like squares in which are different events

Germany: the pub, as a place where people gather for relaxing together and exchanging ideas

Spain: family celebrations (religion-related or not) which are the best opportunity to share positive feelings

Lithuania: families - where everyone shares language, traditions, culture and moral values; Seimas/the Parliament - where people of Lithuania, supporting their own government, defended Lithuania's independence on the 13th of January, 1991 (Independence was restored on 11, March, 1990); educational institutions - where everyone shares knowledge, creativity, cultural and intellectual values.

UK: The pub, the school gate where parents waiting to collect children and share information

Hearth is a metaphor for a place where informal, inter-generational learning takes place. There are personal hearths (e.g. as a child, learning from father in the cockpit of a small boat) and national hearths (e.g. the dining table where the family gathers, shares and celebrates).

The hearths that we have identified in our own countries:

Romania: the church, where important rituals take place, people learn respect, songs, how to behave

Germany: the pub, as a place where people gather for relaxing together and exchanging ideas

Cyprus: the table and food in general as a central reason for gathering and present in various meetings

Spain: family celebrations (religion-related or not) which are the best opportunity to share positive feelings

Lithuania: sports events, where family members unite and also regional celebrations in villages (e.g. St. John's day)

United Kingdom: the local pub, the school gate where parents waiting to collect children share information.

A key point raised, was that the family is at the heart of the hearth.

In Romania, the family is still strong, the members are connected to each other and traditions are kept. The challenges are that Children are increasingly being absorbed, occupied and entertained by technology during family meetings. This makes intergenerational learning more difficult. Many parents are working too many hours and this limits quality time with their children. At the same time, grandparents are taking over parental roles and tasks and this allows for the transfer of traditional learning and values.

The similarities and differences that have been observed during the visits are:

The family is an important element in all countries.

In villages people appear to be much closer to each other.

Nature is used for connecting, implementing activities and for leisure time.

Mills run by families (e.g. in UK and Lithuania) highlight the symbolic importance of bread

Medieval celebrations remain important (e.g. in Germany and Lithuania).

Preserved traditions are seen that help with cultural identity and National pride.

Traditional costumes, stories, dances and songs are preserved and honoured across Europe.

JOHN HARRIS Director of InterActing UK Ltd

Stories, poems, recipes and other embers

The following section includes works produced by the partnership partners before and during their common project. Some of the tales were narrated during partnership country visits, whilst the group members were gathered around the table or around the fire. Other works were the result of spontaneous inspiration by some of the team members. Yet other pieces are stories carried over from generation to generation in the countries of the partners.

The Rooftop Theatre Group Nicosia - Cyprus

This piece follows the theme of food in the form of a theatrical script. It is an excerpt from one of our past productions, titled "Masa", which, means "eating" and "table" (in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot dialect respectively). In the first scene, the main character is narrating a family incident around a dinner table on the occasion of his father's birthday. So it has the food part, the family, the table as the hearth, and the coming together of generations!!! :)

Masa: The Rooftop Official Recipe Guide to special occasions

Setting

The scene has several mobile panels setting its boundaries, in the middle a table and chairs around it. Screen is over the stage for projections. Actors start coming in and setting the table, as if for a feast. When they are done, they gather around the table to eat and celebrate the Father's 65th birthday.

SCENE 1

(The act begins with a table which resembles Da Vinci's Last Supper, with Aunt positioned like Judas in the painting. The main character (son) sits in the middle facing the audience. Dramatic music to play with audience expectations. The other actors freeze and the Son performs his internal monologue. Characters that may become involved in the action, come to life when need be)

Son: Dearly beloved, we have gathered here today to celebrate my Dad's birthday, his 65th birthday. The setting is the same, the people are the same, yet this year we have two new additions, my wife and my mother-in-law. I always enjoy these celebrations, not so much because I am going to see my relatives, but because my Mom prepares my favorite food, bamyas. It's her special recipe, and it is expected that a large Pyrex of bamyas will be the highlight of the dinner. While I am enjoying my favorite dish and ignoring the usual vivid discussions on the Cyprus problem and other current affairs, the irritating voice of my Aunt disrupts my focus and takes it off a perfect bite of bamyas that I managed to bring up to the edge of my wide open mouth. Her voice did not only disrupt me, but also awakened my subconscious distaste for her as everything froze (*he just realizes that other actors are not moving*) around me, reminding me of the embarrassing questions she was asking me while I was a kid, or questions that definitely start an argument between my mom and dad, between my parents and my sister or me. The one question that made me believe that I would never speak to her again, was "Are you gay? When are you finally getting married?". And she asked me in front of my best friend, who is now my best man. Since I got married, she started asking my new wife why we're not having children yet, trying to see if there is a "problem" with one of us. She even asked her if it was because I'm secretly gay. So, the fear grew in me that she would fire one of those questions again...and if that wasn't agonizing enough, my dad placed souvla in front of me and skillfully

started removing it from the stick into the plate. I tried to hide behind the stick so that she wouldn't be able to spot me, but her penetrating eyes detected me. When I was a kid I used to think that she was like a computer screen, showing data of everyone's private lives. My fork immediately landed back to my plate, I was unwilling but ready for the attack.

Aunt: So tell us, who cooks bamyas better? Your mother or your mother-in-law?

Son: Of course! Another question that could possibly trigger a secret grudge between the interested parties. My mistake is that I stopped to think, but I had to process my options, just like contestants do in million dollar shows.

Game show host: (*Comes onstage, imitating voice of a TV game host. As he speaks, the players in the quiz get up and smile. Quiz card on the projector.*) Who cooks bamyas better? Is it option A. Your Mom; is it option B. your Mother in Law; is it option C. Your Wife or option D. Your late granny.

Son: It occurred to me that granny would be the best option as the issue of jealousy between the interested parties would not come up. If I said either my Mother or my Mother-in-Law I could imagine them in my head fighting over the golden bamyas award. (*Mother and mother in law go behind the Son and start fencing*) However, instead of pulling hair, like schoolgirls do, which I admit is kind of sexy, my Mother and my Mother-in-law would try to beat each other in fierce duel. (*They stop fighting, they look at him disapprovingly.*)

Again if I had chosen my wife ... (*Son asks a member of the audience*) What do you think?

That leaves us with option D. My late granny. (*Card on projector*)

So I proudly replied to my Aunt: “Η μακαρίτισσα η γιαγιά μου έκανε καλύτερα τις μπάμιες», although this was not the truth. With this diplomatic answer I managed to prevent threatening looks and everyone responded with a warm “Ohhhhhh” instead.

So I conclude that it is best to use the way of the diplomat, instead of the way of the warrior and break my Aunt's neck for asking the bamyas question.

(*Lights fade, music.*)

Bamyas (μπάμιες) is a traditional dish in Cypriot cuisine, made from okra (also known as “ladies fingers, gumbo or quimbombó) typically cooked with tomatoes and onions. Garlic optional;)

Souvla (σούβλα) is a very popular Cypriot dish that consists of large pieces of meat cooked on a long skewer over a charcoal barbecue. It differs from the popular Greek dish souvlaki, in that meat cuts are much larger and slow cooked for a much longer period at a greater distance from the hot charcoal. Traditional souvla is made from the neck and shoulder of lamb or pork. The meat is cut on the bone into chunks about the size of a medium onion.

A tale about a Cypriot folk hero, Diyenis Akritas

Edited and narrated by Leda Koumides and Charis Charalambous during the meeting in Lithuania

We would like to take you on a journey back to the 11th century Cyprus. Imagine we are all at a feast, sitting around a table. All of us are soldiers and great lords and queens, talking about our adventures and victories.

Amongst us, is sitting the greatest of all...

*Αύριον είναι Τζ'ερκατζή τζ'αι πιθαρκού εν' Τρίτη
τζ'αι είπασιν οι άρκοντες πως εν' ο γιος τ' Ακρίτη.*

Diyenis Akritas... who is so strong that he guards the borders of the Byzantine Empire! He has supernatural forces. He kills monsters and dragons and wild animals. The weapons he uses are huge rocks. His toys are giant marble columns. When he jumps, he covers distances of many miles over the mountains. His footprints leave traces of supernatural dimensions.

This evening, he is telling us about the days of killing hundreds of dragons and lions and a giant, poisonous, five-headed snake. He is also telling us about the time he rested his palm on a mountain, while jumping over it. His handprint was left there forever. The mountain range was named "Pentadaktilos" (Πενταδάκτυλος), meaning "five fingers".

Suddenly, a guest arrives, dressed in black. We invite him to sit with us. "I'm not here for the feast", he says.

*Εν ήρτα 'γιω ο Χάροντας να φα' να πκιώ μιτά σας
... παρά 'ρτα γιω ο Χάροντας τον κάλλιος σας να πάρω.*

Death wants to take the best. Diyenis is the one. They raise their hands and begin to fight against each other.

*Σ'ερκές, σ'ερκές επκιάσασιν τζ'αι στην παλιώστραν πάσιν.
Τζ'αι τζ' ειν εν' που παλιώννασιν τρεις νύκτες τρεις ημέρες
τζ' ει πόπκιαννεν ο Χάροντας τα γαίματα πιτούσαν
τζ' ει πόπκιαννεν ο Διενής τα κόκκαλα ελειούσαν.*

If Diyenis wins, Death will spare his life. Blood is spilled, bones are broken. Diyenis loses the fight.

While lying on his deathbed, with his fellow soldiers grieving beside him, his wife arrives.

*Επίεν τζ' η καλίτσα του να ποσ'αιρετιστούσιν,
στ' αγκάλια του την έσφιξεν τζ' εζέην η ψυσ'ή τους.*

Hugging each other, they die together.
Fellow soldiers, lords and queens!
Go home, grieve for Diyenis!

Zukunftsbaubau GmbH Berlin, Germany

A Berlin story - The Captain of Köpenick

Wilhelm Voigt was born in 1849 in Tilsit, Prussia. In 1863, aged 14, he was sentenced to 14 days in prison for theft, which led to his expulsion from school. He learned shoemaking from his father. Between 1864 and 1891, Voigt was sentenced to prison for a total of 25 years for thefts and forgery. He was released in February 1906.

Voigt hoboed from place to place until he went to live with his sister in Rixdorf near Berlin. He worked briefly as a court shoemaker until, August 1906, police expelled him from Berlin as undesirable, based solely on the fact that he was a former prisoner. Officially he left for Hamburg, although he remained in Berlin as an unregistered resident.



Picture 1 – A statue of Wilhelm Voigt as the Captain of Köpenick at Köpenick city hall

On 16 October 1906 Voigt was ready for his next caper. He had purchased parts of used captain's uniforms from different shops and tested their effect on soldiers. He had resigned from the shoe factory ten days previously. He took the uniform out of baggage storage, put it on and went to the local army barracks, stopped four grenadiers and a sergeant on their way back to barracks and told them to come with him. Indoctrinated to obey officers without question, they followed. He dismissed the commanding sergeant to report to his superiors and later commandeered 6 more soldiers from a shooting range. Then he took a train to Köpenick, east of Berlin, occupied the local city hall with his soldiers and told them to cover all exits. He told the local police to "care for law and order" and to "prevent calls to Berlin for one hour" at the local post office.

He had the treasurer von Wiltberg and mayor Georg Langerhans arrested, supposedly for suspicions of crooked bookkeeping, and confiscated 4002 marks and 37 pfennigs - with a receipt, of course (he signed it with his former jail director's name). Then he commandeered two carriages and told the grenadiers to take the arrested men to the Neue Wache in Berlin for interrogation. He told the remaining guards to stand in their places for half an hour and then left for the train station. He later changed into civilian clothes and disappeared.

In the following days the German press speculated on what had really happened. At the same time the army ran its own investigation. The public seemed to be positively amused by the daring of the culprit.

Voigt was arrested on 26 October and on 1 December sentenced to four years in prison for forgery, impersonating an officer and wrongful imprisonment. However, much of the public opinion was on his side. German Kaiser Wilhelm II pardoned him on August 16, 1908. There are

some claims that even the Kaiser had been amused by the incident, referring to him as an *amiable scoundrel*, and being pleased with the authority and feelings of reverence that his military obviously commanded in the general population.

The British were also amused, seeing it as confirmation of their stereotypes about Germans. In its 27 October 1906 issue, the editors of *The Illustrated London News* were to note gleefully:

For years the Kaiser has been instilling into his people reverence for the omnipotence of militarism, of which the holiest symbol is the German uniform.



Picture 2 German postage stamp, 2006

Voigt decided to capitalize on his fame. His wax figure appeared in the wax museum in Unter den Linden four days after his release. He appeared in the museum to sign his pictures but public officials banned the appearances on the same day. He appeared in small theatres in a play that depicted his exploit and signed more photographs as the Captain of Köpenick. In spite of the ban he toured in Dresden, Vienna and Budapest in variety shows, restaurants and amusement parks. In 1909, he published a book in Leipzig, *How I became the Captain of Köpenick*, which sold well. Although his United States tour almost failed because the immigration authorities refused to grant him a visa, he arrived in 1910 via Canada. He also ended up in Madame Tussaud's museum in London. In 1910, he moved to Luxembourg and worked as a waiter and shoemaker. He received a life pension from a rich Berlin dowager. Two years later, he bought a house and retired, but post-World War I inflation ruined his wealth. Voigt died in Luxembourg in 1922.

In 1931 German author Carl Zuckmayer wrote a play about the affair called *The Captain of Köpenick*, which shifts the focus from the event at Köpenick itself to the prelude, showing how his surroundings and his situation in life had helped Voigt form his plan. Several movies were produced about Wilhelm Voigt (most of them based on Zuckmayer's play), among others *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick* with Heinz Rühmann in 1956, with Rudolf Platte in 1960 (TV) and Harald Juhnke in 1997.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Voigt

Hearth is where the heart is...

When asked about their personal, regional and national hearths, the participants of the German group gave the following answers...

“My hearths are...”

Football stadiums. A place where I meet with other people to share traditions, stories and experiences with friends and family.

Barbecues and bonfires. We often spend our summer time with barbecues and bonfires: as children with our families, later with friends and also during camping holidays. The real hearth as a hearth where people meet to share food, songs and stories. Other bonfires also take place in public due to traditions, for example during the Easter period.

Fire places. More and more people decide to go back to their roots and install fire places in their homes. To save money – but also to enjoy the atmosphere and to gather around it with friends and family.

Television channels. Gathering, watching Films and series together and discussing them afterwards, sometimes for hours.

Kindergartens and schools. Singing together, learning about stories and fairy tales.

Children’s room. A place where the generations meet. Parents and grandparents telling, sometimes even inventing stories, reading books or singing for the children.

Public festivals: harvest festivals, carnival, dance into May, bank holidays. Days and occasions where old traditions are practiced and shown, traditions that are out of sight during daily life: traditional costumes and costume groups, shooting clubs, brass bands, parades, ribbon dances, choirs.

Castles and palaces. Places where history is present, where old traditions and stories are livelier and remembered. Good educational concepts for young people are often available at these places.

Flea markets and markets. Exchanging goods, presentation of handmade things and traditions – and exchange of news and stories. Especially in small towns the market is still an important source of information. ☺

Music schools. Places where people can learn about music, playing instruments, discovering stories and traditions by singing and dancing.

Churches and religious organisations. Living in a community, sharing stories and history, practicing old traditions, singing.

Parks. Public places where people meet to share time, stories, food, sports, singing...

Theatre and puppet theatre. A place where stories are told and played, especially fairy tales and Christmas stories.

Public skate parks. Especially for young people, skate parks are often part of their daily routine and a place to meet their peers, to exchange experiences, share time, thoughts and dreams.

Sports clubs and football grounds in the neighborhood. Another important place in everyday life to come together and share your stories with friends.

Cooking sessions. Invitations for cooking and eating together are very common. Very popular are especially meals with a type of hearth: fondue and raclette dinners or the German “Feuerzangenbowle”. All the three of them are often done on New Year’s Eve.

Parlour games meetings. A lot of people meet at their homes to play games together, often in combination with a nice dinner.

When I think of „my hearths“, I inevitably experience a certain **feeling** that responds to:

- my **original family** (parents and brother) and my **own family** – (partner and children)

- **traditional and/ or religious festivities** which we celebrated then (Christmas and Easter) and which we celebrate now (Christmas, Easter, Newroz and Eid)
- good experiences with close **friends**

Hearths in general produce a feeling of **warmth, security and close connection**.

Nature & Time. Still, a very rare but important option of coming close to my inner hearth is **being on my own**, experiencing **nature** and the **seasons** and leaving my calendar far behind in a well-closed bag.

A selection of typical regional or national German hearths or those for certain groups

Allotment garden area. Different people coming together, working during the day on their own and often celebrating together in the evening and at weekends. Sharing a very close neighbourhood.

TV-Programmes. Not all of them, but the ‘classics’. Those that are seen by whole generations. People watch it together or at least talk about it the next day – because everyone was watching the same thing... In Germany ‘Wetten Dass...’ was very famous, today the crime series ‘Tatort’ is very popular. People meet on Sundays at 20.15 with friends to watch and discuss it – at their homes as well as in pubs. Often canapés are served during the event.

Christmas tree. A place where families still spend time together to share traditions.

The parliament.

General worldwide hearths of today could also be Facebook and Twitter – modern ways to share information and stories.

Associazione Culturale ALLELAMMIE Pisticci, Italy

The Monachicchio Story

Who is Monachicchio?



Today it is still possible to speak with elders who say that when they were children, they saw or heard the famous "monachicchio"

The origin of the myth is to be found in the Roman religious, which attributed to some weird figures the protection of the house. With the advent of Christianity, these pagan figures were gradually assimilated, in the popular imagination. The figure of MONACHICCIO (a sort of gnome) is recurrent in cultures of peasant origin.

According to the tradition, the MONACHICCHIO was the spirit of a child who died before receiving baptism, with an handsome face, wearing a little, red hat. He appeared mostly to children like him, and with these he spent much time playing, laughing and chasing each other. He particularly loved chasing each other, as children get a lot of fun trying to take his hat off. Who could, in fact, to snatch it from his head, he began to collect gold coins that fell copiously on the ground with a distinctive ringing.

The monachicchio, as opposed to evil spirits, appeared to the children during the day and at night.

The monachicchio are tiny beings, cheerful, planes, run fast here and there, and their greatest pleasure is to make the people all sorts of mischief.

They tickled under the feet of the sleeping men, pull the sheets off of the beds, throw sand in the eyes, spilling glasses filled with wine, they hide in the draft and do the cards fly and drop the clothes laid out so that they get dirty, remove the chair from under the women sitting, hiding objects in unexpected places, make milk curdle, damage to pinch, pull hair, bite and hiss like mosquitoes.

But they are innocent: their ailments are never serious, always have the appearance of a game, and as far as annoying, not born never anything serious. Their character is a frisky and playful whimsy, and are almost elusive. They bring in a red cap head bigger than themselves: and woe if they lose it. All their happiness disappears and they do not cease to cry and get sad until they have recovered. The only way to defend themselves from their jokes is just looking for them to be grabbed by the hood if you can take it, the poor Moncachicchio without hat, you will jump to the feet, in tears, avoiding to give it back.

The Story

Nicola listened with great interest and curious attention his grandfather, who sat next to the fireplace with a pipe off, dangling between his lips, that told with his hoarse, calm, quiet, voice the ancient history of the Monachiccio. The wealth of details and the precision of the story of his grandfather made a living image to the child's eyes, the image of this character so mysterious that everyone knew that existed but very few lucky ones were able to meet, see and touch.

The Grandpa continued, "he is a small gnome, is not higher than 80 cm, which lives in the woods, perhaps in the dark cavity of some ancient trunk. Nobody has ever been able to find his house or cave, lumberjacks explored in detail every tree, shrub, tree trunk, or root that meet their path.

He dressed in a very unusual way for humans, wearing a chocolate-colored tights, bow-legged and skinny so skinny that he looked like vines, with a large green jacket with gold buttons, with large patches on the elbows, slippers with the tip made of a heavy fabric, which are "en pendant" with his legendary red hat, which falls on his forehead, covered by a white and messy curls.

And then he has a long and curly nose, bushy eyebrows like brushes from where emerge two lively and bright eyes. Nicola said, "Mom that bad! How can you think that it is a fortune to meet a monster like this!"

Grandpa smiled: "I know, the gnome is ugly!! But everyone loves him anyway. You know it happens, it can happen that he often come in, in children's room and we do not know how! He wakes the child up, he talks to him and if the child manages to take his hat off. Well he will find the treasure! like golden coins!!" Nicola was more and more interested in this strange story, and while pretending not to believe in such a fantasy, in his heart began to hope that this little being is also presented by him.

He soon imagined the moves of Monachicchio, and evaluated how fast it would have been to grab his hat, and he was wondering what kind of treasure could have found in there! And, along with all these thoughts full of hope, he walked slowly to his small bed. It fall asleep with the portrait of his new friend in front of his eyes.

He slept soundly, covered up the nose, with a slight smile on his face, when he thought he heard a faint tapping on the window panes.

The room was lit by the white light of the moon, Nicola rubbed his eyes and saw a strange figure gesticulating from outside. Nicola stood up slowly, he put on his slippers, and walked bravely to the window.

As soon as he opened the window, this strange figure turned a somersault and jumped inside, on the bed, on the cabinet, bedside. "Didn't you believe? But you were hoping for! Admit it! Did you dream me to be alive, right?" shrieked with its pungent voice. Nicola could not believe his eyes: he was him!: "It's him! Red hat, tights, pointy slippers! The MONACHICCHIOOO!!"

The child decided that he would have got the hat with the treasure, and they began to chase each other around the room... Nicola fell to the ground exhausted from laughing and from the fatigue, but regarding the red hat he only managed to touch it, and he promised to himself that from that evening on he would have wait up awake all following night! And Nicola since that night is still waiting there!

Pan Del Toni Story

This is a short story about one of the most famous desserts that is prepared during the Christmas time in Italy. The origin is from the North of Italy.

In Italy the old tradition of food brings several stories, and also because food is a strong presence in our life. Actually, it represents the character and variety of the territory, the creativity in cooking and inventing with it, and it has an important social meaning too: it is the channel through which we express our friendliness and we share our time with our family.



PAN DEL TONI

He lived in times long ago, a poor baker's boy named Toni. On Christmas Eve he worked hard to knead bread and "focacce", a kind of Pizza. He was wrecked, his back ached but his day was not over yet. He continued to knead another block of dough and meanwhile he started to prepare at the top of the counter, eggs, raisins, sugar for Christmas cake for the boss and his guests. As for himself, he would spend a sad Christmas at the bedside of his sick mother. While he was cutting the shapes he made a clumsy movement which knocked over the sugar bowl. In an attempt to save the bowl of eggs, raisins and sugar he found himself with bread dough soaked in sugar, eggs and raisins. He had no solution. He restarted to knead with his tears of despair that fell on the large shape which he cut into loaves and put to cook.

When the big loaves, fragrant and soft, came out of the oven, the "Pan de Toni", or "panettone" as the cunning owner immediately christened the bread. The next day when it was sold to the lords of the country, it was a great success and the baker made a roaring trade.

Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences Vilnius, Lithuania

Rasos - Midsummer's Day

Rasos - Midsummer's day signifies the longest day and the shortest night. It is celebrated on the night from the 23rd to 24th of June. It is the beginning of a real, astronomical summer. In Christianity Midsummer's day was identified with the day of St. John and in Lithuania it was given a name "Joninės".

It is celebrated also as a name-day of Jonas (John) and Janina (Jane), so people with such names are greeted and are given wreaths.

Since 2003 "Joninės" is a rest-day (a day off). There were discussions between those who want to separate Christian "Joninės" and the old "Rasos", because in legislative enactments there is only a name "Joninės" mentioned. Today "Joninės" and "Rasos" are used as synonyms.

Every year people gather to a mass Midsummer's Day celebrations in Kernavė on Rambynas Mountain, and in Jonava, which is often called a capital of all people named Jonas and Janina in Lithuania.

In these mass celebrations traditions of "Joninės" and "Rasos" are mixed – the old rituals are imitated, but also everyone named Jonas (John) or Janina(Jane) are congratulated.

It is thought that herbage is at its best on Midsummer's Day, and herbs have the strongest healing powers. Herbage of "Rasos" are chamomiles and St. John's worts. At night girls go to collect herbage, make wreaths and foretell future with them.

The most important herbage of "Joninės" is fem. It is believed that at the night of "Joninės" – only one night during the year and only for a very short moment fem blossoms. The one who finds a blossom of a fem becomes omniscient, but also - for a very short moment. Searching for a blossom of a fem is one of the best known traditions of "Joninės".

Another important element of "Rasos" is rituals of fire. It was believed that fire has purifying qualities, not only physically, but also morally.

At the end of a short night of "Joninės" the long awaited sun comes out – goddess of light, protector of people, animals, and plants. Spells of witches dissipate, fires fade, and life prevails.

P.S. The partners of the LATH project participated in „Joninės“ celebration on the 24th of June, 2013 in Lithuania, Zarasai region.



© Vytautas Daraškevičius "Rasos"

Defending the Hearth and Freedom

On March 11, 1990, Lithuania became the first republic to declare independence after Soviet occupation. After an economic blockade proved unsuccessful in curbing the Lithuanian drive to independence, Soviet troops seized key buildings throughout Vilnius in the early hours of January 13, 1991. Rather than dispersing, Lithuanians from across the country poured into the capital city, ready to defend the country's fragile independence. The only weapon against the Soviet tanks was bear arms and songs of peaceful civilians, who surrounded the Parliament /the Hearth/ and made a huge crowd as a one body. People heard the squeak of the tanks, felt the vibrating ground under their feet, heard a pledge from the loudspeaker coming out the Parliament urging the old, women and children to leave the square, but no one moved an inch from the Hearth. Faced with peaceful but determined resistance, the Soviet troops were defeated. 14 peaceful civilian freedom defenders lost their lives, hundreds were wounded. The Lithuanians' success in defending their independence on January 13, 1991, proved an important further step in the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe.



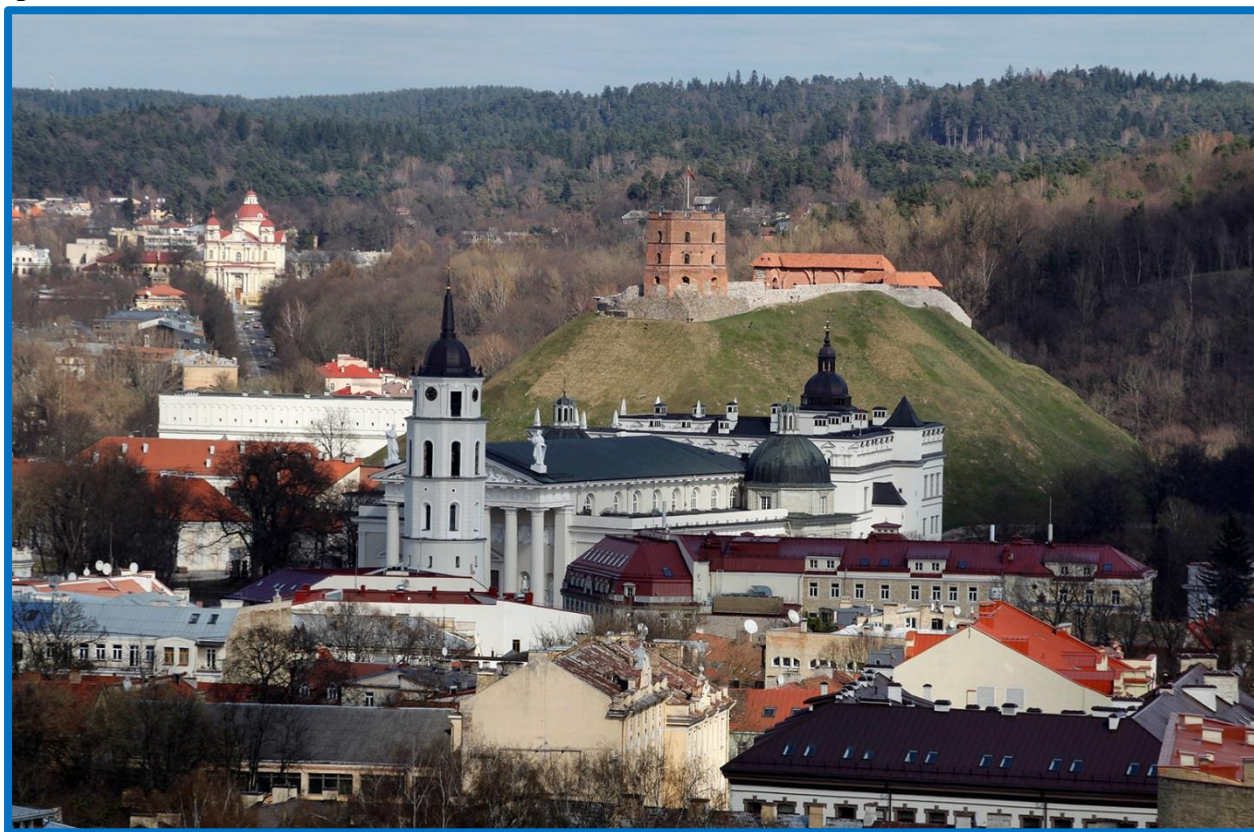
Barricades in front of the Parliament reminding the bloody events of January 13, 1991

A legend about the foundation of Vilnius

Once upon a time the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas hunted in the dense woods, on high hills near the river “Vilnia”. In those ancient times, woods were full of wolves, foxes and bison. Gediminas got tired during the hunting and decided to have a rest. He laid down and fell into deep and calm sleep. This calmness lasted until he started dreaming a dream. The dream of Gediminas looked very weird and mysterious - **he saw a big iron wolf standing on a high hill and howling extremely loudly.**

Gediminas woke up from his nightmare, called the senior prophet Lizdeika and asked him to explain his dream. The pagan prophet was very smart and had a good understanding of dukes' dreams and desires. Lizdeika said to Gediminas:

“Oh my Duke, Your dream means that you will build a castle on that hill and a big city will grow around your castle. Howling of the wolf means the fame of the city that will spread around the world”.



© Vytautas Daraškevičius - Gediminas castle

Gediminas was very pleased to hear such an explanation of his dream and decided to build a castle on the highest hill near the river “Vilnia”. Nearby the castle there was built a town, named Vilnius, which became the capital of Lithuania in 1323.

A legend about amber

This legend is one of the most famous and popular Lithuanian legends and tales.

Goddess, sometimes described as a mermaid, Jūratė (from the noun - jūra, meaning the sea) lived under the Baltic Sea in a beautiful amber castle. She ruled the sea and all the sea life.

A young fisherman Kastytis was disturbing the peace as he was catching a lot of fish in the sea. The Goddess Jūratė decided to punish him and restore the peace, but she fell in love with the handsome young fisherman. They spent some happy time in the castle, but the Thunder God Perkūnas found out that the immortal Goddess had fallen in love with a mortal man.

The Thunder God became furious and struck the amber castle. It exploded into millions of pieces. Then Jūratė was chained to either the ruins or a rock on the sea floor by Perkūnas. According to the legend, that is why pieces of amber come ashore after a storm on the Baltic Sea.

According to the other version, Jūratė rescued Kastytis from drowning in a storm. Kastytis was killed by Perkūnas and Jūratė mourns him to this day. Her tear drops are amber pieces washed ashore and one could hear her voice in a stormy sea.

Traditional food

Lithuanians love their traditional food. Even though in cafes we can find dishes inspired by various countries' cuisines, Lithuanians still consume a lot of potato dishes.

Dishes that now are considered traditional, actually were dishes of peasants in XIX-XX centuries in Lithuania. Almost all traditional dishes are potato dishes. The most popular and traditional food is „cepelinai“ (zeppelins). They are a type of dumpling made from grated potatoes and usually containing ground meat, although sometimes dry cottage cheese (curd) is used instead.

Traditional food - cepelinai

Cepelinai recipe:

Process:

1. Put raw potato gratings in a double cheese cloth, and squeeze dry. Save potato liquid, let potato starch settle at the bottom, decant potato liquid, and mix starch with dry potato gratings.

2. Rice boiled potatoes, and add to raw grated potatoes; salt and blend well. (Adding several crushed vitamin C pills at this point can prevent potato discoloration.) Take about 1/2 cup potato mixture and flatten, making a round form. Place a spoonful of filling mixture (recipes below) in center of the round, fold over, seal seam, and make into an oblong shape.

3. Put "zeppelins" into boiling water, and cook for about 30 min., stirring gently.



Beef or Pork Filling

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 9 ounce ground meat (beef, pork, or a mixture of both)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon marjoram

Meat-filled cepelinai are served with fried bacon bits or with melted butter and sour cream. Pork is the traditional meat filling for cepelinai – rather fat, cut from the shoulder. A mixture of pork and fat is also used. Sauté onion, and add to the ground meat. Season with salt, pepper, and marjoram. Blend well.

Cottage Cheese Filling

Farmer's cheese cepelinai are eaten with melted butter, sour cream, or fried bacon bits.

- 9 ounces farmer's cheese
- 1 ounce bacon, finely chopped and fried
- 1 ounce butter

LATH Learning at the Hearth

- 1 tablespoon sour cream
- 1 egg, beaten
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon French tarragon or peppermint

Blend farmer's cheese with fried bacon, add butter, sour cream, egg, salt, and herbs. Mix well.

Asociația de părinți a elevilor Liceului cu Program Sportiv Suceava, Romania

Sanziene or Summer Solstice

Every year, on 24th of June, Romanians celebrate the holiday of Sanziene, or the summer solstice.

The legend says that in long lost times, the Sanziene used to be priestesses of the Sun, but as their believes are lost in considered beneficial fairies that the Sanziene celebration of the Sun, 24th June, the Sanziene, of their hiding places and the Sanziene dance, the filled with healing



The Sanziene Night, of the most magical nights the worlds is at its thinnest

The people believe that in this night the fairies are flying through the air or walking on land, singing and dancing, bringing love, healing and protecting the grains. The legend says that if people don't celebrate the fairies as it is meant to, the fairies get upset and punish the unbelievers.

The Sanziene celebration is a good night for love, where young people meet to sing and dance. In the evening, the young unmarried men of the villages light big fires and with torches dances around them replicating the movement of the Sun while singing:

"Go Sun, Come Moon/ Good Fairies/ May the flowers grow the flower/ Yellow and sweet smelling/ For the girls to harvest it/ To make it into wreaths/ To wear on the hats/ Flowers for marriages/ The old women to spell them/ To get married by the autumn".

The young unmarried women go to the forest and pick up the Sanziene flowers to create wreaths which they throw on the house roofs. If the wreaths get stuck on the roof is a sign that the maiden will marry before the following year is ended. The flowers are yellow, tiny, highly used in natural remedies.

In the morning, the young men get together and walk around the villages wearing flowers on their hats. They choose the maiden that will represent the fairy. The maiden is chosen from a group of seven girls and she has to be not only the most beautiful, but also the one with the nicest character. Once chosen, the maiden, a Sanziana now, has wheat added to her hair and surrounded by the other girls, dressed in white, walk around the villages and the fields, stopping to sing and dance in the places where paths intersect.

The elders of the villages say that the maidens that wish to marry fast need to wash themselves in the dew from the flowers on the morning of Sanziene. For it to work, however, the girls need to respect some traditions: before sunrise, in places where no human stepped over, the old women harvest the Sanziene dew in a white container, in new cotton. Walking back home,

the women can not talk at all and are not allowed to meet anyone in their path. If these conditions are met, the ones that wash in the dew are said to be healthy, beautiful and lucky in love over the year. Married women can attend this ritual, in order to be loved by their husbands and to have beautiful and healthy children.

Sanziene is a very magical celebration, with strong roots in Paganism. Being considered the middle of the summer, it is the best time to harvest healing plants that are to be later used in magical practices. The rituals are connected to harvest, fecundity and healing practices and even today are a fascinating mix of paganism and witchcraft with slim christian undertones.

The Sanziene holiday is a celebration of love, connected to both the Sun and the Moon. Rituals start at dawn and continue through the middle of the day, dusk and the middle of the night under the clear light of the Moon. At the Solstice, as the Sun dances in the sky, down, on Earth, the women connect in the Sanziene dance. As above so below. In this day of balance between two time intervals, the villages practice rituals for fertility, protection and healing. Many rituals are lost or changed, but one can still feel the magic of a long lost time.



Source: <http://terradacicaaeterna.blogspot.ro/2012/02/sanziene-or-summer-solstice.html>

My grandma's story about land

I remember how many stories I heard from my grandma. My grandmother had got a beautiful garden with flowers and vegetables. Early in the morning she took care about everything in the garden. For her the land was a story but a real story. She told me what important is our land and why. I remember the story about flowers and how could these plants help us when we need. The land was the main source of living in the past and its richness help us in our evolution. My grandmother was very careful and kind and she loved her piece of land. Later, I understood what she said and why. In my heart I have that piece of love for my land – my grandmother's love for land. It is like a legacy but it comes from heart to heart.

For my grandma, for her love for land, every year I try to plant a tree. This tree means that I never forgot her love and kindness.

Îmi amintesc cu emoție poveștile bunicii mele despre pământul nostru. Pentru bunica mea pământul era o poveste. Tot timpul îmi spunea ce darnic este dacă îl îngrijești și faptul că niciodată nu rămâi nerăsplătit. Pentru foarte mulți dintre bunicii noștri pământul a reprezentat un bun sacru și asta i-a ajutat să trăiască. Pământul, în literatura română, este văzut ca avere și chiar de multe ori a provocat tragedii. Bunica mea nu vedea lucrurile așa. Tot timpul spunea că „lăcomia strică omenia” iar pământul nu are nicio legătură cu asta. Grădina bunicii era un colț de rai în care florile și legumele erau din abundență. Tot timpul se trezea la ora 5 să ude grădina și să o îngrijească. Am înțeles ce dorea bunica să-mi transmită mai târziu dar bunica nu mai era. Bătrânii noștri aveau un adevărat cult pentru pământul care îi hrănea iar bunica mi-a transmis asta de la inimă la inimă. E o moștenire care nu constă doar într-o bucată de pământ, e mai mult decât atât, e un bun imaterial – o valoare de suflet.

În fiecare an mă străduiesc să plantez un copac pe care pământul să-l accepte în memoria bunicii mele. Asta înseamnă că nu am uitat valorile pe care mi le-a transmis.

Lacramioara-Tatiana Clucerescu

Recipes from Bukovina Region, Romania

Rădăuțeană soup

Ingredients:

- 2 pieces of chicken breast
- 2 carrots
- 2 parsley roots
- 1 green pepper
- 1 medium onion
- 3 tablespoons of vinegar
- 2 egg yolks
- 500 g cream
- 1 tablespoon of flour
- salt
- chopped herbs
- 5 garlic cloves



Preparation:

Boil the chicken breast with a little salt, remove foam during boiling. After the meat was boiled and the flesh is removed, add the chopped vegetables. After the vegetables were boiled, sour the soup with vinegar, add the egg yolks mixed with white flour and beaten with cream, then put the garlic cloves. It may allow it to boil for about 10 minutes, then add the salt and the fresh herbs and then remove from the heat.

Serving:

Serve hot Rădăuțeană soup with toast and hot pepper.

Pancakes from Bukovina

Ingredients

For the filling:

- 500 g of cheese
- 2 eggs
- vanilla extract
- 5 tablespoons of sugar
- lemon
- cream
- butter



For Vanilla sauce:

- 500 ml of milk
- 3 egg yolks
- 100 g of sugar

- 1 tablespoon of flour
- vanilla extract

Preparation

Prepare the pancakes after the usual recipe, mix all ingredients well, fill the pancakes and put them in a greased pan with butter. Above put the cream and introduce the pan in the oven for 40 -50 minutes.



In the meantime prepare the vanilla sauce. Put the milk on a low heat, separately beat the egg yolks with the sugar, add the flour and pour the milk composition when it begins to boil. Stir continuously until sauce is thickened and remove it to a cool place.

When the pancakes are ready pour over the vanilla sauce, sprinkle with cinnamon and they are ready to eat.

Eggplant salad of Bukovina

Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 2 eggplants
- oil
- mayonnaise



Preparation

You bake eggplant. After the eggplants were baked, remove them, sprinkle them with salt and cover with a towel, meanwhile prepare mayonnaise if you have not bought! Add a boiled yolk, few drops of lemon, salt, a tablespoon of cold water and stir in one direction always adding a little oil! Then cut the onion very finely. When finished, remove the eggplant peel them and beat them with a knife. Once you have finished, add chopped onions and stir well, add the mayonnaise and the spices!

Serving

Serve the salad on slices of bread!

Tomato soup with noodles

Ingredients

- 1 kg of tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 1 green pepper
- parsley
- dill
- a handful of noodles
- sugar

- oil
- salt and pepper

Preparation

- peel onions and peppers, cut into small pieces and fry;
- tomatoes are washed, grated, add onion and pepper, let it boil for 10-15 minutes, stirring constantly, then pour 2 l of water and let it boil; Add the noodles, sugar, pepper and the salt. Sprinkle chopped green herbs.

Rădăuteana cake

Ingredients

- 600-620 g of flour
- 5 eggs
- 600 ml of milk
- 525-560 g of sugar
- 450 g butter
- 4 tablespoons of cocoa
- 1 tablespoon of ammonia
- 1/2 sachet of baking powder
- 4 tablespoons of semolina
- peeled lemon and lemon juice
- 5 tablespoons of powdered sugar



Preparation

- beat an egg with powdered sugar, then add 1 tablespoon of cocoa, 125g butter, ammonia, then put 500 g of flour and make 2 sheets which will be baked on the back pan
- separately beat 4 egg whites, adding gradually, 4 tablespoons of sugar, stir it until it hardens well, add egg yolks and 4 tablespoons of flour mixed with baking powder; the composition will be baked in pan ;
- Boil 500 ml of milk, pour semolina, cook until thickened, 250 g butter, 200 g sugar, add the lemon juice, then the semolina and stir until it turns into a cream
- Prepare a glaze: Boil 3 tablespoons of water, 3 tablespoons of sugar, 3 tablespoons of cocoa, add 100 g of butter and stir quickly to homogenize the mixture till it is still hot
- Baked sheets are assembled: a brown sheet, cream, a yellow sheet, cream, and brown sheet and the glaze.

Escuela de Formación UNOAUNO Merida, Spain

The Language of the Hand Fan (Abanico)



We would like to share this curiosity with you:

During a certain period of time (century XIX and beginning of the XX), the fan became an ideal instrument of communication in an age on which freedom of speech for women was absolutely restricted. The main gestures and their respective meanings that together configured what it was known as “the language of the hand fan” were:

To hold the fan with the right hand in front of the face: Follow me.

To hold it in the left ear: I want you to leave me alone.

To let slide it on the forehead: You have changed.

To move it with the left hand: They are watching us.

To change it to the right hand: You are imprudent.

To throw the fan: I hate you.

To move it with the right hand: I love another.

To let slide it on the cheek: I want you.

To hold it closed: Do you love me?

To let slide it on the eyes: Go away, please.

To touch the edge of the hand fan with the fingers: I want to talk to you.

To hold it on the right cheek: Yes.

To hold it on the left cheek: No.

To open and close it: You are cruel.

To leave it hanging: We will continue being friends.

To fan slowly: I am married.

To fan quickly: I am engaged.

To hold the fan in the lips: Kiss me.

To open it slowly: Wait for me.

To open the hand fan with the left hand: Come and talk to me.

To strike it, closed, on the left hand: Write to me.

To semiclose it in the right and on the left: I cannot.

To hold it opened, covering the mouth: I am single.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village sheep. To amuse himself he took a great breath and sang out, "Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is chasing the sheep!"

The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces.

"Don't cry 'wolf', shepherd boy," said the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went grumbling back down the hill.

Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the wolf away.

When the villagers saw no wolf they sternly said, "Save your frightened song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO wolf!"

But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once more.

Later, he saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he leaped to his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!"

But the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come.

At sunset, everyone wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They went up the hill to find the boy. They found him weeping.

"There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, "Wolf!" Why didn't you come?"

An old man tried to comfort the boy as they walked back to the village.

"We'll help you look for the lost sheep in the morning," he said, putting his arm around the youth, "Nobody believes a

liar...even when he is telling the truth!"



Sources:

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-QAm2WWQjaFk/T4g1eFnbzjI/AAAAAAAAA2M/yxZtiwgaNh8/s1600/que++viene+el+lobo.png)

[QAm2WWQjaFk/T4g1eFnbzjI/AAAAAAAAA2M/yxZtiwgaNh8/s1600/que++viene+el+lobo.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-QAm2WWQjaFk/T4g1eFnbzjI/AAAAAAAAA2M/yxZtiwgaNh8/s1600/que++viene+el+lobo.png)

<http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/boy.html>

The King and the Wine

There was once a king in a small country with a kingdom full of vineyards which all his subjects were engaged in the manufacture of wine.

Exported to other countries and the 15,000 families who lived in this kingdom made enough money to live quite well, pay taxes and afford some luxuries.

The King spent several years studying the finances of the kingdom. The monarch was fair and understanding, and did not like "the feeling of touching the pockets of the people." The king was studying the possibility of reducing or eliminating taxes.

One day he had the great idea. The king decided to abolish the tax, but as the only contribution to cover the costs of the state, the King would ask each of his subjects once a year at the time be packed wines, from approaching the palace with a one-liter jar of the best of their harvest, which would drain into a large barrel to be built for that purpose and be ready for that date.

From the sale of these 15,000 liters of wine would get the money for the budget of the crown, the costs of health and education of the people. The news spread quickly through the kingdom into factions and putting up posters in the main streets of the cities. The joy of the people was indescribable.

In all houses praised the king and sang songs in his honor. In each tavern raised their glasses and toasted the health and long life of the good king. And finally came the day of the contribution. All this week in neighborhoods and markets, squares and churches, people are remembered and recommended one another not to miss the appointment.

Civic awareness would be the equitable remuneration to the sovereign grand gesture. Early on, began to arrive from all over the kingdom with their entire families jar. One by one they climbed the long staircase to the top of the huge royal cask, pouring his tankard and down another staircase at the foot of which, the treasurer of the kingdom placed on the lapel of every farmer, a shield with the seal of the king.

By mid-afternoon, when the last of the farmers emptied her pitcher, it was learned that no one had missed. The huge 15,000 liter barrel was full, from first to last of the subjects had spent time in the gardens and emptying their mugs in the barrel.

The king was proud and satisfied, and at sunset, when the people gathered in the square outside the palace, the king went to his balcony acclaimed for its people. Everyone was happy. In a beautiful crystal glass heritage of their ancestors, the king sent for a sample collected wine. With the cup on the way, the ruler spoke to them and said:

"My dear and wonderful people: As I figured, everyone in the kingdom have been today in the palace. I am proud and pleased to share with you the joy of the crown, to confirm that the people's loyalty to their king, is like the king's loyalty to his people and I can not think of a better tribute we provide for you with the first glass of this wine, which will undoubtedly be a nectar of the gods, the sum of the best grapes in the world, made by the best hands in the world and irrigated with the greatest good of the kingdom, love the people."



All the king wept and cheered. One of the servants brought the cup to the latter, which rose to toast the people applauding euphoric ... but the surprise stopped his hand in the air, the king noticed when lifting the cup which was transparent and colorless liquid, slowly it came his nose, trained to smell the best wines, and confirmed that it had no odor.

Taster as it was, took the cup to his mouth almost automatically and sipped. Had no taste wine wine, or anything else ...! The king sent for a second glass of wine from the barrel, then another and finally to take a sample from the top edge. But to no avail, everything was the same: odorless, colorless and tasteless.

They were urgently called alchemists of the kingdom to analyze the composition of the wine. The conclusion was unanimous: The barrel was filled with WATER, pure water and one hundred percent water.

Then the king sent and gathered together all the wise men and magicians of the kingdom, to urgently seek an explanation for this mystery. What spell, chemical reaction or spell had happened to the wine mixture is transformed into water? Asked.

The oldest of his government ministers came and whispered in her ear: "Miracle? Sorcery?? Alchemy?? None of that, majesty, nothing like that. Your subjects are human, your majesty, that's all. "

"I do not understand" said the king.

"Take for instance one of his subjects, anyone who has a huge vineyard covering from the mountain to the river. The grapes are harvested from the best strains of the kingdom and its wine is sold first and the best price. This morning, when his family was preparing to go down to town, an idea came into his head ...

What if I put water instead of wine, who could tell the difference?

A single jug of water at 15,000 liters of wine, nobody would know the difference. None! ... And no one would have noticed, except for one detail, majesty, except for one detail:

THOUGHT ALL THE SAME!

Source:

http://www.elmistico.com.ar/descarga/jorgebucay/recuentos_para_demian/por_una_jarra_de_vino17.htm

Interacting UK Ltd. Stockton-on-Tees, United Kingdom

Belfast Stories



The skyline, Harland and Wolfe

Some years back when the city decided to reinvent itself as a tourist destination, the powers that be decided that the cranes of the shipyard were to be part of the official skyline of Belfast and therefore protected for posterity. There has been talk for some years of how to make the most of these monuments to the age of shipbuilding and the Titanic industry. One idea is to convert the sliding red control office at the top into a restaurant for the adventurous.

The official names for the cranes are Samson and Goliath, biblical giants to satisfy the deep religion of the city. In their day they were the most powerful lifting machines in the world and were used in the fitting together of the massive super tankers that carried oil through the world's oceans in the 1970s.

As a boy growing up on the outskirts of the city through the years of the troubles we used to travel as a family to the city centre for a Saturday treat and my father would proudly tell us of the achievements of the yard, the quality of our engineering and workmanship, the Titanic and the ballad of William Bloat. My sisters, Heather and Wendy took great delight in claiming that the massive H and W, standing for the firm that owned the yard Harland and Wolff, actually stood for Heather and Wendy and that I was not represented and would have to lift and carry my own suitcase around the world.

The Ballad of William Bloat

In a mean abode on the Shankill Road
Lived a man named William Bloat;
He had a wife, the curse of his life,
Who continually got his goat.
So one day at dawn, with her nightdress on
He slit her bloody throat.

With a razor gash he settled her hash
Never was crime so slick
But the drip drip drip on the pillowslip
Of her lifeblood made him sick.
And the knee-deep gore on the bedroom floor
Grew clotted and cold and thick.

And yet he was glad he had done what he had
When she lay there stiff and still
But a sudden awe of the angry law
Struck his heart with an icy chill.
So to finish the fun so well begun
He resolved himself to kill.

He took the sheet from the wife's coul' feet
And twisted it into a rope
And he hanged himself from the pantry shelf,
'Twas an easy end, let's hope.
In the face of death with his latest breath
He solemnly cursed the Pope.

But the strangest turn to the whole concern
Is only just beginning.
He went to Hell but his wife got well
And she's still alive and sinnin',
For the razor blade was German made
But the sheet was Belfast linen.

The Yorkshire Pudding

Once upon a time in a little village, in the Yorkshire Dales near the town of Reeth, when the main occupation was either farming or mining for lead and copper, there at the edge of the village lived an old lady in a small dilapidated cottage. One day she was making pancakes on the old griddle over the fire, when a knock came at the door. On opening it, she was greeted to a wonderful smile from a bedraggled young woman, who looked quite worn and tired, with her torn clothes and no shoes.

The young woman asked for food, and said everyone in the village had turned her away or set their dogs on her. The old lady listened to her story and invited her in, saying that she herself was very poor, but her guest was welcome to share her pancakes.

The young woman looked at the pancakes, which were rather well cooked, burned on one side and almost inedible. Smiling, she said to the old woman. "Please fetch me two eggs from your chickens, some fresh milk from your cow and you already have flour, I'll cook you something special for you."

The old lady eagerly fetched the requested ingredients but could not imagine what would be made with these ingredients other than pancakes? The young woman bade the old lady to go outside and come back in about half an hour.

When she returned, there on the table was the fluffiest lightest, golden brown battercakes you could ever imagine, the like of which the old lady in her many long years cooking had never seen before. Their taste was exquisite and they melted on the tongue. But the young woman was nowhere to be found, and the old lady had sat by the door for the full half hour, yet she had simply disappeared! Beside the plate was a note, which read, "I am your guardian angel, I was sent by God to test the people in your village for their kindness and charity. You were the only one to show me any pity. So for your kindness and generosity I've left you the recipe for these puddings. I wish for you a long and prosperous life. God Bless and keep you from all harm."

The old lady took the recipe and made a batch of small puddings and sold them at her local market, they were a great success; she couldn't make enough of them. She became prosperous for the rest of her days.

So now you know how the first Yorkshire Pudding was made with love by an Angel. And this is the Angel's recipe!

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 175 grams plain flour
- ¼ litre milk
- 2 medium eggs
- A pinch of salt and pepper
- 25 grams of fat from the meat or lard

Method:

Put the flour, 2 eggs, salt, pepper and milk into a bowl and beat into a thick batter mixture, beat out the lumps and beat well. Leave to stand a few minutes then beat again. Then take a large, baking or roasting tin and put the fat or lard in it and place in a very hot oven for approx. 3 minutes. (Alternative to the large baking tin you can use cake tins and bake a dozen or small sized Yorkshire puddings.)

The fat should be sizzling hot. Now pour in the batter mix. Do not let the fat cool, put straight back into the oven. Keep the temperature on 200 degrees and cook for about 25 minutes or until golden brown. Do not open the oven door within the first 15 minutes of cooking; this is the pudding's critical raising period, and opening the oven door will cause the pudding not to rise properly.

Traditionally Yorkshire puddings were eaten on their own with gravy as a starter and were intended to take the edge off hungry appetites and make the meat go further but as the years went by they were included into the main course of the Traditional English Sunday dinner with roast beef, mashed potatoes, vegetables and gravy.

The Giant's Causeway

A long, long, long time ago in the Land of Ireland there lived a very large person called Fionn mac Cumhaill, in English transcribed as Finn MacCool. You and I would call him a Giant. He had giant hands and giant feet and giant legs and giant arms and giant everything.

Ulster is the most Northern of Ireland's ancient kingdoms. Its landscape is fabulously beautiful – it has towering cliffs and rocky hills, winding rivers and scooped-out lakes that look like they could have been made by the hands of giants.

There are many stone tombs here, five thousand years old, made of enormous boulders that could not possibly be lifted by one man, or even a whole family of ordinary men. For many years the local people have named them "Giant's Graves"

Stories are told of one great Irish Giant, Finn MacCool, whose most fearsome enemies were the giants who lived in Scotland. Finn was so angry, and determined to get at them, that he built a whole causeway from Ulster across the sea via the Island of Staffa to Scotland. He built it out of unusual six-sided cobblestones, so they would fit neatly together like a honeycomb, and they made a very pretty pavement indeed! At high tide it was covered by the sea but at low tide one could walk dry shod across from Ireland to Scotland.

One day after drinking a wee bit too much of his home-made pocheon (Uisk away – the water of life) he roared a challenge to the Scottish giant Benandonner, The Red Man, to cross the causeway and fight him. But as soon as he saw the Scot getting closer and closer on the causeway, he realised Benandonner was much, much bigger than he had imagined! Finn skidaddled back home to County Kildare, and told his wife he'd picked a fight but now thought better of it.

Finn heard the stamping feet of Benandonner from Kilcock, ten miles away and when those feet got to Robertstown, 5 miles away, Finn had to stuff two kilos of moss into each ear. Red Man's spear was as tall and thick as a man, and he used it to knock on the door of the Fort-of-Allen. Finn would not answer the door, so his wife shoved him in the great bath with a couple of sheets over him and a big lace bonnet on his head so that he looked like an enormous baby. "Suck your thumb!" She instructed him. "Yes Mammy!" Said Finn.

Finn's wife, Oonagh, thought quickly. She opened the door to Benandonner saying, "Sure it's a pity but Finn is away hunting deer in County Kerry. Would you like to come in anyway and wait? I'll show you into the Great Hall to sit down after your journey." Oonagh invited Red Man to look around the room, and showed him what she said were some of Finn's prized possessions.

"Would you like to put your spear down? Just there next to Finn's" - It was a huge fir tree with a pointed stone at the top.

"Over there is Finn's shield." - It was a block of building-oak as big as four chariot-wheels.

"Finn's late for his meal. Will you eat it if I cook for you his favourite?"

Oonagh cooked a cake of griddle-bread – baked with the iron griddle pressed inside it. Red Man bit it hungrily, and broke three front teeth. The meat was a strip of hard fat nailed to a block of red timber; two back teeth cracked. He was given a five-gallon bucket of honey-beer to drink. "Would you like to say hello to the baby? Wait! - I'll have to feed her first!"

Oonagh threw a loaf of bread to the huge baby in the bath-cradle and, peeping out from a huge sheet-like dress and bonnet was Finn MacCool himself, pretending to be a baby and contentedly sucking his thumb. Benandonner said “I m noo muck guid wi wee uns” he wasn’t much good with babies. The honey-beer made him feel woozy, and he asked to go outside to clear his head.

Oonagh showed Red Man out. The gardens were scattered about with boulders as tall as the giant.

“Finn and his friends play catch with these rocks. Finn practises by throwing one over the Fort, then running round to catch it before it falls.”

Of course Red Man tried, but it was so heavy he could only just lift it above his head before dropping it. The blow only ricked his neck - luckily the Scotsman’s head was very hard. But his head was also full of good sense. He thanked Oonagh for her hospitality and said he could wait no longer, but return to Scotland before the tide came in and he got his feet wet.

After the Scot had departed, Finn leapt from the cradle, thanked Oonagh for her shrewdness, and chased Benandonner out of Ireland. Passing Portadown, County Antrim, Finn scooped a huge clod of earth out of the ground to fling at the retreating Scot. The hole filled up with water and became the biggest Lough in Ireland – Lough Neagh! The clod he flung missed its target and landed in the middle of the Irish Sea – it became The Isle of Man!

And both giants tore up the Giant’s Causeway, just leaving the ragged ends at the two shores! And if you go to the North coast of Ulster, or to Staffa, the island near the Holy Isle of Iona, you may visit them today – the ends of the beautiful causeway, not the giants – because they are long since in their graves!



The Emu Poem

This poem was written *one* summer evening in Lithuania during a meeting of the partnership where we celebrated St John's Day. It was a spontaneous creation by *Ben Borowiecki and Charis Charalambous* which they recited to the group as we sat on the lake shore, near the very centre of Europe, waiting for sunset and the bonfire party to begin.

I want to tell a story about a deadly emu
So fellows pay attention
I know it might sound very strange
But I swear it's not an invention

So here is how it goes
And imagine if you can
That one day I was walking
To find an emu clan

My goal was very clear
And I had to succeed
So I called for my trusty noble horse
And I climbed upon the steed

My girlfriend said I'm crazy
Emus don't exist
But as you know I am a man
And know I must insist

So into the emu farm I rode
To find a flying creature
To prove her wrong and, at the same time
Take a pretty picture

I looked and looked for nights and days
But nothing was in sight
And just as I was about to quit
I found a cave and went inside

The cave was dark and cold and wet
At first it gave me shivers
It looked the result of a tidal shift
And erosion from the rivers

Suddenly, from the deepest shadow
A huge cry bellowed out

My heart beat fast, and I was scared
But I yelled back, "I won't bail out!"

I'll find my emu
And it will fly, tear away across the sky
And when this happens and I am done
I'll sit with a beer beneath the sun

So come and face me, scary sound
And then you'll see that I won't turn around
Or run away, or hide in fear
Because I will find you, I know you're here

Before you know it
the creature came
He was certainly an emu
I knew it's breed, I knew it's name

Welcome Mindigaudish
Come and meet my sword
Beware I won't show pity
Your death is my reward

But first a photo, I had to take one
And bring it home to prove it
The blinding light from my camera bulb
Had worked, and before I knew it

It cried again, and took my ears
My horse became upset
But I remained calm and finished the job
I threw a rope around its neck to keep it as a pet

Not just a photo, I had the proof
To show beyond all doubt
The emu lived, and I was right
I'd gone and sought it out

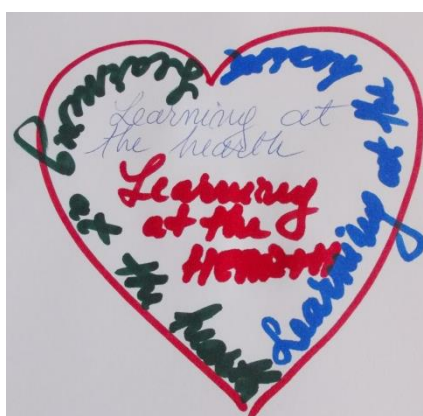
And now with glory I go back home
My new friend striding behind me
I hope my girlfriend doesn't mind
He is quite big and slimy

So come my friends, come and see

That I have been victorious
Mindigaudish will wait for you in the yard
In the sunlight he is glorious

You're probably wondering what it is,
The moral in the end
It's that with time and patience my greatest fear
Became my greatest friend

Logos proposed by the partners as Partnership Logo



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