

**Did you know from 8**

Boruta, Rokita or Lucyper, and in Polish folk tales they are often outwitted by crafty peasants.

-- Washing over a bucket of water containing a coin on Christmas Eve was once thought to ensure good fortune and robust health.

-- In the peasant cottages of yesteryear, not only was hay placed under the tablecloth on Christmas Eve, but straw was strewn about on the floor and tied to the table's legs and sheaves of grain were placed in the corners of the room.

-- The oldest Polish "koleda" (carol) going back to the 15th century and still widely sung today is "Anioł pasterzom mówił".

-- The original meaning of "koleda" was gift or offering and has survived in the "chodzenie po koledzie", the custom of priests visiting and blessing their parishioners homes in the New Year and receiving an offering in return.

-- In some Polish families, sweet Wigilia dishes include compote, poppyseed noodles and sweet soups, while Christmas cakes (piernik, makowiec, keks) are reserved for Christmas Day and thereafter.

-- In some parts of rural Poland, special colored opłatek is mixed with the scraps from the Wigilia table and fed to the family's livestock.

-- Traditionally, the Christmas Eve supper does not begin until the evening's first star appears in the sky. Small children were usually given the task of standing in the window and watching for the star, which was a good way to keep them from getting in the way of last-minute preparations.

-- According to one old belief, there should be an even number of people seated at the Wigilia table. The odd person joining the gathering would not live to see another Christmas.

-- Before the advent of the Christmas tree, Polish peasant cottages were decorated with hanging mobiles known as "pająki" (spiders or chandeliers). They were fashioned from straw and paper flowers or made from strung peas that resembled pearls.

-- A decorated pointed top of an evergreen suspended upside-down from the rafters was known long before the Christmas tree made the scene. Known as a podłaźniczka, it was decorated with home-

made ornaments fashioned from paper, straw and opłatki as well as goodies.

-- The edibles decorating the podłaźniczka was what youngsters liked best, because sweet snacks were a rarity amongst the peasantry of yesteryear. Goodies included sweets in shimmering paper, nuts, small apples and pierniczki (homey-spice cookies).

-- In the past, the poorest Polish families, who couldn't afford store-bought sweets, would decorate the podłaźniczka with small pieces of wood wrapped in colored paper to imitate candy.

-- According to a once widely held custom, every Wigilia guest must sample at least a symbolic portion of each dish on the table. And no-one is allowed to leave the table during the meal except the lady of the house doing the serving.

-- One Polish folk-belief holds that farm animals are briefly able to speak with human voices at midnight on Christmas Eve. The downside of all this is that anyone who actually hears them will not live to see another Christmas.

-- Poland's Christmas gift-giver once varied according to region. In some places it was the Christ Child himself, elsewhere it was an angel, a female personification of Christmas known as Gwiazdka, or a bearded Gwiazdor (Christmas man). Nowadays it is mainly Św. Mikołaj, although he is still called Gwiazdor in the Poznań region.

-- A prized possession of every Polish family was once the Kantyczka, a hymnal containing religious songs for every occasion including a large collection of kolędy. Their pages were often yellowed and ragged round the edges, since these hymnals were passed down from one generation to another.

-- St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26th) is also a legal holiday in Poland. In the olden days parishioners used to bring oats and dried peas to church with which they pelted each other and the priest to symbolize the stoning of Święty Szczepan, the first Christian martyr. The often considerable sweepings enriched the pastor's pantry and St. John's Day (Dec. 27th) is widely celebrated in the countryside, but these are largely social occasions lacking the singular solemnity and symbolism of Christmas Eve. □

**Strybel - Poland 2010 from 11**

scratch. A major tourist draw is its quaint Old Town section with its beautiful old churches, townhouses, narrow cobbled streets and Old Marketplace, rimmed with cafés, restaurants and souvenir shops. What is known as the Royal Way leads from Old Town past Łazienki Park to King Jan Sobieski's magnificent summer palace in Wilanów. Warsaw's historic old buildings contrast with the modern skyscrapers, hotels and shopping faculties of downtown Warsaw. The city boasts numerous museums and entertainment opportunities including a Monte Carlo style gambling casino.

**GDAŃSK:** This Baltic port also boasts a completely restored Old Town district which offers boat rides down its main canal as well as hovercraft cruises on the sea itself. St. Mary's Basilica is said to be the world's largest Gothic-style brick church. Worth visiting is the Gdańsk Shipyard, birthplace of the Solidarity movement that led to the overthrow of communism. You may even get a glimpse of Lech Wałęsa who lives in the area. The nearby seaside resort of Sopot also attracts visitors from far and wide, and folk-culture buffs will surely enjoy visiting some of the quaint Kashubian villages in the area.

**KRAKÓW:** Poland's former capital has a unique atmosphere all its own and ranks among Europe's top tourist attractions. It is a true repository of architectural relics, art works and historical memorabilia such as the crown jewels and the crypts of Poland's kings in Wawel Royal Castle and Cathedral. The Main Square includes St. Mary's Church of "Trumpeter of Kraków" fame, the Sukiennice Cloth Hall and the Mickiewicz Monument. The city also sparkles with a large variety of pubs, clubs, cafés and restaurants.

**CZĘSTOCHOWA:** Not far from Kraków is Częstochowa, a city best known for its Shrine of the Black Madonna at Jasna Góra Monastery. It was on the monastery's ramparts in the mid-17th century that Pauline monk Augustyn Kordecki led the defense against the invading Swedes which eventually swept them back across the Baltic. Thousands come here to pray daily and witness the ceremonial unveiling of the icon of Our Lady of Jasna Góra. But in mid-August hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from Poland and abroad converge on Częstochowa for the annual national pilgrimage.

**TATRA MOUNTAINS:** The highest mountain range between the alps and the Caucasus, Poland's popular mountain resort of Zakopane is also an easy drive from Kraków. Perpetually snow-covered

peaks, picturesque valley, small waterfalls and other scenic beauty can be admired along 150 miles of hiking trails. Others might find a horse-drawn carriage driven by a Góral (Polish highlander) more to their liking. The folk culture of the Polish highlands can be seen in the quaint chalet-type architecture and regional attire as well as in the various foods and souvenirs available.

**AUSCHWITZ:** More a place of reflection than a tourist attraction is the museum in the southern town of Oświęcim, the site of Nazis Germany's notorious Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Visitors are able to tour the original prison barracks, gas chambers and crematoria that snuffed out the lives of as many as 1.5 million people, most of them Jewish. Not a pleasant place to visit but an eye-opening "must" for every sensitive soul.

**SPECIAL 2010 ATTRACTIONS:**

**International Chopin Year** is being celebrated throughout 2010, and music lovers are in for many musical treats, many of them centering on Warsaw's Chopin Institute. Events are also being held across the country. For details visit: <http://chopin2010.pl/en>

**600th Grunwald anniversary:** July 10, 2010 marks the 600th anniversary of Poland's victorious Battle of Grunwald over the hated German Knights of the Cross. The battle's re-enactment should be especially spectacular this year, and the Knights' foreboding Malbork Castle should be on the "must" list of all history buffs. An International Scout Jamboree is being planned to mark the occasion (<http://2010.grunwald.zhp.pl/Grunwald2010.pdf>).

**Solidarity's 30th anniversary:** August 2010 marks the 30th anniversary of the birth of Solidarity, the Soviet bloc's first and only independent workers' union which eventually spelled the end of Soviet communism. Many events and attractions are being planned for the occasion across the country, but Gdańsk's International Solidarity Center will be the main focus of the observances (<http://www.ecs.gda.pl/>).

All this however barely scratches the surface of what there is to do and see in Poland. For more details visit: [http://www.hotelpol.com/en/info\\_poland/](http://www.hotelpol.com/en/info_poland/) When you have nearly decided you might like to visit Poland this summer, get in touch with tour specialist associated with the Society of Polish-American Travel Agents to find out what is available this season ([http://www.spata.org/active\\_members.htm](http://www.spata.org/active_members.htm)). Ultimately, the choice is yours! □

**Wędrowniki Przez Latas**  
**Harcerski Bal Jubileuszowy**  
**100-lecia**

**Sobota, 16-go stycznia 2010**  
6:30 pm - 2:00 am

**Sala Parafialna**  
3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018

Gra "Zbigniew Galazka Trio"  
Obiad - Loteria Fantowa - Zaproszony Bar  
Honorowa Gość

**Wstęp: 57\$ od osoby**  
350 (wliczone do 25 lat)

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*Organizacja przez organizację*

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