



Traditions of Poland Quiz

1. Christmas is a Polish national holiday celebrated since it became Catholic in _____.
2. How do you say Merry Christmas in Polish?
3. How do you say Happy New Year in Polish?
4. On what day does Poland celebrate Swiety Mikolaj / Saint Nicholas?
5. What is Kulig?
6. The Christmas Wafer is known as _____
7. What is the polish word for Christmas carols?
8. What is the polish word for nativity crèche?
9. Why is straw laid under the holiday table cloth?
10. What is the significance of the Gwiazdka or 'little star'?
11. Custom has it that 12 dishes are served on Christmas as a symbol of what?

Traditions of Poland Answers to the Quiz

1. Christmas is a Polish national holiday celebrated since it became Catholic in 966
 2. How do you say Merry Christmas in Polish? *Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia*
 3. How do you say Happy New Year - *Szczesliwego Nowego Roku*
 4. On what day does Poland celebrate *Święty Mikołaj* / Saint Nicholas? December 6
Though as important as Santa Claus himself Saint Nick is not originally a Polish hero but Nicholas of Myra, a 4th century Greek Bishop of Myra who because of his numerous miracles and generous gift giving became the original Santa Claus. He had a reputation of secret gift giving by placing coins in shoes of strangers. The celebration of Saint Nicholas is on December 6 when children receive their present.
 5. *Kulig* (coo lee gh) or a sleigh ride party is a winter tradition celebrated during Carnival time from Christmas till Ash Wednesday. The tradition dates back the time when Polish Nobles would travel from manor to manor spreading Holiday wishes. In modern times *Kulig* could refer to a party pulled by a tractor or car but always with lots of signing, merriment, bonfire and good spirits to keep you warm.
 6. The Christmas Wafer is known as *OPLATEK*
With the First Star the family says a prayer for souls of lost ones who are believed to participate in the feast. The family members then share *Oplatek* or a Christmas Wafer and offer each other best wishes for the upcoming year. *Oplatek* symbolizes unity and reminds us to share our last piece of bread with others.
 7. The Polish word for Christmas carol is *koleda* (pronounced *kolenda*) and it comes from the Latin word "calendae," meaning the first day of the month. *Koledy* are mostly anonymous, having been created by the Polish people over the centuries. *Koledy* date back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and while they did start out as hymns to be sung during Mass, they quickly found their way out of churches to the populace, where they took on a colorful life of their own.
 8. The *szopka* or nativity creche is often an integral part of Christmas observances in churches, as well as in homes, where plans are busily made throughout December for another important centerpiece of a Polish Christmas - the holiday feast.
 9. Christmas Eve is when Poles gather for the main celebration, filled with wonderful traditions beginning with bits of straw laid down under the holiday table cloth as a reminder of Jesus' humble birth in a stable.
 10. The observance of *Gwiazdka*, or "little star" as the sky is carefully watched for the appearance of the first star of the night - in remembrance of the Star of Bethlehem. The moment the star appears, families may begin the ceremony of feasting, or *wigilia*, deriving its name from the old Latin, "to keep vigil".
 11. The customary 12 dishes are usually served as a symbol of the 12 apostles, and include generous helpings of the traditional carp, borscht, soup wild mushroom, perogies, pickled herring, and noodles with poppy seeds.
- Any number of desserts may also be on the menu, including a traditional *cwibak* (Christmas fruit cake), *piernik* (honey cake), and *baba rum*.