**Special Ukrainian Dates**

There are special dates and events in the life of Ukraine that are memorable to every Ukrainian citizen. They are Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, Women’s Day, and Independence Day.

The first special date in the Ukrainian calendar has to be 6th January, Christmas Day. Until recently this day wasn't recognized by the government and indeed was even prohibited. Nevertheless, it has always been celebrated within homes, especially in western Ukraine.

A new date to add into the calendar is February 14th, otherwise known as St Valentine's Day. This day of lovers has always been popular in western European countries and has now reached Ukraine. On this day people with romantic interest in each other should give presents and flowers. It is also an opportunity to tell somebody you art-interested in them if they do not already know!

International Women's Day falls on March 8th, is like Mother’s Day in Great Britain. This day is hugely popular with women in Ukraine as they receive flowers and chocolates from the men. Children give their mothers presents, or send them postcards.

One of the most exciting holidays for families is Easter. It could fall on any Sunday in April or May and full of lovely traditions which the whole family become involved in.

Eggs are boiled and then painted brightly in different colors. Very special sweet Easter bread is baked, full of raisins and sultanas. Often people will take food like the eggs and bread to be blessed by a priest on Easter night.

Everybody gets two days off work for May Day on 1st May. This political holiday represents the solidarity of workers and very often red flags are flown on the many buildings.

Eight days later on 9th May is Victory Day. There is always a military parade involving all the people who took part in World War II. All the old uniforms are worn with the original medals. Their family and friends give these old soldiers flowers and congratulations.

Nowadays one of the main holidays of Ukraine is the Independence Day, celebrated on the 24th of August. On this day in 1991 the “Act of Independence of Ukraine” was proclaimed.

And in the end of year we celebrate the most popular holiday – New Year. On the New Year night people go to dance, visit their friends, or stay at home because this is a family holiday.