



The Day of the Alphabet

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Grade 5

Here is a picture of my mom, age 5, and her grandma Marinka ("Mikka") and grandpa Kolio. It was taken on May 24, 1980, in Shumen, Bulgaria.

May 24 is the Day of the Alphabet, an official and beloved holiday in Bulgaria. On this day each year Bulgarians celebrate the alphabet, education, and teachers. The Bulgarian alphabet was invented by two monks – Cyril and Methodius – in the ninth century by orders of the Byzantine emperor, who wanted to use the alphabet to increase his influence over neighboring Slavic countries. The Bulgarian king Boris I took the emperor on his offer, and Bulgaria was the first country in the world to adopt the Cyrillic alphabet.

Great-grandma Mikka was a school principal, and great-grandpa Kolio was a teacher. May 24 was a special day in their family, on which they celebrated with friends and students. After getting together in the town square for the mayor's speech and students' performances, they would go home for a delicious feast made of fried

meatballs, green salad, and fresh white bread. Then, great-grandpa Kolio would take a nap, and my mom would snuggle with him.

Today my mom lives in the United States, where there is no similar holiday. However, my mom still takes the time to call her relatives in Bulgaria on May 24 each year to congratulate them for the holiday. Also, my mom sometimes makes fried meatballs, which remind her of her May 24 feasts with her grandparents.

And here are two fun facts! My great-grandma Mikka is still alive and well at the age of 98. She loves to hear my mom's voice on May 24 every year. And I was named after the Bulgarian king Boris I, who took in the Cyrillic alphabet.

