

SLAVA

What is SLAVA?

- The **Slava** is the family's annual ceremony and veneration of their patron saint, a social event in which the family is together at the house.
- Also, the friends of the family come to the patriarch's house, usually without a prior invitation (There's an old Serbian proverb about Slavias - "**На славу се не зове**" which literally means "**One does not invite people on Slava**").
- The family saint is inherited from the patriarch (head of the household) – from father to son, while women adopt the patron saint of their husbands upon marriage.
- The tradition is also very well preserved among the Serbs worldwide.

Celebration

- Some Serbian historians consider that records of slava amongst Serbs can be traced back to 1018.
- The ritual foods that are prepared for the feast are the **slavski kolač** a ritual bread, and **koljivo** (or **žito**), a dish of minced boiled wheat, sweetened and sometimes mixed with chopped walnuts. The top of the kolač is adorned with the Christian cross, the peace dove, and other symbols.

Celebratory table



- **Slavski kolač** represents our sacrifice to God that we were saved from death through the suffering and resurrection of Christ.
- Head of the household breaks the bread with the family, kissing it and telling these words “Hristos medju nama” and others answer “Jeste i biće” which means “Christ among us” and answer “It is and will be”.
- **Koljivo** is prepared out of gratitude to God for all the earthly fruits he gives us, as well as for the rest of the souls of deceased relatives.
- **Slavska sveća (Candel)** should be made of pure wax, it represents our purest and most sincere sacrifice to God.
- **Crno vino (Red wine)** represents the blood of Christ and purification from sins.
- **Tamjan (Incense)** signifies our prayer that comes from a pure heart.

- In November 2014 it was inscribed in the [UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists](#).
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- Did you know that there are as many as 78 Slavias among Serbs?
- The most common [feast days](#) are [St. Nicholas](#) (*Nikoljdan*, 19 December), [St. George](#) (*Durđevdan*, 6 May), [St. John the Baptist](#) (*Jovanjdan*, 20 January), [St. Demetrius](#) (*Mitrovdan*, 8 November), [St. Michael](#) (*Arandjelovdan*, 21 November) and [St. Sava](#) (*Savindan*, 27 January).



