

# Polish American Cultural Center

## Polish Easter Traditions Continue to Unite Polish People All Over the World!

### The Treasured Polish Custom of Swieconka

The blessing of the Easter food, or the "Swieconka" is a tradition dear to the heart of every Pole. Being deeply religious, he is grateful to God for all His gifts of both nature and grace, and, as a token of this gratitude, has the food of his table sanctified with the hope that spring, the season of the Resurrection, will also be blessed by God's goodness and mercy.



The usual fare on the Easter table includes ham and kielbasa, cakes of all kinds - particularly babka; eggs - some shelled or some decorated. There is usually a Paschal Lamb or "Baranek" made of butter, some cheese, horseradish, salt, vinegar and oil.



The food is brought to the church and blessed by the parish priest on Holy Saturday. The food can also be blessed in the home. After the blessing, the food is usually set aside until Easter morning when the head of the house shares the blessed egg, symbol of life, with family and friends. Having exchanged wishes, all continue to enjoy a hearty meal.

This centuries old custom is indeed richly symbolic and beautiful. It is one in which the whole family can participate and help prepare. May this tradition endure for many generations to come.

All of you can enjoy this beautiful Polish custom by participating at the blessing of the Easter food "Swieconka" at the Polish church nearest you. This is an excellent way to teach the younger members of your family about this treasured Polish tradition.

**To All Members & Supporters  
Happy Easter • Wesołego Alleluja**

### Wesoły Nam Dzień

Wesoły nam dziś dzień nastał, Którego z nas każdy ządał,  
Tego dnia Chrystus zmartwychwstał, Alleluja, Alleluja.

Król niebieski k'nam zawitał, Jako śliczny kwiat zakwitał,  
Po śmierci się nam pokazał, Alleluja, Alleluja.

A great day for us has dawned, One for which we were all yearning,  
The day of Christ's resurrection, Alleluja, Alleluja.

Heaven's King, His might assuming, like a lovely rose is blooming,  
after death to us appearing, Alleluja, Alleluja.

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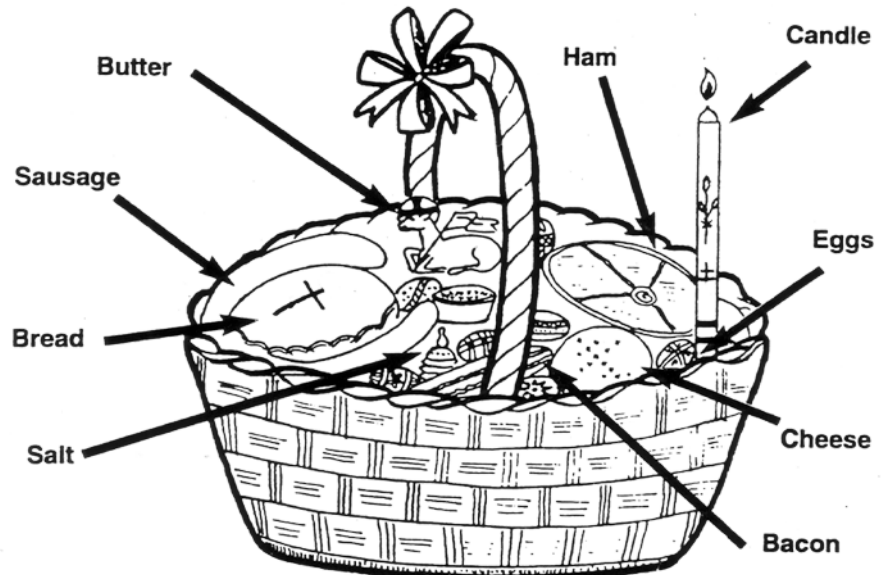
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### A Traditional Polish Easter Basket



Maslo (Butter) - This dairy product is often shaped into a lamb (Baranek Wielkanocny) or a cross. This reminds us of the good will of Christ that we should have towards all things.

Babka (Easter Bread) - A round or long loaf topped with a cross or a fish, symbolic of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life.

Chrzan (Horseradish) - Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds.

Jajka (Eggs) and Pisanki (decorated with symbols of Easter, of life, of prosperity) - Indicates new life and Christ's Resurrection from the tomb.

Kielbasa (Sausage) - A sausage product, symbolic of God's favor and generosity.

Szynka (Ham) - Symbolic of great joy and abundance. Some prefer lamb or veal. The lamb also reminds Christians that the Risen Christ is the "Lamb of God."

Slonina (Smoked Bacon) - A symbol of the overabundance of God's mercy and generosity.

Sol (Salt) - A necessary element in our physical life. Symbolic of prosperity and justice and to remind us that people are the flavor of the earth.

Ser (Cheese) - Symbolic of the moderation Christians should have at all times.

Candle - Represents Christ as the Light of the World.

Colorful Ribbons and Sprigs of Greenery - are attached to the basket as signs of joy and new life in the season of spring and in celebration of the Resurrection.

Linen Cover - drawn over the top of the basket which is ready for the priest's visit to the home or the trip to church where it is joined with the baskets of others to await the blessing. The food is then set aside and enjoyed on Easter Sunday.

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### Dyngus

The Easter season in Poland ends on Monday when the traditional "Dyngus-Smigus" custom is observed. It is a humorous Easter time custom. The young people break the solemnity of Easter by a burst of frivolity. They visit from house to house singing songs, playing pranks and merrymaking.

After getting the girls out of their houses, the boys dowse them with water. The girls reciprocate in kind. In cities this custom is practiced with more gentility, by using a sprinkle of water or fragrant cologne. The origin of this custom is unknown. Some say it is a pagan tradition handed down from the earliest settlers in Poland. Others assert it is a reminder that the sinner has been washed clean in the blood of Christ, newly risen from the dead.