



NEWSLETTER 11/2021

EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODSHIP	2
NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NEW YEAR IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODESHIP	3
CHRISTMAS IN THE PAST IN WARMIA	4
NEW YEAR IN THE PAST IN WARMIA	5
CHRISTMAS IN MASURIA IN THE PAST	6
NEW YEAR'S EVE IN MASURIA IN THE PAST	7

EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODSHIP



arch. Hotel Krasicki****

In 1945, the German population fled the region from the approaching Soviet front. Poles from the area of Poland which before the World War II belonged to it and after World War II was annexed to Soviet Union came to live here. For this reason, after so many years since the end of the war, customs in the region have been typically Polish, not Warmian or Masurian. Christmas Eve marks the beginning of Christmas celebrations. In Polish tradition, Christmas Eve is the most solemn and moving evening of the year. Christmas Eve is celebrated when the first star appears in the sky. The most important moment of the Christmas Eve supper is the sharing of the wafer, there are usually 12 dishes. The Polish still attend midnight mass on this night. One of the youngest traditions on Christmas Eve is the decorating of the Christmas tree, with presents waiting under the tree. The singing of carols and the constructing of the nativity scenes are the most beautiful Christmas customs. Christmas is celebrated traditionally at home, but it is becoming increasingly popular to spend it in hotels, e.g. Hotel Mikolajki**** www.hotelmikolajki.pl, Hotel Krasicki**** www.hotelkrasicki.pl, Hotel Anders****, www.hotelanders.pl, GrandHotel Tiffi www.grandhotel.tiffi.com.pl, Galiny, Palace and Farm Galiny**** www.palac-galiny.pl.

NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NEW YEAR IN WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE VOIVODESHIP



arch. Hotel Krasicki****

New Year is a holiday celebrated in all cultures. It is a season of fun, whether at balls, in private homes or outdoors. It's always noisy, and at midnight everyone makes Christmas wishes. A New Year's toast is usually made with champagne. But these are the present habits. You can welcome the New Year in hotels e.g. Hotel Mikolajki***** www.hotelmikolajki.pl, Hotel Krasicki**** www.hotelkrasicki.pl, Hotel Anders****, www.hotelanders.pl, GrandHotel Tiffi www.grandhotel.tiffi.com.pl, Palace and Farm Galiny**** www.palac-galiny.pl

CHRISTMAS IN FORMER TIMES IN WARMIA



arch. Park Etnograficzny w Olsztynku

Christmas in Warmia was called the Gody. There were different customs than those we know today. There was no sumptuous dinner with twelve courses, no Christmas tree and no opening of Christmas presents from Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Eve meals were meatless and modest. The custom of breaking Christmas wafers was also unknown in Warmia until 1945. The process of decorating the Christmas tree became popular in the early 20th century. In the past, a sheaf of grain was placed in the corner of the room or branches of a pine, spruce or fir were hung. Children did not wait for Santa Claus, but for the Shemel and his entourage. As dusk fell, the procession set off for the houses. The shemel is a white horse that resembles a Cracovian lajkonik. He was accompanied by a retinue of servants dressed in white sheets, such as a chimney sweep, a woman and a goat. The shemel would come into the room with the bell-ringer, it would jump, frighten the household members, and question the children about their prayers. There was the whip cracking to bring good luck as well. Children were given candies (sweets).

NEW YEAR IN THE PAST IN WARMIA

New Year's Eve was a magical time. If there were a lot of stars in the sky that night, the hens would lay well all year round. The fortune was told from the straw which was pulled from a sheaf standing in the room - the length of the straw and the grains foretold the next year's harvest. People used to bake a cake called novolatek made of flower with juniper beer. The dough was used to make figures of farm animals, birds and ears of rye, which were supposed to herald good luck in the coming year. On New Year's Day, the farmer would give pieces of cake to the farm animals and say a spell. There was a belief that at that time the souls of the dead resided among the living, which favored all kinds of predictions. The kitchen was specially cleaned for a night because the ghosts would come to bask beneath the stove. A traditional New Year's Eve dish was breja, cooked from coarsely ground rye flour, which was poured over boiling water. Eating this dish was about to bring good harvest in the coming year. On New Year's Eve there was time for mischief, such as hiding farm equipment, moving it to some absurd place - often the roof, plugging chimneys, painting windows with water and ash. It used to be magical - symbolic stealing was supposed to ensure good fortune. Later it was done for fun.

CHRISTMAS IN MASURIA IN THE PAST



arch. Park Etnograficzny w Olsztynku

In the past, Christmas in Masuria was called the *gody*. *Gody* were preceded by the Advent season. The most important event of the Advent period was the dawn service for the *Gody*. It could have taken place at school, church or even at home. It was a typically religious performance. Children sang songs from the hymnbook. The dishes served on Christmas Eve in Masuria did not differ much from those served on a weekday. However, if the hosts could afford a more sumptuous dinner, it was then that the table was set mainly with various types of meat, especially roast goose. People had usually dinner at around 5 p.m. Sharing the wafer was not known in Masuria. It was only after the Second World War that this custom arrived in this area together with the immigrant population. The Christmas period gave also an opportunity to make predictions about the future for the coming year.

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN MASURIA IN THE PAST

The Masurians spent New Year's Eve foretelling the future. They tried to get big fish for the last supper of the year. It was believed that big fish eaten that evening would ensure good money and wealth throughout the whole year. On New Year's Eve, Masurian housewives would place a kneading trough on the straw, in which they kneaded dough for baking New Year's cakes called novolatki. They were believed to bring peace and prosperity and were given to farm animals to keep them healthy. Now all is simple - we party on New Year's Eve in hotels or at home. The champagne corks pops, we wish each other all the best. The first day of the New Year, on the other hand, no longer brings with it practically any customs. However, the former inhabitants of Masuria had a different approach to this. On New Year's Eve, the Masurians ate big fish for supper because they believed that such a meal would ensure wealth for the whole year. And on New Year's Day they would bake cakes called novolatki, which they would then keep in the house to make the household happy.