

Spring traditions in Latvia

Spring is probably the most awaited season of all because it comes right after the long and cold winter. This season is also connected with many customs, national celebrations and preparation for summer.

Just like other people all over the world Latvians celebrate **Easter**. The end of March – beginning of April is the time when Latvians start wondering how they're going to celebrate Easter this year. Probably the most important thing is painting eggs (they symbolize the sun) – using natural ingredients is very popular.



Latvians use the method of boiling eggs in water with onion's peel. It makes the eggs red and you can tie small leaves of plants or flowers to the egg so there is a lighter silhouette left after boiling. By increasing the amount of onion's peel you can paint the eggs in darker, brighter shade of red.

The food is not the only thing that creates the sense of Easter. An ancient Latvian proverb says: „If you swing very high in Easter, the mosquitoes won't bite you during the summer.” No one likes to be bitten by a mosquitoes – that's why people try to seesaw no matter what age they are.



There are other physical activities that Latvians do while celebrating Easter. A game called „egg rolling” is a fun way to figure out who’s egg is the most solid one. Participants roll their eggs down a sloping board while trying not to break the shell. Another game that includes the hardness of egg’s shell is „egg fights”. Opponent tries to break other person’s egg’s shell by hitting it with his own egg. The winner is the person who’s egg stays unbroken.



Spring is the time when people clean the environment around them. In Latvia there is a special event that takes care of this process. „**Lielā talka**” or **joint work** is an annual tradition of voluntary work that includes actions of picking up garbage, cleaning the woods, renewing old benches in parks and so on. The whole country is involved in the process - there are national TV broadcasts, advertisement campaigns, local organizers. Voluntary work is promoting patriotic sentiments and teaches not to pollute the nature.



In Latvian calendars **May 1st** is marked as red. It's the day of Latvia's Constitutional assembly and this day is a holiday. Another *red date* is **May 4th** – the day when Republic of Latvia announced the declaration of independence after many years of being a part of USSR. It's also a holiday and is celebrated with a celebratory parade in the capital city Riga.

