

“Blini”

Они хранили в жизни мирной
Привычки милой старины;
У них на масленице жирной
Водились русские блины.
А.С. Пушкин

In peaceful life they protected
Sweet olden-time traditions;
With them on fatty Maslenitsa
Was always the Russian blin
A.S. Pushkin



Dear guests!

We cordially invite you to join us for Blini! That is time to say goodbye to winter and greet the coming spring! That is time for joyful songs to be heard, traditional dances to be flown as a part of pre-Lenten celebration.

FEBRUARY 14TH, 2010, SUNDAY– THE LAST DAY OF THE WEEK OF MASLENITSA, THE SISTERHOOD OF ST. VLADIMIR RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IS ORGANIZING “BLINI” – IN THE PARISH HOUSE AFTER THE END OF THE D. LITURGY.

This year Blini coincide with the Feast of THE MEETING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE. Join us for Divine Liturgy worship at 9.30 am that day too.

All of you are welcome to bring your special, delicious home-made Blini and whatever else you would like.

For the parishioners that like to sing and dance:

Please, you are very welcome to bring your guitars or other instruments. You can also dress in traditional Russian costumes and bring traditional Russian craft souvenirs.

Let us sing and enjoy this truly Russian holiday!

For our American and non-Russian Fellows:

What Is/Are Blini?

Blini are small, usually buckwheat pancakes which originally come from Russia. Round and golden, they are made from the rich foods still allowed by the Orthodox tradition before the Great Lent: butter, eggs, and milk. Classically they are served with butter, sour cream, honey, jam, black or red caviar, fillet of sturgeon or salmon.



“Maslenitsa” (Butter, Cheesefare Week)



*Maslenitsa, Boris Kustodiev, 1919
(Isaak Brodsky Museum, St. Petersburg).*

Blini are the most characteristic food of “Maslenitsa” week, popularly taken to symbolize the sun. “Maslo” in Russian means butter - that’s why the name Maslenitsa.

According to the Russian Orthodox tradition “Maslenitsa” is the last week before the onset of Great Lent. During Maslenitsa week, meat is already forbidden to Orthodox Christians, making it a myasopustnaya nedelya (Russian: мясопустная неделя, English “meat-empty week” or “meat-fast week”). As you all know during Great Lent, meat, fish, dairy products and eggs are forbidden. Furthermore, Great Lent also excludes parties, secular music, dancing and other distractions from the spiritual life. Thus, Maslenitsa represents the last chance to partake of dairy products and those social activities that are not appropriate during the more prayerful, sober and introspective Lenten season. The last day (Sunday) is the day of forgiveness - a day where people ask for forgiveness and forgive each other.

Sunday of Forgiveness

The last day of Cheesefare Week is called "Forgiveness Sunday", indicating the desire for God's forgiveness that lies at the heart of Great Lent. At Vespers on Sunday evening, all the people ask forgiveness of one another, and thus Great Lent begins. Another name for Forgiveness Sunday is "Cheesefare Sunday," because for devout Orthodox Christians, it is the last day on which dairy products may be consumed until Pascha. The day following Cheesefare Sunday is called Clean Monday, because everyone has confessed their sins, asked forgiveness, and begun Great Lent with a clean slate.

Originally, before the Orthodox practice, Maslenitsa was a week long festival and was based on the pagan ancient tradition of bidding farewell to the cold and gloomy winter and welcoming the fresh and sunny spring. Russians believe that spring is a season of celebrations and festivities where the old is washed away. The first day is related to greetings, the second to singing and dancing, the third is sweet tooth's day, the fourth is the lavish day, the fifth day is when the son in-laws invite their mother in-laws for a treat, the sixth day sees the daughter in-laws inviting her in laws for a party. The last day a straw doll dressed up in colorful scarves and skirts is burnt symbolizing the winter. This is an ancient tradition, dating back to before the beginning of Russian Orthodox Church tradition.

So, during all these seven days of Maslenitsa the Russians eat blini. Good blini is very thin, the thinner the blini the perfect the skill is.

