

Slavic Gods & Goddesses

Fairies, Spirits and Minor Deities

• Bannik • Bereginny • Bolotnyi • Dogoda • Domawiczka • Domovoi • Dvorovoi • Eretik • Kikimora • Kurinyi Bog • Leszi • Lesovikha • Lugovik • Musail • Ovinnik • Polewik • Poludnica • Polunocnica • Poluvirica • Rarog • Rusalka • Treasurer • Vodonoj • Wampyr • Wila • Zaltys

•Bannik (BAHN-neeek)

Bath house spirit. Slavic bathhouses were like saunas with an inner steaming room and an outer room for changing. They were dark and frightening and like many scary places, were considered perfect for divinations. They were also the place most often used for child-bearing. No newborn was left there long, though, lest the fairies would steal him. No Christian icons were allowed in the bath house, neither, as they may offend the its true occupant - the Bannik. It was customary in some places to offer every third firing of the sauna, or sometimes the fourth to the Bannik. One did not want to disturb him while bathing, though, or he might just throw hot water on them. Other times he would use his sharp claws to flay his victim alive. Besides a firing of the sauna, he liked offerings of soap, fir branches, and a water. The Bannik usually takes on the appearance of a member or friend of the family; so if you ever see someone you know in the bathroom, and find out later that they weren't there.....

•Bereginny - Bóginki in Polish (boo-GIN-kee)

Traditionally "covens" of old women performed the rituals and sacrifices for these river bank nymphs. Bóginki means "little Goddess". They were said to steal human babies and leave behind changelings called Odmience in Polish, Oborotni in Russian.

These spirits were the original spirits of life and predate the sky deities. They are the forerunners of the Rusalki.

•Bolotnyi - Bagnica in Polish (bahg-NEETS-ah)

from "boloto" or "bagnu" - swamp. Female bog spirit

•Dogoda (doh-GOH-da)

The gentle West wind.

•Domawiczka (Doh-mah-VEETCH-kah)

female Domovoi or wife of the Domovoi. May be the same as the Kikimora. There are very few reports on this spirit, but they usually involve her rewarding anyone who bathes or finds her baby.

•Domovoi - Domowije in Polish (doh-moh-VEE-yeh)

Male house spirits from "domu" -home. The Domovik usually lives in the attic, behind the stove, under the threshold or in the stables or cattle barn. He is thought to be responsible for all domestic prosperity and tranquility and finish chores when family members forget. He will howl and moan to warn of approaching trouble, and pull hair to warn a woman in danger of abuse from a man. He can be heard laughing if good times are ahead, and if you hear him strumming a comb, there is a wedding in the future. The Domovoi should be fed nightly or he may cause trouble, much like a poltiergeist. Usually, if neglected, he will simply leave. To attract a domovoi, put on your finest clothing, go outside and say "Dedushka Dobrokhhot (grandfather well-wisher), come live with us and tend the flocks."

Special care was taken to only obtain pets and farm animals in the Domovoi's favorite color. Each new horse was introduced formally to the Domovoi for the spirit took especially good care of the animals he liked but tormented the ones he didn't.

When a new house was built, the owner would put a piece of bread down before the stove went in, to attract the domovoi. When a person moved, the coals from the stove were taken with them and the formal invitation "Domovoi, Domovoi, don't stay here. Come with our family" was recited to ensure that the Domovoi came along to the new home. Salted bread, wrapped in a white cloth will appease the domovoi as will putting clean white linen in his favorite room - an invitation to eat with the family. You can also hang your old shoes in the yard to brighten the Domovik's mood. The domovik usually resembles a male head of household, living or dead. This supports the belief that the Domovik is a remnant from the times of ancestral worship. He can be seen if you view him through a harrow or horse collar. Otherwise, if he shows himself, it is usually to warn of death. He, like the Banshee, can be heard weeping when death approaches a member of the household.

•**Dvorovoi - Russian**

Male yard spirits from "dvor" - yard. Like the domovoi, he usually resembles the male head of household and has preferences as to the color of pets and livestock. He is usually malicious and sometimes, but not often, deadly. He is appeased by placing a shiny object, slice of bread and piece of sheep's wool in the stables while saying "Master Dvorovik, I offer you this gift in gratitude. Please look after the cattle and feed them well." If he is completely out of control he is punished in the following way: The head of household wove a three-tailed whip from a corpse's shroud, dipped it in wax, ignited it and whipped all corners of the cattle shed and manger, hoping to beat the spirit into submission.

• **Eretik - (EH-reh-teeek), erestun, eretica, eretnik.**

"heretic" This later term for the upyr is due to the belief that heretics returned from the dead as evil spirits. This belief was considered responsible for the brutality and hysteria surrounding the medieval Russian campaign against heretics. The eretik usually returns from the grave to devour people, the erestun is usually a living vampire created when the soul of a sorcerer possesses and revives the body of one on the brink of death. The eretica usually causes one to wither by the power of her eye. The eyes of the dead, in Slavic belief, could lure one into the grave. That is why it was so important to close the eyes of the newly deceased.

• **Kikimora(kee-kee-MOHR-ah) or Shishimora**

female house spirit who usually lives in the cellar or behind the stove. She comes out at night to spin and will look after the housework and the chickens if the home is well tended. If the household is a sloppy one she will wine, whistle and tickle the children at night. She is sometimes married to the domovik. To appease an angry Kikimora, you should wash all your pots and pans in a fern tea. She appears as an average woman with hair down (Slavic women always kept their heads covered) or sometimes with chicken feet. She would occasionally appear, spinning, to one about to die.

•**Kurinyi bog(kur-EEN-yee book)**

"Chicken God". Usually a round fieldstone with a hole in the middle in the chicken yard. This "deity" was supposed to protect chickens from the domovoi, kikimora and dvorovoi.

•**Leszi, Leshii (LESH-ee)**

"Forest lord". From "les" - forest. He often appeared as a peasant, either without a belt or with

shoes on the wrong feet. Sometimes he was said to have wings and a tail and be covered in black hair. Many assigned him goat's hooves and horns like Pan. He is usually attributed with green eyes. He could change his size from that of a blade of grass to that of the highest tree. Usually he carried a club to show his rulership over the forest creatures. The Leszi could take the shape of a familiar person and lead you astray with the sound of their voice. Once in his domain, he might tickle his victim to death. He could also become a hare, wolf, bear, raven, pig, horse, rooster, flaming fir tree or even a mushroom. The Leshi is fond of trees and is said to be heard weeping when one is cut down. He is the protector of the forest and all its creatures. His favorite animal is the wolf - the king of the beasts in Slavic folklore. He is also said to be often seen in the company of bears.

Upon entering a forest, one always uttered a protective spell or prayer lest they run into him. If he got hold of a child, he might replace it with one of his own - who would grow up stupid, with a voracious appetite. If the child returned it would ever afterward be a useless tramp. When the Leshii got his hands on an adult, the adult would return sometimes mute and covered with moss, othertimes unable to concentrate and would act oddly for the rest of their lives.

The Leshii likes offerings of kasha, suet, blini, bread & salt. He is also perfectly happy with a cookie or candy left on a stump or log. To protect yourself against the leshii, you can: turn all your clothing backward and also the collar on your horse, chant "Sheep's mug, sheep's wool" or if you encounter him, get him to laugh. When the leshy could be coaxed to befriend a human, the human often had to make a pact, never again wear a cross or take the eucharist. In return, the Leshy would teach the human the secrets of magic. He is, after all, the Green Man.

In myth and art, the Leshy is often associated with the psychotropic mushroom Amanita Muscaria. This may connect him in some way to Shamanic mind-altering techniques.

•**Lesovikha - (Leh-soh-VEE-kah)**

Female Leszi. Sometimes an ugly woman with large breasts, sometimes a naked young girl - or a woman in white as tall as the trees.

•**Lugovik - (loo-GOH-veek)**

Spirit of the meadow. "lugo" - meadow. He should not be confused with the spirit of the grain field.

•**Musail**

The forest tsar, king of the forest spirits. He was associated with the Rowan tree.

•**Ovinnik - (Oh-VEEN-neek) Russian**

Barn spirit from "Ovin" - threshing barn. The Slavic threshing barn was a 2 story building with a furnace entrenched in earth on the first floor and the second floor for drying the grain. It was ruled by the Ovinnik who appeared as a huge disheveled black cat with burning eyes. You could sometimes hear him laughing or barking like a dog from the corner of the barn in which he lived. Offerings of blini or the last sheaf were left to him. If angered, he was known to burn down the barn, usually with its owner or owner's children in it.

•**Polewik, Polevoi (poh-LEH-veek)**

Field spirit from "pole" - field. He appears as a deformed dwarf with grass for hair and two differently colored eyes. He usually wears either all white or all black and appears at noon or sunset. He will lead astray people who wander in the fields, and if they fall asleep there, give them diseases or ride over them with his horse. If a person falls asleep drunk while on the job, the Polewik might kill them. To appease the Polewik you must put two eggs and a rooster too old to

crow in a ditch when no one is looking.

• **Poludnica - Psepolnica in Serbian (poh-wood-NEET-sah)** Lady Middy, from "Poluden" - noon. She may appear as a 12-yr old girl, a beautiful woman or an old hag but is only seen at the hottest part of a summer's day. She is known to steal children or lead them astray in the fields and Russian mothers threaten their children with "Be good or the Poludnica will get you. She sometimes pulls the hair of farm workers or attacks women who have just given birth and wander out at noontime. She carries a scythe and will stop people in the field to either ask difficult questions or engage them in conversation. If the person fails to answer a question or tries to change the subject of the conversation, the Poludnica will strike them with illness or cut off their head (Poland). The Wends, German Slavs, called her pscipolnitsa and pictured her as carrying shears, a symbol of death. When not in the fields or streets, the Poludnica was said to float on the winds. Marija Gimbutas calls her "sunstroke" personified. It is thought that the Poludnica was the explanation for the dangers of working in the noon heat and remained a part of more recent legend because of her usefulness in scaring children away from valuable crops.

• **Polunocnica - (Poh-woo-nok-NEET-sah)**

"lady midnight". A "demon" said to torment children in the middle of the night. May have originally been the third Zorya of midnight

• **Poluvirica - (Poh-woo-vee-REET-sa)**

"female half-believer". This forest spirit probably had an earlier name but was later called poluvirica due to the belief that non-Christians returned after death as various home and forest spirits. She appears naked, with a long face, long hanging breasts and three braids of hair down her back. She is usually seen carrying a child.

• **Rarog - (RAH-rook) Polish, Rarich - Ukranian, Rarach - Czech.**

This same word for whirlwind may be a late bastardization of the name Swarog. A falcon, hawk or fiery dwarf who turns himself into a whirlwind. From Lusitania to the Urals it was customary to throw a knife into a whirlwind to kill the demon residing within it.

Into this century, Blugarians, Pomeranians and Russians were still being observed casting themselves face down before a whirlwind to ward off illness and misfortune. Russians would do so shouting "a belt around your neck" in order to strangle the rarog.

• **Rusalka (roo-SAHW-kah)**

Female water Spirit. These souls of unbaptized babies or drowned maidens became beautiful pale girls with long flowing hair. They wear white or are sometimes naked, usually with poppies in their hair. They lived in the waters during the winter, but moved to the forests and fields during Rusal'naia week (hence the name) where they could often be seen perched in trees.

A danger to humans, the Rusalki may lead cattle astray, steal children, fall upon people from the treetops and tickle them to death or kidnap young lads to take as lovers. They love to come out in the moonlight to sing and dance the khorovod (circle dance). If they find someone bathing near where they dance, often, they will drown them. Tying ribbons to trees in which they were known to perch is one way to appease them. Linens and scarves, as well as eggs were also left as offerings.

Before these nature spirits were associated with the souls of the "unclean" dead, it is believed they were the spirits who brought moisture to forest and field.

•Treasurers

pozemne vile - "earth spirits". I have not seen the Slavic name for these creatures anywhere - but in Polish the word for gnome is "karzelek" (kar-ZEH-lek) which these creatures most resemble. Called pchuvushi by the gypsies, they live in mines and underground workings and are the guardians of precious metals, gems & crystals. They are most often helpful toward miners and will lead them to rich veins of ore, protect them from danger and lead them back when they are lost. To evil persons or those who insult them they can be deadly and have been known to send tunnels crashing down upon them or push them into dark chasms. Whistling, hurling rocks into dark chasms and uncovering one's head are actions considered offensive to the Treasurer. He will, however, warn the offender once before taking action. Small insults warrant a pelting with handfuls of soil. Larger insults are usually repayed with a beating with the Treasurer's cudgel or the forfeit of all the metals mined that day.

They sometimes appear as small naked children, as human miners, as glimmers of light or as salt people. Most often, though, they appear as adults of smaller stature, usually about 2 - 3 feet in height, carrying mining lanterns.

•Wampyr , Upyr

Vampires have featured in the legends of all Eastern Europe. The Kashubian region on the Baltic coast of Poland shows records of an exceptionally high belief in Vampires. As recently as the 20th century, attempts were made in Puck and Kartuzy to exhume vampires and render them harmless. People of high facial colour or an excitable nature were supposed to cool slowly on death, retaining a red complexion and flexible limbs, hence the expression "Czerwony jak wieszczny", red as a vampire. Vampires are the souls of the dead. Their physical body does not usually leave the grave. Their victims are their own family members whom they visit, one at time to drain their life's force. When that family member is dead, they move onto the next. In this manner was evidence of vampire activity discovered. Members of a single family would begin to die, one by one. If the Wampyr had no relatives, they would pull on the church bell, signalling death for all that heard it.

Once a vampire was detected, the first family members to pass on in the string of deaths were exhumed. If one was found to be in extraordinarily good shape, various remedies could be used against them: They might be cut up and their bones re-arranged. A crucifix was often placed under the tongue and sometimes a fishing net or a bag of sand was placed in the coffin. Only one grain of sand could be removed each year, or one knot undone, keeping the vampire away for a very long time.

According to Dion Fortune - a brilliant occultist - the "soul body" lives on for about 3 days after the death of the physical body, then it dies also, forcing the remaining essence of the person to go on. If the person is knowledgeable in the occult, they may choose to remain on earth by latching onto a human victim who is weak or morally corrupt. Through this victim they absorb the life's energy of others. Taking blood is one method of doing this. They cannot take the life's force of their victim, as he would die, so they possess him and force him to take the blood of others. ...just something to think about.

Upyr were originally spirits of death and predate the sky gods.

(much of the information on Polish vampirism was e-mailed to me, the author was unknown - so no credit could be given)

•Wila, Vily, Vile, Veles in Lithuanian (VEE-lah)

Female fairy-like spirits who live in the wilderness and sometimes clouds. They were believed to be the spirits of women who had been frivolous in their lifetimes and now floated between here

and the afterlife. They sometimes appear as the swans, snakes, horses, falcons, or wolves that they can shapeshift into but usually appear as beautiful maidens, naked or dressed in white with long flowing hair. It is said that if even one of these hairs is plucked, the Wila will die, or be forced to change back to her true shape. A human may gain the control of a Wila by stealing feathers from her wings. Once she gets them back, however, she will disappear.

The voices of the Wila are as beautiful as they, and one who hears them loses all thoughts of food, drink or sleep, sometimes for days. Despite their feminine charms, however, the Wila are fierce warriors. The earth is said to shake when they do battle. They have healing and prophetic powers and are sometimes willing to help mankind. Other times they lure young men to dance with them, which according to their mood can be a very good or very bad thing for the lad. They ride on horses or deer when they hunt with their bows and arrows and will kill any man who defies them or breaks his word. Fairy rings of deep thick grass are left where they have danced which should never be trod upon (bad luck).

Offerings for Wila consist of round cakes, ribbons, fresh fruits and vegetables or flowers left at sacred trees and wells and at fairy caves.

• **The Vodonoj - Wódjanoj in Polish (vohd-YAH-noy)**

Male water spirits from "Woda" - water. Master shape-shifters, they sometimes appear as old men with long green or white beards, sometimes as creatures with huge toes, claws, horns, a tail and burning eyes in a human face. At times they look like fat old bald men and other times like mossy looking fish or flying tree trunks. If he takes on human form, you will know him by the water oozing from the left side of his coat. Vodonoj are said to live in underwater palaces made from the treasures from sunken ships and often marry Russalki.

They are usually malicious and are believed to lie in wait for human victims and drag them under the water to their death. Dark marks on the bodies of drowning victims were thought to be bruises from their struggle with the Vodonoj. Retrieving a drowned body was thought to anger the Vodonoj who wanted to keep their spoils. A Vodonik may be appeased by pouring butter into the water or offering him your first fish. To employ the Vodonoj's aid in fishing, throw a pinch of tobacco into the water and say loudly "Here's your tobacco, Lord Vodonik, now give me a fish".

• **Zaltys**

The world serpent who lay coiled at the roots of the great world tree. He was the arch enemy of Perun, at whom Perun seemed to aim much of his lightning.

The Greater Pantheon

• Baba Jaga • Bialobóg • Czarnóbog • Dazhdbóg • Dodola • Dzarowit • Dziewona • Jarilo • Jurata • Khors • Koljada • Kupalo • Lada • Lado • Lel • Marzanna • Mata Syra Zjemja • Miésiac • Mokosz • Perun • Porevit • Rod • Rodenica • Ruevit • Rugievit • Simargl • Slava • Stribóg • Swaróg • Swarozhicz • Swiatowid • Triglav • Vesna • Weles • The Zorya

• **Baba Jaga - (BAH-bah YAH-gah) Jezi Baba in Polish (YEH-zhee BAH-bah)**

"Grandmother Bony-shanks". A terrifying Witch who flew through the air in a mortar using the pestle as a rudder and sweeping away her tracks with a broom. She lived in a revolving house

which stood on chicken legs. Her fence was made of human bones and was topped with skulls. The keyhole was a mouth filled with sharp teeth. She would aid those who were strong and pure of heart and eat those who were not. I see her as a Goddess of death and initiation.

•**Bialobóg (byah-WOH-book)**

White God from "bialy" - white. God of the waxing year. He would defeat his brother, Czarnobog in battle every Koliada to take his place as ruler of the waxing year. At Kupalo, they would battle again, but Czarnobog would win to rule the waning half. He was said to appear as an old man with a long white beard, dressed in white and carrying a staff. He was said to appear only by day and often assisted travellers in finding their way out of dark forests or reapers in the fields.

•**Czarnobóg (char-NOH-book)**

Black God from "czarne" - black. God of the waning year.

•**Dazhdbóg (DAHZHd-book)**

Giver God from "dati" - to give. The sun personified - may be the same as Khors. This son of Swiantowid emerged from his Eastern palace every morning in a two wheeled, diamond chariot, pulled by twelve fire-breathing horses with manes of gold. He would travel across the heavens each day through his twelve kingdoms (zodiac signs?). Some believed that he emerged each day as a beautiful infant and would age until his death as an old man in the West. Dazhdbóg was also a god of justice who sat seated on a purple throne surrounded by his seven judges (the planets?) The morning and evening stars, seven messengers who fly across the heavens with fiery tails (comets) and sometimes, Mjestjas, his bald uncle - the moon. In some legends, Mjesyas is his wife. He has many children who, according to legend, live among the stars and the Russian people, who call themselves "Dazhdbog's grandchildren."

•**Dzarowit (jahr-OH-veet) or Jarovit (yar-OH-veet)**

God of war. Same root name as Jarilo - youth and springtime. The historian, Herbord, equated him with Mars. His sacred symbol seems to have been the shield. When his temple at Wolgast was destroyed in 1128, those entering it in search of idols found only a gigantic shield. Afraid of the crowds gathering outside, Bishop Otto's men took the shield to hide behind as they exited. On sight of moving shield the people threw themselves upon the ground thinking that it was the god himself.

Dzarowit is thought to be one of four seasonal aspects of Swiantowid, the aspect ruling Springtime and looking toward the West. He may be related to Jarilo; In Dzarowit's name his priests proclaimed "I am your god who covers the plains with grass and the forests with leaves. The produce of the fields and woods, the young of the cattle and all things that serve man's needs are in my power."

from Gimbutas - "The Slavs" p160

•**Dodola** from "doit" - to give milk. A South Slavic cloud/rain goddess. Rain was thought to be a form of divine milk, sometimes thought to be from Dodola, sometimes the milk of Mokosh. Often, the clouds were perceived to be heavenly women or even cows. In Serbia, the rites of Dodola were kept up until quite recently: During a drought a girl, called Dodola, clad only in greenery and

flowers was led through the village while her companions sang "Dodola" songs:

We pass through the village, and the clouds across the sky. We go quicker, and the clouds go quicker, But the clouds have overtaken us and have bedewed the fields. We go through the village, and the clouds across the sky, and see, a ring drops from the clouds.

- W.R.Ralston p.227-229 Afterwards, the girl dances and spins while the woman douse her with water. This practice is thought to convince the heavenly women, clouds, to rain upon the earth, represented by the greenery.

•Dziewona (jeh-VOH-nah)

This huntress was said to run throughout the Carpathian forests. A version of Diana whose legend is probably due to contact with the Romanians.

•Jarilo (yah-REE-loh)

The Young Lord - from "jaru" - young, ardent, Springtime, bright, rash. He is a beautiful, barefoot youth wearing a long white robe. His head is crowned with a wreath of flowers and he rides a white horse. He is seen holding a bunch of wheat ears in his left hand.

He is a god of youth and sexuality whose symbol may have been the phallus. He is a dying and resurrected God whose funeral was celebrated during the rites of Kupalo.

•Jurata (yoo-RAH-tah)

A Baltic Sea Goddess who took the form of a mermaid. She was said to live in an underwater palace made of amber polished to look like gold. The mighty Perun fell in love with her beauty, but Jurata had eyes only for a human fisherman. The jealous God of Thunder send down a bolt of lightning which killed both Jurata and her fisherman. When pieces of amber wash ashore, they are said to be pieces of Jurata's ruined palace.

Another version of this myth has her palace and lover destroyed by her own sea father who disapproved of her romance with a mere mortal. Durning storms it is said one may still here her lamenting over the loss of her lover.(Poland)

•Khors

A name of the sun, personified, from the Iranian word "khursid". The same as Dazhdbog, as a matter of fact, he is sometimes referred to as "Khors Dazhdbog". The name of the circle dances, xorovods, comes from his name.

•Koljada (koh-LYAH-da)

a seasonal deity of the winter solstice. See Kupalo below.

•Kupalo (koo-PAH-woh)

Although many references are made to this diety either being a water Goddess or another version of the sacrificial god, Jarilo, as best as I can ascertain, Kupalo is a "seasonal" deity of the Summer Solstice. It was customary in Slavic culture to create an effigy named after the holiday which they were welcoming in. At the end of the holiday, the effigy was torn apart and tossed into the fields.

•**Lada (LAH-dah, WAH-dah)**

Lada is the Slavic goddess of love and beauty. In Russia, when a couple is happily married, it is said they "live in lada", in love. Lad is also a word meaning "peace, union, harmony" as in the proverb "When a husband and wife have lad, they don't require klad (Treasure)" - Ralston, p.105. She is said to reside in the underworld, vřij, until the Vernal Equinox, Maslenica, when she returns, bringing the lark and springtime with her. Like Jarilo, Lada is often portrayed as a goddess who is born and dies yearly. Her sacred tree is the lime/linden, supposedly because its leaves are shaped like hearts. As a Slavonian love song goes:

"As the bee is drawn by the linden-bloom (or lime-perfume),
My heart is drawn by thee." - Leland, p.138

One story has her married to Swarog who without her could not have created the world. Other sources give her a brother/lover named Lado which would make them divine twins such as Freya and Frey. There is also some mention of her two sons, Lel & Polel, and occasionally that of a daughter, Liuli.

•**Lado (LAH-doh, WAH-doh)**

"I fear thee not, O wolf! The god with the sunny curls will not let thee approach. Lado, O Sun-Lado." - W.R.Ralston, p.105

Partner of Lada, Lado is compared to Frey and considered a solar deity by some. In one old chronicle, Lado is called "The God of marriage, of mirth, of pleasure and of general happiness" to whom those about to marry offered sacrifice to ensure a good union.

•**Lel**

Son of Lada who, according to Pushkin, is the Slavic version of the Greek Hymen - god of marriage.

•**Marzanna (mahr-ZAH-nah), Marena**

Death and winter personified. the Marzanna appeared as an old woman dressed in white. Annually, an effigy of her was made, escorted to the edge of the village and thrown out. In Poland it was burned then "drowned". This was customary as both the fire of the sun, and the rainwaters were needed for the fertility of the crops.

•**Matka or Mata Syra Zjemiļa**

(MAHT-kah SIHR-ah ZHYEM-yah)

"...Matushka Zemļa, Mother Earth, giving suck from bountiful breasts to countless children. When the peasants spoke of Matushka Zemļa, their eyes, usually dull and expressionless, were flooded with love, like the eyes of children who see their mother at a distance." - Shmarya Levin

Moist Mother Earth, seems to have never been personified as other Earth Goddesses were

(given human form), but worshipped in her natural form. She may, however, be the same Goddess as Mokosh. Along with the ancestral worship shown in the belief in household spirits, Earth worship was most adamantly clung to despite the Christianizing of the Slavic world. She had absolute sanctity and no one was allowed to strike her or begin farming until her birthgiving time at Maslenica. Memorial day and Assumption day (sorry - I have no dates as of yet) were her name days so no plowing or digging could be done then. Anyone spitting on the Earth had to beg her forgiveness.

Property disputes were settled by calling her to witness the justice of the claims. Oaths and marriages were confirmed by swallowing a clump of earth or holding it on the head. Boundaries were measured while walking them with a clump of earth on the head. Villages were protected from cattle plague & epidemic by plowing a furrow around them to release Mother Earth's power. If no priest was present, sins were confessed to the earth and into the 20th century survived the custom of begging the Earth's forgiveness prior to death.

Earth worship was transferred to the cult of Mary and is why she is such a central part of Slavic Christianity. Unlike other nature deities, Mata Syra Zemlja was never personified as a Goddess with human features.

In the early 1900's to save their village from plague of cholera the older women circled the village at midnight quietly getting the younger women to come out. Without the men's knowledge, they chose nine maidens and three widows who were led out of the village and undressed down to their shifts. The maidens let their hair down, white shawls covered the heads of the widows. They armed themselves with ploughs and items of frightening appearance such as animal skulls. The maidens took up scythes and the entire procession marched around the village, howling and shrieking, while ploughing a deep furrow to release the spirits of the Earth. Any man who came upon the procession was felled by the maidens "without mercy".

•Mjésjac (MYEH-syahnts)

The Moon Deity- Sometimes seen as "The Sun's old bald uncle", sometimes his wife who grows older every winter as she moves away from her husband across the sky. In the summer, her youth returns and they are once again re-united and remarried.

•Mokosz (MOH-kosh)

Her name means "moisture" and she may be the personified version of Mati Syra Ziemia (Moist Mother Earth). Images of her survive to this day in Russian embroidery with arms raised, flanked by two horsemen. She is usually described as having a large head & long arms. In Onolets, she was believed to walk abroad or spin wool at night and if a sheep mysteriously lost its hair, it meant that Mokosh had sheared them.

Mokosh is associated with weaving, spinning, and perhaps that is why she is seen as the Goddess of fate. She is also seen as a Goddess of fertility and bounty. Some sources say she rules over occult knowledge and divination. She is also sometimes referred to as wife of Swarog which would then create a marriage of "heaven" and "earth". Rybakov called her the Great Mother Goddess of the Slavs.

16th century church chronicles contain a question posed to women parishoners "Did you not go to Mokosz?" It was believed that if Mokosz were pleased with the women's offerings, she would help the women with their laundry. This helps to support some people's theory that Mokosz was actually a water Goddess. As a wandering goddess, she is thought to be tied into the fertility of the earth and rain is sometimes called "Mokosz milk."

Mokosz has survived in the legends of Mokosha - minor female spirits who punish women for spinning on Friday, Mokosh sacred day. Her worship was transferred to that of St. Paraskeva-Friday.

Mokosh' Feast Day - Mokosh was honored on the Friday between Oct 25 and Nov 1. She was given offerings of vegetables and vegetables seem to have been the focal point of the day. One reference fixes this date on Oct 28.

•Perun - Piórun in Polish (PYOO-run)

God of thunder from "per, perk or perg" - to strike. He is described as a rugged man with a copper beard. He rides in a chariot pulled by a he-goat and carries a mighty axe, or strely, sometimes a hammer. This axe is hurled at evil people and spirits and will always return to his hand., and of oak. The word strela can mean either axe or arrow, i.e. bolt and strela are hung on houses to protect them from storms, restore milk to cows, ease labor and grant good luck to newborns and newlyweds.

His lightning bolts were believed to pass through the earth to a certain depth and return gradually to the surface in a specific period of time - usually 7 yrs 40days. People, rocks and trees struck by lightening are considered to be sacred for the heavenly fire remains inside them. In 1652 a Lithuanian man was recorded to have eaten the ashes of a leather saddle burned by lightening. He believed his action would save him from illness and give him oracular powers and the ability to conjur fire.

All big trees were sacred to Perun, but he especially loved the oak. There are records of oaks being fenced in as sacred to him. Sacrifices to him usually consisted of a rooster, but on special occasions, bear, bull or he-goat might be killed. The sacrificed animal was then communally eaten as they were seen to be imbued with the power of their patron God. Eating the god's animal to absorb the god's essence is similar to and predates the ritual of Holy Communion.

Perun's arch enemy was the zaltys, a great serpent curled at the base of the world tree. Somehow, this also put him on Weles' blacklist and worship of these two gods had to be kept separate.

Temples to Perun tended to be octagonal and on high ground. An idol of him set outside the castle of Vladmir was said to have a silver head and gold moustache - in some accounts, gold mouth. When Vladmir tore down the idol, it was tied to a horses tail and dragged to the Dnieper. Amid much weeping it was then tossed in as men with poles made sure that he was not washed ashore or pulled out. It eventually floated down river and was blown onto a sandbank still known as Perun's bank. Perun's holy day is Thursday, his feast day is the 20th of July.

• Porevit

from the root "pora" which means midsummer. This God, who was worshiped at Rugen, is thought to be one of the four seasonal aspects of Swiantovid facing South and ruling over summer. A temple of his in Garz was destroyed in the 12th century by Danish King Waldemar.

• Rod and Rodenica, Rozhenica

Literally creator and creatrix from the root verb, "dati" - to give birth. They seem to be the original "Lord and Lady" who created the universe. Swarog gained control later on, seemingly, with Rod's permission. Ceremonial meals in their honor were denounced by the church. These meatless meals usually consisted of cottage cheese, mead, bread and porridge.

Rod survived as a sort of Slavic penate, household god. His worship was at the center of the older ancestor cults. Rodenica survived as a mother-daughter team of glowing white fairies who visited children at their birth and determined each baby's fate.

- **Ruevit**

From the root "Ruenu" which was the Slavonic autumnal month named for the mating calls of the newly matured animals. Worshipped on the Island of Rugen, this God is thought to be one of the four seasonal aspects of Swiantowid ruling Autumn and facing East.

- **Rugievit**

God of Rugen, may be the same as Ruevit. His temple at Garz consisted of a large wooden structure with an inner room which had four posts and a roof and was decorated with purple hangings. His oak statue had seven heads (faces, probably) and seven swords in his girdle, an eighth in his hand.

- **Simargl**

A winged griffin or dog that probably came to the Slavs through their Sarmatian overlords. In Sarmatian myth, Simourg (Simargl) guarded the tree which produced the seed to every species of plant. He also was responsible for the disbursement of these seeds and thus is connected with vegetative fertility. According to some, Simargl is a fiery bird and may be the original firebird of Russian myth.

- **Slava**

A beautiful bird - a messenger of God Perun, every feather of which was said to shine a different color. This beautiful bird was called MATEPb CBA (Mater Sva) which can be translated either as Mater Slava (Mother Glory), Mater svex (Mother of everyone) or Mater Sova (Mother Owl - which may be why much of Russian Folk art depicts an owl). This flame colored bird usually appeared in the critical moment and pointed with its wing the direction in which an army should go. Everyone knew that either glory or a glorious death awaited the warriors and the prince had no choice but to follow the bird's lead. (from Taras at Adventure World E-zine)

- **Stribóg (SHTREE-book)**

From "srei"-to flow or from the Iranian "srira" beautiful, a common epithet for the wind. Grandfather of the winds. According to E.G.Kagarov, Stribog was a deity of wind, storms and dissension. He was supposed to bring the frost.

- **Swaróg (SHVAR-ook)**

From "svargas" - radiant sky, "svarati" - gleams. His name survives in the Romanian word for sunburnt or hot - sfarog. A smith god, identified with Hephaestis, he was associated with fire & with it's generative power, particularly sexual. He is the father of Dazhbog (the sun) and Swarowicz - or Ogon, the celestial and hearth fires, respectively. A master craftsman, he could shapeshift into the wind, a golden-horned aurochs (ox), boar, horse, or the falcon, Varagna which was his main incarnation.

Swarog was concerned only with heavenly affairs and left the earthly ones to his son. Unfortunately for his children, Perun was a much stronger war god and took over the role as chief deity of the warrior classes.

Swarog may be the "divine light" of God which in turn produced both the Celestial & Terrestrial fires.

•Swarozhicz/Swarowicz (shvar-OH-zheech/veech)

God of fire personified. As the name literally means "Swarog's son", all of Swarog's children would be called Swarozhich i.e. "Dazhbog Swarozhich", therefore, Swarowicz may not originally have been a god but all of Swarog's children. Some sources mention Dazhbog's brother as Ogon, meaning "fire". Other sources believe that the God of fire's name could not be spoken aloud. People would refer to him by his title as Swarog's son. Jehovah was originally a fire god who's name could not be spoken aloud. hmmm....makes you wonder.

•Swiatowid (shvyan-TOH-veed), Sventovit

From "svent" - strong, or perhaps "sventu" - Iranian for holy. God of war and protector of fields. His gender is not fixed as male, though, for his statue in Galica, Poland had 2 male sides and 2 female sides. Swiantowid had his own white horse only ridden by the high priest. He was believed to accompany anyone who went to war seated upon it. Before a war, the horse was led down a row of crossed spears. If he walked the row without catching a hoof on a spear it was a good omen.

His temple at Arkona was described thus: One door, a red roof and strong walls ornamented in relief with all kinds of roughly painted carvings. The outer walls were made of vertical wooden posts enclosing an area more than 20m square. Inside was decorated with ornaments, purple items and animal horns. An inner room consisting of a roof supported by four columns and hung with purple rugs contained a sunken base for a huge idol of the god. The idol held a drinking horn in his right hand. Mead was poured into it at harvest, the higher the level reached, the better next year's crop was purported to be. Swiatowid may be an aspect of or Western Slavonic version of Swarog.

•Triglav (TREE-glahv)

Triglav was a three-faced deity, symbolizing the dominion over the three realms - sky, earth, and the underworld. Triglav was shown blindfolded, supposedly because the god was too sacred to view the evils of the earth, and his temple at Stettin was richly sculpted both inside and out and decorated with war booty on the inside.

•Vesna

"Spring". A Vernal Goddess, possible Serbian in origin.

•Weles, Volos (VEH-less, VOH-lohs)

The Slavic Horned lord, ruled horned animals, wealth and the underworld. He is believed to have survived from the time of a common Indo-European pantheon. He was also a god of trade and oaths were sworn in his name. Weles is also the God of poets and bards and is often associated with magick. He was later associated with St. Blas, guardian of cattle.

At Kiev, his statue was not among those on the hill outside the palace but was instead, erected in the marketplace. This is supposedly because he and Perun are great enemies and couldn't be worshipped together.

•The Zorya - (ZOR-yah)

These daughters of Dazhdbog are the Auroras of dawn and dusk, and sometimes have a third sister, midnight (perhaps, Polunocnica). They are the Guardians of the God or hound, which is chained to the constellation, Ursa Major. Like the Fenris wolf of the Norse mythos, this creature will destroy the world if it ever breaks free.

Each morning, Zorya Utrenyaya opens the gates of Dazhdbog's Eastern palace so he may ride across the sky. In the evening, Zorya Vechernyaya closes the gates after her father's daily ride is finished. Their other two sisters, Zezhda Dennitsa and Vechernyaya Zezhda, the morning star and evening star are the caretakers of their father's horses and are sometimes considered to be the same two goddesses. These Goddesses, associated with Venus, are sometimes merged into one warrior Goddess, Zorya, who hides and protects warriors with her veil.

Slavic Magick & Folk Medicine

• Spells • Divinations • Remedies • Superstitions

Spells

• Prosperity and Domestic Tranquility

To Attract a Domovoi: Go outside of your home wearing your finest clothing and say aloud "Dedushka Dobrokhot, Please come into my house and tend the flocks."

To rid yourself of a rival Domovoi: Sometimes a home may have one too many Domoviki. In this case poltergeist-like activity may occur. Beat the walls of your home with a broom shouting "Grandfather Domovoi, help me chase away this intruder."

•To Gain Magickal Knowledge

Calling a Leshii: Cut down an Aspen tree so that it's top falls facing the East. Bend over and look through your legs saying "Leshi, Forest Lord, Come to me now; not as a grey wolf, not as a black raven, not as a flaming fir tree, but as a man."

The leshii will teach the arts of magick to any whom he befriends.

(from Ivanits - Russian Folk Lore)

•For Love

a zagorovui, or runespell, to capture the one you love:

In the ocean sea, on the island of Buyan, there live three brothers, three winds: the first Northern, the second Eastern and the third Western. Waft, O winds, bring on (lover's name) sorrow and dreariness so that without me s/he may not be able to spend a day nor pass an hour!

and yet another...

I, (conjurer's name), stand still, uttering a blessing.

I go from the room to the door, from the courtyard to the gates.

I go out into the open field to the Eastern side. On the Eastern side stands an izba (cottage). In the middle of the izba lies a plank, under the plank is the longing.

The longing weeps. The longing sobs, waiting to get at the white light. The white light, the fair sun, waits, enjoys itself, and rejoices.

So may s/he wait, longing to get to me, and having done so, may he enjoy himself and rejoice! And without me let it not be possible for him to live, nor to be, nor to eat, nor to drink; neither by the morning dawn, nor by the evening glow.

As a fish without water, as a babe without its mother, without its mother's milk, cannot live, so may s/he, without me, not be able to live, nor to be, nor to eat, nor to drink, nor by the evening glow; neither every day, not at mid-day, nor under the many stars, nor together with the stormy winds. Neither under the sun by day, nor under the moon by night.

Plunge thyself, O longing, gnaw thy way, O longing, into his/her breast, into his/her heart; grow and increase in all his/her veins, in all his bones, with pain and thirst for me!

- from "Songs of the Russian People", William Ralston

•For Protection

Prayer: Recite the following prayer to Zorya:

Oh Virgin, unsheath your father's sacred sword.
Take up the breastplate of your ancestors.
Take up your powerful helmet.
Bring forth your steed of black.
Fly forth to the open field,
There, where the great army with countless weapons is found.
Oh, Virgin, cover me with your veil.
Protect me against the power of the enemy
Against guns and arrows, warriors and weapons;
Weapons of wood, of bone, of copper, of iron and steel.

(from The New Larousse Encyc. of Mythology)

• For Happiness

Recite the following to a flame:

"Dear Father, tsar fire,
Be gentle and kind to me.
Burn away all my aches & pains, tears & worries."

• To Have Lost Animals Return

The following letter is written on three pieces of birchbark:

I am writing to the forest tsar and forest tsaritsa with their small children; to the earth tsar and earth tsaritsa with their small children; to the water tsar and water tsaritsa with their small children. I inform you that (name of owner inserted) has lost a (color mentioned) horse (or cow, or other animal - distinctive marks should be given). If you have it send it back without delaying an hour, a minute, a second. If you do not comply with my wish, I shall pray against you to the great God, Weles and tsaritsa Alexandra.

One letter is fastened to a tree in the forest, the second buried in the earth and the third thrown with a stone into water. After this, the lost animal is supposed to return by itself.

• To Bring the Rain

If rain was needed a virgin girl was chose, one not yet old enough to conceive whose mother was no longer able to conceive. Naked, yet draped all over with flowers, she would whirl around and around while singing invocations to Perun. All the while she would be "watered" by the surrounding women.

• To Win a Fist Fight

Recite while holding a stone from a gravesite:

"I summon to my aid the forest spirits from the forest and the water spirits from the water: and you, forest spirits of the forest, water spirits of the water, come to my aid against my opponent fist-fighter, and enable me to defeat my opponent fist-fighter with my own fists. And you, forest spirits from the forest and water spirits of the water, take the rock from this corpse and place it on the hands, or head, or feet of my opponent fist-fighter...and just as this dead man is heavy from the earth and rock, so too may my opponent fist-fighter be heavy to lift his hand against me, and may my opponent become weak in the arms and the legs, and blind in the eyes from my verdict until the time I remove it."

• To Guard against Slander

A zagovorui, or runespell, against Slander:

O righteous Sun! Do thou in my foes, my rivals, my opposers, in the powers that be, and public officials, and in all people of good mouth and heart, parch up evil thoughts and deeds, so that they may not rise up, may not utter words baleful for me!

• Spoiling

"Spoiling" is a Slavic term for cursing. The following spells are posted here only for research purposes:

• To Cause One to Wither

Dirt from the victim's footprint was collected and placed in a little bag, or a lock of the victim's hair was coated with clay. Either of these were hung inside the chimney. As the dirt or clay dried out, so, supposedly, did the victim.

• To Cause Death

Bareheaded and wearing only an undergarment, the magick user would circle the property of his or her victim's yard with a burning candle. The candle was then broken in two and turned upside-down.

Eggs (termed "white swans" for this purpose) and/or bread were brought to the gravesite of a known criminal in exchange for some soil from their grave which was removed while saying "As this corpse has died unrepentant, so may you too die, unrepentant."

Divinations

Tatyana curiously gazes
At the prophetic waxen mold,
All eager in its wondrous mazes
A wonderous future to behold.
Then from the basin someone dredges,
Ring after ring, the player's pledges,
And comes her ringlet, they rehearse
The immemorial little verse:
"There all the serfs are wealthy yeomen,
They shovel silver with a spade;
To whom we sing, he shall be made
Famous and rich!" But for ill omen
They take this plaintive ditty's voice;
Koshurka (kitten) is the maiden's choice

- Pushkin, from Eugene Onegin V.8, translated by Walter Arndt.

Podbljudnaja - (Pohd-blyood-NIE-ya) - "Under the Plate"

This form of divination should be done on Koliada and New Year's only. Each person takes a ring off their finger and places it into a bowl filled with water. A plate covers the bowl and songs are sung over it. At the end of each song, a ring is pulled out and the fate that the song is believed to apply to the owner of that ring.

Some traditional Podbljudnaja:

Podbljudnaja that fortell a wedding:

The ring was rolling
Along the velvet
The ring rolled up
To the ruby.
For one who takes it out
For her it will come true,
For her it will come true,
She will not escape

A Maple entwined with a birch
It did not untwine - Lada, Lada
Whoever takes it out
For her it will come true,

All will be well.

A little cat is sitting
In a wicker basket
She is sewing a towel.
She will marry the tom
For whom we are singing
All will be well.

Podbljudnaja that fortell wealth:

A rooster was digging
on a little mound of Earth
The rooster dug up
A little pearl.
For whoever gets it
All will be well.

A calyx is floating from somewhere beyond the sea.
To wherever it floats, there it will blossom.
Whoever takes it out - For her will it come true.
She will not escape - glory!

To predict a journey:

The sleigh stands, ready to go - Glory!
In it the cushions are all arranged - Glory!
It stands near the forest, waiting to go for a ride - Glory!
To whom we sing this song, all will be well.
It will come true, she will not escape - Glory.

To predict widowhood:

I sat - by a window
I waited - for my beloved
I could no longer wait
I fell asleep.
In the morning - I awoke
I suddenly - realized
I am a widow.
To whom we sing, all will come true.

To fortell death:

Death is walking down the street
Carrying blini* on a plate
Whoever takes the ring out
For her it will come true.
She will not escape - Glory.

(*blini is a traditional food offering to the dead)

This podbljudnaja is traditionally sung at midnight on New Year's eve and also predicts death.

A dandy once took a very sharp axe - Lileju
The dandy went out - into the wide courtyard.
The dandy began - to hew some boards
To nail the wood - into an oaken coffin
Whomever this song reaches,
For her it will come true
She will not escape

If you choose to write your own songs for this divination ritual, you may want to use some traditional symbolism. Bread, grain, millet or rye symbolize harvest, fulfillment and material security. Gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fur and expensive cloth symbolize luxury and wealth. Doing things together like eating, drinking, working, standing or sitting together symbolize love and happy marriages. The songs are usually short as one song quickly follows another and traditionally, each refrain ends with a praise word such as glory.

Songs taken from Reeder: Russian Folk Lyrics.

A Russian **flower divination** resembles the "He loves me" rhyme. They say:

Lyubit, Ne lyubit, Plyunit, Potseluyet, K sertsu prizhmet, K chertu poshlet, Dorogoj nazovet

(S/He loves, doesn't love me, Spits on me, Kisses me, Hugs me to his/her heart, Sends me to the devil, Calls me his/her dear one.)

If a thread was hanging from one's clothing, they would wrap it around the finger while reciting the alphabet. Whatever letter you stop on when the thread is fully wrapped is the initial of the future spouse. The color of the thread is also important. If the thread is pale, the spouse will be blonde, if dark, the spouse will be a brunette.

Wax Divinations - before Koljada, wax was melted and after it cooled, or was dropped into water, special attention was given to its shape. A coffin meant death to the inquirer, a ring meant marriage, etc. Sometimes this method was used by dropping molten lead into the water instead of wax.

New Year's Divinations -

Divination rituals that occurred on New Year's Eve were considered especially powerful if one followed certain rules. No crosses or belts could be worn and no blessings could be asked.

It was customary on New Year's Eve for a girl to back up to the bathhouse door with her hem over the back of her head (rear-end exposed) and ask a question of the Bannik. If a cold touch or scratch from his claw was felt, it meant no. If a warm touch or caress was felt, it meant yes.

This same divination could be used if one put their hand in-between the wood of the bathhouse.

If you looked into the mirror in the steam bath on New Years eve, you would see the face of your future husband, or if you slept on a log, you would see his face in a dream.

If you caught the moons reflection in a mirror, your future spouses name would also be revealed there.

Remedies

These are actual remedies that were used, taken from various sources. Whether or not they work, I could not tell you.

• Alcoholism:

a zagovorui, or rune spell, for alcoholism:

Dost thou hear O Sky (Svarog)? Dost thou see, O Sky? O ye bright Stars! Descend into the marriage-cup, and in my cup let there be water from a mountain spring. O thou fair Moon! Bow down to my klyet (store-room). O thou free Sun! Dawn upon my homestead. O ye Stars! Deliver me,(insert name here), from drink! O Sun, draw me from drink!

• Colds:

I think Babci was just trying to keep me quiet with this one when I was little!

Into a cup of hot tea add fresh lemon juice, honey and a shot of jezynowka (Polish cherry brandy). Sip. Have no more than 2 cups, unless you WANT to get drunk.

• Coughs:

Upon retiring, have a glass of hot beer.

Add some honey to a grated radish and eat along with any of the radish juices.

• Crankiness:

"When your child is mysteriously cranky, has a strange unyielding headache, or can't sleep after a day out or around people, either the child has been jinxed or exposed to negative energy/forces

The child's mother should take the lower left corner of her skirt, apron, or shirt with her right hand and wipe the childs face several times in a clockwise direction. Afterwards, give the child some water and put it to bed.

This spell is normally used for young children but it works at any age. My 70 year old grandma did it to my 50 year old mother a little while ago and it worked."
(Thanks to Vika for this Ukranian remedy)

• Fever:

Rub vodka on your chest and feet, put some mustard powder in a pair of woollen socks and put them on. Drink a mixture of milk, honey, baking soda, and vodka and go to sleep.

Before bed, stand naked, wearing only a woollen hat, with your feet up to the ankles in hot water and drink a large mug of tea with honey, jam, and at least 100g (about 2 1/2 shots) of vodka.

• **Hemorrhoids:**

Put two liters of milk and four large onions in a large covered clay pot and slowly heat it in the oven. Remove the pot from the oven, replace the cover with a toilet seat or similar object and sit on it. Steam yourself for a while and then rub the afflicted area with vaseline.

• **Hiccups:**

Rub a mixture of vinegar and mustard on your tongue. Hold for two minutes and then rinse.

• **Illness, general:**

a zagorvorui, or runespell, for healing:

Mother Zorya of morning and evening and midnight! as ye quietly fade away and disappear, so may both sicknesses and sorrows in me, (insert name), quietly fade and disappear - those of the morning, and of the evening, and of midnight!

• **Pain:**

"For unexplainable pain in the arm, hand, or wrist which nothing seems effective on...
Take a piece of thread (red is best...I don't know why but I can ask if you like) and tie it around your wrist. It should ease the pain if it doesn't get rid of it all together."
- From Vika.

• **Sore Throat:**

Mix one cup vodka, one cup oil and the juice of one lemon. Gargle with it and then drink.

Make a juice of mashed onion and water. Gargle.

Breathe heavily on a frog for about 8 to 10 minutes. The frog's heart should start beating rapidly and the sickness should pass entirely to the frog. You should feel instant relief. The less faint of heart should put the frog directly into the mouth and hold it for a couple of minutes.

• **Stuffy nose:**

Mash several cloves of garlic and put them in a pot of boiling water. Stand over the pot and breathe through your nose for five minutes.

• **Tickling, To proof a child against:**

Roll dough over the child's back, then bake a flat cake of that dough and feed it to the dog.

• **Toothache:**

Place a piece of salo (a slab of fat) in the opposite side of the mouth from the painful region. Hold for about 20 minutes.

A zagovorui, runespell, for a toothache:

O thou young Moon! Test the dead and the living: the teeth of one who is dead, do they ache? Not at all ache the teeth of one dead, whose bones are tanned, whose teeth are mute....Grant, O Lord, that the teeth of me, _____, may become mute and never ache.

This zagovorui must be recited three times while biting the stone doorway of a church: As this stone is firm, so may my teeth also become stony - harder than stone
This supposedly goes back to pre-Christian times and the stone was originally the stone of an axe or hammer, symbols of Perun.

• **Ulcer:**

Mix two raw eggs with a shot of vodka and drink 20 minutes before breakfast.

• **Upset stomach:**

Add salt and pepper to two shots of vodka and drink.

• **Warts: My grandmother's remedy -**

Cut a piece from a potato (be careful that it does not include an "eye") rub the cut part on the wart and then bury the piece of potato. As the potato dissolves, so will the wart.

Omens & Superstitions

Never touch a person or shake their hand over the threshold. If you don't wait until they are inside, you will not see them again for seven years and risk angering the Domovoi to boot.

It is unlucky to sit at the corner of a table.

If the cat is cleaning herself it means that company is coming.

If you whistle inside, you risk losing all your money.

Never begin a new project on a Friday.

If you compliment a person on their appearance or their baby's health, you must either knock unpolished wood or spit three times over the left shoulder lest the fairy's take them.

Never shave or cut your hair when a family member is in danger.

Never cut your hair while pregnant or the umbilical cord will wrap around ur baby's neck - From

Vika.

When giving flowers, give only odd numbers of flowers. Even numbers are for the dead.

If a bird hits the window, someone will die.

If you accidentally step in poop or a bird poops on you, you will win money. - From Vika.

If you break a mirror, you can run the pieces under water to counteract the bad luck.

Never show a newborn baby to a stranger until it is at least 40 days old.

Do not put keys on a table. You'll lose money - From Vika.

Tatyana, in her heart obeying
The simple folkways of the past,
Believed in dreams and in soothsaying
And heeded what the moon forecast.
Weird apparitions would distress her,
And any object could impress her
With some occult significance
Or dire foreboding of mischance.
A preening pussycat, relaxing
Upon the stove with lick and purr,
Was an unfailing sign to her
That guests were coming; or a waxing
Twin-horned young moon that she saw ride
Across the sky on her left side

Would make her tremble and change color;
Each time a shooting star might flash
In the dark firmament, grow duller
And burst asunder into ash:
All flustered, Tanya would be seeking,
While yet the fiery spark was streaking,
To whisper it her heart's desire.
But if she met a black-robed friar
At any place or any season,
Or if from out the meadow swath
A fleeing hare should cross her path,
She would be frightened out of reason,
And filled with superstitious dread,
See some calamity ahead.

- Pushkin - from Eugene Onegin V.5 & V.6 - translated by Walter Arndt.

Slavic Pagan Beliefs

The Slavic peoples are not a "race". Like the Romance and Germanic peoples, they are related

by area and culture, not by blood. Today there are thirteen different Slavic groups divided into three blocs, Eastern, Southern and Western. This includes the Russians, Polish, Czechs, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Serbo-Croatians, Macedonians, Slovenians, Bulgarians, Kashubians and Slovaks. Although the Lithuanians, Estonians and Latvians are of Baltic tribes, we are including some of their customs as they are similar to those of their Slavic neighbors.

Slavic Runes were called "Runitsa", "Cherty y Rezy" ("Strokes and Cuts") and later, "Vlesovitsa". The Cyrillic system ("Cyrillitsa") was created in the 9th century by Sts. Cyril and Methodius based on a combination of the Greek alphabet and the Slavic Runes. Vlesovitsa continued to be used by the Pagans, while Cyrillitsa was used by the Christians. During the "war" against Paganism, the Christians destroyed each document that contained Runic instead of the Cyrillic writing, usually along with its owner. This was done so effectively that according to most sources, the ancient Slavic peoples had no written language at all. Therefore the nearly all records of the rituals, temples and idols/gods of the ancient Slavs come from the very people sent to destroy them. This, along with the fact that very little information on Slavic Mythology and Magick has been translated into English, makes studying the subject extremely difficult.

Research must then be done through the study of folklore and folk customs. Fortunately, the medieval Slavic peasant did not embrace Christianity on any more than a surface level. This gave rise to what the Russians call dvoeverie (dvoh-ev-VAIR-ryeh) or "double-faith". According to one historian, Christianity so shallowly masked the surface of the true Pagan beliefs, many a peasant did not know the name of the man on the cross to whom he prayed.

Dualism & The Origins of Slavic Belief

The origins of Slavic belief, like that of the rest of the world's, rest in animism and ancestral worship. The first two types of spirit were called the beregyni - female spirits that bring life and are the forerunners of the Rusalki, and Upyr - the spirits of death who eventually became our modern Vampire (Wampyr). From this original dualism sprang belief in all of the nature spirits, and eventually in the Rod and Rozhenitsa, the God and Goddess who imbue the newborn child with a soul and his/her fate. Although nearly all deities were originally ancestral, Rod and Rozhenitsa eventually pulled the Slavic mind out of that way of thinking and opened the doorway for the later "Indo-European" way of thinking, although the original "Old European" way of thinking kept a stronger hold on the average Slav.

Dualism permeates all of Slavic Pagan spirituality and actually seems to be the basis for most of it. This should not be confused with the dualistic good against evil beliefs of the Christian religion which have unfortunately seeped into the Slavic spirituality of today. It is a system of complimenting opposites such as darkness and light, winter and summer, female and male, cold and hot more similar to the yin/yang. The God-brothers Bialybog "white-god" and Czarnybog "black-god" who rule the light half and dark half of the year respectively, are further illustrations of this polarity. Unfortunately, because of the introduction of Christianity, these two gods later became confused with "God" and Satan.

Other examples of dualism are - the two Rozhinitzy, the mother and daughter fates, the spirits of midnight, Polunocnitsa and noon, Poludnitsa - both times seen to be equally as frightening, and the Zorya - Goddesses of dusk and dawn. The Elements

The ancient Slavs had a deep sense of reverence for the four elements. Fire and Water were seen as sacred dualistic symbols on the horizontal or earthly plane. Earth and Sky were seen as a more vertical system of duality. High places such as mountaintops or treetops, especially birch, linden and oak, became sacred as meeting places the Sky father and the Earth mother. Where they met, they would join their procreative forces, usually in a flash of lightning and clap of thunder.

The winds were seen as the grandchildren of the God, Stribog. Water was referred to in mythology as the water of life and death and rivers were treated with respect lest they should drown you on your next visit. There are records of human, as well as other sacrifices being made to rivers such as the Dneiper and the Volga. Although many bodies of water had their own deities, most bodies of water were ruled by spirits known as Rusalki or Vodanoi. Fire was personified by the god, Svarozhich and it was considered nearly criminal to spit into a fire. Mati Syra Zemlja or Mother Moist Earth, however, seems to have been given the greatest amount of respect.

No one was allowed to strike Mati Syra Zemlja with a hoe, until the Spring Equinox, Maslenica, as she was considered pregnant until then. Earth was considered so sacred that oaths were sworn while holding a piece of her, sometimes in the mouth and ancient wedding vows were taken while swallowing a small clump of Earth or holding it on the head. The custom of asking the Earth's forgiveness before death was still being observed far into the 20th century and when a priest could not be found it was considered appropriate to confess sins to the Earth.

Totems

Like the native Americans, each Slavic tribe had a totem animal that the clan was usually named after. It was considered taboo to kill or eat this animal except for specific religious rituals. Each member of the tribe was thought to have an animal twin, and the death of that twin could cause the death of the tribe member. The World Tree

The Slavs believed that the world tree was divided into three parts; The roots existed in the realm of the underworld, "Nav", and were where the zaltys lived. The main section existed in the mundane world and the uppermost branches reached into the land of the sky Gods. A magical bird was said to live in the branches. Although the Slavs did have Viking influence, the world tree beliefs seem to come more from the native Siberians. These Asian peoples each keep a tree, usually a linden, near their home and see it as a sort of "telephone" to the other realms. Creation Myths

(Russian 1071 CE - the transcript of Lavrentij) - A Slavic magi was recorded as saying: "We know how man was created: God was washing in the bathhouse and, after sweating, he wiped himself with a towel that he threw onto the ground; then Satan entered into dispute with God as to who should make man out of this towel; and God breathed a soul into him, therefore after death man's body returns to the soil and his spirit to God."

A Christmas Carol from Galica explains:

When there was in the beginning no world,
Then there was neither heaven nor earth.
Everywhere was a blue sea,
And on the midst of the sea, a green plane-trees
On the plane tree three doves,
Three doves take counsel,
Take counsel as how to create the world.
"Let us plunge to the bottom of the sea.
Let us gather fine sand;
Let us scatter fine sand,
That it may become for us black earth.
Let us get golden rocks;
Let us scatter golden rocks.
Let there be for us a bright sky,
A bright sky, a shining sun,
A shining sun and bright moon,
A bright moon, a bright morning star,

A bright morning star and little starlets.

-Drahomaniv p.10

In other recorded versions of this song, there are two doves not three, two oaks instead of a plane tree or blue stones instead of golden ones. Much later versions have God, St. Peter and St. Paul riding the doves as the actual creators.

In the beginning, there were no earth and no people, only the primordial sea. Bielobog flew over the face of the waters in the shape of a swan and was lonely. Longing for someone to keep him company, he noticed his shadow, Chernobog and rejoiced.

"Let us make land" said Bielobog.

"Let us," said Chernobog, but where will we get the dirt?"

"There is dirt under the water, go down and get some," answered Bielobog, but before you can reach it, you must say 'With Bielobog's power and mine'."

The devil dived into the water, but said "With My Power", instead of what he was instructed to say. Twice he dived down and neither time did he reach the bottom. Finally, the third time he said "With Bielobog's Power and Mine" and he reached the dirt. Scraping some up with his nails, he brought it to the surface but hid a grain of dirt in his mouth in order to have his own land.

God then took the dirt from him and scattered it upon the water. The dirt became dry land and began to grow. Of course, the land in Chernobog's mouth also began to grow and his mouth began to swell. Chernobog was forced to spit and spit to rid himself of all the earth and where he spit, mountains were formed.

Angered that he was cheated out of his own land, he waited for Bielobog to fall asleep. As soon as the god was sleeping peacefully, Czernobog lifted him up to throw him in the water. In each direction he went, but the land had grown so much, he could not reach the ocean. When Bielobog awoke, Czernobog said "Look how much the land has grown, we should bless it."

..And Bielobog said slyly, "I blessed it last night, in all four directions, when you tried to throw me in the water."

This greatly angered Czernobog who stormed off to get away from Bielobog once and for all. In the meantime, the earth would not stop growing. This made Bielobog very nervous as the Heavens could no longer cover it all, so he sent an expedition to ask Czernobog how to make it stop.

Czernobog had since created a goat. When the expedition saw the great god Czernobog riding astride a goat, they couldn't stop laughing. This angered the god and he refused to speak to them. Bielobog then created a bee, and sent the bee to spy on Czernobog.

The bee quietly alit upon Czernobog's shoulder and waited. Soon, she heard him say to the goat "What a stupid god! He doesn't even know that all he has to do is take a stick, make a cross to the four directions and say 'That is enough earth'. Instead he wonders what to do."

Hearing this, the bee buzzed off in excitement. Knowing that he'd been heard, Czernobog yelled after the bee, "Whoever sent you, Let him eat your excrement!"

The bee went directly to Bielobog and said "He said All you need to do is make a cross to the four directions and say 'That is enough earth.' And to me he said 'let whomever sent you eat your

excrement'.

So god stopped the earth from growing and than said to the bee "Then forever after, let there be no excrement sweeter than yours."

This myth is a combination of myths from Bulgarian and Ukranian sources. Although the versions of these myths use God and Satanail as the dual creators, Slavic scholars agree that the myth is a later form of the original dualism of Czernobog and Bielobog. Because of this I have replaced the names.

The World Tree.

Some Slavs believed that the Earth was an Island floating in water that the sun was immersed in every evening. At the center of this Island stood the world tree or mountain. The roots of this tree extended deep into the underworld and the branches reached high up into the realm of the sky gods, Irij.

Nav was the underworld, realm of the dead from whence it gets its name. Weles/Wolos, the God of cattle and wealth and Lada, Goddess of springtime were also said to reside here. This is not really surprising, considering that most cthonic deities, such as Pluto, Saturn and Ops were also associated with wealth and that the crops are pushed upward from inside the Earth. Also, Lada would return from the underworld in the spring, much like Kore, Persephone and Ostara of the Teutons did.

Origin of Witchcraft - a story

Long ago, when the world was still fairly new, a young woman ventured into the woods to pick mushrooms. In no time at all, the skies opened up upon her and narrowly escaping the rain, she ran beneath a tree, removed all of her clothing, and bundled them up in her bag so they would not get wet. After some time, the rain stopped and the woman resumed her mushroom picking. Weles, Horned God of the forest happened upon her, and asked her what great magick she knew in order to have kept dry during the storm.

"If you show me the secret to your magick, I will show you how I kept dry." she said. Being somewhat easily tempted by a pretty face, Weles proceeded to teach her all of his magickal secrets. After he was done, she told him how she had removed her clothing and hid under a tree.

Knowing that he had been tricked, but had no one but himself to blame, Weles ran off in a rage, and thus, the first Witch came into being.

Slavic Pagan Holidays

Highlighted holidays link to images. Rituals are in the process of being written.

- Winter
- Spring
- Summer
- Autumn

Winter

Koljada (Kohl-YAH-da) - The Winter Solstice.

Most agree that the word comes from the Roman word "calendae" which meant the first 10 days of any month. Some, however, believe the word is derived from the word "Kolo" or wheel - much

like the word "Yule" is an Anglo-Saxon word for wheel. The holiday's original name may have been "Ovsen". The holiday was filled with revelry. Processions of people masked like animals and cross-dressers roamed the village. Often they were accompanied by a "goat" - a goat's head, either real or (usually) made and stuffed on a stick. The person holding the "goat" would be covered by a blanket to play the part. Sometimes a child on horseback - symbol of the reborn sun - would accompany them; the horse was often played by two young men in horses costumes. One of the wenders would carry a spinning solar symbol, internally lit by a candle, on a stick. Later, after Christianity entered the scene, the spinning "sun" became a star.

This unusual group would stop and sing Koljada songs from house to house. These songs usually included invocations to "Koljada", the god or goddess of the holiday, praises and good wishes, requests for handouts and threats for refusal. The handouts, also called "koljada", usually took the form of little pastries or "korovki" shaped like cows or goats. They were sometimes just in the shape of the animals head, but often were described as having "horns and tails and everything." The korovki were traditionally baked by the old people in the house, the grandmothers and grandfathers.

The "tricks" played by those who were not rewarded could be brutal: Garbage might be brought from all over the village and piled in front of the offending host's gate, their gate might be torn off and thrown in the nearest water or livestock could be led off.

In Poland one "caroller" would carry a bundle of hazel twigs and after receiving koljada, would gently hit his host/ess with a small stick loudly wishing "Na shchestia, na zdravia, na tot Novii Reek" (happiness, health, in the coming New Year). A small twig was left with the farmer who nailed it above his door for wealth and protection.

Bonfires were sometimes lit and the dead ancestors asked inside to warm themselves. Mock funerals were held where a person pretending to be dead was carried into the house amidst both laughter and wailing. Sometimes even a real corpse was used. One young girl would be chosen and tradition made her kiss the "corpse" on the lips. If a pretend corpse was used, the person would leap up after being kissed - a symbol of rebirth.

Holiday foods included kut'ia, a traditional funeral food consisting of whole grains and pork. The whole grain is a universal symbol - "the seed as the mysterious container of new life" (J A Propp p.8)

On the last day of the koljada season in Poland, all the unmarried men of the village would get together to "wend" for oats. It was impossible to get rid of them with a scoop of oats; it took at least 7 liters. The farmer would keep a sharp eye on his grain that night, because otherwise the carollers would steal it as part of the evening's custom. With the money from the sold oats the men would hire musicians and organize a large dance party in the village during the pre-Spring festival period.

If you don't give us a tart - We'll take your cow by the horns.
If you don't give us a sausage - We'll grab your pig by the head.
If you don't give us a bliny - We'll give the host a kick.

- Reeder, p.85

New Year's Day - originally on the Winter Solstice, New years was considered the most powerful time for divination. A traditional New Year's divination was called podbljunaja (powd-blyew-NIE-ya) or "under the plate". Details of this divinatory system may be found on the Slavic Magick page. Pork was traditionally eaten at this time.

Spring

Strinennia - Mar 9th. Clay images of larks were made, their heads smeared with honey and stuck with tinsel. They were carried around the village amidst the singing of vesnjanki, invocations to Spring. Birds were thought to bring the Spring with them upon their return. Children were given pastries shaped like birds to toss into the air while saying "The rooks have come.". Sometimes the pastries were tied to poles in the garden. The baking of these pastries was to ensure that the birds would return.

Oh little bee, Ardent bee!
Fly out beyond the sea.
Get out the keys, the golden keys.
Lock up winter, cold winter
Unlock summer, warm summer.
Warm summer -
A summer fertile in grain.

- Reeder, p 92

Maslenica (Mah-sw eh-NEET-sa) "Butter woman" from the word Maslo which means butter. Originally it was practiced at the Vernal Equinox but later was celebrated the week before lent. Maslenica (mah-sw eh-NEET-sa), sometimes called Shrovetide, was a celebration of the returning light, a time of games and contests, especially horse racing, fist fights, sliding and mock battles. It was a time for protection and purification rituals and a time of gluttony, obscenity and dissolution.

At the beginning of the festivities a life-sized corn doll would be made as a personification of the holiday. The doll would be invoked and welcomed by the name Maslenica. Sometimes a drunken peasant was chosen, instead, to represent Maslenica. He would either be dressed in woman's clothing or in a costume sewn all over with bells. His face would be smeared with soot and he would be seated on a wheel resting on a pole within a sledge. Wine and pastries would surround him and as many as could would accompany him in other sledges. Crowds would follow on foot, laughing, dancing and singing ritualsongs. Corn "Maslenitsas" were also driven around in barrows, wagons or sleighs accompanied by crowds of celebrants.

Many customs honoring the sun were included in the festivities such as the lighting of bonfires, pushing a wheel whose axel pole was a flaming torch about or circling the village on horseback with torches. Farmsteads were also circled at this time, either with a religious icon or with brooms, sweeping around the entire property three times to create a magickal circle which protected against illness and evil spirits.

Traditionally, the house and barn were cleaned and decorated and holiday foods such as bliny (pancakes), kulich (sweet bread) and paskha (pyramid shaped cottage-cheese bread) were prepared. Special loaves were baked and fed to the cattle to guard them from unclean spirits. Kozuli, pastries shaped like cattle, goats, etc. were prepared and eaten to bring on the multiplication of the herds. Eggs were decorated and rolled along the ground in order to transfer the fertility of the egg to the earth. The customary "swinging" which occurred at this time was believed to strengthen the stock and fertility of the villagers as well.

Maslenitsa was considered to be a time for purification. All salt was prepared for the coming year, as salt was used for cleansing and curative purposes. Ritual baths to prepare for the oncoming work in the fields were also taken before sunrise and followed with fumigation in the smoke of the juniper.

Another important part of Slavic ritual is the funeral meal. A huge feast was prepared and brought to the cemetery where it was eaten amidst much wailing and laughter. Food was always left for the dead. In Eastern European ritual, funeral and fertility rites are intertwined. Volos, a god of the herds, is believed by many to be the same god as Veles, an underworld deity.

At the end of the week the Maslenitsa (if a doll was used) was taken to a field outside the village, usually where the winter crops were planted. There it was destroyed, either by being torn apart and thrown into the field or burned. This was the remnant of an earlier cult of a dying and resurrected God, Volos perhaps, whose death brought life to the fields. The "God" was always destroyed with laughter as such a "death" was seen to bring life. Smaller dolls were also made for individual households which were also torn apart at the week's end and fed to the livestock. This was believed to ensure their fertility and the customary willow branch they were fed was thought to protect them for the entire year to come.

Our Dear Maslenica, dear, leli, dear
Came for a while, for a while, leli, for a while
We thought for seven weeks, seven weeks, leli, seven weeks
But Maslenica stayed only seven days, seven days, leli, seven days
And Maslenica deceived us, deceived us, leli, deceived us
To Lent she offered a seat, offered a seat, leli, offered a seat
Bitter horseradish she put out, put out, leli, put out
And that horseradish is more bitter than xren, more bitter than xren,
leli, more bitter than xren.

(Traditional Maslenica song - Zemcovskij - xren is a form of horseradish also)

It is interesting to note that in this song, the singer laments that he is betrayed by Maslenica because she gives up her seat to Lent and gives him bitter things (to eat). In the Slavic traditions, The periods directly before and after Easter were filled with customs, rituals and celebrations although Easter itself came and went without much ado. This is supposedly due to the Orthodox Priest's successful efforts to keep the day of Easter, itself free of pagan influence. The holiday of Maslenitsa lasted a week and marked the beginning of the Slavic Spring Festivals which continue through to the Summer Solstice, Kupalo.

Krasnaja Gorka - "beautiful" or "red" hillock - the Sunday after Easter. In Russia, a woman holding a red egg and round loaf of bread would face East and sing a spring song which the chorus then took up. Afterward, a doll representing Marzena, grandmother Winter, was carried to the edge of the village and thrown out or destroyed. Xorovods, Russian circle dances, started on this day as well as were Spring game songs; A female performer would enter the center of a circle and mime the sowing, pulling, spreading, etc..of the flax all the way up to the spinning. She and all those in the circle would sing:

Turn out well, turn out well, my flax.
Turn out well, my white flax. *

This is a form of sympathetic magic to ensure a bountiful flax harvest.
(* - Reeder - Russian Folk lyrics)

Radunica - (Rah-doo-NEET-sa) The second Tuesday after Easter. This holiday was originally known as Nav Dien (Day of the Dead) and was a bi-annual holiday to celebrate the ancestors. The original dates of these two holidays were probably May eve and November eve - cross-quarter dates. Usually feasting and celebrating occurred in the cemeteries among much ritual wailing. Offerings, often of eggs, were left to the dead.

Ascension - 40 days after Easter. This holiday may have originally fallen on May eve and been tied in with the holiday of Nav Dien. On this day, lark pastries were again baked. After supper, all would rest a while and then take their lark pastries into the rye fields. A prayer would be offered at each side of the field while the larks were tossed into the air and people cried "So that my rye may grow as high". The larks were then eaten.

Village girls customarily imitated the spring bird's song. Songs were sung on opposite ends of the village with one chorus answering the other. When finished, another song would begin in the distance and in this fashion the songs would travel from village to village.

St. Egorij (George) Day - April 23 - George is Greek for "farmer". The first day the flocks are taken to the fields. They were driven out using pussy willows that had been blessed on Palm Sunday. The energy of the willow was thought to be transferred to the animal, or person, being whipped by it. According to an old song;

The pussy willow has brought health
The pussy willow whip beats you to tears
The pussy willow does not beat in vain.

People walk around the fields singing invocations to Egorij begging him to protect the flock from wild animals in the fields and beyond them. These invocations probably originated as prayers to the god Weles, ruler of horned animals, wealth and the underworld. After the flocks left, the entire village would gather together for one solemn moment. Some of the pussy willows were then stuck in the rye fields to give them strength, others were brought home to ensure the flock's return.

St. Egorij is a holiday predominated by men. One ritual for this day consisted of the old village men going down to the river and gathering a stone for every animal in their family's flock. They would then put them in a bag and hang the bag in the courtyard saying

Tsar of the fields, Tsarina of the fields,
Tsar of the forest, Tsarina of the forest,
Tsar of the water, Tsarina of the water,
Protect my flocks, from the evil eye,
From wicked people, from wild beasts,
And from all others.

On the eve of this holiday, young boys and men do a form of trick-or-treating by singing from house to house for food and bestowing blessings upon those who are generous and curses upon those who are not. This door-to-door singing was called "The Labor of St. George."

Cows, give birth to calves. Pigs, give birth to sucklings.
Roosters, stamp your feet. Hens, hatch chickens.
Hostes be good to us. Host, don't be stingy.

If the host and hostess were generous, the singers would usually wish for the hosts and for themselves 200 cows and 150 bulls each. If the host was stingy, he might hear:

Neither a farm, nor a courtyard
Not any chicken feathers
May God grant you cockroaches and bedbugs

Rusal'naia Week - (Roo-sahl-NIE-ya) originally just after May eve, this holiday was later

celebrated on the 7th or 8th week after Easter. The holiday was possibly named after the Roman holiday Rosalia. During this week the Rusalki, female water spirits, were said to leave the rivers and go to the forests and fields. Birches were considered a source of vegetative power and homes were decorated with birch branches, both inside and out.

On the Wednesday of this week, girls would go into the forests and choose and mark the birches. The following day, Semik, bringing fried eggs (omelettes) & beer, they would decorate the chosen trees with flowers. One special birch would be chosen and "curled". That is, the ends of the twigs would be knotted and twisted to form wreaths. The fried eggs would be placed around it while Semickajas (songs sung only at Semik) were sung. Then the kumit'sja ceremony would be held: The girls would kiss each other through wreaths on the birch tree and swear an oath of friendship. This spell was believed to ensure that they would be friends for life or, "kumas".

This tree was sometimes left in the forest, and sometimes cut down and brought into the village. No males were allowed to touch the tree. The tree might be dressed in woman's clothing and/or stripped of its lower branches. Sometimes this tree was set up in a home as a guest. If left in the forest, its tip might be bent down and tied to the grass, ensuring that its sacred energy would return to the earth. Girls would sing and dance the xorovod around the tree.

Banishings of the Rusalki were performed during Rusal'naia. Dolls of them were made and ritually torn apart in the grain fields.

On the Sunday of this week, girls would perform memorial rites on the graves of their parents and afterward divide eggs among their family members. Then the sacred birch tree was removed from the village and tossed into a local river or stream. Girls would take wreaths from their heads and toss them in after the birch. If their wreath floated off, love was to come from the direction the wreath floated toward. If the wreath sunk, the girl was supposed to die within the following year. If it circled, misfortune would come.

I, a young girl, am going to the quiet meadow, the quiet meadow.
To the quiet meadow, to a little birch.
I, a young girl, will pick a blue cornflower,
A little blue cornflower, a cornflower.
I, a young girl, will weave a wreath.
I, a young girl, will go to the river.
I will throw the wreath down the river.
I will think about my sweetheart
My wreath is drowning, drowning.
My heart is aching, aching.
My wreath will drown.
My sweetheart will abandon me.

- Reeder, p.101

Semik - (Seh-MEEK) the Thursday of Rusal'naia Week. This was the day to perform funerals for all those who had not yet been properly buried.

Semik songs (Semikjas):

While selecting the birch:
Don't rejoice oak trees. Don't rejoice green ones.
Not to you are the girls coming. Not to you, the pretty ones.

Not to you are they bringing pies, pastries, omelettes.
Yo, Yo Semik and Trinity!
Rejoice birches! Rejoice green ones!
To you the girls are coming!
To you they are bringing pies, pastries, omelettes.
Yo, yo Semik and Trinity.

While curling the birch:
Oh birch, so curly, curly and young,
Under you, little birch, no poppy is blooming.
Under you, little birch, no fire is burning -
No poppy is blooming -
Pretty maids are dancing a xorovod,
about you little birch, they are singing songs.

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Summer

Kupalo - (Coo-PAH-loh) - the Celebration of the summer solstice. Kupalo comes from the verb kupati which means "to bathe" and mass baths were taken on the morning of this holiday. On this holiday, the sun supposedly bathed by dipping into the waters at the horizon. This imbued all water with his power and therefore, those who bathed on this day would absorb some of that power.

Fire was sacred to the ancient Slavs and fires were never allowed to go out. In the sanctuaries, fires were tended by the priests and in the home, guarded by the mother. On the eve of Kupalo, however, all fires were extinguished and rekindled with "new fire". New fire was created by friction. A peg was rotated within a hole in a block of wood made especially for this purpose. In some areas, animals were sacrificed on Kupalo's eve and a feast prepared of them entirely by men was shared as a communal meal. Bonfires were lit and couples jumped over them. It was considered a good omen and prediction of marriage if a young couple could jump the flame without letting go of each other's hand. Cattle was chased through the fires in order to ensure their fertility.

At the beginning of the celebration, a straw image of "Kupalo" was made of straw, dressed like a woman and placed under a sacred tree. At the end of the festival, the effigy was ritually destroyed by burning, "drowning" or being ripped apart. Afterward, elaborate mock funerals were held. Two people pretending to be a priest and deacon would cense the figure, with a mixture of dung and old shoes burning over coals in a clay pot. The funeral was carried out among much wailing and laughter.

Kupalo was considered the most powerful time to gather both magical and medicinal plants. It was considered the only time to gather the magical fire-fern. On Kupalo's eve, the flower of the fern was said to climb up the plant and burst into bloom. Anyone who obtained it would gain magical powers including the ability to find treasures. To gather the herb, one must draw a magic circle around the plant and ignore the taunts of the demons who would try to frighten them off. Kupalo marked the end of the "Spring festival" period which started in the beginning of March.

Perun's Day - July 20th. On this day a human sacrifice was chosen by ballot. There is record of a viking's son being chosen and the viking refusing to give him up. Both father and son were killed as a result. This day was considered a "Terrible" holiday. The sacrifice was seen as necessary to placate the God and keep him from destroying the crops with late summer storms.

According to Dr. Buhler in *De Diis Samogitarum*, the prayer uttered by the officiating priest went as follows:

Perkons! Father! Thy children lead this faultless victim to thy altar. Bestow, O Father, they blessing on the plough and on the corn. May golden straw with great well-filled ears rise abundantly as rushes. Drive away all black haily clouds to the great moors, forests, and large deserts, where they will not frighten mankind; and give sunshine and rain, gentle falling rain, in order that the crops may thrive!"

A bull was also sacrificed and it was eaten as a communal meal.

Autumn

St. Ilia's Day - August 2nd. In the Ukraine, this day marked the beginning of autumn. It was said "Until dinner, it's summer. After dinner, it's autumn." Ilia is closely related to Perun and this was most probably one of Perun's holy days. After this day, no swimming was allowed as Ilia will curse anyone he finds swimming after his feast day.

Harvest - Harvest Holidays occurred anywhere from Aug 2 to the autumn equinox and lasted from 4 days to a week. Various rituals center around the reaping and threshing of the sheaths. The Harvest Holidays of the Slavs were far more practical than ritual. The songs sung at this time are almost completely concerned with the work at hand or praises for the host and hostess or the one who brought the cup. Work parties called *tolo'ka* or *pomoi'* were formed and these travelled from farm to farm until all the work was done. The host was obligated to provide the day's food and entertainment.

Yablochnyi/Medovoy Spas - or "Apple/Honey Saviour. This is a crossquarter holiday between the summer solstice and the fall equinox. It celebrates the wealth of the harvest when fruit and honey are ready to be gathered. The first fruits and honey picked on this day and the bee hives were blessed.

Zaziuki - on or around Aug 7, might be the same holiday as Spas. Particular attention was paid to the first sheaf (*zazhinochnyi* or *zazhinnyi*) which was usually brought into the house and threshed separately. Sometimes it was blessed and then mixed back in with the seed. The end of the harvest celebration was called *Dozinki*. The last sheaf (the *dozhinochnyi* or *ortzhinnyi*) was also brought in the house where it was either decorated with flowers and ribbons or dressed in woman's clothing. It was then placed in the entrance corner of the home or near any religious icons until Oct 1, when it was fed to the cattle. Sometimes the last sheaf ceremony was merged with the ritual surrounding a small patch of field that was left uncut. The spirit of the harvest was said to precede the reapers and hide in the uncut grain. This small patch was referred to as the "beard" of Volos, the God of animals and wealth. The uncut sheaves of wheat in "Volos' beard" were decorated with ribbons and the heads were bent toward the ground in a ritual called "The curling of the beard". This was believed to send the spirit of the harvest back to the Earth. Salt and bread, traditional symbols of hospitality were left as offerings to Volos' beard.

Mokosh Day - Mokosh was honored on the Friday between Oct 25 and Nov 1. She was given

offerings of vegetables. One reference fixes this date on Oct 28.

Slavic Ritual Recipes

Traditionally, ritual libation would have consisted of mead. There is currently a very good commercial Polish mead available called "Piasz". It is produced and bottled in Poland and imported by Adamba Imports, Brooklyn, NY 11237. This brand of mead is SO Pagan that the back of the bottle boasts "Piasz, a 9th century Polish prince quaffed his honey wine from the horn of a bison, the same way his forbears paid homage to their ancient god, Swiatowid." - the strange thing is that...a 9th century prince would have been VERY Pagan as Poland was not Christianized until the year 966....the TENTH century.

Blini

Blini is not only a food appropriate for ritual, it is a traditional food offered to the dead.

Scald 2 cups milk. When it has cooled somewhat, stir in 1 package yeast, 1 Tbsp sugar and 1 1/2 cups flour. Let this rise, covered, in a warm place for 1 hour. beat 3 egg yolks with 1tsp salt, 1 Tbsp melted butter and 1/2 cup flour. Stir this into the sponge. Beat 3 eggwhites until stiff and fold them into the batter. Cook small pancakes in melted butter. Serve with sour cream and maybe some caviar.

Pierogi

These little moon-shaped dumplings are perfect for during and/or after any circle work.

mix 1 egg, 1 tbsp oil, a pinch of salt and enough flour to make a good pasta dough. Roll this out thin (best to use a pasta maker) and using a floured, upturned glass, cut circles out of the dough. Place a small amount of filling in the center of the circle and fold over, wetting the edge to seal. Boil in salted water until tender. You may then fry them in butter with sliced onions. Serve with sour cream.

Pierogi Fillings:

- Seasoned Mashed potatoes
- Seasoned mashed potatoes & sauer kraut
- Seasoned farmer's cheese
- Finely chopped mushrooms sauteed with onion
- Ground meat mixed with 1 raw egg & some dillweed.

Other Recipes

Not specifically magickal, but any Slavic ritual should be followed by a good deal of eating....

Glumpki - Stuffed Cabbage

Core 2 or 3 heads of cabbage and immerse each one in boiling water for about 5 minutes each. Peel off all the larger leaves and cut out the stalky parts at the bottoms. Set aside.

Mix together: 1lb ground beef, 1 lb ground pork, 1 2 cups cooked long grain rice (al dente), 1 large chopped onion, salt, pepper and a little oil.

In each cabbage leaf place about 2 Tbsps of the meat mixture and roll up - first bring in the sides of the leaf then roll. Do this to all the meat mixture.

Line the bottom of a large covered casserole with some of the extra cabbage leaves. Place the cabbage bundles tightly together in the pot and cover with a mixture of 1 large can crushed

tomatoes and 2 Tbsp cider vinegar. You may want to add tomato juice to be sure all the cabbage bundles are kept wet during cooking. Cover with a layer of extra cabbage leaves and either bake for 1 hr or cook atop the stove for 50 minutes.

Latkas - Potato Pancakes

Peel and grate 1 lb of russet potatoes. mix with one egg, 1/2 to cup flour, salt, pepper and 1 or 2 chopped scallions.

Heat a mixture of butter and oil in a frying pan. fry the batter in small, flattened amounts. The latkas should be brown and crispy. Serve with sour cream.

You can cheat by using left over mashed potatoes instead of grated fresh ones. It still tastes pretty good.

Mushroom Kasha

mix 1 cup kasha (buckwheat groats) with 1 egg and 1/3 cup sliced, sauteed mushrooms. Stir-fry in 2 Tbsp butter till the egg is cooked and buckwheat is separated. Add 2 cups boiling chicken broth, salt & pepper and simmer, covered, for ten minutes. Fluff with fork before serving.