

***LOCAL FESTIVALS AT MALËSIA E MADHE**

N.	DATE	HOLIDAY	VILLAGE	ADM. UNIT
1	6-Apr	Raising the flag at Deçiç	Hot	Kastrat
2	25-Apr	Saint Mark	Bajzë	Kastrat
3	Last Sunday of April	St. George	Grizhe Reç	Gruemirë Shkrel
4	First Wednesday of May	St. George	Koplik	Center
5	First Thursday of May	St. George	Grizhe Reç	Gruemirë Shkrel
6	9-May	Saint Nicolas of Spring	/	Shkrel
7	24-May	Our Lady of Vukel	Vukel	Kelmend
8	In harvest time of Honey	Honey Festival	Landi Skaqaj, Bajzë	Kastrat
9	June	Mountain Tourism Day	Razem	Shkrel
10	13-Jun	Saint Ndou Day	Tamare	Kelmend
11	23-Jun	Congress of Greça	Selcë	Kelmend
12	28-Jun	St. Peter and St. Paul	Bajzë	Kastrat
13	29-Jun	St. Peter	/	Kelmend
14	29-Jun	St. Peter's day	Qafë Predelec	Kelmend

15	20-Jul	Saint Mëdhia	Reç	Shkrel
16	26-Jul	Saint Prenda	/	Shkrel
17	2-Aug	Niesa of Kastrat (Our Lady of Kastrat)	/	Kastrat
18	Second Saturday of August	Logu i Bjeshkëve (the Alpine Place)	Qafë Predelec	Kelmend
19	16-Aug	Emigrant day	Bogë	Shkrel
20	16-Aug	Saint Rock	Bajzë	Kastrat
21	Third Friday of August	Full Moon	Tamare	Kastrat
22	29-Aug	Saint John	Hot	Kastrat
23	Last Sunday of August	Festival of Reç	Reç	Shkrel
24	15 - 20 August	Day of Alps	Lëpushe	Kelmend
25	29-Sep	St. Michael	Bogë	Shkrel
26	September	Grape day	Kantina Kopliku	Koplik
27	First Sunday of October	Our Lady of Triesh	Triesh	Kelmend
28	7-Oct	Shirq	Lohe	Shkrel

29	7-Oct	Our Lady of the Rosary	Selcë	Kelmend
30	26-Oct	St. Demetrios	Ducaj	Shkrel
31	October	Chestnut Festival	Reç	Shkrel
32	8-Nov	Ascension Day	Rrjoll	Shkrel
33	6-Dec	Saint Nicolas of Winter	/	Shkrel
34	December	Kaçimak Festival	Bzhetë	Shkrel

DESCRIPTION

In Deçiq, Malesia e Madhe, the red and black flag was raised on April 6, 1911, a year and a half before the Albanian declaration of independence in Vlora. On this day the Municipality of Malesia e Madhe symbolically organizes the raising of the red and black flag. This event is attended not only by locals, but also by young people who have left the country, as well as by fellow citizens from other areas associated with important

In honor of the 1st century martyr of the Catholic Church, St. Mark, the village of Bajza has been celebrating for many years with the Holy Mass, and then with songs and dances in what the locals call the Party Venue.

The festival symbolizes the arrival of the spring, so the doors of the houses are decorated with green leaves. The tradition of the festival is also the placement of swings for children. Traditional food of this day is fish and

Traditionally women decorate the houses, especially the doors and windows, with flowers and branches, while the typical foods of this festival are fish and sultjash (rice with milk).

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May 9, the day of the transfer of the remains of St. Nicholas to Bari, in the 11th century in Italy, is celebrated massively also in Albania. In the past, the festival was known as Saint Nicolas of Spring because it coincided with the day when the mountaineers went out with the cattle to camp on the mountains. Currently, in Shkrel, the feast is celebrated with a mass in the Catholic Church and then with an artistic concert by local children.

This religious festivity has its origins in the 16th century and is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In most of villages of Kelmend, it is celebrated with a mass in the village churches, in the presence of locals and friends

Honey Festival is a local celebration that was organized for the first time in 2019, during the honey extraction period. The beekeeper Landi Skaqaj aims to promote bee care and the tradition of honey extraction. The celebration also includes a fair with other bee products and honey-containing foods.

The opening of the tourist season in Malesia e Madhe is characterized by a series of activities in some of the largest inhabited mountain centers of this municipality. Folk music through lahuta and çiftelia is performed together with popular and modern music outdoors. Friends and locals can taste the traditional products offered at the fairs, dominated by forest fruit juices, some types of cheese and liqueurs, brandy, wine etc.

One of the most famous saints in the world, Saint Ndou (Saint Anthony of Padua of the thirteenth century), is also loved by christian believers in Albania, and in particular among catholics in North Albania. The anniversary of his death on June 13 is also commemorated through a mass in the church of Tamara village, in Kelmend, where all the inhabitants participate.

June 23 marks the Greça Congress in Selca, Kelmend. Actually, the Assembly held its work for two weeks (from 10 June to 23 June 1911), but the date 23 was chosen to coincide with the announcement of the 12 requests for what is now known as the Autonomy Memorandum of Greça, which inspired the Malesia e Madhe Revolt against the Turkish occupation. Currently this event is commemorated through official

This religious feast is organized in honor of two apostles of Catholicism, Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In Bajza, area of Kastrat, the celebrations for this day have been relatively new since 2010 and, in addition to the church mass, there is also an artistic concert for the participants.

All the couples who got married during the year, from the previous day of San Pietro, after they greet the public, without jury, they choose the most beautiful couple among themselves. Then there are popular games, such as horse racing, rope pulling, sword fighting for bear cutting (worked goat leather rope), hoods, running competitions, men's wrestling etc. At noon, the priest holds the mass and then the games continue again until the winners are decided.

This religious festival began centuries ago and after been stopped in the mid-twentieth century, it spontaneously started again involving more and more locals. In addition to masses in the church, residents organize popular games, a place for brides and children, songs and arm wrestling. In festivals where lahuta and çiftelia are listened to the highest peaks, the winners and losers know how to respect each other.

<p>Reverence for one of the ancient prophets, belonging to the century IX b.C., is the reason for the feast of July 20 in some of the villages of Malesia e Madhe. Then, a solemn Mass is held in the Catholic Church of Rec in honor of Saint Mëdhia (St. Elia).</p>
<p>The feast is dedicated to the martyr of the Catholic church, St. Prenda, known as the Eye Healer. She lived in the second century. As is traditional in Shkrel, the feast is celebrated in the church of the village of Razem through the holy mass. Subsequently, children and artistic groups offer shows to the public. This festival brings many visitors to the area.</p>
<p>On the occasion of this religious feast, which coincides with the day of the Catholic church of Sant'Eusebio of Vercel, a special mass is held in the Catholic church of Kastrat, during which the priest gives the prayers. Our Lady herself is part of the blessing.</p>
<p>It is one of the oldest non-religious festivals celebrated without interruption since 1999 in the heart of Malesia e Madhe. Its purpose is to celebrate the unique dress of mountain dwellers - the xhubleta, and to keep the tradition of this dress alive. This is achieved through a competition of girls in xhubleta who compete to choose the most beautiful one. In a lively atmosphere full of popular songs and dances and a fair with local food, more and more guests spend an unforgettable day in the mountains of Kelmend.</p>
<p>It is a local festival financed and organized by migrants. Coincides with the saint of the XIII-XIV century, St. Rocco, since he also lived for a long time emigrating from one place to another. The celebrations begin with mass in the Catholic church and then the festive concert continues with local singers of Malesia e</p>
<p>The festival dedicated to the cholera healer is celebrated by holding a mass in the Catholic church of Bajza in Kastrat, and after the end of the mass, there is a concert of traditional music and dancing by the locals.</p>
<p>With the aim of reviving the area through youth activism, the celebration of the Full Moon has been taking place since 2006 in the center of the village of Tamare. Unlike many traditional family celebrations in the area, this feast tends to be modern, seducing young people with local products, contemporary but also popular music as well as dancing until late at night.</p>
<p>The hospitable mountaineers of Hot, in Malesia e Madhe, celebrate the day of St. John the Baptist of the first century, the precursor of Jesus Christ, all gathered to attend the Holy Mass celebrated in the church. Then they sing and dance all together.</p>
<p>Celebrations in honor of the War of Rec on August 30-31, 1943, last three days. For the first two days, traditional music accompanies guests on the dining table with traditional local food. The third day begins with a tribute at the Monument of the martyrs of the Second World War, who died fighting with the Italian fascists. In this place the official ceremony is held, followed by an artistic concert, attended by many other guests besides the veterans and their relatives.</p>
<p>With the aim of promoting the greatness of the Kelmend Alps, in the village of Lepushë of Kelmend, the Alpine Day has been organized since 2016, a celebration with a fair of local products, as well as traditional mountain clothes - xhubleta and çakshir, folk songs and dances etc.</p>
<p>Most religious holidays in Albania restarted celebrations in the early 1990s, after a period of nearly three decades of state atheism. On this occasion, the feast foresees the participation of the faithful of the Catholic Church in the Holy Mass, followed by an artistic concert in the place of the church, attended by locals and</p>
<p>At the local festivals of Malesia e Madhe, a grape harvest festival could not be missing. For this reason, Kantina Kopliku, a winery in Koplík, has decided to organize a special holiday for the first time in September 2019 in which the guests join the locals to collect the grapes and enjoy the fresh juice squeezed there. The party is also accompanied by music and food from the area.</p>
<p>Our Lady of Triesh is another name for the feast of Our Lady (Virgin Mary). One of the reasons why this festival is celebrated on different dates in different villages in Malesia e Madhe is that these villages are located at a distance from each other. Usually, the feast is celebrated through a mass, which is held in church, and then afterwards with songs and dances from the locals.</p>
<p>The festive mass is held on the premises of the Lohe Catholic Church in Shkrel of Malesia e Madhe. The festival is dedicated to the Catholic saint Sergi (Shirqi), in whose honor a church was erected in another area of the Shkoder region, on the bank of the Buna river in the 6th century.</p>

This religious festival in the village of Selca, in Kelmend in Malesia e Madhe, in the Shkoder region, and is associated with the Blessed Lady. The origins of this feast in the world are thought to date back to the end of the 16th century, but its formalization was made in 1913 by Pope Pius X, nicknamed the feast of the Holy

Religious celebration of the village of Ducaj dedicated to the Catholic saint Demetrius, martyr of Thessaloniki who lived during the reign of Diocletian. An ardent preacher of the Gospel, a fearless soldier of the Christian faith, famous for his acts of charity and great popularity, Saint Demetrius was a pillar for the Christians of Thessaloniki and one of the most revered saints in the Christian East.

During this festival there are numerous and parallel activities, from the fair with local products and crafts, visits to the incubator of local products, dairy and farmhouse in Reç, awareness raising activities for the protection of the chestnut, tour in the chestnuts forest, dishes with the chestnut as key ingredient, spaces entirely dedicated to children, etc.

A solemn Holy Mass in honor of Christ's Ascension into Heaven, marks the Ascension Day in Rrjoll of Malesia e Madhe. After mass in the Catholic church, believers wish each other, and a small celebration is organized on the church site.

Like most of the northern mountain dwellers, this is also dedicated to the Catholic saint Nicholas, who lived in the 14th century and died on December 6th. Traditionally in this area, this festival has a family character, as each family celebrates at home, rather than going out or visiting a friend.

The Kaçimak festival is a new local initiative organized by the Parish of Shkrel to promote endangered local foods. During this party, children and participants play many games, paint and create poems on the theme of good and clean food, dance and sing. In the end, everyone participates in the cooking of kaçimak. After cooking, the children help distribute the food to everyone present to enjoy it together.