

Easter in Poland

Poland is a country of unique rituals connected with Easter, ranging from joyful to spiritual, and of course always including plenty of homemade delicacies. Easter is the most important holiday for Christians.



Holly Week

Palm Sunday, the week before Easter Sunday, is marked by church attendance with palm-leaf substitutes in the form of willow branches or handmade bouquets of dried flowers.



On Holy Thursday and Friday Polish people go to church to pray. On Saturday before Easter Sunday, Poles paint hard-boiled eggs (called pisanki). Some use store-brought kits which make the coloring and decorating easier, others continue to make dyes the traditional way - with boiled onion skins. Egg painting is encountered in several other Slavic cultures, and is thought to date back to talismanic pagan rituals that are over 5000 years old. Another Saturday activity is the preparation of Easter baskets. Lined with a white linen or lace napkin and decorated with sprigs of boxwood, the baskets contain a sampling of Easter foods: pisanki (decorated eggs), a piece of sausage or ham, salt and pepper, bread, a piece of cake and an Easter Lamb made of sugar or even plastic. They are brought to church to be blessed.



Easter Monday is a family holiday in Poland and is called Smigus Dyngus, or Wet Monday, on this they men and boys pour water on women and girls.

Poppy Seed Cake (Makowiec)



INGREDIENTS:

Dough:

1 lb. flour

1 cup sugar

3/4 c. margarine

3 egg yolks

1 c. milk 1 oz. yeast

salt

Filling:

1 lb. poppy seeds

1 c. sugar

2 T. honey

1 rounded T. butter

2 egg whites

vanilla sugar

3/4 c. raisins

1 c. chopped walnuts

1 T. finely chopped candied orange peel

Brushing:

1 egg

Glaze:

1 c. powdered sugar

1 T. lemon juice

1-2 T. boiling water

RECIPE:

Rinse poppy seeds, scald with hot water and let sit overnight. The next day, prepare dough and let it rise. Drain the poppy seeds in a sieve, grind at least three times. Melt butter in a pot, add sugar, poppy seeds, honey, raisins, nuts and candied orange peel and fry a few minutes on a low flame, still mixing. When slightly cooled, add egg whites whisked into a froth and mix. Divide the dough and the poppy seed mixture into three parts. Roll out each part of the dough, lightly sprinkled with flour. Evenly spread poppy seed mixture on the dough, roll up the dough and place in long, app. 18-inch loaf pans. The edges should be tucked under the dough roll. Let the rolls rise in a warm place covered with a towel, then brush with an egg mixed with 1 t. milk. Bake in a moderate oven (360) for 35-40 minutes. Check if ready with a toothpick, which should remain dry. When slightly cooled, take out of the pans and glaze.

