

Christmas In Poland

In Poland Christmas is celebrated for three days but the most important is Christmas Eve, known as Wigilia. The house is cleaned and everyone puts on their festive clothes. The main Christmas meal is eaten in the evening. It's traditional that no food is eaten until the first star is seen in the sky! So children look at the night sky to spot the first star!

On the table there are 12 dishes - they are meant to give you good luck for the next 12 months. The meal is traditionally meat free, this is to remember the animals who took care of the baby Jesus. Everyone has to eat or at least try some of each dish. Some people in Poland say that at midnight the animals can talk.

One of the most important dishes is "barszcz" (beetroot soup) or you can eat mushroom soup. The barszcz may be eaten with "uszka" (little dumplings with mushrooms) or "krokiety" (pancakes with mushrooms or/and cabbage).

Carp is the main dish of the meal. The carp's scales are said to bring luck and fortune and by some are kept for the whole year (e.g. in wallets).

"Bigos" is a traditional dish made of cabbage, meat, wild mushrooms, dried plums - so it is saved for Christmas day or the 26th as it has meat in it. It is made a few days before Christmas Eve, because with each day it gets better.

Herrings are very popular and usually are served in several ways: in oil, in sour cream .

In most houses there is also "kompot z suszu" that is drink made by boiling dried fruits.

The most popular desserts at Christmas Eve are cakes: "makowiec", a poppy seed roll made of sweet yeast bread, "kutia" mixed dried fruits and nuts with wheat seeds, "piernik" a moist cake made with honey and gingerbreads.

At the beginning of the meal, a large wafer biscuit called an 'Oplatek', which has a picture of Mary, Joseph and Jesus on it, is passed around the table and everyone breaks a piece off and eats it sharing wishes. Sometimes a small piece may be given to pets that the family may have. A place is often left empty at the meal table, for an unexpected guest. Polish people say that no one should be alone or hungry, therefore if someone unexpectedly knocks on the door they are welcomed. In some houses, the empty place is to commemorate a dead relative or for a family member who couldn't come to the meal.

Sometimes hay is put under the table cloth, to remind people that Jesus was born in a stable.

The best part about the Christmas Eve supper is that you can open the presents when it is finished. In most of the houses, before the presents are opened, the family sings carols together.

Presents are brought by "Święty Mikołaj" (St Nicholas/Santa Claus), but in some parts of Poland there are different present bringers (because in the past the borders of Poland were different, so

people had different traditions). In the east (Podlasie) there is "Dziadek Mróz" (Ded Moroz), in western and northern Poland "Gwiazdor", the Starman. The starman is not always all-good - if someone was bad, he can give him "rózga", a birch-rod that should be used on bad person!

Christmas Eve is finished by going to church for a Midnight Mass service.

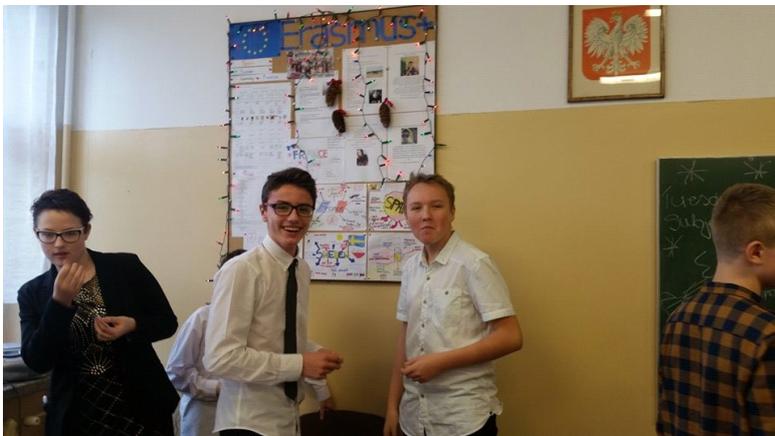
The next two Christmas days are always spend with family and friends.

Christmas in our class

In our class Christmas is celebrated for tradition as well as for fun.



First, we shared the wafer and tell each other Christmas wishes. Then, we started eating Christmas cakes. After the meal, we gave each other gifts.





It was our first Christmas time as a new class, so we all thought that it was very special. It brought us together so we will never forget this day.



