

Folk Calendar – Dimitrovden

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According to popular belief, on 26 October it is Dimitrovden and then winter begins.

The saying goes: „George brings summer, Dimitar – winter“. According to legend, St. Dimitar is the patron of winter and cold and is the elder brother of St. George. He rides a red horse, and from his long white beard fall the first snowflakes – „When Dimitar comes, the snow comes too“.

On Dimitrovden the ploughs are put away in a dry place, the firewood for the winter is stacked, and the first snowfalls are expected. Also characteristic are the three days after Dimitrovden, the so-called „Mouse Days“, when householders undertake various actions to protect their food, clothes and grain from mouse attacks.

From Dimitrovden to Gergyovden and from Gergyovden to Dimitrovden – this is how Bulgarians grouped the seasons. The boundary between the seasons of the year had an agricultural character.

In the Balkan Mountain regions, they observe that if the moon is full on the eve of the feast, the bees will swarm and the beehives will be full of honey, and the sheepfolds will be full of lambs. According to old custom, on a name day one visits without being invited and brings white flowers for the name bearer so that the winter will be mild. The flowers are wrapped with scarlet thread so that the celebrants will be healthy. On Dimitrovden, the festive table includes kurban or stew made of mutton and chicken ragout – from a rooster if the name bearer is a man, and from a hen if it is a woman. Vegetables are served. Various autumn delicacies are also placed on the table – boiled corn, fruit leather, apple loaf or baked apples, candied green figs and pumpkin.

On this day the following celebrate their name day: Dimitar, Dimitslava, Dimitrina, Dimitria, Demetra, Dima, Dimka, Dimcho, Dimana, Mitko, Mitra, Mitka, Mitrana, Mita, Diyan/a, Dian/a, Draga, Drago