

Fasting Guidelines for Orthodox Christians

Cheesefare Week (*Maslenitsa*---a semi-festal week before Lent) **March 7-12**

1. Preparatory week to ready our bodies and hearts for Lent.
2. No meat during Cheesefare.
3. Dairy, wine, and fish eaten throughout Cheesefare.

General Lenten Guidelines

1. No meat or dairy--essentially vegan diet for Lent and Holy Week.
2. Wine and olive oil on weekends.
3. Wine and olive oil on certain feasts (see the calendar).
4. Fish, wine, & olive oil on Annunciation and Palm Sunday.
5. Shellfish are allowed during Lent, but try to save them for weekends and feasts. Some Orthodox eat canned fish on occasion.
6. Increased prayer life and church attendance.
7. Increased almsgiving.
8. Limiting entertainments (e.g. TV, recreational computer)
9. Intense guarding of heart and tongue.

Clean Week (first week of Lent) **March 14-18 (weekdays)**

1. As strict as you can go without sickness or endangering self & others.
2. Extremely simple foods (*xerophagy* or "dry-eating" i.e. foods like nuts, vegetables, fruits, bread, etc.). Xerophagy helps us spend less time on food prep, yet keep up our strength for prayer and labors.
3. Cooked meal mid-week after Presanctified Liturgy and Friday evening.
4. Because of easier food prep, use more time for prayer and worship.

Holy Week - **April 25 - 30**

1. Similar to Clean Week (*xerophagy* and simple foods).
2. Holy Friday is the strictest fast of the whole year.
3. After Liturgy on Holy Saturday, we break fast with blessed bread & wine (and other "dry" foods) but afterwards Eucharistic fast.

Eucharistic Fasts

1. If a Liturgy is earlier than noon, fast from midnight on.
2. If a Liturgy is in the afternoon, fast completely from food and water for about 8 hours before receiving Communion.
3. If you arrive late to an evening Liturgy because of work or traffic, but have prepared yourself by fasting and prayer and recent Confession, receive Holy Communion despite arriving late.

Note: **Children should be included in adult Lenten meals.** Parents may need to supplement these fast-appropriate foods with non-Lenten foods; but our children can and should participate in the lifestyle changes that Lent brings.