



The food items in the Easter basket, as well as at the Easter Sunday breakfast where the blessed food is eaten, have special significance.

Decorating the Basket

A lot of thought, time, and care is put not only into the foods that will go into the basket but also how the basket is assembled. The basket is lined with an embroidered cloth or traditional folk fabric. Once the basket is filled, it is covered with a white linen cloth (some have a colorfully crocheted edging or embroidered design) representing the shroud of Christ. The basket may then be decorated with sprigs of boxwood (buzsapan) or Polish “[palms](#)” made from dried flowers and colorful paper.

Filling the Basket

A typical Polish Easter basket would include any of these symbolic foods.

- Smoked bacon (*boczek/słonina*). Smoked bacon (*słonina*) - A symbol of the overabundance of God's mercy and generosity.
- Bread (*chleb*). Usually a braided sweet bread type, representing the staff of life given by God.
- Easter bread—*Babka*. A round loaf of rich, eggy, yeast dough with raisins topped with a cross or a fish, symbolic of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life.

- Butter (*masło*). Dairy products are included to celebrate the end of Lent and the richness of our salvation. Butter is often shaped into a lamb (symbolic of the Paschal Lamb) and known as a *baranek*. (When the *baranek* is made of sugar, it is known as *baranek cukrowy wielkanocny*.)
- Candle (*swieca*). The candle symbolizes Jesus, the "light of the world," and can be lit when the priest blesses the baskets of food.
- Cheese (*ser*). Cheese is a symbol to remind Christians of moderation.
- Colored eggs (*jajka*) and *pisanki* (pee-SAHN-kee). Both colored and uncolored hard-cooked eggs indicate hope, new life and Christ rising from his tomb.
- Ham (*szynka*). Meats are symbolic of great joy and abundance in celebration of Christ's resurrection. Some prefer lamb or veal. The lamb also reminds Christians that the Risen Christ is the "Lamb of God."
- Sausage (*kielbasa*). The sausage links are symbolic of the chains of death that were broken when Jesus rose from the dead, as well as of God's generosity.
- Horseradish (*chrzan*). This is a reminder of the bitterness and harshness of the Passion of Jesus, and the vinegar it is mixed with symbolizes the sour wine given to Jesus on the cross.
- Salt—*sól*. Salt is represented to add zest to life and preserve us from corruption.
- Sweets—*słodycze*. Sweets suggest the promise of eternal life or good things to come.
- 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.