

# **POLSH CHRISTMAS**

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# BEFORE CHRISTMAS

- Christmas is the most family holiday in Poland.
- It begins on 24th December and lasts three days, however preparations starts much sooner.
- People buy presents, clean homes, cook Christmas dishes and finally – decorate Christmas trees. They put on glass bulbs, fairy lights, angels, sweets and hand made ornaments.



# CHRISTMAS EVE

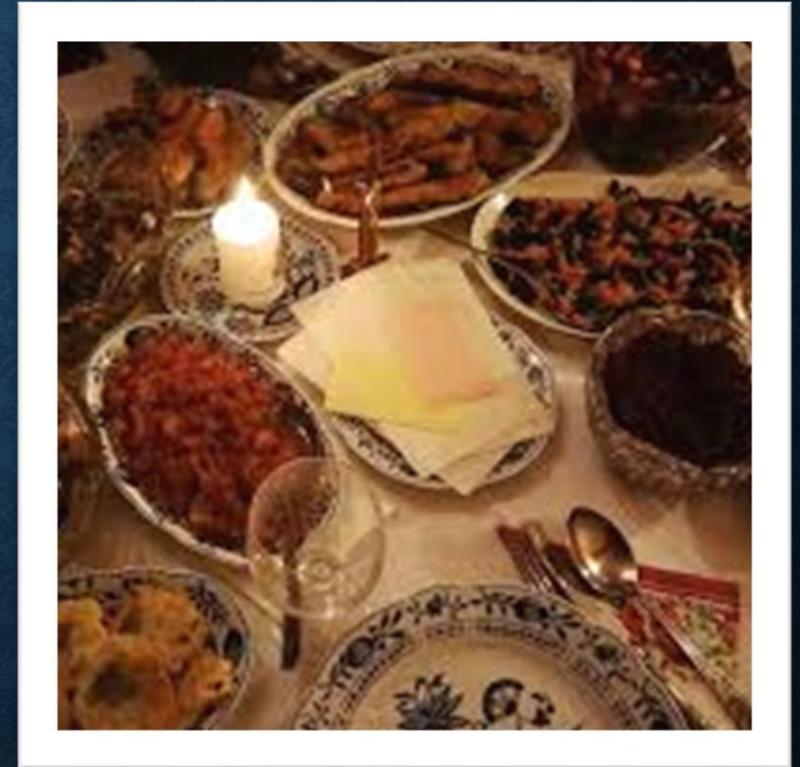


- 24th December is called Christmas Eve and it is the most beautiful day of Christmas.
- When the first star appears in the sky, the whole family gather at the Christmas table.
- The supper is preceded by breaking and sharing of "opłatek" (wafer), which is the symbol of unity.
- It is also important to leave an additional plate for an unexpected guest.
- In more religious families people sing Christmas carols and go to the Christmas Vigil Mass.
- Last but not least, when the supper is finished, Christmas presents can be unwrapped. And this is the most impatiently awaited moment for all children.

# 12 DISHES

According to tradition, there should be 12 dishes on the table. The most popular are beetroot soup, carp, dumplings with sauerkraut and forest mushrooms, drink made of dried fruit, cheesecake and poppy seed cake.

Polish people don't eat meat on Christmas Eve.



# CHRISTMAS



25th December is the important day during the holiday. Mostly people go to churches, pray and sing carols. Everyone visits the closest family all day long. Second day in Poland is also a day off.

Saint Stephen's Day - a holiday celebrated in memory of Saint Stephen (the first Christian martyr) on December 26 in the Roman Catholic Church. People spend 26th December together, they usually go to church, eat left Christmas dishes, chat and enjoy the festive mood.

I love Christmas time as people are nice to one another and try to forget about stresses of everyday life. All that counts is celebration, peace and love.



# SHEPHERDESS

Christmas Eve evening ends with a solemn mass celebrated at midnight in Catholic churches.

According to tradition, it commemorates the arrival to Bethlehem of the shepherds who were the first to pay homage to the newborn Christ.

The custom of celebrating the night liturgy was introduced in the Church in the 5th century and reached Poland with Christianity.

# CAROLS

Singing Christmas carols is an important element of Christmas Eve.

There are many of them in the Polish tradition, and the oldest of them come from the Middle Ages.

However, their greatest heyday falls on the 17th and 18th centuries, when the most popular of them were created, e.g. "In the silence of the night" or "God is born".

In some parts of Poland, carol singers also go from house to house, making wishes and singing carols.





# WAFER

- The most important moment of the Christmas Eve supper is sharing the wafer together and making wishes.
- This custom is a reference to the Last Supper and Jesus' sharing of bread with his disciples.
- In the church tradition, the wafer is a remnant of the old Christian eulogies, special breads placed on the altar.
- They were a symbol of love and unity of Christians and a symbol of union with God.

# NATIVITY SCENE

- Nativity scene is a very popular Christmas item.
- Describes the scene of Jesus' birth.
- It presents Holy family (baby Jesus, Holy Mary, Holy Josef) in the stable
- In the stable was also shepherds, kings and cattle.





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**