

# Martenitsa - The “Secret” Unique Amulet of Bulgaria Which Brings Good Health, Purity and Passion

“The Best Kids Toy and Present of the Year”, next to Christmas

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**Martenitsa** (marteniza, martenica, Bulgarian: мартеница, pronounced ['martenitsa]) is a “Secret” unique amulet of Bulgaria for bringing good health, purity and passion. Martenica is “the Best Kids Toy and Present of the Year”, next to Christmas. They accept Baba Marta as well as they accepted Santa Clause two months before, but they receive Martenitsi (pl.) instead of presents, or make one themselves.



An ancient custom is a small piece of adornment, made of white and red yarn and worn **from March 1 until around the end of March** (*or the first time an individual sees a stork, swallow, or budding tree*). Most of the time, the tassels are decorated with blue beads, small golden coins or colorful threads.



Wearing one or more Martenitsi is the World unique and a very popular Bulgarian tradition.

The name of the holiday is **Baba Marta**.

"Baba" (баба) is the Bulgarian word for "grandmother" and Mart (март) is the Bulgarian word for the month of March. Baba Marta is a Bulgarian tradition related to welcoming the upcoming spring. When she is smiling the sun is shining; when she is mad, cold weather is firming the ground.

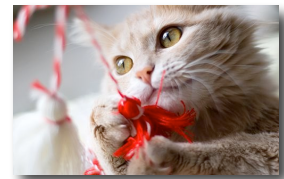
The majority of the rituals aim to make her **happy and merciful**.



The month of March, according to Bulgarian folklore, marks the beginning of springtime. Therefore, the 1st day of March is a traditional holiday associated with sending off winter and welcoming spring. On that day and for a few days afterwards, Bulgarians exchange and wear white and red tassels or small dolls.

Martenitsa is usually worn pinned on the clothes, near the collar, or tied around the wrist or neck.

The Martenitsa is a stylized **symbol of Mother Nature - new life, conception, fertility, and spring**. During late-winter / early-spring, nature seems full of hopes and expectations. The **white** symbolizes the **purity** of the melting white snow and the **red** symbolizes the **setting of the sun**, which becomes more and more intense as spring progresses. These two natural resources are the **source of life**. They are also associated with the **male and female beginnings and the need for harmony** in Nature and in people's lives.



This is an old tradition that remains almost unchanged today and the common belief is that by wearing the red and white colors of the martenitsa people ask Baba Marta for mercy. People receive Martenitsa as presents from relatives,

friends and colleagues. Even you can see dogs and cats wearing them.

**Martenitsi are always given as gifts.** Tradition dictates that people never buy Martenitsi for themselves. Best is when you make for others, and especially when kids make some for their family and friends.



The tradition calls for wearing the martenitsa until the person **sees a stork or a blooming tree**, and then removes the Martenitsa and **hangs it on a blossoming tree**.

The stork is considered a harbinger of spring and as evidence that Baba Marta is in a good mood and is about to retire.

Everybody will smile because they believe they have won the generosity of Baba Marta.

Честита  
Баба Марта!

**Everyone says “Tchestita Baba Marta” (Happy Grandma Marta)!**