

Every country has its customs and national holidays.

A lot has been said and written about the inscrutable Russian soul yet it still keeps mystery.

Spacious or big nature is the first thing to hear from the Russian if asked about the national Russian character. Russian people are altogether spacious people, just like their land and extremely inclined to the fantastic and disorderly. Yes, one life wouldn't be enough to visit all the places of this land, its spaces are hard to take control over and its riches seem impossible to waste. The Russian generosity and spontaneity. Our weakness for extremes and longing for the unknown, as well as our unpredictability and lack of order and certainty.

Go there no one knows where and bring nobody knows what – that is the task given to the main hero in many Russian tales. It means a Russian person is guided by intuition, his inner voice rather than by mere reason. When planning something in this country, keep free space left for alternative ways and be prepared that with the Russian people some plans might change and events take quite another turn all of a sudden. But do not get upset beforehand, anyway-it may happen that some additional opportunities will come your way.

The favourite Russian saying says: all that is done is done for the better. On the one hand, it implies optimistic and adventurous outlook, on the other hand sheer fatalism and passivity – the opposite coming together in Russian people. That feature is quite understandable if you take into account our history of upheavals and cataclysms, from the Tatar yoke with numerous barbaric forays to the 20<sup>th</sup> century with world and civil wars, revolutions, repressions and shocking reforms.

Often the Russians say: Hope for the better and be ready for the worst. And our most common hope is that it will work out somehow by itself. Perhaps it is for that notorious Russian carelessness that we are easily beguiled and made use of by various leaders coming in a long train.

Unfortunately justice and law are far from being synonyms in Russia. The state is perceived as a mechanism encroaching upon the rights and freedoms of its citizens instead of protecting them. The laws can be manipulated in the interests of the mighty of this world. No law can provide for every eventually of life, we believe. So relations between individuals are regulated by the idea of justice which is prior to law in Russia.

Russian patience seems endless as a Russian open country. It means the ability to endure any privations and severities.

The habit of hardships and peaceful nature make the Russians conformists: we dislike open conflicts and prefer compromising. They say: a lean compromise is better than a fat lawsuit. We can long put up with pressure and injustice but once we explore with all our long suppressed offences, it's dangerous, because there is no stop to it.

Russian laziness is almost as notorious as Russian spacious soul. Every Russian soul harbours Yemelya, the great idler, a fairy-tale hero who does not have to get off his favourite place – a stove, as it can carry him anywhere and all his wishes are fulfilled by magic. Russian laziness is opposed to the wordly haste and vanity of vanities. If you are working in Russia keep in mind that A Russian person needs time to pull oneself together, that is to focus all one's infinite soul on a definite goal. But when ready and interested and emotionally involved, one can beat records in efficiency.

The Russians often do generous spendthrifts. We are fond of making handsome gestures, we enjoy surprising our friends and guests with generous gifts and regals. Even if the hosts are having hard times, they will do their best to treat guests well.

Russian collectivism takes its roots in the communal living of the Old Rus and the Orthodox moral values. Our inclination to work jointly for the common good, share what we have and rely on somebody's help is based on the feeling of kindred with other people. That is well reflected in the Russian language: a number of words denoting blood relations: sonny, mummy, grandpa, grandma, daddy, daughter, sister.

Better have a hundred friends than a hundred roubles, Russian people like to say. Personal relations play here a more important role than one's social status or bank account. The dark side of it is that a person's success often depends on profitable connections rather than on one's talents and professionalism.

And the last one is: what is good for German for a Russian is death. Nowadays Russia bent on the Western and European standards is driving towards stability and living on credit, convenient but binding. Extra stability verging on routine is very suppressing for the Russians. Smooth and scheduled living and working void of variation and collision that makes a European feel comfortable will depress a Russian.

The list of national Russian character is endless, because our nation is unique. But here are presented the most characteristic features to my mind.