

Christmas traditions

-Świąteczne tradycje-



Advent

Christmas time is preceded by the 4-week religious season of Advent, a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus.

Decorating Christmas tree

Christmas trees are decorated shortly before Christmas. The decorations include glass balls (bombki), garlands (tańcuchy), home-made ornaments (domowej roboty ozdoby) and candles (świeczki), with a star or a tree topper at the top.



Fasting

Christmas Eve is a day of fasting, followed by a sumptuous dinner, consisting of 12 traditional dishes, which in most homes starts with the appearance of the first star.

Culinary traditions

Polish culinary traditions vary depending on the region, but traditionally 12 dishes are served to reflect the number of Apostles. The dishes may include fish or red beetroot soup, carp, pasta with poppy mass, jellied fish, herring in cream or oil, or Kutia – a wheat pudding with poppy seed, honey, and nuts.



An extra seat for the unexpected guest

In most Polish homes, an empty seat with a set of dishes and cutlery is left for a traveler or a homeless person so that they can join the hosts and celebrate the holiday on Christmas Eve.

Sharing wafer

Just before the dinner, family members share the wafer and wish all the best to each other.



Hay on the table

This tradition is on the decline, but there still are families who put hay on the table covering it with the table cloth.

Gift giving following Christmas dinner

One of the best loved Polish traditions. Traditionally, it Santa Claus who brings gift or, optionally, they are placed under the Christmas tree.



Singing carols

Christmas carols are serious and religious in character, yet it is customary to sing them after dinner.

Caroling on Christmas Eve

In some parts of Poland, especially in the countryside, there are groups of carolers going house to house, caroling or performing a short nativity play.

Midnight Mass

At midnight following Christmas Eve many Poles attend the Midnight Mass (Pasterka) to commemorate the prayers of shepherds on their way to Bethlehem.

Christmas Days



Christmas Day and Boxing Day, known here as the First and the Second Day of Christmas, are traditionally spent with relatives, even if it means traveling long distances to visit them.



Thank you for attention!

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