



APPLES

IN EAST SLAVIC FOLKLORE



Apples are a very common fruit in eastern Slavic regions, and as such make many appearances in folklore and folktales. They can serve as objects of temptation, symbols of fertility, and even sometimes methods of punishment!

In Vittebsk province in Belarus, it is said that apple trees should not be cut down because Theotokos/Bogoroditsa rests on top of them when she comes down to Earth.

Golden apples in particular often appear as magical items, or as the objects of a hero's quest. This motif is quite common throughout Europe, appearing in Greek and Irish legends as well.

Apples are a symbol of love and marriage, as well. There are numerous rituals for telling romantic fortunes that involve apples or the branches of apple trees.

Apples are very commonly used as symbols of fertility and good luck. Sometimes, the apple tree and its fruit symbolize a mother and child. It makes sense, then, for them to be associated with Bogoroditsa!

One Carpatho-Rusyn folktale tells of Madei, a brigand and murderer who is turned into an apple tree until he confesses his crimes.

Apples in eastern Slavic folklore are often associated with the fruit of the Garden of Eden. In this context, they can represent temptation and forbidden knowledge.

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