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Most of the Polish Christmas celebrations take place on 24th December, and even though the day isn't an official public holiday in Poland, to many Poles it is one of the most significant and family-oriented dates in the calendar. Many institutions stop working earlier than usual on the day of Christmas Eve, which is usually celebrated with a family dinner at home



Waiting for the first star to appear in the sky

Many Poles wait until the first star appears in the sky before sitting down to eat on 24th December. This tradition commemorates the Star of Bethlehem, which according to the New Testament guided the Wise Mer to the birthplace of Christ.

Nowadays, with so many satellites circling around the Earth and reflecting light, its sometimes tricky to adhere to this tradition, but many families do their best.

Sharing an opłatek

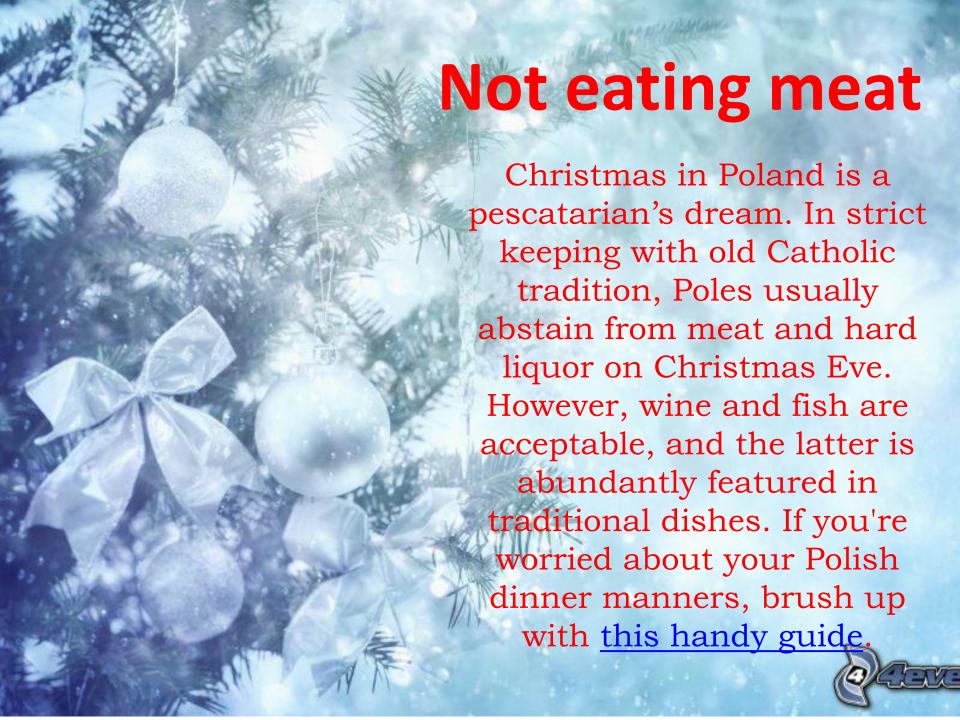


Oplatek is an unleavened wafer made of flour and water embossed with a religious image. Every person attending the Christmas celebration gets one and then shares pieces of it with everyone else. This is accompanied by exchanges of good wishes and occurs before sitting down to eat. This tradition is linked to the breaking of bread at the Last Supper.



of bewildered family pets.







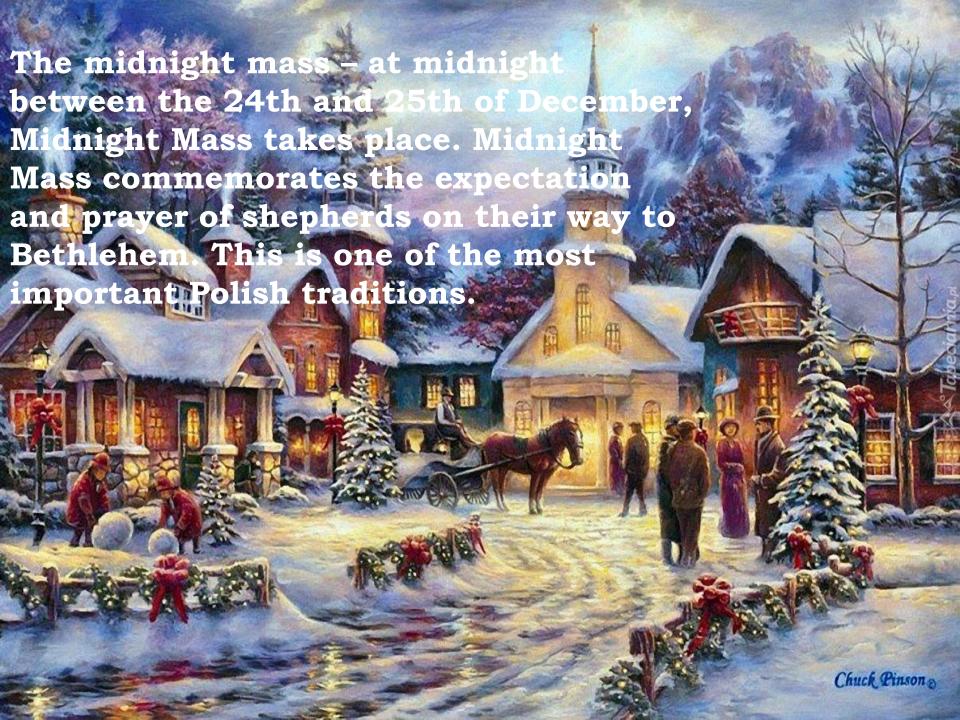
Putting hay beneath the tablecloth

If you find some hay beneath the tablecloth at a Polish Christmas Eve celebration, don't assume your hosts did a poor job of tidying up. The hay is there on purpose, as a way of remembering that, according to the Bible, the newborn Jesus was put in a manger to rest.



Preparing 12 dishes

A traditional Polish Christmas Eve dinner consists of <u>12 dishes</u>. One for each month of the new year. Some claim that one should try every dish to secure good luck throughout the upcoming twelve-month period. Classic Polish Christmas dishes include, amongst others, cabbage and mushroom *pierogi* (dumplings) and the <u>poppy seed cake known as *makowiec*</u>.











According to the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ was born in a

Answer: Stable

In the carol, "Jingle Bells," what kind of a sleigh is mentioned?



"A one-horse open sleigh"



