

Andrew's Day - the feast of grain

Author(s): Растителна защита
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The Bulgarian people celebrate St. Andrew's Day (November 30) as the holiday of the seed (grain). This day is associated with the understanding that the light in the day begins to grow – to increase, which is why it is sometimes called Edrey Day, and the sun stirs "like a chick in an egg". Thus, each day increases little by little, by as much as a millet grain. The hope for light brings optimism for the fertility of the upcoming agricultural year.

In the Folk Calendar, St. Andrew's Day is known by various names (Andreyovden, Andreya, Endrin, Edrey, Udrey, Dreyovden, Edrevdan, Mechkinden) in the different regions of Bulgaria.



It is believed that from this day onward, the day begins to grow ("increase") by as much as a millet (corn, pea, etc.) grain, which is connected to the ritual practice on the eve of this holiday of boiling various grains – wheat, peas, corn, beans, lentils, peas, millet, and barley – in a new clay pot, so that they may increase. And just as they increase quickly, so too will the brides swell with their new offspring.

In the morning, each member of the household throws a little of this boiled mixture into the chimney, wishing for "tall" (good) crops, and the rest is eaten. It is also given to the domestic animals and chickens. It is further believed that the saint drives away winter and the long nights.

According to folk belief, St. Andrew's Day is also called Bear Day. The legend tells that St. Andrew was the only apostle without a feast day, so he mounted a bear and went to God. The Lord told him, "Whoever does not celebrate you, let him ride your horse." Therefore, on November 30, in certain regions of Bulgaria, they boil corn and toss it over the chimney, calling out: "Here, bear, boiled corn, so you don't eat the raw one and don't eat the livestock and the people."

Happy Name Day to Andrey, Andriyan, Andreyka, Hrabar, Hrabrin, Silen, Deshka, and Parvan!

