

## POLISH CUISINE

Polish cuisine has long traditions and throughout centuries has been influenced by culinary customs of different nations. This contributed to the wealth of tastes and complexity of Polish menu.

Traditional food is rich in various kinds of meat, especially pork, chicken and beef. Soups are very popular, made with vegetables, broth, beets, and many other ingredients. Vegetables are in common use, among which cabbage is probably the most famous. Polish cuisine includes different kinds of dumplings and noodles, the most notable of which are “pierogi” and “kluski”. And of course there is no need to mention the excellent bread and delicious sausages.

Polish cuisine is generally demanding in preparation. However, there are special occasions when Poles allow a lot of time to prepare traditional food and then enjoy their festive meals. For Christmas and Easter celebrations a special menu and meals are served.

The main meal of the day is generally eaten about 2 pm or in the early afternoon. Traditionally, it is composed of three courses: starting with a soup, followed by the main course usually including a serving of meat, vegetables or salads, and potatoes, rice or groats. Pastries and cakes are traditional types of dessert.

Below you can find examples of the Polish national dishes.

### Appetizers:

**Kielbasa** – Polish sausage is a very popular and well know product from Poland and comes in a wide variety of types. It is made from different meat and spices. Popular varieties include smoked and dried sausage, but there is also white sausage, and many more.

**Ogorki kiszzone** – Polish-style pickled cucumbers are commonly used as appetizers. The best ones are of course those home-made.

**Sledzie** – herring is a very popular cold appetizer. It is prepared and served in numerous ways: in vinegary marinades, in oil and onion, in sour cream, sweet, etc.

**Smalec** – lard is used as a spread on thick slices of bread. It was a typical staple in traditional rural cuisine.

**Oscypek** – smoked cheese made of salted sheep milk is a regional product. It is produced by shepherds in Polish mountains and is a must taste when you visit Tatra mountains. It is served cold or hot with cranberry.

### Soups:

**Zurek** [ˈzʊrɛk] – sour rye soup served with white sausage and boiled egg. Sometimes it is served in an edible bowl made of bread. Zurek is very nutritious and traditionally eaten at Easter.

**Barszcz biały** [barʃtʃ ˈbʲjawʲi] – white borscht is a soup closely related to zurek. It is also a bit sour and is made with wheat flour instead of rye.

**Barszcz czerwony** [barʃtʃ ʧ̑er'võni] – red borscht or beetroot soup. It usually contains beetroot, onions, garlic, and other vegetables (carrots, potatoes, celery). A vegetarian version of borscht is the first course during the Christmas Eve feast and is served with ravioli-type dumplings (“uszka”) stuffed with mushrooms.

**Chłodnik** [xwɔd'ɲik] – cold borscht is another variant of red borscht. It is also based on beets with addition of sour milk, kefir or yoghurt and is served cold in the summer.

**Rosol** [ˈrɔsɔw] – chicken broth served with fine noodles. This is one of the most popular soups in Poland, often served on family dinners and during weddings.

**Flaki** soup [ˈflaki] – spicy beef tripe soup is traditional and popular, although its name meaning “guts” in Polish may be quite off-putting. The soup is quite dense (like meat stew) and is made from a shredded beef stomach.

**Zupa grzybowa** [ˈzupa ɡʒi'bɔva] – mushroom soup cooked on meat and vegetable stock. It might include different types of mushrooms. In some regions of Poland it is served for the Christmas Eve supper.

**Zupa ogorkowa** [ˈzupa ɔgur'kɔva] – cucumber soup is a traditional and popular Polish soup. The main ingredients are sour pickled cucumbers and boiled potatoes.

**Zupa pomidorowa** [ˈzupa pɔm'ido'rɔva] – tomato soup is one of the everyday and simple soups. In Poland it is served with noodles or rice.

### Main dishes:

**Pierogi** [ˈpʲjɛrɔɟi] – dumplings stuffed with various fillings: cheese and potatoes, meat, mushroom and cabbage, sweet curd cheese, fruit, etc. They are served steaming hot boiled or fried. Pierogi are one of the best recognizable Polish food.

**Bigos** [ˈbʲigɔs] – Polish hunter’s stew is a combination of cabbage, diced sausage and various meats, dried mushrooms, onion and spices. It is usually eaten with bread or potatoes. Bigos is very traditional.

**Gołąbki** – cabbage rolls stuffed with minced meat, served in tomato sauce. Other ingredients include groats or rice, onion and spices.

**Kotlet schabowy** – Polish pork schnitzel is one of the most popular and usual dinner dishes in Poland. It is a pork cutlet in a coating, served with potatoes and vegetables.

**Kotlet mielony** – Polish ground cutlet is made of fried minced meat, usually pork. It is served with potatoes and a vegetable salad.

**Zrazy** – beef rolls made of thin seasoned slices of beef with different stuffing combinations: pickles with bacon and onion or vegetables, mushrooms, eggs and potato, etc. They are often served with buckwheat and fresh cucumber salad (“mizeria”).

**Placki ziemniaczane** – potato pancakes is a simple dish made from grated potatoes fried in fat. Usually, they are served with sugar or jam. A bigger version served with meat, beef sauce and vegetables is called “placek po zbójnicku” (brigand’s pancake)

**Kopytka** – „little hooves” dumplings are another kind of Polish dumplings. They are made from grated potatoes and flour and are served as a separate dish or a side dish.

**Karp** – fried carp is a festive fish eaten once a year during Christmas Eve feast.

**Nalesniki** – crepes or pancakes come with various fillings, from sweet to spicy.

### Desserts and sweets:

**Pączki** [ˈpɔɲt͡ʂki] – Polish donuts are one of the most typical pastries and most favorite. They are round deep-fried pieces of dough filled with jam, pudding or other sweet filling, served covered with powdered sugar, icing or bits of dried orange peel. A singular form of “pączki” is “pączek” [ˈpɔɲt͡ʂɛk]. Polish “Fat Thursday” is a day when eating donuts is a must.

**Sernik** [ˈsɛrɲik] – cheesecake with dried fruit, raisins and/or crumble topping can be made in different ways; baked in the oven or prepared without baking. It is made of sweet curd cheese; served hot or cold.

**Makowiec** [maˈkɔvʲjɛʦ] – poppy-seed cake is a roll of sweet yeast cake stuffed with minced poppy seed, sometimes with addition of raisins, almonds or walnuts, and decorated with icing. It is commonly eaten at Christmas and Easter.

**Szarlotka** – apple pie; can be served hot or cold.

**Piernik** [ˈpjɛrɲik] – gingerbread is a dark hard aromatic cake. It comes in a form of a big piece of cake or small tasty cookies.

**Sekacz** [ˈsɛkaʧ] – tree cake is a regional delicacy from Podlasie region. It owes its name to its characteristic appearance and light and dark layers resembling growth rings of a tree trunk (“sęk” means “knot” in Polish).

**Kremowka / Napoleonka** – cream pie made of two layers of puff pastry, filled with whipped cream or custard cream, and usually sprinkled with powdered sugar.

### Drinks:

**Kompot** [kɔmˈpɔt] – compote is a drink made in summer from fresh fruit and sugar. It is served cold and is a common drink during dinner in Polish homes.

**Wodka** [ˈvutka] – vodka is known as Polish national alcohol. Although its consumption has been decreasing, it is still quite popular and comes in many varieties.

**Piwo** [pʲivɔ] – beer is the most popular and favorite alcoholic drink in Poland. Brewing traditions here date back to medieval times. Nowadays, numerous local micro-breweries produce multitude of different types of beer.

**Nalewki** [na'ɛfki] – liqueurs made of fruit, spices or herbs are the stronger drinks. They have distinctive taste and are perfect aid to digestion.

**Miod pitny** [mʲjut pʲitɲi] – mead is traditional Polish alcohol produced by fermenting a solution of honey and water. It may be flavored with spices and herbs.