

# The Belarussian Challenge book





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Badges for completion of the challenge are available at £1 each, or to help us fundraise for the Berarusians we have a "friends badge" - very similar design, but slightly different colour, which can be ordered instead.



# Preface. How to use the Challenge book



Dear Girlguides from Hampshire North, this Challenge book was created specially for you to acquaint you with the geography, history and culture of Belarus. Materials for this book were collected and put together by girlguides from different parts of Belarus. The link between your county and our country lasts more than 16 years and we are very glad that you show such an interest in learning more about Belarus.

This book contains eight different challenges on different themes. There is no need for you to complete every task in challenge. However, we want you to learn something new about Belarus from different spheres, so try to do something from each of the eight parts of the book. And, when you complete your Challenge, you will get a special badge as a friend of Belarusian guides. Young leader and trainer of the Association of Belarusian guides Natasha Zavadskaya created this badge specially for the Challenge.

To share your progress and funny moments of getting through the Challenge we created a Facebook group where we ask you to upload videos and photos of how you complete different tasks. The link for the group is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BelarusianChallenge/> Join in!

All the media materials and additional information, which is too big for the book, we upload to the Google disk, use the link <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7q0r3jJBES5ZkdpS2hUT09rUEk?usp=sharing> to find all the materials on the disk.

The best way to complete the Challenge is to have fun through it. We wish you to enjoy your Challenge and welcome you to Belarus!



\* All video, pictures and documents are taken from public Internet sources. If any material infringes your copyright, please contact us by e-mail [belguides@gmail.com](mailto:belguides@gmail.com)

# History of Hampshire North/Belarus link

(Told by Robbie Hill – Contact person for the Link and active participant of it since the beginning)



Hampshire North hosted a group of 9 from Belarus at and after the World Camp. They invited us to take a group to Belarus.



Group of 18 from Hampshire North went to Belarus in 2001, taking 2 Trainers who ran sessions over 3 days for leaders who came from all over Belarus. There were about 80 guides in the camp. The group fund-raised over 2 years to purchase 1000 Promise Badges for the Association of Belarussian Guides, plus metal badges to their design for those attending the camp or who had helped organise it in Belarus. Each participant also took a number of stationery items so that each Belarussian at the camp had good quality notebooks and pencils/coloured pens. (quality is vastly improved now). In 2003 a group from the County joined in a camp in Belarus with girls from Hampshire West and S.Lincs.



20 Belarussians came to Hanor Unite at County invitation, with home hospitality afterwards. 2007 group of 7 went to Braslov. 2008 10 from Belarus joined County Camp, with home hospitality.



2009 group went to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Link.



May 2010 4 adults stayed in a hotel in Minsk and were looked after during the day by several members of ABG and taken to visit Birds, Guides and Rangers at their Unit meetings.

A group of 10 came to Hanor Unite. 2014 Robbie went on her own, stayed 1 night in camp and was hosted brilliantly for the rest of the week...



HAMPSHIRE NORTH ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING ANOTHER GROUP FROM BELARUS AT THEIR COUNTY CAMP IN AUGUST 2017.....

# Challenge 1. Meet the Belarus

**What you need to engage in the challenge:**



- Safety pins (1 each).
- Beads (red, green and white in colour).
- Printed card sets with the answers for activity 3.
- Projector/TV/ laptop/ tablet or mobile-phone to watch the video.
- Tablet/ mobile phone with the camera to record your greetings to

Belarusian Guides.

## Activity 1

Watch the video with greetings from the Belarusian Guides Arina & Irina.

## Activity 2

Tell the girls about Hampshire North-to-Belarus Link, about the Challenge Book and the badge the girls can get once they are through all the challenges.

## Activity 3

Game «What do I know about Belarus? »

Hang card sets (Supplement 1) with the answer options in 4 corners of your activity room. Each card set consists of 5 cards with correct or incorrect answers to the questions about Belarus. All the answers in each card are given in sequence order of questions. Read one question at a time and ask the girls to find the corner where they think the correct answer is given. Once the girls have chosen their corners, give them the correct answer and provide them with some facts about Belarus from the fact-list attached. Take the top card from the set off for the girls to see the next 4 answers. Then proceed with the next question.

Proposed questions:

1. What is the capital of Belarus?
2. What is the population of Belarus?
3. What countries does Belarus border on?
4. What are the State languages in Belarus?
5. Which sea does Belarus have access to?

You can ask other questions based on the fact-list (see Supplement 1) in order to tailor the challenge to your group's needs, age and interests. You can limit the time for the answers, let's say, while the music is on.

Once you are through with this activity, you can share some more information about Belarus or your own experience about your visits to Belarus.



## Activity 4

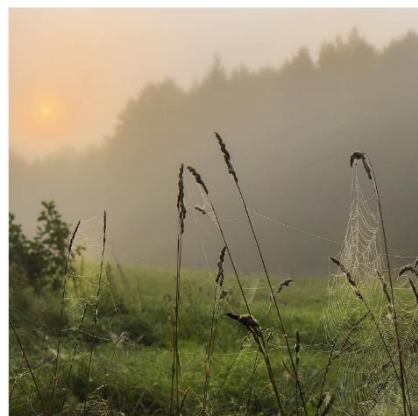
Watch one or both the videos about Belarus. For the video go to Google disc created for the Challenge, or use the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tul63MCxZa0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsicST8l3vM>

Choose the video your unit may like.

Discuss with the girls if they have learned anything new about the country after they have watched the video.



## Activity 5

Show the girls some pictures/slides with the Belarusian National Emblem and State flag (you can find them on Google disk). Tell the girls about the symbolic meaning of each colour. You can ask them to guess what each colour stands for.

The National Flag of the Republic of Belarus is a rectangular cloth consisting of two horizontal stripes: a red upper stripe and a green lower stripe that are two-thirds and one-third of the flag width respectively.

A vertical red-on-white Belarusian decorative pattern which occupies one-ninth of the flag's length is placed against the flagstaff. The flag's width-to-length ratio is 1 to 2. The flag is fixed on a golden (ochre) flagstaff.

Since ancient times the red colour of the flag has been the symbol of the Sun. It signifies blood ties, brotherhood and struggle for justice. It also signifies the past history of Belarus, as the colour used by the Belarusian forces at the Battle of Grunwald, and of the Red Army when they were fighting Nazi Germany during the Great Patriotic War. It stands for high purpose in destiny as well as for victory. At the same time, it symbolizes happiness and life. In old times notable people used to wear red hats and red sarafans\*

The green colour of the flag is the colour of nature. Green stands for the bright future ahead of Belarus, and also represents many forests, fields and meadows located in the country. It is the colour of the good, growth, development, prosperity and peace.

The white colour is the colour of freedom, purity and wisdom.

A decorative pattern, designed in 1917 by Matrena Markevich, is displayed on the hoist of the flag. The pattern, derived from local plants and flowers, is a traditional type commonly used in Belarus. These patterns are sometimes used in woven garments, most importantly in the traditional 'rushnik' – a woven towel used for ceremonial events like religious services, funerals, and other social functions. An example of their use would be a host offering his guests bread and salt served on a rushnik.

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\* A sarafan is a long, trapezoidal traditional jumper dress (pinafore) worn as folk costume by women and girls).





This pattern symbolizes ancient culture, intellectual wealth and solidarity.

The pattern “The Rising Sun” is the basis of the pattern the central element of which is a rhomb. It signifies the Rising Sun in the ancient mythology. The figures to the right and to the left of the rhomb are the symbols of prosperity and wealth. Two x-shaped lines with four dots in between are located inside the rhombus and signify the land under crop. This central rhombus is also called a key to happiness as it signifies successful events developing. The pairs of joint rhombuses at the top and at the bottom of the pattern are the symbol of life extension and regenerative corn. Lines in between four rectangles go through the middle of the pattern. They denote a wish fulfillment.

Ask the girls to make the National Flag of the Republic of Belarus using safety-pins, beads and the pattern provided below. Ask them to wear the flag while they are going to take part in the Challenge.

The pattern for the Flag made of beads:



## Activity 6

Learn some Belarusian/Russian words from our mini-vocabulary. Using the words you have learnt, record a message in Belarusian to Belarusian Guides. Upload your video to the Facebook Belarusian guide challenge group with the hashtags #belarusianchallenge and #guidingisfun

### Vocabulary:

English	Russian	How to say	Belarusian	How to say
Hello	Привет	Priv <u>jet</u> *	Прывітанне	Pryvit <u>anne</u>
Good buy	Пока	Pak <u>a</u>	Дапабачэння	Dapabach <u>ennja</u>
Thank you	Спасибо	Spas <u>iba</u>	Дзякуй	<u>Dzjaku</u> j
You are welcome, please	Пожалуйста	Paz <u>ha</u> lujsta	Калі ласка	Kali <u>L</u> aska
Girl	Девочка	<u>Dev</u> achka	Дзяучынка	Dzjauch <u>hyn</u> ka
To girls	Девочкам	<u>Dev</u> achkam	Дзяучынка	Dzjauch <u>hyn</u> kam
To Guides	Гайдам	Gajdam	Гайдам	Gajdam
Belarusian	Белорусский (им)**	Belar <u>us</u> ki(m)	Беларускі	Belar <u>us</u> ki(m)
Friend	Друг	Druk	Сябра	<u>Sjab</u> ra
Friends	Подруга(и)	Padr <u>uga</u> (ee)	Сяброўка (i)	Sjabr <u>ou</u> ki
We say hello to somebody	Мы передаем привет.	My pered <u>ajom</u>	Мы вітаем.	My vitaem

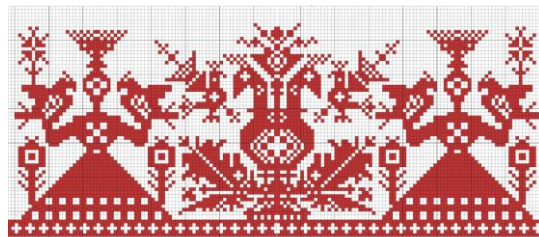
\*Highlighted syllable is stressed.

\*\* ending in Dative case

## Challenge 2. Belarusian mythological characters

### What you need to engage in the challenge:

- Printed colour illustrations of the mythological characters
- 4 cards with the parts of the recipe of the traditional Belarusian dish
- Crafts to make a “Fire” amulet
- Crafts to make a broom
- Tablet/ mobile phone with the camera to record your videos or to take pictures of what you have done to download it to Facebook group.



### Activity 1

Tell the girls about the Belarusian mythological characters (see the Supplement 2) or ask them to read about them on their own. Provide them with the handouts. Show the girls the illustrations of the mythological characters done by a girl-guide from Zhodino, Arina Skakun, aged 16, to give them ideas how the characters look like (see the Google disk).

As an alternative, you can ask the girls to make a sketch of how they imagine this or that creature. Then ask them to sit in a line or in a circle. One girl starts drawing a picture that she has on the back of the girl that sits before her. That girl draws what she has remembered on the back of the girl that sits before her and so on. The picture goes through the line to the front. The girl in the front draws a picture of a character on a piece of paper. Then ask the girls to compare the pictures – the one that has been sent round and the final one or with the original one.

### Activity 2

The girls are to meet some of the mythological characters and to get the recipe of the secret traditional Belarusian dish to cook at the next meeting. For this activity choose the recipe from the Cook book on the Google disk on the girls' age, tastes, preferences and time that you can allow for cooking. Divide the recipe into four parts. Print each part on a separate card that you can later give to the girls once they are through one of the 4 stations described below.

There are 4 stations in the game. On each station the girls will meet one of the mythological characters. The girls have to remember and tell you or your assistant as much as they can about this character in order to get a task. On each station the girls can be met by leader's assistants dressed up like the characters. Or on each station you can ask the group to dress up one girl using material at hand.

#### Station 1. Vampire – Vurdaľack.

Vampires-vurdaľacks never attack people who have amulets with fire symbols on them or who wear crosses. Ask the girls to make amulets with the help of the symbols that the Belarusians use to depict various phenomena. Look through the symbols and find the one that stands for fire. (the list of symbols are in the Supplement 2). Make an amulet in the shape of this symbol.

Depending on the venue and the group's age and interests you can make a “Fire” amulet in one of the following ways:

- Draw it or make it from dough and bake it in the oven.
- Paint the stone or a piece of wood or carton
- Make a card with a fire application.
- Colour the Cross of St Ephrasinia Polotskaya (see the Supplement 2).

When the amulet is made, give the girls a card with a part of the recipe and tell them to proceed to the next station.



### Station 2. Woodsman or Ljesavick.

Wood goblins or woodsmen (lesavicks) can be scared away with a shouting or a spell. Shout as loud and as fast as you can the following saying: "Dobramu usjudu dobra" which means all is well for a good man. Record your best attempt and download it to the Facebook Challenge Group.

When the girls are through with this activity, give them a card with a part of the recipe and tell them to proceed to the next station.

### Station 3. Mermaid.

To shoo away a mermaid ask the girls to make funny faces. Take a picture of them making funny faces and download the photos to the Facebook Challenge Group.

Give the girls a card with a part of the recipe and tell them to proceed to the next station.

### Station 4. House spirit (Brownie) or Damavick.

To gain House Spirit's favour make a small broom under which this creature can live.

You will need:

Twine (rope), plank, scissors, glue, ribbon and other items for decoration. Then follow the instruction on pictures:

Step 1. Prepare materials



Step 2. Wind the string on the Board, tie with one hand and cut with the second



Step 3. Tie the rope as shown at the pictures



Step 4. Decorate a broomstick



Give the girls a card with a part of the recipe and tell them to proceed to the next station. Allow them some time to make all parts of the recipe together and to find out what they are going to cook.

## Challenge 3. Belarusian cuisine



### What you need to engage in the challenge:

- Tablet/ mobile phone with the camera to record what you have cooked.
- Ingredients for the chosen dish.

### Activity 1

**Tell the girls about Belarusian cuisine and ask them to choose one of the recipes from the Cook Book for cooking.**

Belarusian national cuisine has evolved over the centuries. Belarusian culinary traditions represent a mix of simple recipes used by commoners and a sophisticated cuisine of the nobility, an extensive use of local ingredients and unusual way of cooking.

Old Belarusian recipes have survived to the present day, and the country's visitors show an increased interest in them.

Traditional dishes are served at farmsteads that use only fresh farm produce to make the dishes which are often common only for a particular area. Here they bake bread to old recipes and technologies, cook homemade meat delicacies, cheese from cow or goat's milk, and sweets made of honey, apples and cranberries.

Today's diet of Belarusians includes many traditional dishes. The most popular are pork stew (machanka) and vereshchaka, homemade sausages, draniki (thick potato pancakes), kolduny, kletski (dumplings), babka (baked grated potato pie), cold sorrel soup, mushroom soup...

Belarusian cuisine was influenced by two main factors: active farming and extensive use of local produce; influences from neighboring countries and migrant settlers. Since the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the national culinary traditions have been a mix of Baltic, Slavic, Jewish and partly German cuisines. Therefore, the Belarusian cuisine is one of the most diverse in the continent. It is similar to the Russian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish, but is unique in its own way, is hearty and delicious.

The Belarusian cuisine widely uses local produce: vegetables and greens, pulses; grains; mushrooms (pickled, dried, powdered); fruit and berries; spices and dressings.

Potatoes deserve a special mention: being introduced to the diet of the Belarusians in the 18th century they have formed the basis of many Belarusian dishes for hundreds of years. Among them are famous draniki, kolduny, pyzy, potato sausage, kletski, babka...

For centuries Belarusians consumed limited amounts of meat. Meat was usually served on festive occasions in the form of salted and sun-dried products. With time, the meat diet expanded. The most frequently used meat included: pork, mutton, beef, poultry (chicken, duck, goose, turkey).

The Belarusian cuisine is a variety of meat and poultry dishes (pyachysta, kumpyachok, machanka, vereshchaka, tushanka, smazhanka), all sorts of home-made sausages, salty salo, byproduct dishes (vantrabyanka, rubtsy – pork belly stuffed with meat and buckwheat porridge), smoked meat...

The Belarusian cuisine is also rich in fish dishes. As a rule, it is river fish (tench, sturgeon, pike, eelpout, bream, eel, trout, perch, carp). Belarusians used to make yushka, dumplings, salt and smoked fish. Today restaurants serve famous "Pike Perch a la Radziwill."

Common dairy products included curd cheese (made of cow and goat milk), sour cream, and butter. Milk is a regular ingredient in many Belarusian recipes, including all kinds of soups, porridges, mokanka.

There are special features that distinguish the Belarusian cuisine from culinary traditions of many other countries, give it a local color and a peculiar charm. For example, the Belarusian cuisine is characterized by quite complicated and lengthy processing of products. It includes such methods as braising, stewing, baking, cooking, blanching and roasting, with several of them being used in some recipes.

Many national dishes require various kinds of flour made of oats, buckwheat, peas, rye (*a plant that looks like barley but that produces larger grain, grown as food for animals and for making flour and whisky*) and their mixtures. Flour can be used as the main ingredient of some foods (flat cakes called perepecha, special Belarusian pancakes from various kinds of flour, thick pancakes made of peas). However, it can also serve as an additive for thickening ("zakolota" for soups). Traditionally yeast was not used in Belarus to knead dough.

The Belarusian cuisine offers a great variety of dishes made from vegetables. Many of them are unique despite the fact that they are based on traditional Slavonic recipes. The examples are the soup zhur (cooked prior to Lent and can be alternatively made of milk or meat) based on oat water, polivka (thin soup made of cereals and vegetables), morkva (carrot soup), gryzhanka (turnip soup), garbuzok (pumpkin soup) and other kinds of dishes.

The pride of the national cuisine is traditional Belarusian bread baked with the use of rye flour. Instead of yeast Belarusians used a special leaven. This is a very healthy product. Belarusian bread is heavier and is a bit sour. In old recipes different additives were used like caraway seeds, linseeds and sunflower seeds. Bread was sometimes baked on the 'pillow' made from birch and oak leaves.

The contemporary Belarusian cuisine is eclectic. It has preserved old traditional recipes which are gradually being revived. Meanwhile dishes from other countries are becoming increasingly popular, too. Today's restaurants offer modern intake on traditional Belarusian dishes which reflect original ideas of chefs and principles of Grande cuisine, which takes into account the diversity of products and seasonal changes.

You will definitely appreciate many delicious dishes!

Today the menu of Belarusian restaurants features dishes of the Belarusian, European, and Asian cuisines, and modern culinary trends (wellness, fusion).

For many centuries honey has been the main dessert for the Belarusians. Solodukha (malt dough), kulaga (thick beverage made from berries, flour, sugar, and honey), and baked apples also were popular.

The recipes that are famous in Belarus include sweet pancakes with cottage cheese gravy and pears a la Radziwill. Today the most popular desserts are: ice-cream, whipped cream, cakes, fruits and berries (apples, pears, bilberry, cranberry, strawberry)

Vodka (Harelka) – is the most popular strong alcoholic beverage in Belarus. It appeared in the late 15th century and gradually became one of the most common types of alcohol. Belarusians drink vodka on holidays and special occasions.





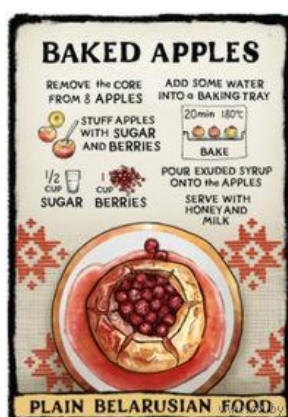
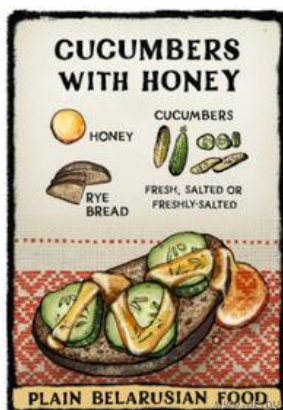
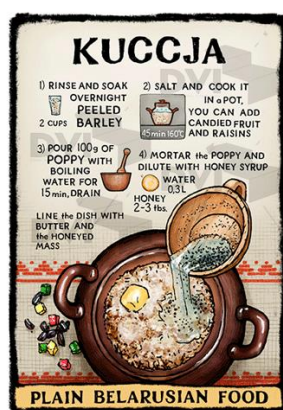
## Activity 2

Play a game which is called a “Mixed Salad”. The game aims at helping the girls remember the ingredients of a traditional Belarusian salad and making fun!

Each participant gets one of the following ingredients needed for the salad: beetroot, potato, onion, carrot, pickled cucumber, oil. Then ask the girls to sit in a circle. One person stands outside the circle and names this or that ingredient. As soon as the girls hear their ingredients they have to swap places and the person who calls out the ingredients has to occupy the vacant chair. The game continues. If the girls hear “Mixed salad” they all have to swap places.

## Activity 3

Cook one of the dishes that you have chosen from the Cook Book (you can find it on the Google disc) and share the photos in the Facebook group. Before you try what you have cooked, say to everybody “Enjoy your meal” in Belarusian which is “**Smachna Jesti**”!!!!!!





## Challenge 4. Belarusian National Holidays

What you need to engage in the challenge:



- **Kaliady:** costumes, a make-up, a tablet/ mobile phone to play songs and record yourself.
- **Spring Greeting:** dough, pints, brushes to make birds, ribbons, sweets, etc to decorate a tree, a tablet/ mobile phone to play songs and record yourself.
- **Kupalle:** papier-mâché, ribbons, glue to make a flower, flowers or artificial flowers for wreaths, a tablet/ mobile phone to play songs and record yourself.

### Activity 1

Tell the girls about Belarusian National Holidays.

The Belarusian people remember not only the great battles and fights: the traditions and customs of ancestors are also kept in people's minds. Some of the National holidays are even included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Others are related to the events of the historical past of Belarus and are held in all the regions of the country.

Let's look at the most popular holidays that have roots in pagan celebrations and stand out most.

Before 990 A.D. Belarusians (several eastern slavic and baltic tribes, mostly Kryvichi and their branches, Jatviags, Lits) were pagans. They believed in the God of Sun - Yaryla, celebrated seasons of nature according to sun and moon calendar. The cycles of folk songs that were sang at these celebrations still exist. The main festivities are listed below.

**1. "Spring Greeting"** - is a cycle of celebrations designed to "awake" mother Earth from the winter sleep which was important for such agricultural people as Belarusians. This cycle includes such holidays as "Maslenitsa", "Vialikdzen'" (Easter), "Yur'ya" and others. Each celebration is characterized by specific cycles of "Vesnavyia" (spring) songs. The most ancient celebration is "Yur'ia". Yur'ia is in fact christianized name for pagan God-Sun - Yaryla. The typical ritual on Yur'ia (reflected in "yur'iauskiia" songs is calling for Yaryla (Yur'ya), the Sun-God, to bring out the keys and open his mothers (Earth, Nature) womb - to let out the grass, and flowers, and animals. As usual these holidays are also celebrated by specific ritual food - eggs (symbol of life in most of Indo-European cultures), pancakes (circle is an important magical shape - it depicts the sun).

The symbol of the "Spring Greeting" is a bird that return back home from warm countries.

**2. Kupalle (Solstice, June 21)** - is the most loved and cherished pagan holiday in contemporary Belarus. The tradition is very ancient. Under different names this holiday is celebrated by all peoples of Indo-European group. During the summer Solstice, Yaryla (God-Sun) reaches its biggest power. Kupalle is a hedonistic summer celebration of the land fertility in the name of a female God - Kupala. It seems like she is considered a lunar Goddess by some pagan sources, although direct translation of the name is "She Who Bathes". Lately it was renamed into a christian celebration of a male saint - Ivan Kupala. There is a whole complex of traditional rituals, beliefs, love and agricultural magic. Supposedly in ancient times Kupalle was celebrated in the night from July 6 to July 7. During the day of July 6 young girls were going into the meadows to collect different "kupal'skiia" (made on Kupalle) plants and remedies - corn flower, ferns, etc. It was considered that the plants gathered at this time have particular strengths for curing and magic. A part of these plants was used in food. Some plants were used for magical protection and the wreaths of these plants were put on the walls of the houses to protect against bad spirits. Some of the plants were used in the "kupal'skiia" wreaths which were worn on the head by young men and women during Kupalle celebration.



The central part in Kupalle celebration is a fire. This fire signifies *life* and *Yaryla*. During the day young men prepare the place to make a fire. They go around the village collecting old things - clothes, broken barrels - and would take them out to the chosen for festivity place. Usually it would be a meadow, a forest glade, a bank of a river. Guys would. Then later the youth would go around the village calling with their special Kupalle songs for the celebration. Special ritual food is cooked on the fire - fried eggs (egg symbolized both sun and life), kulaha (a sort of a puding made of wheat powder), vareniki (dumplings stuffed with berries - blueberries, cherries, raspberries). The oiled wooden wheel is set on fire to symbolize sun.

Kupalle usually involves the youth going into the woods and the meadows, wearing flower and grass garlands and wreaths on their heads. It is associated with many rituals such as *jumping through the fire*, *bathing in the river* or *rolling in the grass dew*. It involves a lot of dancing in karagods (in a circle), competing in strength. A popular type of magic practiced on Kupalle night is fortune telling. At that night the girls pick flowers and bind wreaths and let them drift down the river trying to discover their destiny. It is also believed that if you pick the leaf of fern growing at the crossroads and put it under the pillow - you are very likely to dream your future husband or wife on Kupalle night. One could burn a bunch of fern leaves in Kupalle fire and chant: "Fern, give birth", to increase its crops.

According to a legend a flower of a fern known as "Paparac'-kvetka" unfolds at midnight and the young man or woman who finds it will be eternally young, happy and capable of predicting the future.

It is also believed that on Kupalle night rivers are glowing with a special light, trees can speak in a human language and even move from one place to another. The Sunset on Kupalle night is said to be very special. The Sun goes down "playing" - dividing into concentric circles that expand and contract.

It is also believed that the witches can spoil things on this night. Different ways to protect yourself and your household are used. You can put garlands of special plants that have magical protective properties on the outside of your house. You can put into your rye burning coals from Kupalle fire. Of course the hands of working women were protected by red ornament on the sleeves.



Karagods



Searching for a fern ("Paparac'-kvetka") in bloom

**3. Dzyady** is a pre-Christian celebration originated from the cult of ancestors. It is a ritual dinner to commemorate the dead relatives. "Dziady" is the day on which the ritual of awakening of the dead is performed. The holiday is celebrated during particular days 3-4 times a year (depending on the region). The main Dziady is celebrated in autumn, the first Saturday preceding St. Dzmitry day (October, 26). Also, Dziady is celebrated in early spring on "radaunitsa", "maslenitsa" and "siomuha". The special ritual food is cooked for Dziady dinner - "kyccia" (fine barley porridge with berries), "bliny" (pancakes), fried eggs, meat. According to the tradition part of the food and drink is left in a special plate and glass for the dead.

At this day families are going to the graveyards to take care of the graves. Sometimes they have food by the grave. Then it is customary to pour some vodka on a grave. Unlike Halloween it's a light holiday of commemoration of dead. It does not involve any blood, fake teeth and other satanic stuff.

**4. Kaliady (December 25 - January 7).** All New Year celebrations in Belarus are entirely tied to Kalyady — the ancient pagan ritual with maskers and songs. It derives from Latin "Calendae", which is the name of the first day of each month. Another version of the origin of the word is the word "Kola" (the wheel) which is related to the turn of the year. In the annual cycle of folk rituals and celebrations this holiday was the beginning. Later it was very nicely adopted for Christmas celebration by Orthodox and Catholic churches. Since the Catholic Christmas is on December 25 and the Orthodox Christmas is on January 5 - Kaliady is now celebrated between these two dates. The ritual food is cooked for three ritual dinners: "posnaia viachera" (Engl.: fasting dinner) with no meat or fat in the beginning, "toustaiia" (Engl.: fat) or "miasnaia" (Engl.: "meat") dinner with meat, eggs and sweets on New Year Eve and the last one - "halodnaia" (Engl.: hungry) or "vadzianaia" (Engl.: watery) at the end of Kaliady. During Kaliady there is a lot of fun going on. Folk dresses up as animals and fantastic beasts, carries the sun and the goat's head on a stick and visits different houses trick-or-treating. People sing special Kaliady carols in which the performers greet the house owners, wish them success and prosperity.

**5. "Dozhinki".** In modern Belarus the Slavic holiday marking the end of the harvest turned into "Dozhinki" – the National Festival and Fair of Rural Workers, celebrated on a large scale since 1996. The President annually takes part in the celebrations. Each year, the holiday is hosted by a different city.

The only pagan holiday legalized by the Orthodox Church — Maslenitsa, or Cheese Week — is widely celebrated across the country. Each of the seven days of fun, entertainment and pancakes has its own name ("Meeting", "Zaigryshi", "Gourmand") and traditions.

Other holidays and memorable dates in Belarus

- 1 January: *New Year*
- 7 January: *Orthodox Christmas*
- 23 February: **Fatherland Defenders and Armed Forces day of the Republic of Belarus** – a day that pays tribute to servicemen past and present, and recognises all men too.
- 8 March: *Women's Day*. This day was established following the revolution in 1917. In modern Belarus 8 March is a celebration of love and respect toward women.
- 15 March: *Constitution Day*. 15 March marks the day in 1994 when Belarus established its new Constitution.
- 26 April: *Day of Remembrance of the Chernobyl tragedy*
- 1 May: *Labour Day (Worker's Day)* - International Labour Day is one of the most popular holidays in Belarus. To celebrate there are lots of concerts and public entertainment and many families celebrate with picnics and shashlyk barbecues.
- 9 May: *Victory Day*. It commemorates victory in the World War 2 (known as the Great Patriotic War). During the war, 25 per cent of the population of Belarus died. The occasion is marked with a large parade in Minsk Victory Square led by war veterans.
- 3 July: *Independence Day*. In Belarus, Independence Day is celebrated on 3 July and marks the liberation of Minsk in 1944 from fascist aggressors. The occasion is marked with a large military parade in Pobediteli Avenue. Independence Day demonstrates the achievements of a sovereign Belarus and reminds the people that by suffering great loss, they have won the freedom of their country.
- 7 November: *October Revolution Day*
- 25 December: *Catholic Christmas*

## Activity 2

Choose a holiday you all like to celebrate for your Challenge depending on the time of the year, your group's age and interests. Use some of the following ideas for your celebration.

### Kaliady

- Make improvised costumes of a bear, a goat, peasants and dress up.

- Use a make-up to colour your faces.
- Make a Christmas Star from paper and glue, put on the tick – use the pattern below.

- Learn a song about a goat. It says "Go-go a grey goat, where you go there is always heavy harvest":

Go-Go-Go kaza,

Go-Go-Go shera,

Dze kaza hodzits'

Tam zhyta rodzits' (Sing it twice!)

For the melody go to the Google disc.

- Make a wish for someone you are going to visit in a funny costume.
- Visit another unit trick-or-treating. Tell them about the holiday, Sing a song, have fun!



### "Spring Greeting"

- Make small birds from dough, let them dry and then colour them / or make origami birds (how to make a birds from dough see at the Supplement 3).
- Choose a tree to decorate with bright ribbons.
- Sing and dance in a ring.
- Play a game called 'Rivers'

This is a game played by Belarusian children and requires a lot of energy.

This game works best with an odd number of people. Quite a Lot of space is needed but this can be played inside or outside. Girls in the tunnel must move down towards the front of the paying area as the tunnel increases in length.

How to Play

Girls stand in pairs facing each other and holding hands, each making an arch with their arms and forming a long tunnel. A single girl starts at the front and runs through the tunnel of arms, catching hold of the arm of one of the girls in the line. She must put the girl she has caught behind her to the end of the tunnel where they join on the end and make an arch. Meanwhile the girl who lost her partner also runs behind them, through the tunnel, out of the end and along the outside to the front of the tunnel. She then becomes the single girl and runs through in the same way to catch the arm of a new partner.

The game continues in this way until everyone is exhausted! You should better play with music or singing.



### Kupalle

- Collect herbs and flowers, make wreaths and float them on water, jump over the fire (make an improvised fire with the help of torches or shoes, etc.),
- Make a papier-mâché fern blossom.
- Search for the fern blossom which your leader should hide at the start of an activity.
- Fight evil spirits of the water and forest making your own weapons.
- Learn a verse from a song Kupalinka:

Kupalinka, Kupalinka, Tsjomnaja nochka,

Tsjomnaja nochka, a dze zh tvaja dochka,

Tsjomnaja nochka, a dze zh tvaja dochka,

For the melody go to Google Disk.

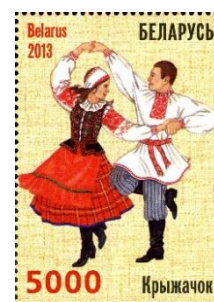
Share the photos and videos of celebration in the Facebook group.



## Challenge 5. Belarusian folk dance

### What you need to engage in the challenge:

- Laptop to watch videos and play songs and to upload the video to the Facebook group
- Camera or smartphone to record your video



### Activity 1

Dance is a very important part of any culture. It shows the nation's temperament and people's character. Watch the video which illustrates one of the traditional Belarusian folk dances - "Lyavoniha", try to guess which characteristics of Belarusians it shows.

The Belarusians consider themselves hard-working, kind, hospitable, cheerful, and ready to face any difficulties positively, with a smile on their faces. The main characteristics of the Belarusian folk dances are dynamism and vitality, emotionality, and the collective nature of the performance.

### Activity 2

Ask the girls to learn the basic steps of any Belarusian folk dance. Their old friends from challenge 1 - Arina and Irina - will help them learn the steps. Watch the video where Arina and Irina show the steps. Try to remember them!

### Activity 3

Once the girls have learnt the basic steps of the Belarusian folk dance, tell them to create their own dance. For the dance use any of the songs downloaded to Google (or a CD that you have got) – disc, at the disc you can also find a brief description of each song.

Your dance can be modern and dynamic, or slow, or you can dance it along an old folk melody. The main thing is to use the Belarusian dance steps, have fun and come up with the dance of your own.

### Activity 4

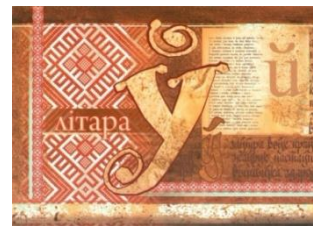
When you are ready with the dance, record your performance and download it to The Belarusian Challenge Facebook group.



## Challenge 6. Belarusian literature

### What you need to engage in the challenge:

- Printed texts of chosen fairy tales, fables or passages from the novel (See at the Google disk)
- 3 or 4 copies of the text or its part for girls
- Camera or smartphone to record a video and upload it to Facebook group



### Activity 1

Tell your group some words about the history of the Belarusian literature:

Belarusian literature was formed from the common basis of Kievan Rus literary tradition, which also gave rise to Ukrainian literature and Russian literature. A separate literary tradition of Belarus became apparent only in the 14th-15th centuries. The old Belarusian literature experienced its golden age in the 16th-17th centuries, when the Old Belarusian language was the official language of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. The Statutes of the Great Duchy of 1529, 1566 and 1588, as well as polemic religious literature were all published in Old Belarusian language. Since the early 16th century Belarusian literary works have been printed. **The first printed Belarusian book** (in the version of Old Belarusian) was Psalms, which was printed in Prague by **Francysk Skaryna in 1517** (this was the first book to be printed in an East Slavonic language). During the 16th and 17th century *poetry* and *drama* appeared in Belarusian literature under the influence of a more developed Polish literature.

Due to cultural dominance of the Polish language within the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian language within the Russian Empire, Belarusian literary tradition was severely damaged in the 18th century. Its renaissance began in the first half of the 19th century, when an anonymous satirical poem 'Taras na Parnase' was published. Books were often published in the Latin alphabet (Lacinka), not the Cyrillic, which is the norm today.

In the second half of the 19th century there was a rise in the literary tradition of Realism.

New period started after the Russian Revolution of 1905, when first Belarusian language newspapers were established in Vilnius (Nasha Dolia and Nasha Niva). They brought together a circle of writers, who were arguing for developing Belarusian language and its literature. Belarusian literature of the time combined elements of *Romanticism*, *Realism* and *Modernism*.

During the World War 1 and proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic (1918) the key themes within the Belarusian literature were *patriotism* and *common life*.

After the establishment of BSSR in 1919 literary life in Belarus was concentrated around magazines Maladnjak (1923-1928) and Uzvyshsha (1926-1931), which were published by a group of Belarusian writers.

After the end of the World War 2 key themes for the new Belarusian literature were *war time experiences*, *life of Belarusians in the USSR* and *national history* (in particular, novels by Ivan Melezh and Ivan Shamiakin). Since the 1960s a new theme of *morality* appeared in the Belarusian prose. Many writers have been fighting for freedom of speech of the authors (in particular, Vasil Bykau and Uladzimer Karatkevich).

The main achievement of the modern Belarusian literature - Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015 for Svetlana Aleksievich. Her most famous books are documentary prose "War's Unwomanly Face", "Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from a Forgotten War", "Chernobyl Prayer", "Second-hand Time".

In her books, Svetlana describes the most tragic events of the modern history of Belarus (the second world war, which killed every third Belarusian, accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, participation in the war in Afghanistan, and others.) using the memories of ordinary people. Svetlana Aleksievich - the first Nobel Prize winner in the history of independent Belarus, and the whole country are proud of her achievements.



## Activity 2

Ask the girls to read one of the Belarusian fairy tales, or fables written by Kandrat Krapiva (translated from Belarusian into English) or a passage from the novel "King Stakh's Wild Hunt" written by Uladzimir Karatkevich beforehand. As an alternative, you can read a fairy tale or a fable together. The novel is recommended for the group 14+. It is a detective story which can be compared with like "Sherlock Holmes" by Arthur Conan Doyle.



## Activity 3

Divide your patrol into 3 or 4 small groups and ask them to role play what you have read and discussed in one of the following genres: a) *drama*, b) *horror*, c) *comedy*, d) *musical*. Let the group choose the genre by picking a card. Allow the girls some time to prepare for the acting. Take some pictures or create a video while girls are acting out to share in our Facebook group.

Optional: If some girls or leaders are interested, encourage them to read more poems of different Belarusian authors and, in particular, a satirical poem "Taras at the Parnasus" by unknown author.

Also, you can learn and sing a song in English based on the poem "Above the white down of the cherries" by Maksim Bahdanovich. For the melody and the video in Belarusian go to Google (or CD) – disc of the Challenge.

# Challenge 7. Belarusian art and crafts

**What you need to engage in the challenge:**

- Printed pictures of Marc Chagall paintings for colouring, colour pencils.
- Materials for crafts
- Camera or smartphone to take pictures and upload them to Facebook group

## Activity 1. Art

Belarus is a motherland of many world famous artists such as Leon Bakst, Napoleon Orda or Mikhail Savitsky. But the most famous of them is Marc Chagall (1887 – 1985) – world famous artist, early modernist, he was associated with several major artistic styles and created works in virtually every artistic format, including painting, book illustrations, stained glass, stage sets, ceramic, tapestries and fine art prints.

*Marc Chagall in United Kingdom – the works of Marc Chagall presented in Tate Gallery in London (the Tate Modern). The only church in the world with a complete set of Chagall window-glass is located in the village of Tudeley, in Kent, England. On the north side of Chichester Cathedral (West Sussex, UK) there is a stained glass window designed and created by Chagall at the age of 90.*



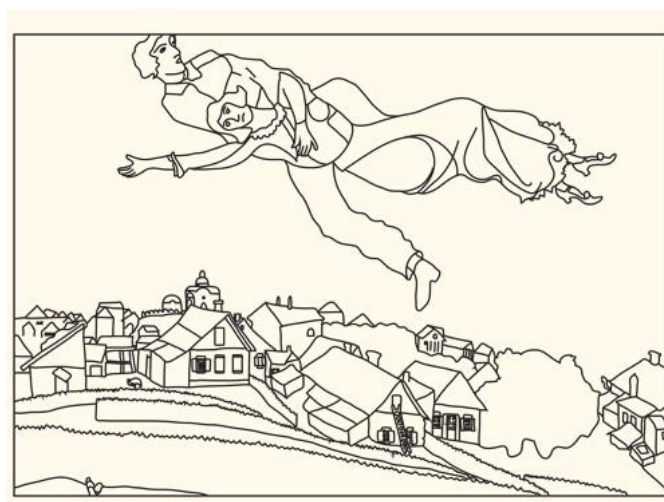
You can explore Belarusian art by visiting one of the churches with Chagall-made window-glasses or the Tate Gallery and see his works yourself. Or you can paint one of his paintings The-Walk or Over the City.



## The-Walk:



## Over the City:



## Activity 2. Crafts

Arts and crafts are an important part of Belarusian culture. Today there are more than ten kinds of folk crafts came down to us from past and many masters. The works of Belarusian artists have become known in world culture, are in the collection of the works of the Vatican, as well as in other famous lovers. Belarusian craftsmen annually present their work at the international exhibitions of handicrafts.

### Types of most common crafts:

**Smithing.** Blacksmith is one of the oldest crafts of Belarus. Village blacksmith "kaval" produced horseshoes, nails, knives, sickles and scythes, shovels and pans. Blacksmithing considered in Belarus as mysterious occupation. Horseshoe - the most common product blacksmith - is still considered among the people amulet and talisman. Nailed over the door ends up, it will not allow the evil to the house; nailed on the bed - to get rid of bad dreams.





**Pottery and ceramics.** Pottery on the territory of Belarus, known since the Neolithic era, when appeared first hand-sculpted pottery. Potters shaped dishes on the potter's wheel, fired in ovens and decorated.

Over time, pottery, like many others, turned into art. A separate topic of pottery is a small ceramics - made of clay different symbolic animals, musical instruments, toys and many other things are important direction in the Belarusian traditional ceramics.



**Basket Weaving.** Wickerwork - one of the oldest crafts in Belarus. From the branches of woody plants were built homes, fences, baby cradles, furniture, toys and utensils. The most common products are the baskets.

Basket Weaving - one of the most well-preserved crafts today. The skills of the folk crafts hardly have been lost, and products - baskets, furniture, souvenirs - are always in demand.

**Straw.** Straw is one of the oldest crafts in Belarus. From straw produces a variety of boxes, dishes, food storage boxes, toys, hats, etc.

Various pieces of straw - are not just toys, they are protectors. The horse - the hero of many beliefs - always accompanied by a man, and he was both a friend and adviser, and protector; the goat - the symbol of harvest and fertility; doll - the protectress of women, birds - the souls of ancestors, protecting and assisting those who dwell on the earth.



Suspended straw "spiders" were made on the day of the winter solstice. "Spider" hung out at the place of honor at home - in the red corner, above the table. It turned slowly in the jets of warm air rising from the food and cast shadows. They collected all the negative energy. On the day of the vernal equinox, "spider" was burned with all the evil it has collected, happiness and good harvest were guaranteed.

**Cooperage.** In every Belarusian village in the past, along with a blacksmith, a potter and a miller there was a cooper, who manufactured the barrels and utensils made from oak, pine, spruce, aspen plates.

Experienced Cooper owned and owns not only the cookware manufacturing techniques, but also understand the characteristics of a wood. Therefore, honey is best stored in a linden barrel, and dough faster rises in oak utensils.



**Carving.** Carving - the oldest way of decorating wood products. Traditionally Belarusians decorated carved wooden boats and houses, furniture and utensils, weaving looms and spinning wheels. One of the most common patterns were so-called solar signs or symbols of the sun. Sun personified the beginning of life and purity of human thoughts. There were some other signs, too. So, the tree is a symbol of the relationship of all the kinds of life: the roots of the tree - the ancestors, the barrel - living, crown's - future generations. Image of a horse brings luck and fertility. Goose, Swan and Duck are a symbol of a good start. Rooster, peacock, chicken protect against the evil eye.



**Weaving.** Weaving - one of the most common types of Belarusian folk art. The ability to weave was mandatory for each girl and women. The main materials for weaving were and are flax, wool, hemp. With weaving involves a lot of folk rites and customs. Rushnyk (special towel) was not just a piece of cloth for household or economic needs it was a central part of different traditions. On rushnyk took the newborn, tray bread and salt for the guests and newlywed, rushnyk decorated the red corner in the house – the most honorable place.



### Folk dress.

Men's - long linen shirt, tight pants, a belt, sometimes a vest, and hat. Everyday shoes were bast sandals (lapy), leather sandals; festive shoes were leather boots.

Women's costume consisted of a linen shirt with long sleeves, linen or wool skirt and apron, belt and, sometimes, vest. Everyday shoes were the same as for men and in the holidays prosperous peasant woman wore high boots with heels.

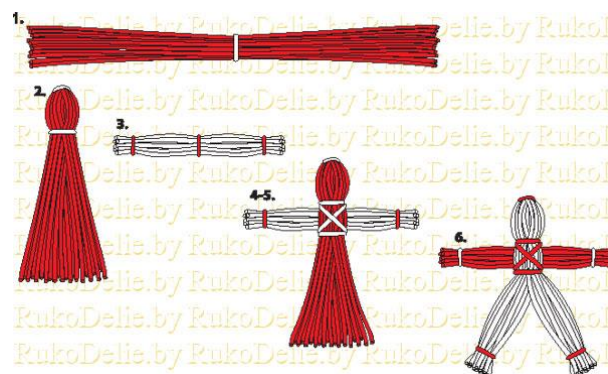
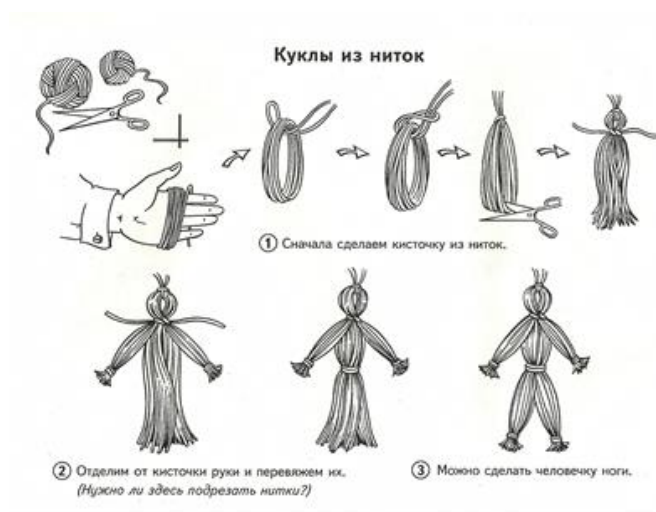
Details of folk clothing are widely used in modern fashion. Ethnic motifs are among the most enduring fashion trends.



### Activity 3.

Try different types of Belarusian folk crafts and share the pictures of what you've made on the Facebook group.

**Dolls** from woolen thread. You will need thread of two colours – red and white, scissors. Follow one of the schemes below to create a doll – defender from evil.



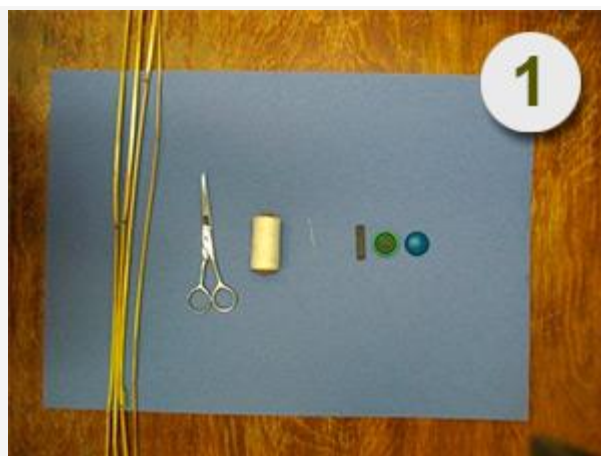


**Vytsinanka.** Vytsinanka is a technique of cutting paper - openwork pattern, cut from black white or colored paper. You will need thick paper for background, scissors and printed on thin paper patterns for each girl, glue. You will find different patterns on the Google disk.

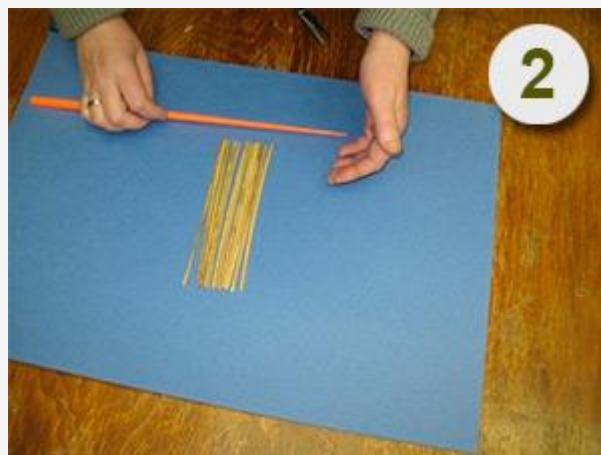
Carefully cut the pattern along the contours and stick to the thick paper of a different color, insert to the frame if you want.



**Straw «spider».** To make a spider you can use tubes for cocktails instead of straw. To make a spider follow a pattern below. You will need tubes, string the same colour as tubes, long needle, magnet, scissors.



How to make the main diamond of the spider

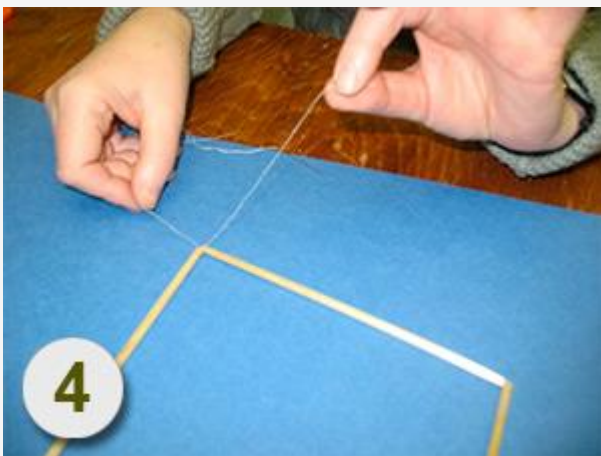
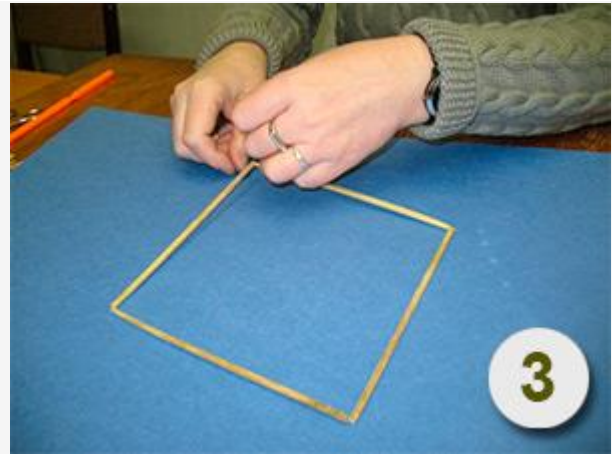


Take 12 tubes the same size each, it will be the bigger length.

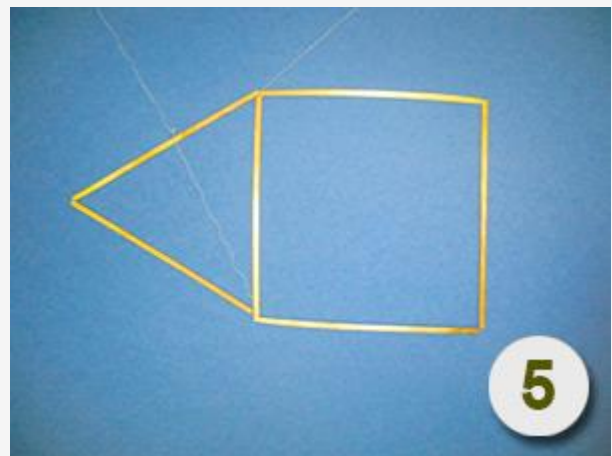




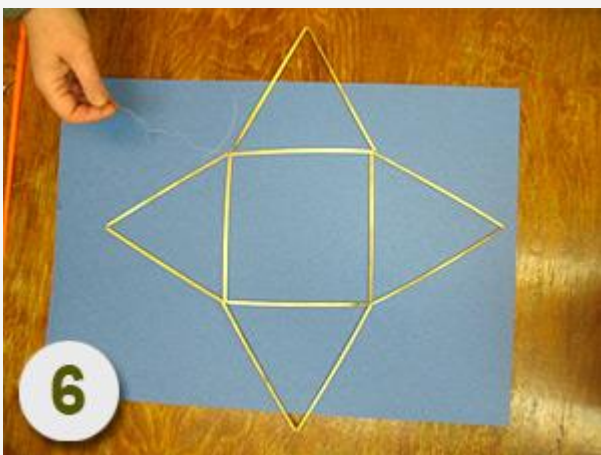
With the help of a needle and string put 4 tubes on a string. This can be done by shaking a needle or with a magnet. All tubes must be putted on one string.



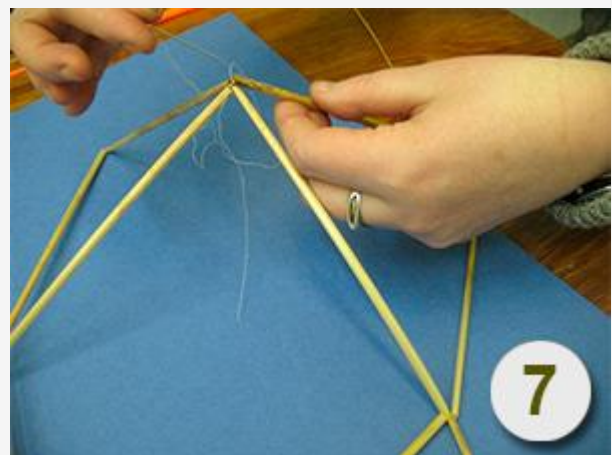
Gently tie the tubes, making a square shape. The remaining tip of the string should not be cut.



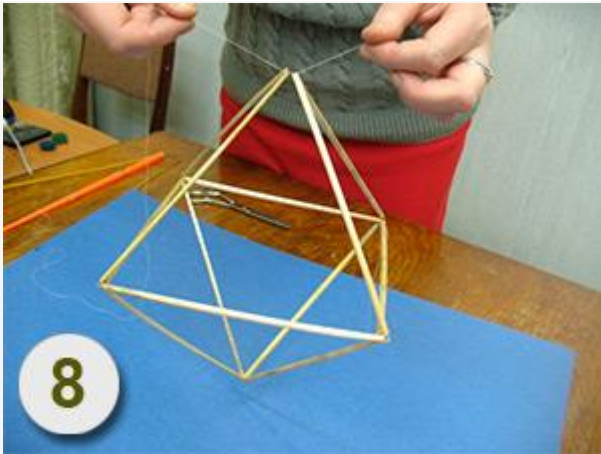
For the remained long string put two tubes, do "the roof of the house", fixing the construction in the corners.



Such triangles should be attached to each side of the square. If the string is over, tie new string to it by an ordinary knot. Tying the remaining tail of string and the main string.



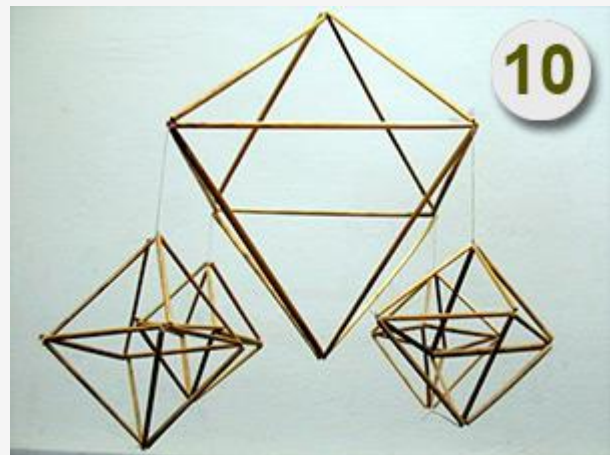
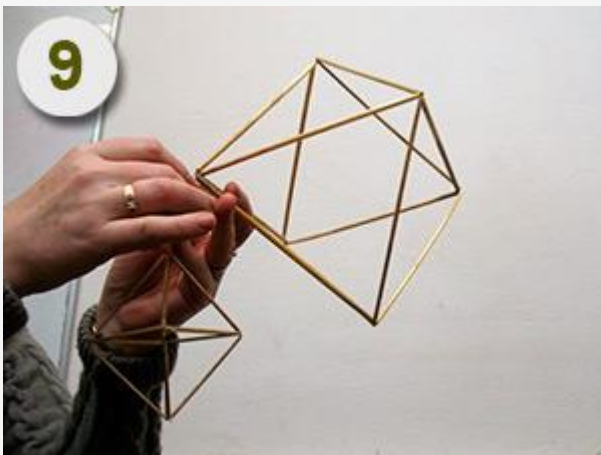
Threads with a needle should be outputted by a magnet to the top of one of the triangles and connect two opposing triangle making pyramid.



Cut the string. Take another string and connect the other two triangle, string should not be short, because it will serve as the primary suspension. Add a clip - the basis of our "spider" is ready.

In the same sequence we produce medium-sized diamonds. It is recommended to make on tube a standard, because you will have to cut many of the same length tubes.

After the medium-sized modules, with the same principle produce small diamonds.



Ready middle-sized diamond gently bind to large.

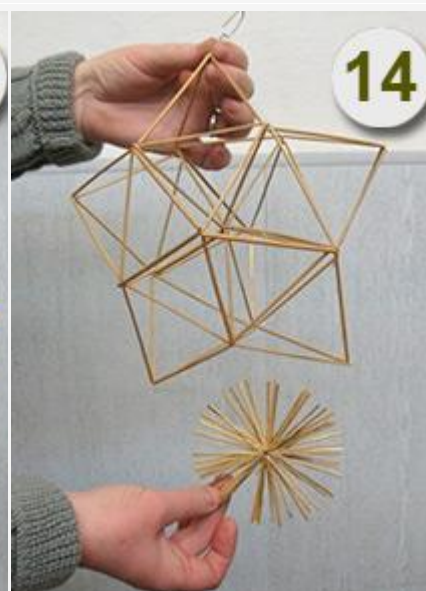
The same to be done with the following diamonds.



Then make small diamonds and fasten them the same way.

Add decorations.







**Folk dress.** Colour the picture of the Belarussian traditional folk dress.



Don't forget to share results of your work on Facebook.

## Challenge 8. Big game Friend of Belarussian guides

**What you need to engage in the challenge:**

- Cards with questions and the numbers from 1 to 25 on the reverse side
- Dice and one chip for each team
- Field for the game from Supplement 4
- Phone or camera taking pictures and to put them on Facebook




Previous 7 challenges allowed you to learn a lot about Belarus. This challenge will help you to refresh your knowledge and maybe even learn something new.

Before the meeting leader print and cut cards with questions and put the numbers from 1 to 25 to the reverse side. Then leader hide cards at the territory where you are going to play. Try to remember where you hide each card if girls won't be able to find some and to pick all of them up after the game.

Rules of the game. Before the game divide girls to small groups. Each group should have a chip – maybe something prepared before or some belongings of one of the girls – hairpin, earring, eraser, clip etc. Chips of teams should be different.

Each team put their chips to the Start field and then roll the dice. The team should put their chip forward to the number of fields equal the number of dots on the dice. The number they chip are on is the number of card they need to find. When the team finds a card with number they need they should read the question, put the card at the same place and go to leader to answer the question. In case if the team don't know the answer they should do some funny task – sing a song, show how crocodile moves etc. In case of the correct answer they roll the dice, move the chip forward to the number of dots and go to find next question. Each group should get to the finish in the middle where the badge of the Challenge are drawn. After all groups finish the game you can present them badges.

Cards with the questions.

1. Name colours used in Belarusian national flag	2. What is the name of the capital of Belarus	3. Say hello in Belarusian	4. Name 5 countries which boarder Belarus	5. What languages are official state languages in Belarus
6. How many years exists link between Hampshire North and Belarusian Guides	7. What celebration takes place at nite from 6 <sup>th</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup> of July	8. How many regions Belarus divided in	9. Tell how Belarusians celebrate Kaliady	10. Why Belarus are called Blue eyed
11. When Belarusians celebrate Christmas	12. Say Bon appetite in Belarusian	13. Tell how to cook one of Belarusian cousins	14. Dance a small part of the Belarusian folk dance	15. How many people lives in Belarus
16. Say thank you in Belarussian	17. How you can defend yourself from the Belarusian Mermaid	18. How Belarusians call the kind fairytale spirit who lives in the house	19. Who is the most famous Belarusian artist	20. Who is Vurdalack
21. What this picture symbolize 	22. What is the name of Belarusian writer won the Noble Prize	23. Name 3 typical for Belarus folk crafts	24. Describe the folk dress of Belarussian women	25. Why people burned stroke «spider»

Supplement one. Game «What do I know about Belarus?» and the Fact list

**Cards with options for the game «What do I know about Belarus?»**

1	Lisbon	Minsk	Moscow	Kiev
2	300 million	1 million	9,5 million	50 million
3	Lithuania, Latvia, the Ukraine, Russia, Poland	Czeck Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Hungary	Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan	France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Luxemburg
4	Belarusian and English	Belarusian and Russian	Belarusian	Russian
5	The Black Sea	The Mediterranean Sea	The Northern Sea	Belarus is landlocked



## Correct answers:

1. Minsk
2. 9,5 million
3. Lithuania, Latvia, the Ukraine, Russia, Poland
4. Belarusian and Russian
5. Belarus is landlocked

## Fact list

Official Name of the country - Republic of Belarus

President of Belarus - Alexander Lukashenko (1994 - present)

Prime Minister of Belarus - Andrei Kobyakov (2014)

Total land area of Belarus - 207,600 km<sup>2</sup>

Population – 9.498,4 million (on 1 January 2016)

Population living in cities – 77.6%

The capital is Minsk – 1.959,8 million inhabitants

Regional centres of Belarus (on 1 January 2016):

Brest region – 1.387,0 million inhabitants (Brest city – 340 thousand)

Vitebsk region – 1.193,6 million inhabitants (Vitebsk city – 376 thousand)

Gomel region – 1.422,9 million inhabitants (Gomel city – 531 thousand)

Grodno region – 1.050,1 million inhabitants (Grodno city – 366 thousand)

Mogilev region – 1.067,7 million inhabitants (Mogilev city – 378 thousand)

Minsk region – 1.417,3 million inhabitants

Ethnicity - Belarusian 83.7%, Russian 8.3%, Polish 3.1%, Ukrainian 1.7%, Jewish 0.1%

Official state languages in Belarus - Belarusian and Russian

National holidays in Belarus - Independence Day, 3 July

Currency of Belarus - Belarusian rouble (Br)

Main Business Partners of Belarus (2015) – Russia, Ukraine, China, United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Netherlands, Lithuania, Italy, Latvia

Main Industries of Belarus – metallurgical, mechanical engineering, including tractors and agricultural, cars, machine-tool constructing and tool industry, instrument making, radio engineering, electro technical, electronic, optics-mechanical industry; and metal working, chemical and petrochemical light industry, food industry

Area of farmland in Belarus - 8582 thousands hectares (on 1 January 2016)

Agriculture - Areas of speciality in agriculture: grain, potatoes, vegetables, sugar beet, flax, meat and dairy industry

Natural resources – wood, peat, potash and rock salts, small oil and natural gas fields, granite, dolomite, limestone, clay, sand

Number of people in employment - 4.5 million (2015)

Internet users (2015): 5,9 million

In terms of overall postal e-services development, the Universal Postal Union index places Belarus in the top ten (2011).

Transportation - Railways – 5491 km, including 1128 km of electric track

Religions in Belarus

Orthodox religion is by no means the only Belarus religion. Many other religions are also well represented in the country, including: Roman Catholics (almost 400 churches), Protestants (over 500 communities including Lutherans, Mormons, Baptists, Calvinists), Jews (more than 40 Hebrew communities), Muslims (27 communities and nine mosques)

There are up to 25 religious confessions in Belarus, the number of religious communities amounts to more than 3.4 thousand (January, 2015).

For more facts go to <http://www.belarus.by/en>

## Supplement two. Belarusian mythological characters

Myths are a part of Belarusian rich and original culture. Fairytales, legends, superstitions, ethnoscience and folk songs are rooted in myths.

Long ago the Belarusians lived in small rural settlements, farmed the land, ranched cattle and hunted. Every day they encountered unusual phenomena which they tried to explain by means of fairy creatures which governed natural forces and everyday life. The Belarusians believed in being surrounded by the spirits – evil and good. Fantastical and mythical creatures inhabited fields, rivers, lakes, swamps, houses. In the houses they lived in the attics and under the stoves.

The woodsman or **Lesavick** was the owner of the woods. It looked like a bearded old man dressed in skin of a beast. Its face was as white as a birch bark. The woodsman had oversized ears that often made him get stuck in bushes. As a result, it was always in a horrible mood. Its eyes shone even in the daytime. It would wear its right boot on its left foot and its left boot on its right foot. The woodsman ruled over the winds. Fallen trees, high snowdrifts were the work of the woodsman. At times it helped people. It led the lost out of the woods, showed mushroomers to the places abundant in mushrooms and berries, showed people where to find honey. It also helped the hunters to come upon the tracks of animals. At the same time, the woodsman could mock at people making them ramble if they didn't behave themselves in the woods. People did their utmost not to irritate and angry the Master of the woods. It was a firm belief that in order to get rid of the woodsman, one should pray or cast spells in a loud voice, wear mascots and amulets.

Graveyards and burial mounds were inhabited by **Vurdalacks** (Vampires). A Vurdalack is a dead person who rises from the grave at night. It causes trouble to people and the cattle, feeds himself with their blood, damages the farms etc.

It was considered that only people who were werewolves, witches, magicians or criminals in their lifetime became vurdalacks. According to old beliefs, vurdalacks step out of their graves, wander around the world, disguise themselves as human beings, penetrate into sleeping people's houses to suck their blood and then

return to the graves. A Vurdalack could be killed by stabbing it with an aspen stake or by setting fire to it. All vurdalacks have fire dread. They never penetrate into houses on the threshold of which there are fire amulets.

The houses were inhabited by House Spirits or **Damavicks**. A House Spirit is a mythological patron of the house which ensures health, wealth and prosperity for the family it lives with. It is described as a tiny grey-haired long-bearded old man. It lives behind the stove or under the broom. Each household has its own House Spirit. House Spirits are said to help people about the house, protect their property, love domestic animals, horses in particular. People need to gain its favour. If it is pleased with the way it is treated by a family, it warns it about forthcoming misfortune or trouble, guards the house. If it is displeased with the way it is treated by a family, it smashes dishes, makes terrible and loud noises, stamps its feet, etc.

Rivers, lakes and ponds were inhabited by Watermen (**Vadjanoj**) or Mermaids (**Rusalki**). A Waterman is an old man with a long beard and long hair, smooth shiny skin. It has very long legs and hands and the membrane in between the fingers.

Mermaids look like young girls with long green hair, pale complexion, long thin hands and a tail instead of legs. They tore to pieces fishing nets, lured into the pool those who had a swim where they lived. Those whom they were able drag to the depth of the river became mermaids and watermen.

Mermaids were said to be dangerous and hostile towards people of all ages except children. To scare mermaids away people made funny faces and pretended to be children.

#### Belarusian symbols:



**Fire**



**Wealth**



**Spring**



**Soul**



**Life**



**Land**



**Beauty**



**Youth**



**Seeds**



**Ancestors**



**Prosperity**



**Sun**



**Family**



**Harvest**



**Purity**



**Energy**



St Ephrasinia Polotskaya (1110–1173) was the granddaughter of a prince of Polotsk (Vitebsk region), Vseslav, and daughter of Prince Svyatoslav of Polotsk. She is one of the 15 patron saints of Belarus. She refused all proposals of marriage and, without her parents' knowledge, ran away to the convent where her aunt was the abbess. She became a nun and took the name Euphrosyne. She was one of the most educated women of her time. Towards the end of her life, she undertook a pilgrimage to Constantinople and the Holy Land.



The cross of Saint Euphrosyne was a splendid gem-studded cross created at her behest by a local master, Lazar Bohsa. The famous six-armed golden cross was decorated with enamels and precious stones and presented by her to the church of the Holy Saviour in 1161. Of exquisite beauty, the relic survived centuries of turbulence until World War II, when it mysteriously disappeared during the evacuation of the museum in 1941. For the last time, the cross was seen in Mogilev. Despite some efforts of the Belarusian government to trace in the early 1990s the whereabouts of this treasure, which included even searching in private collections in the United States, nothing has been found.

Colour the picture below to complete the Vurdalack station.



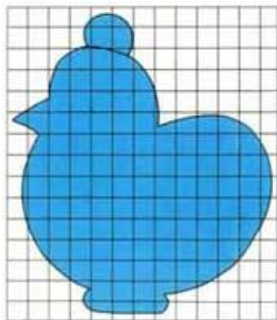
## Supplement three. Belarusian National Holidays

### How to create a bird from a dough

Salt dough recipe:

1 cup of fine salt, 2 cups of flour and 1 cup of water (a little less than a glass)

Roll out the dough 1 cm thick and cut out the figure of a pattern.



Align the edges with a brush dipped in water. For the "eyes" take beads. Use straw or wooden stick to pierce small holes.



Decorate a bird.

Supplement four. Field for the big game Friend of Belarusian guides

