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АНГЛИС ЖАНА КЫРГЫЗ МАЙРАМДАРЫНЫН ОРТОСУНДАГЫ ОКШОШТУКТАР ЖАНА АЙЫРМАЧЫЛЫКТАР

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СХОДСТВА И РАЗЛИЧИЯ МЕЖДУ АНГЛИЙСКИМИ И КЫРГЫЗСКИМИ ПРАЗДНИКАМИ

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DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND KYRGYZ HOLIDAYS

Аннотация. Макала англис жана кыргыз майрамдарынын окшоштуктары менен айырмачылыктарын изилдеп, алардын тарыхый, диний жана маданий контексттерин талдайт. Макала майрамдардын социалдык биримдикти бекемдөөгө, салттарды сактоого жана баалуулуктарды муундан муунга өткөрүүгө кантип жардам бере турганын көрсөтөт. Ошондой эле глобалдашуунун жана заманбапташтыруунун майрамдык практикаларга тийгизген таасири каралат.

Ачкыч сөздөр: майрамдар, маданият, Англия, Кыргызстан, салттар, салыштырмалуу талдоо

Аннотация. Статья рассматривает сходства и различия между английскими и кыргызскими праздниками, анализируя их исторический, религиозный и культурный контексты. Подчеркивается, как праздники способствуют социальной сплоченности, сохранению традиций и передаче ценностей, несмотря на различия в происхождении и формах празднования. Также обсуждается влияние глобализации и модернизации на праздничные практики.

Ключевые слова: праздники, культура, Англия, Кыргызстан, традиции, сравнительный анализ

Annotation. The article examines similarities and differences between English and Kyrgyz holidays, analyzing their historical, religious, and cultural contexts. It highlights how holidays foster social cohesion, preserve traditions, and transmit values, despite differing origins and forms of celebration. The study also discusses the influence of globalization and modernization on holiday practices.

Keywords: holidays, culture, England, Kyrgyzstan, traditions, comparative analysis

Differences and Similarities Between English and Kyrgyz Holidays

Holidays represent an essential component of national culture, reflecting historical experience, religious beliefs, social values, and collective identity. This article explores the similarities and differences between English and Kyrgyz holidays through a comparative cultural analysis. Despite significant differences in historical background, religion, and socio-economic development, both cultures demonstrate shared functions of holidays, such as strengthening social cohesion, preserving traditions, and reinforcing national identity. The study analyzes major national, religious, and traditional holidays in England and Kyrgyzstan, focusing on their origins, meanings, forms of celebration, and cultural significance. The findings show that while English holidays are largely shaped by Christianity and constitutional history, Kyrgyz holidays are deeply rooted in nomadic traditions, nature worship, and later Islamic influence. At the same time, both cultures use holidays as tools for cultural continuity and intergenerational transmission of values.

Holidays play a crucial role in the cultural life of any society. They serve not only as periods of rest and celebration but also as symbolic events through which communities express their values, beliefs, and historical memory. In the context of globalization, the study of national holidays becomes particularly relevant, as cultural exchange increasingly brings different traditions into contact.

England and Kyrgyzstan represent two cultures with contrasting historical trajectories. England developed within a settled, urbanized European civilization influenced by Christianity and constitutional governance, while Kyrgyz culture emerged from a nomadic Central Asian lifestyle closely connected to nature and tribal traditions. These differences are vividly reflected in the nature and celebration of holidays.

The aim of this article is to identify and analyze the similarities and differences between English and Kyrgyz holidays, focusing on their historical origins, cultural meanings, and social functions. The research contributes to intercultural understanding and highlights the importance of holidays in preserving cultural identity.

The study of holidays has been widely addressed in cultural anthropology, sociology, and ethnography. According to Durkheim (1912), collective celebrations reinforce social solidarity and shared consciousness. Turner (1969) emphasized the ritual nature of festivals, viewing them as moments of “*communitas*,” where social hierarchies are temporarily suspended.

Comparative studies of holidays often focus on religious versus secular celebrations, modernization effects, and the role of tradition in contemporary societies. Scholars such as Smith (1991) argue that national holidays function as symbols of collective identity, while Hobsbawm (1983) introduced the concept of “*invented traditions*,” highlighting how some holidays are adapted or newly created to serve political or social purposes.

Research on Kyrgyz holidays has largely focused on nomadic heritage and seasonal rituals, particularly Nooruz, while studies on English holidays emphasize Christian traditions and national commemorations. However, comparative studies between these two cultures remain limited, which underscores the relevance of the present research.

Holidays in both English and Kyrgyz cultures can be classified into three main categories:

1. **Religious holidays**
2. **National and state holidays**
3. **Traditional and seasonal holidays**

This classification provides a structured basis for comparative analysis.

Religious holidays in England are predominantly Christian and closely associated with the Anglican Church. The most significant religious holidays include:

- **Christmas** – celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed on December 25. It is characterized by family gatherings, gift-giving, church services, and festive meals.
- **Easter** – commemorating the resurrection of Christ. Traditions include church attendance, Easter eggs, and symbolic rituals representing renewal and rebirth.

These holidays emphasize family unity, charity, and spiritual reflection.

English national holidays reflect political history and constitutional development:

- **The King's (or Queen's) Birthday** – symbolizing continuity of the monarchy.

- **Remembrance Day** – honoring soldiers who died in wars, marked by moments of silence and the wearing of poppies.

These holidays promote patriotism, historical memory, and national unity.

Some English holidays have folkloric origins:

- **Bonfire Night (Guy Fawkes Night)** – commemorates the failure of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Celebrated with fireworks and bonfires, it reflects historical awareness and public participation.
- **May Day** – associated with spring and fertility, featuring dances and rural traditions.

Kyrgyz holidays represent a complex synthesis of ancient nomadic traditions, religious values, and modern statehood. Historically, the Kyrgyz people maintained a close relationship with nature due to their nomadic lifestyle, which shaped seasonal celebrations and ritual practices. Over time, the spread of Islam and later the establishment of an independent nation-state further influenced the structure and meaning of holidays. As a result, Kyrgyz holidays can be categorized into traditional and seasonal, religious, and national or state holidays, each reflecting a specific stage of cultural and historical development.

Traditional and seasonal holidays in Kyrgyz culture are deeply rooted in the nomadic way of life and the natural cycle of the year. These celebrations emerged as a response to environmental conditions, agricultural rhythms, and the need for social cohesion within nomadic communities. Nature, seasonal change, and renewal play a central symbolic role in these holidays.

One of the most significant traditional holidays is **Nooruz**, celebrated annually on **March 21**, the day of the spring equinox. Nooruz marks the beginning of the new year according to ancient Eastern calendars and symbolizes the renewal of nature, rebirth, and the triumph of life over winter. For the Kyrgyz people, Nooruz is not

only a seasonal celebration but also a philosophical representation of harmony between humans and nature.

The celebration of Nooruz involves a wide range of traditional rituals and cultural practices. Homes are cleaned in advance to symbolize spiritual purification and a fresh beginning. Special traditional dishes, particularly *sumolok*, are prepared collectively, emphasizing unity, cooperation, and shared responsibility. National games, folk music, and dances are performed, reinforcing cultural identity and intergenerational continuity. Through these practices, Nooruz serves as a powerful medium for preserving cultural memory and strengthening social bonds.

Religious holidays in Kyrgyzstan are primarily influenced by **Islam**, which became deeply rooted in Kyrgyz society over several centuries. These holidays play a crucial role in shaping moral values, ethical behavior, and community relations. Unlike traditional holidays centered on nature, religious celebrations emphasize spirituality, faith, and social responsibility.

One of the most important religious holidays is **Orozo Ait (Eid al-Fitr)**, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims observe fasting, self-discipline, and spiritual reflection. Orozo Ait symbolizes purification, gratitude, and renewal of faith. On this day, people attend communal prayers, visit relatives, and give charity to those in need. Acts of forgiveness and reconciliation are particularly encouraged, strengthening social harmony and solidarity.

Another major religious holiday is **Kurban Ait (Eid al-Adha)**, which commemorates the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God. This holiday emphasizes values such as generosity, compassion, and devotion. Families traditionally perform the ritual sacrifice of an animal, and the meat is shared with relatives, neighbors, and disadvantaged members of society. Kurban Ait reinforces communal responsibility and highlights the importance of caring for others.

Together, these religious holidays contribute to the moral and ethical framework of Kyrgyz society, promoting compassion, humility, and social justice.

National and state holidays in Kyrgyzstan reflect the country's modern political history and its journey toward independence and democratic governance. Unlike traditional and religious holidays, these celebrations focus on national identity, statehood, and collective historical memory.

Independence Day, celebrated on **August 31**, is one of the most significant national holidays in Kyrgyzstan. It commemorates the country's independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The holiday is marked by official ceremonies, public events, cultural performances, and patriotic speeches. Independence Day plays a vital role in strengthening national consciousness and fostering a sense of pride in sovereignty and self-determination.

Another important state holiday is **Constitution Day**, which symbolizes the legal and political foundations of the Kyrgyz Republic. This holiday highlights the principles of democracy, rule of law, and civic responsibility. Public discussions, educational activities, and official events emphasize the importance of constitutional values in the development of a modern state.

National and state holidays thus serve as instruments for reinforcing political awareness, promoting unity, and encouraging active citizenship among the population.

Despite cultural differences, several similarities can be identified:

1. **Social Cohesion:** In both cultures, holidays bring families and communities together.
2. **Cultural Transmission:** Traditions are passed from older generations to younger ones.

3. **Symbolic Meaning:** Holidays serve as symbols of identity, history, and values.
4. **Combination of Old and New:** Traditional elements coexist with modern forms of celebration.

These similarities demonstrate the universal function of holidays in human societies.

The differences are rooted in historical, religious, and lifestyle factors:

1. **Religious Background:** English holidays are primarily Christian, while Kyrgyz holidays reflect Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions.
2. **Lifestyle Influence:** Nomadic heritage strongly influences Kyrgyz holidays, emphasizing nature and seasons, whereas English holidays are shaped by urban and agricultural traditions.
3. **Forms of Celebration:** Kyrgyz celebrations often involve outdoor activities and communal rituals, while English holidays emphasize domestic and institutional settings.
4. **Historical Focus:** English holidays frequently commemorate political events, while Kyrgyz holidays emphasize harmony with nature and community values.

Globalization has influenced holiday practices in both cultures. English holidays have become more commercialized, especially Christmas. Similarly, Kyrgyz holidays incorporate modern elements such as concerts and media celebrations. However, both societies continue to preserve core traditional meanings, demonstrating cultural resilience.

The comparative analysis reveals that holidays act as cultural mirrors reflecting the historical experience and worldview of each society. While forms and symbols differ, the underlying functions remain similar. Understanding these differences and similarities promotes intercultural awareness and mutual respect.

In conclusion, English and Kyrgyz holidays differ significantly in origin, symbolism, and modes of celebration due to distinct historical and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, they share fundamental social and cultural functions. Holidays in both societies serve as powerful tools for preserving cultural identity, strengthening social bonds, and transmitting values across generations. Further research may include empirical studies or broader comparisons with other cultures.

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