

In the kitchen

The farm kitchen was large but now it looked like a busy hotel kitchen crowded with chefs and cooks. While the butcher and his helpers were busy with stuffing sausages, cooking goulash and rendering cracklings, Anna and her cousin prepared traditional carnival donuts - *koblihy*. Yes, now the big surprise was revealed. All these feast meals are being prepared for tomorrow's *Masopust*.

Every year, in the days when winter slowly gives way to spring, an unusual event takes place in some East Bohemian villages of Hlinsko region. A colourful and merry carnival procession called "*Masopustní průvod*", or Shrovetide in English travels from house to house, delivering joy, health, good harvest and happiness to everyone they visit.

The history of this celebration reaches as far back as the 13th century but such festivities are much older though and can be linked with the pre-Christian pagan ceremonies. Thanks to its strong tradition, which has been passed down from generation to generation, it has been added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Shrovetide, originally a three-day festival (Shrove Sunday – Shrove Tuesday), begins the forty days of Lent, which ends on Easter. This feast is movable and can happen any time between February 1 and March 7. Nowadays the main procession takes place on Saturday before Shrove Sunday.

"Are we supposed to wear masks as well?" Alysia asked. "That would be cool."

"You don't have to for the procession as there are traditional masks worn by male villagers only but at least for the evening dancing party it is recommended. We'll find something", Anna said.