

CHRISTMAS IN POLAND

Everyone loves Christmas. It is the favorite and most eagerly awaited holiday in the year. This is a unique time when people try to be kind, friendly and generous to one another. They seem to forget all their problems, quarrels and just enjoy being together. Christmas is preceded by many days of preparation. Streets are lit by coloured lamps; shops are full of people buying presents, choosing Christmas cards; Christmas trees are set up in every home and decorated with sparkling tinsel, candles, chains, toys and trinkets. The atmosphere of excitement and expectation can be felt almost everywhere. The day preceding Christmas Eve is a unique one. It is believed that everything that might happen on it might influence the whole year come. Much attention, for instance, is paid to the person who first enters the house and if it is a man, he ensures, welfare to all members of the family. Some people say that if you ask for food on that day, you will be hungry throughout the year. The moment everyone waits for is Christmas Eve. When the first star appears in the sky, people take seats at the Christmas table. They do not forget about leaving an empty place for an unexpected guest. The table is covered with white tablecloth and hay is spread on it. Another custom is the number of dishes. Traditionally there should be twelve of them and they must all be tasted. The most popular dishes are red borsch, pies or sour cabbage with mushrooms, fish (usually carp) and poppy-seed cake. Before the family starts eating, all its members share the holy wafer. There is also a custom of giving presents and everyone may find something nice under the Christmas tree. At midnight many people go to church to attend a special mass during which Christmas carols are song. This night is miraculous because it is believed that animals can speak with human voices. The first day of Christmas, 25 December, is usually spent at home. Work is forbidden.

It is believed that washing hands with silver coins in the morning may bring money. On that day carol-singers dressed as an angel, a devil, King Herod or Death visit people's house. They sing carols and play various scenes from the Bible. The second day of Christmas is spent in a different way. People pay and receive visits, spend much time at the table talking or singing carols. From that day Carnival begins. Christmas for Polish people is not only the yearly celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ but also the most familiar, traditional and joyful time of happiness and reconciliation. The birth of Jesus Christ is regarded as a kind of symbol which heralds the days of peace and love.

dressed as- przebrani za

empty plate- pustytalerz

eagerly awaited- oczekiwanie z niecierpliwością
(upragnione)

custom- zwyczaj
dishes- potrawy

kind- miły, uprzejmy

generous- wielkoduszny

to precede- poprzedzać

days of preparation- dni przygotowań

Christmas cards- kartki świąteczne

Christmas tree- choinka

to decorate- ubierać (ozdobić)	carol-singers- kolędnicy
sparklightinsel- błyszczące świecidełka	candles- świecezki
chains- łańcuchy	toys- zabawki
trinkets- ozdoby na choinkę	excitement- podniecenie
expectation- oczekiwanie	to influence- miećwpływ
welfare- dobrobytChristmas Eve- Wigilia	the carnival- karnawał
the first star- pierwszagwiazda	unexpected guest- nieoczekiwanygość
tablecloth- obrus	hay- siano
to taste- próbować	red borsh- czerwony barszcz
pies with mushrooms- pierogi z grzybami	sauerkraut- kiszona kapusta
poppy-seed cake- makowiec	mass- msza
to share the holywafer- dzielić się opłatkiem	carols- kolędy
to pay and receivevisits- składać wizyty i (święta)	the yearly celebration- doroczny obchód przyjmować gości

Adapted from Małgorzata Cieślak: *Repetytorium tematyczno-leksykalne 1*. Wagros.