

## March

Käardipäev (3/17). It was crucial to roll large yarn balls on that day, to keep away snakes and insects in the summer. It was strictly forbidden to do laundry and brush your hair. Maarjapäev was celebrated on 3/25. A common tradition was to drink *naistepuna* (a red wine-like drink).

One of the most important old traditions was the ceremony of making a Metsik- also known as Landking (a doll out of hay) and taking it to the forest. It was usually tied up on a tree and left there. Making a Metsik ensured fishing and farming luck as well as overall protection of the land. Important traditions also include fortune-telling using pig bones and eating dried fish.

## April

Karjalaskeppäev (4/1) was dedicated to protecting farm animals and putting magic spells on the shepherd by giving him a boiled egg and muring water onto his neck. A new shepherd would do a smoke ritual around the cattle or throw an egg over them. Jüripäev (4/23) was dedicated to putting spells on the cattle to protect them from the wolves. It wasn't allowed to visit neighbors' houses because people were afraid of evil spells put on their households on Jüripäev. One of the important sacred rituals was milk spell magic- the ritual was performed before the sunrise, in a very secretive way, the women were supposed to milk the fences and juniper branches.

## May

The time of freezing nights had officially ended and summer was on the horizon. It was time to plant warm loving plants and flowers

## June

Jaanipäev (6/24) also known as the Midsummers is one of the most ancient and important holidays. It was the longest day and shortest night of the year. It was forbidden to work since it was truly time to celebrate. The most important traditions included making a fire and jumping over it and making a fire. Magical rituals included looking for a blooming fern as well as jumping over 9 different fences and picking 9 different flowers- the bouquet was then put under the pillow to dream of a future spouse. It was time to dance, sing and celebrate and be up until dawn.

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## Prologue

“Dawn and Dusk” is a beloved Estonian myth written by Friedrich Robert **Faehmann** in 1840.

## July

On Heinamaarjapäev (7/2) the new branches were made for the sauna. It was a fun, beloved activity filled with song, dance, and celebration. People would be searching for Maarjahein- a magic plant that would open all doors and make you speak all the languages in the world. It would be the only plant that'd swim against the current in the river. It was forbidden to pick strawberries on Jaagupipäev (7/25) since that would make you sleepy. An important magical ritual was rotating cabbages to ensure their growth. Cabbage was a very important part of Estonian cuisine. A cuckoo would stop making sounds because a barley branch would get stuck in its throat. It was believed that the stars would start appearing in the sky on Olevipäev.

## August

Pärtlipäev (8/24) was a day to propose to a future bride. The swallows would leave to the south. Mushrooms are believed to be planted from heaven. A fire fairy Laurensius was honored on Lauritsapäev (8/10) by heating the sauna and preparing the sauna branches. Water must be thrown on the roof to avoid fire in the house. Making any kind of fire was strictly forbidden as well as doing any kind of work in the garden.

## September

The snakes went to hibernation on Ussimaarjapäev (9/8). It was forbidden to do any sewing to avoid snake bites (the needle is a symbol of snake tongue). It was also forbidden to go into the woods - the forest, snakes, and insects would fall asleep and should not be disturbed. Mihklipäev (9/29) was the ending of warm and bright summer days. The shepherds would be set free when the first snow came- therefore they held magical rituals like dragging a white ram counterclockwise around a rock- to make the snowfall. The mosquitos would fall asleep. A rooster was sacrificed.

## October

Land and waters would freeze on Simunapäev (10/28). Kolletamispäev (10/14) was the start of the winter in the wild.

## November

Hingedepäev (11/2) is the day when the souls of the deceased ancestors would return home. Dinner was served and the sauna was heated up for them. It was forbidden to work with yarn and make any loud noises. The soul was believed to live in the whole body as well as different body parts. One had to be really careful with leaving parts of themselves around. For example, if you'd throw your hair in the wind, you'd get a headache. If you'd clip your nails and leave them lying

around, then the devil would take them to make a hat that would make him invisible. On Mardipäev (11/10) people dressed in dark colors inside out men's clothing and covered their faces with mud or wore masks and made a lot of noises. They visited houses around the villages singing, telling stories, and gathering gifts. Their arrival at the houses was meant to bring good fortune for the harvest. Kadripäev (11/25) has more of a focus on women, traditions of going around the village and singing were similar to Mardipäev. It was also common to go around and make sheep noises. Kadris would tell stories and riddles. The arrival of Kadrisandid ensured good shepherd luck. Sheep shearing was forbidden on that day.

## December

Nigulapäev (12/6) was believed to be a night so long and cold that an eagle would fall off the tree because its claws would get tired. Toomapäev (12/21) was a critical turning point. In the old times, it would be celebrated as the New Year in some Scandinavian countries. Souls of the deceased would be walking around that day and all sorts of animals would cry out for a beer. The only chore that was allowed was cleaning. An important tradition was making hay dolls called Tahma Toomas. It was believed that Tahma Toomas will take in all the messiness, dirtiness and laziness, and bad luck. He was then hidden in different houses and gardens in the villages until the new year's day and symbolized bad luck to the family who found him on January 1st. Christmas (12/24) started with bringing in the Christmas hay- it symbolized welcoming the holidays. It was a time of joy, happiness, honoring the ancestors, and eating a lot of food (one must eat 12 different meals on a Christmas day!). The most important character was the Christmas goat - fooling around, scaring children, and making people laugh

## January

Tõnispäev (1/17) was the day to honor the home elf Tõnn. Tõnn statue was made out of a branch of wood and wrapped in human clothing and kept hidden in a box. It was also an important day to ensure farming luck. Some of the magic rituals included carrying bread around the sheep or secretly shearing the neighbor's sheep head.

## February

Küünlapäev (2/2) was one of the bigger holidays for women- on that day women would go to the bar and men would do all the household chores typically done by women. Luuvalupäev (2/9) was a day of rest. It wasn't allowed to dance, run or do any type of work. One was supposed to make a lot of noise with chains to keep away snakes and wild animals. To keep away the flies in the summer, one was supposed to make flies out of hay and bring them to a neighbor's door on Madispäev (2/24). It was also forbidden to use the needles on that day since it was believed to attract the snakes.