

A scenic view of a Bulgarian town, likely Sofia, with a church tower in the foreground and hills in the background. The town is densely packed with buildings, and the hills in the background are covered in greenery. The sky is clear and blue.

CULTUREGUIDE **BULGARIA**

SERIES 1
SECONDARY (7–12)



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
KENNEDY CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

BULGARIA CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the International Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

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WHY STUDY CULTURES?

For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.¹

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established International Outreach as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 *gratis* cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty eMACs, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

CultureGuides share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try to “make culture real.”² Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

¹ Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

² *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

TRADITIONS

BABA MARTA

Bulgaria's history is filled with a variety of rich traditions, some of which date back to pagan times. Many of these traditions, like *Baba Marta*, or Grandma March, are still celebrated today. Every year on 1 March, Bulgarians greet each other with wishes for health and happiness. As they do so, they exchange specially prepared *martenitzi* as a token of their good will. This tradition is related to one of Bulgaria's oldest pagan traditions. It is also a symbol of the end of the cold winter and the coming of spring. Baba Marta is unique to Bulgaria and an important part of the Bulgarian culture.



Starting Points

1. Hold up a spool of white yarn and a spool of red yarn. Discuss what the colors could symbolize. Find out why students perceive the colors differently. Show the students the pictures of the martenitzi (see **Traditions Visual 1**). Explain that Bulgarians make these tokens of happiness for friends and relatives.
2. Discuss with the class if Americans have a similar tradition of people making gifts to express their care for others. What do gifts symbolize to the students?
3. Because they were in bondage for so many centuries, it was very hard for the Bulgarians to keep their national identity and traditions. However, Baba Marta is a tradition that Bulgarians have held throughout their history. Explain that this is an important part of the Bulgarian culture and identity.



Information

Traditions and Superstitions in Bulgaria

Many Bulgarian customs and traditions originate from ritualistic and superstitious rites and practices. Dating back to 681 C.E., Bulgaria was a collection of many separate and distinct tribes, including the Bulgar tribe. Each of these tribes brought their own customs and traditions. The influence of these customs is still seen today in the frequent references to good luck and superstitions. Throughout Bulgaria's existence, these practices have become a part of the practice of Christianity.

Some traditions incorporate both Christian ideals and ancient rituals. One of these traditions is the wearing of martenitzi. Martenitzi are red and white threaded ornaments that are woven together. Each year during the month of Baba Marta, Bulgarians of all ages wear martinitzi on their wrists, lapels, and shirt pockets. Each martenitza (the singular form of martenitzi) means something different to each person. Although many of the superstitions and beliefs about martenitzi differ, the history of their origin is generally accepted.

The Origin of Baba Marta

During the nineteenth century, Bulgaria was struggling to free itself from the Ottoman Empire's occupation. One of Bulgaria's main armies found itself in a predicament—they were in a fort surrounded by a relentless Turkish army. The soldiers had been fighting for many days, their food and provisions were nearly gone, and their strength was diminishing. The Bulgarian soldiers, having run out of bullets, resorted to throwing dead soldiers from the top of the wall in order to deter would-be captors. No help was in sight, and the weary soldiers began to give up the little hope they had. As a final attempt, the leader of the army devised a plan that would give them more time and also provide the aid they desperately needed.

Knowing that the opposing army was keeping a careful watch, the leader of the Bulgarian soldiers decided to trick the enemy. He tied a piece of white cloth to the ankle of a trained messenger eagle, assuming that the bird would not be shot down if it carried a message of Bulgarian surrender. He also tucked a small note under its wing. The note asked for help to be sent to the struggling Bulgarian army. Not to be tricked, the Turkish army shot at the brave eagle, which avoided all but one bullet. Wounded but not dead, the eagle made its way to a nearby Bulgarian army reserve. When they saw the white cloth with a streak of red blood through the middle, they rushed to rescue the small, weary army. As the eagle delivered the message, the enemy army planned their ruthless attack to destroy the Bulgarian army. But by the time of the attack, help had been sent to the Bulgarians. The reserve army surprised the enemy army by attacking them from behind. Following this attack, the Bulgarian army went on to triumph in the war against their enemy.

The blood from the eagle's leg colored the white cloth that hung from it. Since that battle, the Bulgarian people have used the white and red piece of cloth as a symbol of the blood-stained white cloth. They wear this in memory of the day Bulgaria won its independence, 3 March 1878. Bulgarians wear martenitzi during the entire month of March. When this tradition first began, people greeted each other and exchanged red and white cloth on 1 March in celebration of the freedom and independence they had obtained. They celebrated a time when the old system of bondage had failed and a new bright future was ahead. Today, Bulgarians use red and white thread instead of cloth, but the meaning remains the same. The day has also come to symbolize the end of the cold winter and the beginning of spring and new life.

Baba Marta, Martenitzi, and Modern Bulgaria

Martenitzi have deep symbolic meaning in Bulgaria. Many Bulgarians believe that the intertwined red and white yarn assures the wearer of special power. The red coloring protects against disease and sickness throughout the coming year, and the white symbolizes a long, healthy life. Bulgarians give martenitzi to members of their immediate family, relatives, and friends. On 1 March, people exchange the martenitzi and say, "*Chestita Baba Marta*," or "Merry Grandma March," and then express their wishes of health and happiness for the other person. In some areas, friends and family gather around bonfires and sing and dance late into the night.

Baba Marta is an important time of year culturally. Bulgarians believe that the month of March is personified by Baba Marta, an old lady. If somebody is not wearing a martenitza, one might warn him or her by saying something like, “If you don't wear a martenitza, then Baba Marta will bring evil things against you.” Baba Marta is considered the most powerful month of the year because she brings in the spring. She is happy when the sun shines and mad when it gets cloudy. Some Bulgarians do a thorough spring-cleaning because, according to legend, Baba Marta only visits clean houses. The traditions and customs practiced during the spring are for the purpose of pleasing Baba Marta.

According to tradition, everyone must wear their martenitzi until they see a stork. Much like our Groundhog Day, the first sighting of a stork returning from its long winter in the north symbolizes the return of spring. At this first sighting, a Bulgarian takes off his or her martenitza and hangs it on the nearest tree branch—an action believed to make the tree fruitful.

During the entire month of March, everyone seems happier than at any other time of the year. Although wearing martenitzi is only a symbolic tradition and each person wears them for different reasons, Bulgarians are united in the belief that the martenitza brings good luck and the promise of a long, healthy life.

During the month of Baba Marta foreigners are even encouraged to wear martenitzi. Visitors to Bulgaria during Baba Marta may be overwhelmed with the generosity of Bulgarians as they receive numerous martenitzi from friends and strangers alike. The Bulgarians appreciate efforts from foreigners to understand their ancient traditions and history.

Instructions for Making Martenitzi (see Traditions Visual 2)

You will need:

- 1 spool white yarn
- 1 spool red yarn
- scissors
- tape

Preparation:

1. Cut one twelve-inch piece of white yarn.
2. Cut two twelve-inch pieces of red yarn.
3. Tie the three strings together at one end and tape that end down.
4. Braid the strings and tie them at the other end to hold them together.
5. Tie your martenitza around your wrist.



Activities

1. Have the students create their own way of making martenitza. Have a martenitza contest in class. After the contest, they should give it to a friend and greet him or her in the Bulgarian traditional way by saying “Chestita Baba Marta” and sharing their wishes for health and happiness.

2. Assign the students to write a paragraph about martenitzi, focusing mainly on what the martenitzi symbolize to Bulgarians.
3. In groups of five or six, have the students invent a tradition based on the colors red and white. Since each student will likely come up with different traditions, this will give the class an opportunity to recognize how easily traditions change and adjust according to an individual's background and purpose, much like Bulgarian traditions have changed and adjusted throughout generations.



Discussion Questions

1. What do you think has helped the Bulgarians to keep the tradition of Baba Marta throughout their history until the present time?
2. Why have traditions about the symbols of martenitzi changed over time?
3. What do the colors red and white symbolize in our culture? What do the colors mean to Bulgarians?
4. What are some American traditions that are similar to the Bulgarian tradition of wearing martenitzi?

FOLKLORE & LANGUAGE

CYRILLIC ALPHABET

Bulgarians have a deep sense of pride and respect for the language developed in their own country. The Bulgarians attribute the creation of today's Slavic languages to two Christian missionary brothers, Cyril and Methodius. The two brothers lived many centuries ago in the southeast corner of Bulgaria. The languages' influence has spread throughout eastern Europe and Russia.



Starting Points

1. Show the students various writing systems, such as the Cyrillic [si-rill-ic] and Arabic alphabets and Chinese characters (**See Additional Resources**). Ask the students to make a list of the things they can do with a written language.
2. Show a clip from the movie *The Hunt for Red October*. Many scenes show words written in the Cyrillic alphabet (on flags, buildings, warships, submarines, etc.). Have the students discuss the feelings that the movie is trying to evoke by showing the words. Discuss reasons why the alphabet and language were originally created.
3. Discuss the use of English in the world today and how British English differs from American English. Ask the class for possible reasons why Americans created a different form of English and compare this to the Bulgarian's creating their own language. Discuss how language represents a culture and is always changing to fit the needs of the people; for example, many new words have been added to the dictionary with the invention of computers.



Information

Warring Tribes History

The formation of Bulgaria was a long process, and it certainly did not happen without strife and conflict. During the seventh century, the region now known as Bulgaria was united under one government by a Bulgar tribe leader, but was made up of a confederation of several warring tribes and factions who were in continual conflict. It was under these circumstances that the two missionary brothers entered Bulgaria. Cyril and Methodius were from the southern region of present-day Bulgaria, and wanted to educate and proselyte to a people who believed in varying rituals and deities.

At this time, Bulgaria had its own spoken language, but a corresponding writing system had not yet been developed. Cyril and Methodius created the Bulgarian alphabet, known as the Cyrillic alphabet, during the ninth century as a means of spreading Christianity, educating the illiterate, and uniting a nation. Cyril and Methodius quickly realized that to succeed in their goals, there had to be unification among the people, but unification couldn't take place until the tribes could communicate with one other. Realizing that a civilization could not exist without a written

language and a unified alphabet, the two brothers took the responsibility of translating the New Testament into Greek for the Slavic people. But the brothers found that the Slavic people were not familiar with the Greek language. Not only did most people not understand Greek, but some sounds in the Greek language did not correspond to the sounds of the Bulgarian language. The Greek alphabet was designed to suit the needs of the Greeks, not the Bulgarians. Cyril and Methodius resolved this issue by creating a new alphabet. They wanted to adapt this new alphabet to the Bulgarian language so that the Bulgarians could learn it quickly and easily.

Creating and Spreading the New Alphabet

At the time Cyril and Methodius were creating the alphabet, the Bulgarian ruler Rastislav invited the brothers to stay with him. He provided them with everything they needed to finish their project: shelter, food, and assistants. The alphabet Cyril and Methodius first created was called *Glagolitza*. They incorporated many symbols from the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. This trial alphabet was not used for long. A short time later, they created an improved version called Cyril, named after the younger of the two brothers. Some of the symbols were still taken from the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, but most were unique. This alphabet better reflected the sounds of the Bulgarian language. When the alphabet was finally finished and presented to Rastislav, he formally accepted it, and the Cyrillic alphabet became the national alphabet of Bulgaria.

The development of this writing system played a vital role in the growth of the Eastern Orthodox Church. As the Christian religion spread into other parts of eastern Europe and eventually Russia, so did the Cyrillic alphabet. Today, hundreds of millions of people write, type, and communicate using the alphabet these Christian missionaries developed and taught to help unify Bulgaria.

The creation of a new alphabet was not appreciated by everyone; more powerful countries opposed it. For example, the Greeks disliked it, knowing that the Bulgarians would become stronger if they could write their own traditions and folklore. This proved to be true—Bulgaria did become more powerful. Having their own written language helped strengthen Bulgarian culture and national pride. It was no longer easy for other nations to conquer Bulgaria.

Despite the contributions made to their country, Cyril and Methodius went through hardships in their lives after the creation of the alphabet. They were both thrown in jail by clergymen. Cyril died in Rome, but Methodius lived on to defend the existence of the Cyrillic alphabet and to continue his missionary efforts. He was also able to teach his followers the alphabet, and his followers in turn began teaching many other people. Books were printed and libraries appeared. The Bulgarians' confidence in their culture, and way of life, grew stronger as the great Bulgarian literary tradition continued to develop.

Today, Bulgaria carries great pride in being the first nation to adopt and use the Cyrillic alphabet. Other nations, such as Russia and Mongolia, now use this same alphabet. The creation of the Cyrillic alphabet freed Bulgaria from Greek influence, making it possible for the Bulgarian nation to preserve its unique culture and traditions.



Activities

1. Divide the class into groups and show them the Cyrillic alphabet (**see Folklore & Language Visual 1**). Have the groups prepare flash cards to help them remember the letters and their sounds. After allowing the groups to study and quiz each other, pass out the Bulgarian Pronunciation Quiz (**see Folklore and Language Visual 2**). The group that recognizes the most letters wins.
2. Have the students practice writing their name and the names of their friends and family members using the Cyrillic alphabet.
3. Decode the English sentence in the activity provided. Practice saying the phrases in Bulgarian (**see Folklore & Language Visuals 1 and 3**).
4. Ask the students to draw, paint, or graphically design five Cyrillic letters or their own letters for sounds not represented in our alphabet. Encourage them to make the letters as fancy as they can.
5. Assign the students to research and write a one page historical synopsis of Cyril and Methodius and their goals in creating a new language.



Discussion Questions

1. Why is language an important part of a nation's culture? How is language used to create meaning in our lives?
2. How is a written language important in spreading ideas and religion? What are some examples of written language being used to promote ideas or religion?
3. How has the evolution of the English language affected our culture? Are there words or phrases we use today that were created by past generations?
4. How has the alphabet created by Cyril and Methodius affected the cultures of countries other than Bulgaria?

FOOD

BANITZA

Bulgarians are famous for a rich variety of foods. Every celebration or tradition has a specific food to accompany it. For example, Easter is celebrated with Bulgarian sweet bread, *kozunak*. At *Zagovezni*, a Bulgarian holiday similar to Thanksgiving, Bulgarians eat pork prepared in different ways. On 6 May, people celebrate Name Day for everyone named George by eating lamb. To celebrate weddings, the mother of the groom receives her new daughter-in-law by eating bread dipped in salt and honey. For Christmas and the New Year, people eat the famous Bulgarian pastry, *banitza* [bah-nee-tsa].



Starting Points

1. Ask the students to name some of the most popular American foods. Banitza is a traditional food in Bulgaria eaten in every home.
2. Show the students the pictures of a Bulgarian making banitza and have them guess what the woman is doing (see **Food Visual 1**).
3. Have the students think about traditional American food at Christmas. Ask them if they know any historic meanings associated with these foods.



Information

History

In ancient times, there were no stores available to buy food and clothing, so people had to rely on what they could produce themselves. Bulgarian women were skilled in weaving fabric, sewing clothes, and preparing food. Bread was the main food staple and was often all a Bulgarian family had to eat. Because of this, they learned to prepare bread in many different ways.

Banitza is one of the most popular varieties of bread. Bulgarians eat banitza any time of the day. It is a pastry made from dough, cheese, eggs, and oil. In Bulgaria, the dough for banitza is made from scratch. When the dough is prepared, it is divided and placed in small bowls. The dough must then be formed into a circle and held in two hands. To enlarge the circle of dough, the dough is flipped over the head, first slowly and then faster (see **Food Visual 1**). Then the dough is circled above the head until it is large enough to be filled.

There are many variations of banitza bread. For example, *Baklava* is a variety of banitza made with nuts, honey, and sugar. One of the most important ingredients for the standard banitza is the unique Bulgarian white cheese. This cheese, called *serene*, is made from the milk of cows, sheep, or goats. Every traditional Bulgarian family knows how to make this cheese at home.

The most special time to prepare banitza is Christmas. For this holiday, banitza is filled with something special. The grandmother puts pieces of paper with fortunes written on them inside the banitza. She also puts coins in the banitza before it is cooked. In the evening, everyone gathers around the table and the eldest person in the family breaks the banitza in pieces and hands one to each person. It is an old pagan belief that the fortune received in the piece of banitza will be the person's fortune for the coming year.

Recipe for Banitza with White Cheese

You will need:

1 box phyllo (fillo) dough (in the frozen section of most grocery stores)	½ lb feta cheese 3 eggs 1 C melted margarine or butter
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Preparation

1. Leave the phyllo dough out overnight to defrost.
2. Melt the butter.
3. Crack the eggs in the same bowl as the butter and mix them together.
4. Crumble the feta cheese in another dish.
5. Place three sheets of phyllo dough in a 9 x 13 cake pan.
6. Spread some of the melted butter and egg mixture onto the dough.
7. Drop a small amount of feta cheese over the eggs and melted butter.
8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 seven times, ending with a layer of phyllo dough.
9. Spread the remaining butter and eggs over the banitza.
10. Bake at 300 degrees for thirty to forty minutes until golden brown.

Banitza with Cinnamon (Baklava)

You will need:

1 box phyllo dough (in the frozen section of most grocery stores)	1 lb chopped walnuts 1 tsp cinnamon 1 C melted margarine or butter
½ C water	
2 C brown sugar	
½ C honey	

Preparation

1. Leave the phyllo dough out overnight to defrost.
2. Melt the butter.
3. Mix the honey, walnuts, cinnamon, and 1 cup of brown sugar in the bowl with the melted butter.
4. Place three sheets of phyllo dough in a 9 x 13 cake pan.
5. Spread some of the butter mixture onto the dough.
6. Repeat step 5 six or seven times, ending with a layer of phyllo dough.
7. Spread the remaining butter mixture over the banitza.
8. Bake at 300 degrees for thirty to forty minutes until golden brown.
9. To make the syrup, boil ½ cup of water with 1 cup of brown sugar.
10. When the banitza is done and still hot, pour syrup over the top—enough so that the banitza will be moist and juicy.
11. Let the banitza cool before eating so that the syrup can soak in.



Activities

1. Divide the class into groups. Have the groups use one of the recipes shown above to make banitza.
2. Ask the students what they would put in banitza and have them create their own recipe for it.
3. Have each of the students write a fortune for each member of his or her family, and put them inside the banitza.



Discussion Questions

1. Why are Bulgarians skilled at making different kinds of bread? Think of the typical foods eaten in America. Are Americans skilled in making them, and do they enjoy making them everyday?
2. Why do Bulgarians still make banitza, and how is it still a significant part of Bulgarian culture?
3. Why is the Christmas tradition of putting coins and fortunes into the banitza important to the Bulgarians? Is there a similar tradition in American culture?
4. Why are some foods popular in one country and not in another? In what ways do culture, location, availability, and climate play a role in food decisions?

CROSS-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ROSE OIL

Bulgaria is a beautiful country. Not only does Bulgaria have beautiful scenery and a pleasant climate, but it also has very rich soil. Because of its climate and soil, Bulgaria is an ideal location for growing different types of plants. One of Bulgaria's main contributions to the world is its famous rose oil. Rose oil is used as a basic ingredient in many pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.



Starting Points

1. Show the students the picture of Bulgarians picking roses (**see Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1**). Ask them to guess what the people are doing and why they are doing it.
2. Ask the students to make a list of things that can be done with roses.
3. Ask the students what they know about growing roses and extracting rose oil. Explain to them how rose oil is produced.



Information

The Valley of Roses

The Bulgarian rose was first imported to Bulgaria hundreds of years ago from Persia by a Turkish merchant during the Turkish bondage. At first, roses were used to decorate the castles and gardens of Turkish leaders in Bulgaria. Soon, the roses began to flourish because of the favorable climate and the rich soil. The quality of these imported roses was better than had ever been seen. Roses grew especially well around a town now called Kazanluk in the central region of Bulgaria. A short time after the roses were planted, they spread and covered a whole valley. This valley is now known as the "Valley of Roses."

Bulgaria is now world famous for the Valley of Roses and the perfume made from the flowers grown there. The Valley of Roses is about seventy-five miles long and lies in the middle of the country between the vast Thracian plane and the mountains in the north—the *Stara Planina* (Old Mountain). This area is a main tourist attraction for visitors from around the world to participate in the special Festival of Roses performed each year. This festival is celebrated throughout the valley from 25 May to 7 June in several cities including Karlovo, Kazanluk, and Arbanassi.

In Arbanassi, there is the Rose Oil Factory Museum which opens its doors to all visitors. Each city hosts a parade as a part of the ceremony, enhanced by folk and theatrical presentations. Ritual performances include folk dancing and singing. A popular traditional folk dance is called the *horo*. This dance is typically performed by a group of five to twenty people and includes gestures and movements associated with merriment, love, and praise. After a dance competition, the crowned "Queen of

the Roses” leads the dancing and the singing. The Festival of Roses is the most celebrated event in Bulgaria.

The Best Rose Oil in the World

Soon after roses were imported to Bulgaria, their quality became highly valued and people found numerous ways to use roses. Not only did the roses provide a beautiful, fragrant decoration, they could also be used in pharmaceuticals and aromatherapies. The Bulgarians began to produce rose oil.

After a rose has bloomed and is no longer used for decoration, the rose petals are gathered and used for oil distillery. The production process is extensive, but has become a world-famous tradition. Rose picking starts in late May and early June. Each day the gathering begins no later than four o’clock in the morning when the dewy petals are most fragrant and ends when the sun rises. The petals are then put into a press to extract the oil. In order to produce one pound of rose oil, more than 3,000 pounds of rose petals are needed! This is why rose oil is very expensive and precious. The best way to preserve and store oil is to put it in glass or wooden containers called *muskalche* (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visuals 2 and 3**). From the thousands of varieties of roses, the best rose for producing oil is the Kazanluk rose, which has been cultivated for over 300 years in Bulgaria.

Rose oil is important to Bulgaria’s economy because it is an expensive product and is exported throughout the world. Seventy percent of the rose oil used by many prestigious perfume companies comes from Bulgaria because it is the best in the world. It is a key ingredient in many pharmaceutical and aromatherapy products. Bulgarians take pride in their rose oil. Rose oil is important to Bulgarian culture not only as a source of income, but also because Bulgarian culture has been preserved through this tradition. During their times of hardship and bondage, Bulgarians felt connected and united through their work of extracting rose oil. The beauty of the roses is a symbol of hope for their future.



Activities

1. Divide the students into groups and ask them to write a paragraph about the history of rose oil and how it is extracted from the rose.
2. Have the students take the rose oil quiz (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 4**).
3. Ask the students to do research on how to grow roses and how to care for them. Then, bring a rose plant to the classroom and after the rose has fully bloomed, put the petals in a glass bowl to create a fragrant decoration for the classroom.



Discussion Questions

1. Why is rose oil significant in Bulgaria?
2. How does the production of rose oil help unify the Bulgarians? Why would working for many hours a day as a community help strengthen the economy?
3. How can nature contribute to a nation’s identity?

FACTS ABOUT BULGARIA

Official Name: Republic of Bulgaria

Capital: Sofia

Government Type: parliamentary democracy

Area: total: 110,910 sq km; land: 110,550 sq km; water: 360 sq km

Land Boundaries: Greece, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Romania, Yugoslavia, Turkey

Climate: temperate; cold, damp winters; hot, dry summers

Lowest Point: Black Sea 0 m

Highest Point: Musala 2,925 m

Natural Resources: bauxite, copper, lead, zinc, coal, timber, arable land

Natural Hazards: earthquakes, landslides

Population: 7,517,973 (July 2004 est.)

Nationality: Bulgarian

Ethnic Groups: Bulgarian 83.9%, Turk 9.4%, Roma 4.7%, Macedonian, Armenian, Tatar, Gagauz, Circassian, others 2% (2001)

Religions: Bulgarian Orthodox 82.6%, Muslim 12.2%, Roman Catholic 1.7%, Jewish 0.1%, Protestant, Gregorian-Armenian, and other 3.4% (1998)

Languages: Bulgarian, secondary languages closely correspond to ethnic breakdown

GDP: \$57.133 billion (2004 est.)

GDP: \$7,600 (2004 est.)

GDP composition by sector: agriculture: 11.4%; industry: 30%; services: 58.6% (2004)

Labor Force: 3.333 million (2004 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 14.3% (2004 est.)

Industries: electricity, gas, and water; food, beverages, and tobacco; machinery and equipment, base metals, chemical products, coke, refined petroleum, nuclear fuel

Agricultural Products: vegetables, fruits, tobacco, livestock, wine, wheat, barley, sunflowers, sugar beets

Exports: 7.337 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.) clothing, footwear, iron and steel, machinery and equipment, fuels

Imports: 9.723 billion f.o.b. (2003 est.) fuels, minerals, and raw materials; machinery and equipment; metals and ores; chemicals and plastics; food, textiles

Trade Partners: Italy, Germany, Greece, Turkey, France, U.S., Russia

Currency: lev (BGL)

Currency Rate: 1.7327 BGL = \$1 U.S (January 2003)

HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

TIME LINE

- 681 C.E.** Various warring tribes are united; and the first Bulgarian Empire is founded
- 803–814** Khan Krum “The Terrible” rules Bulgaria
- 862** Cyrillic alphabet is created and accepted in Bulgaria
- 863** Christianity becomes the official religion
- 893–927** Bulgarians enjoy one of their greatest periods in history under King Simeon the Great
- 1018** First Bulgarian Kingdom ends
- 1018–1185** Bulgaria is ruled by the Byzantine Empire
- 1187** The second Bulgarian Empire is founded
- 1218–1241** King Ivan Asen expands Bulgaria’s borders to three different seas
- 1241–1396** A series of wars between the Bulgarians and the Byzantine Empire facilitates the takeover of Bulgaria by the Ottoman Empire
- 1396–1878** Ottoman Empire rules Bulgaria—this five-hundred-year period is known as the “Turkish Yoke”
- 1878** Bulgaria is freed from Ottoman bondage and becomes independent; Bulgaria is divided into Bulgaria (north) and Eastern Rumelia (south)
- 1885** Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia reunite
- 1908** Bulgaria is proclaimed a kingdom, coming out of Ottoman rule
- 1912–1913** Bulgarian Empire loses territory in the Balkan Wars
- 1915** Bulgaria allies with Germany in World War I
- 1919** Treaty of Neuilly takes away Bulgaria’s access to the Aegean Sea
- 1941** Bulgaria allies with Germany in World War II
- 1944** Russia declares war against Bulgaria; Bulgarians are told not to resist; Soviet Union defeats Bulgaria
- 1946** Soviet dictatorship established
- 1959** Bulgaria and the United States renew diplomatic relations
- 1956** Todor Zhivkov, the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party, becomes head of the government
- 1989** End of Communist rule; Todor Zhivkov put in house arrest
- 1990–present** Bulgaria is in a post-Communist era, trying to develop national democratic principles

HOLIDAYS

- 1 Jan** New Year’s Day or St. Basil’s Day
- 7 Jan** St. John the Baptist Day (each saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church has a specified day each year, at which time every person in Bulgaria with the name of that day’s saint celebrates)
- 19 Feb** The martyrdom of Vasil Levski (a great revolutionary hero whose life ended in 1876)
- Feb** Kukery (Bulgarian version of Halloween)

1 Mar	Baba Marta
3 Mar	Independence Day (celebration from Turkish bondage)
8 Mar	Mother's Day
1 Apr	Fool's Day
14-15 Apr	Easter
1 May	Labor Day
24 May	Celebration of the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet
1 Jun	Children's Day
1 Nov	Zagoveszni (Bulgarian version of Thanksgiving)
25 Dec	Christmas
Year-round	Name days (different dates are appointed to a specific letter; names that begin with that letter are celebrated)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BULGARIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES

1621 22nd St. NW

Washington, D.C. 20008

Phone: (202) 387-0174, Fax: (202) 234-7973

Web site: <http://www.bulgaria-embassy.org>

BULGARIAN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

1st Sofia Street, Sofia 1040

Phone: 359-(2)-987-9778, Fax: 359-(2)-989-6939

Web site: <http://www.bulgariatravel.org>

BOOKS

Bar-Zohar, Michael. *Beyond Hitler's Grasp: The Heroic Rescue of Bulgaria's Jews*, Adams Media Corporation, 1998.

Boll, Michael M. *Cold War in the Balkans: American Foreign Policy and the Emergence of Communist Bulgaria, 1943–1947*, University Press of Kentucky, 1984.

Bousfield, Jonathan and Dan Richardson. *The Rough Guide to Bulgaria*, 4th ed., Rough Guides, 2002.

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Information Bulgaria—A Short Encyclopedia of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Pergamon Press, 1985.

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Komitska, Anita and Veska Borisova. *Bulgarian Folk Costumes*, Borina, 2000.

Kovatcheva, Mira. *Bulgarian: A Complete Course for Beginners*, Teach Yourself Publishing, NTC Publishing Group, 1995.

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Rodgers, Mary M., ed. *Bulgaria . . . in Pictures*, Lerner Publishing Group, 1994.

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Veleva, Maria G. *Bulgarian Folk Costumes*, Tamburitza Press, 1982.
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FILM

The Hunt for Red October, Mace Neufeld, 1990.

INTERNET SITES

Bulgarian News (in Bulgarian):

<http://www.dirbg.com>

Bulgarian Folk Dancing:

<http://www.balkanfolk.com>

CIA World Factbook:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bu.html>

Everything Easter:

<http://www.everythingeaster.com>

Martenitza:

<http://www.geocities.com/greetings1001/martenitza.html>

Martenitza—Explanations of:

http://www.geocities.com/kris_elenski/marta.html

Omniglot: A Guide to Writing Systems

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/atoz.htm>

Republic of Bulgaria:

<http://www.government.bg/English/>

Russian Periodicals Online:

<http://www.russianstory.com/eng/start.jsp>

Serbian Alphabet:

<http://yurope.com/people/sen/prezentacije/azbuka/index.html>

Simple Bulgarian Phrases:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/6490/language/phrases.html>

The Bulgarian Rose Company:

<http://www.bulgarskarosa.com>

Travel Information:

<http://www.travel-bulgaria.com>

Uses for Rose Oil:

<http://www.cedarvale.net>

MUSIC

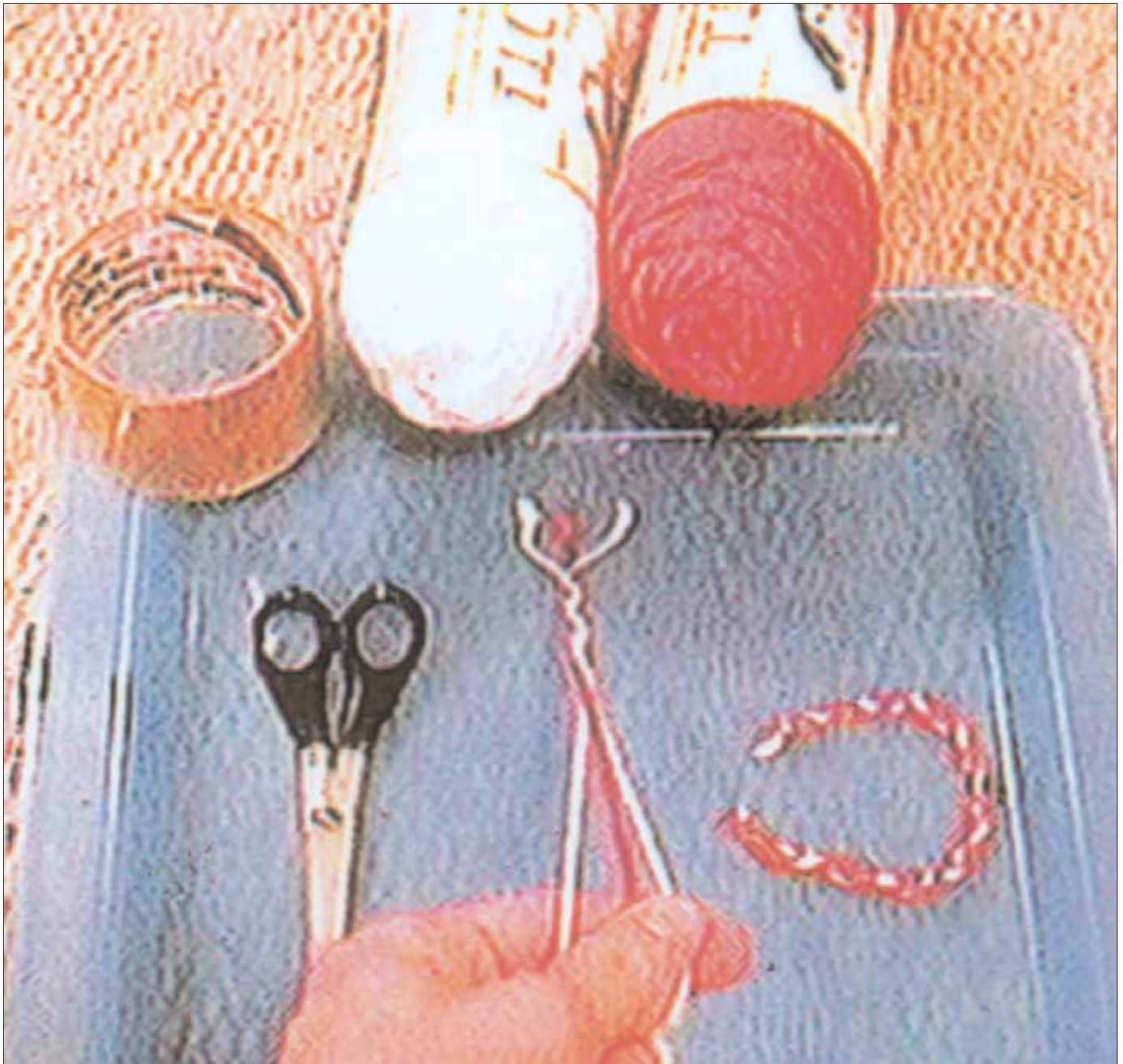
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Village Music of Bulgaria, 1988.

Traditions Visual 1: Martenitzi



Traditions Visual 2: Tools for Making Martenitzi



Аа	talk	Пп	pet
Бб	boy	Рр	red
Вв	vet	Сс	sit
Гг	get	Тт	tell
Дд	dad	Уу	suit
Ее	let	Фф	fall
Жж	dj	Хх	Hello
Зз	zit	Цц	tz fits
Ии	lead	Чч	chill
Йй	feet	Шш	shoe
Кк	kick	Щщ	shta
Лл	lick	Ъ	put
Мм	mom	Юю	you
Нн	no	Яя	yawn
Оо	goal		

Name: _____

BULGARIAN PRONUNCIATION

_____ t <u>a</u> lk	_____ p <u>e</u> t
_____ b <u>o</u> y	_____ r <u>e</u> d
_____ v <u>e</u> t	_____ s <u>i</u> t
_____ g <u>e</u> t	_____ t <u>e</u> ll
_____ d <u>a</u> d	_____ s <u>u</u> it
_____ l <u>e</u> t	_____ f <u>a</u> ll
_____ d <u>j</u> d <u>o</u> d <u>g</u> e	_____ h <u>e</u> llo
_____ z <u>i</u> t	_____ t <u>z</u> f <u>i</u> t <u>s</u>
_____ l <u>e</u> ad	_____ ch <u>i</u> ll
_____ f <u>e</u> et	_____ sh <u>o</u> e
_____ k <u>i</u> ck	_____ shta w <u>i</u> sh <u>e</u> d + <u>a</u>
_____ l <u>i</u> ck	_____ p <u>u</u> t
_____ m <u>o</u> m	_____ y <u>o</u> u
_____ n <u>o</u>	_____ y <u>a</u> wn
_____ g <u>o</u> al	

Name: _____

DECODING CYRILLIC

Write this phrase using Bulgarian letters so that it still sounds like English.

Kids love school!

Now, what sounds do these letters make in English? What does this sentence say in English? Decode it.

Ўй хоп абр тйчбр гивз бс гвд гредз

Name: _____

DECODING CYRILLIC

Decode so that it sounds like English with Bulgarian letters.

Kids love school!

Answer: КИДЗ ЛЪВ СКУЛ

Now, what sounds do these letters make in English? What does this sentence say in English? Decode it.

Ўй хоп абр тйчър гивз бс гвд гредз

Answer: We hope our teacher gives us good grades.

Food Visual 1: Making Banitza









Name: _____

ROSE OIL QUIZ

1. Who imported roses to Bulgaria?

2. Why were roses brought to Bulgaria?

3. What part of the rose is gathered to make oil?

4. What is a rose oil container called?

5. Why is rose oil so precious and expensive?

6. What is rose oil used for today?

7. What city is the Valley of Roses located next to?

8. Why is rose oil important to Bulgaria?

9. Why do roses grow so well in Bulgaria?

10. What is the name of the festival that is celebrated from 25 May to 7 June?

Name: _____

ROSE OIL QUIZ

1. Who imported roses to Bulgaria?

_____ Turkish merchants _____

2. Why were roses brought to Bulgaria?

_____ for decorating the gardens of Turkish leaders _____

3. What part of the rose is gathered to make oil?

_____ the petals _____

4. What is a rose oil container called?

_____ muskalche _____

5. Why is rose oil so precious and expensive?

_____ because it takes 3,000 pounds of petals to make just one pound of rose oil _____

6. What is rose oil used for today?

_____ pharmaceutical and aromatherapy products _____

7. What city is the Valley of Roses located next to?

_____ Kazanluk _____

8. Why is rose oil important to Bulgaria?

_____ It is a good source of income, and it united Bulgarians during a time of hardship _____

9. Why do roses grow so well in Bulgaria?

_____ because of the rich, warm soil _____

10. What is the name of the festival that is celebrated from 25 May to 7 June?

_____ Festival of Roses _____



FLAG OF BULGARIA

White represents the purity of the nation and that Bulgarians have kept their traditions and culture despite their history of invasion and bondage. Green represents Bulgaria's rich and beautiful land. During Communism, red represented the Community Party. But before and after Communism, red represented the blood of those Bulgarians who gave their lives fighting for the freedom and independence of Bulgaria.

Map of Bulgaria

