

Polish Christmas traditions

poppy seed	sauerkraut	Christmas wafer	hay	borsch
Christmas Eve Supper	ginger	dumplings	Midnight Mass	
dish	carp	plate	dried fruit	Christmas Eve

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter. You asked me to write and tell you how Polish people celebrate Christmas.

Christmas starts on (1) _____. This is the day when most families decorate their Christmas tree. The most important part of the day is the evening, when people share a (2) _____ and wish everybody all the best for the future. Then we eat (3) _____. The table has a white tablecloth with some (4) _____ under it. The hay reminds us of Jesus and where He was born. There is an extra (5) _____ in case someone comes unexpectedly. On that particular night everybody is welcome into your house.

There are usually twelve different dishes. There is no meat, but there is lots of fish, usually herring and fried (6) _____. There is also (7) _____ (a cabbage dish), Christmas (8) _____ (beetroot soup) and traditional (9) _____ with cabbage and mushrooms. It is a tradition that you must try every (10) _____. There are a lot of sweet things to eat as well: cheesecake, (11) _____ cake and, everybody's favourite, (12) _____ cake. We drink a traditional drink made from (13) _____.

After supper we sing or listen to Christmas carols and wait for Santa Claus to come. Sometimes presents appear suddenly under the Christmas tree, sometimes there is a big bag on the doorstep, and sometimes Santa appears in person and gives the presents to the family!

At midnight we go to church to (14) _____. We pray and sing to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus.

We usually spend the next two days with family and friends. It's the best time of the year!

Best wishes, Kajtek

Source: *The Festive Year*, wyd. Felberg SJA