

## CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

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**Annotation:** This thesis discusses why customs, traditions, and festivals remain important in people's lives. It explains how traditions develop from history, religion, and culture, and how they change over time through social and global influence. Using examples like Japan's Obon, Mexico's Día de los Muertos, India's Diwali, and African festivals, the work shows how these celebrations keep cultural identity alive and bring communities together. The thesis also highlights the emotional, social, and economic benefits of festivals, such as creating happiness, reducing stress, and supporting tourism. In a globalized world, it emphasizes the need to protect and respect cultural practices. Overall, the study argues that customs and festivals are essential for preserving identity, unity, and cultural diversity.

**Key words:** customs, traditions, festivals, kultural identity, intangible cultural heritage, globalization, social bonds, cultural preservation, cultural exchange, community unity, cultural diversity.

Human societies have always been shaped by shared customs, religions, and traditions that bring people together. Around the world, every culture has its own practices and festivals that reflect its history, beliefs, and values. Even though globalization is making countries similar in many fields, traditional, cultural events still remain one of the basic symbols of identity. These customs continue cause they meet important social and emotional needs. Although festivals and traditions have differences —on religious ceremonies to seasonal celebrations— they all share a common purpose: to save cultural identity, strengthen social relationships, and help communities remember their history and values. This thesis explores the importance of customs, traditions, and festivals by discussing their histories, social and psychological impact, and their value in today's globalized and digital world.

Traditions are rooted in history and passed down from generation to generation as ways of understanding life. Many cultures developed as survival ways, religious rituals, or expressions of gratitude toward nature. For instance, Japan's Obon Festival honors ancestors and reflects Buddhist beliefs about the connection between the living and the dead<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, Mexico's Día de los Muertos combines ancient Aztec rituals with Catholic influences brought during Spanish colonization<sup>2</sup>. Families celebrate their relatives who have dead and remember their lives. These examples show that traditions are not fixed; they change over time due to cultural exchange, historical events, and social developments. According to UNESCO<sup>3</sup>, more than 600 cultural practices are recognized as "Intangible Cultural Heritage," meaning they are living traditions rather than physical objects. This list includes Morocco's traditional oil-pressing methods and Korea's Royal Court music called Gugak. The variety of these traditions

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obon>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/guide-to-dia-de-muertos-mexico>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists>

proves that customs are meaningful cultural systems shaped by long histories. Even simple customs that way of greeting or wedding ceremonies carry one of the basic signs that connects people to their ancestors and save cultural identity.

Festivals are the most visible and joyful expressions of cultural identity. They gather communities and create strong social bonds. According to Statista, India's Diwali Festival attracts over 20 million people each year, making it one of the largest cultural celebrations in the world<sup>4</sup>. During Diwali, people clean their homes, light lamps, and share food with each others, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness. Festivals also have psychological purposes—they reduce stress, encourage happiness, and help people feel connected. In many Western countries, festivals like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter bring families together and promote values such as gratitude, kindness, and generosity. In African nations, festivals such as Gerewol in Niger and Timkat in Ethiopia mix religious traditions with social activities that strengthen community unity. According to research by the World Tourism Organization, cultural festivals generate about 40% of global tourism income, showing that they also have significant economic benefits<sup>5</sup>. Festivals often act as social equalizers. During celebrations, social differences become less important, and people from different backgrounds can come together in harmony. Music, dance, traditional clothes, and special foods create a shared cultural language that organize and unites communities. Festivals remind us that despite cultural or political differences, humans naturally enjoy celebrating life together.

In today's society, cultural exchange happens much more fast. This can sometimes cause traditional practices to fade, change, or become commercialized. However, many customs still survive because they represent identity, pride, and cultural memory. Many communities actively protect their traditions to prevent cultural loss. UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Program is a major effort to support endangered traditions that are at risk due to modernization, migration, or lack of preservation. Globalization has also led to new forms of cultural scrambling. For example, Korean holidays such as Chuseok and Seollal are celebrated not only in Korea but also by Korean communities around the world. Western celebrations like Christmas and Halloween have become popular in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Often, these celebrations mix with local customs, creating another odd hybrid traditions. This shows that customs are flexible and can adapt to new environments. However, globalization also brings problems, such as cultural misunderstanding or disrespect. For example, Native American symbols are often used in fashion without proper cultural knowledge, and some Hindu or Buddhist symbols are misrepresented in Western media. These issues show the importance of cultural education and respect when participating in global traditions. Even in a world dominated by technology and digital culture, people continue to search meaningful ways to celebrate their traditions. Customs and festivals didn't lose their value because they give a sense of belonging, identity, and connection to history. As societies become more connected, traditional practices remind us of our cultural roots and the value of diversity.

Customs, traditions, and festivals are not just activities—they are sign of identity, shared memory, and soul of community . From ancient rituals to modern celebrations, these traditions

<sup>4</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/india-diwali-hindu-festival-lights-1d8ca69601b227f4ed8c6a0b3e46486b>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.untourism.int/archive/europe/press-release/2016-11-23/unwto-congress-discuss-links-between-cultural-heritage-and-creative-tourism>

help societies stay strong and maintain their cultural identity in a rapidly changing world. They also promote cross-cultural understanding, allowing people to appreciate the beauty and variety of human civilization. As long as communities continue to value their cultural heritage, traditions will remain a crucial part of human life, connecting the past, present, and future.

### Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

1. UNESCO <https://ich.unesco.org/>
2. Statista <https://www.statista.com/>
3. World Tourism Organisation(UNWTO) <https://www.unwto.org/>