My Polish Easter
(Wielkanoc)


Easter celebrations in my home in Australia are the same as they were when I was still living in Poland. They started on Saturday by us preparing Easter baskets, called *Święconka*. This basket included a decorated egg, pieces of bread and sausage, babka, salt and pepper, a lamb made of sugar symbolizing the Resurrection and celebration of life.

Święconka, decorated with starched white linens and greens of boxwood will be taken to church for a blessing. In Poland churches set up blessings every 15 - 60 minutes and were ready to receive hundreds and hundreds of baskets on Holy Saturday. Children enjoy this part the most, but they will have to refrain from sneaking anything out of baskets until Sunday morning.


Holy Saturday is also a day for decorating eggs (*pisanki*) and adding finishing touches to Easter dishes. We would always boil our eggs in onion peels. The eggshells would turn dark reddish-brown from the golden onion peels. We would then use a knife or a needle to scrape the colouring off. I was never good at it. But my husband is super talented and did awesome designs. The designs can be very elaborate and take immaculate precision and time to create. *Pisanki* would decorate our Easter table along with decorative palms made for Palm Sunday.

Easter Sunday breakfast starts with sharing of an egg from the blessed basket, *Święconka*. Everyone gets a small piece, and we wish each other all the best and thank God for all His blessings. Food is served and eggs are the stars of the day. We also play this “egg war” game in my family. Everyone gets a boiled egg, and we bump ends against another’s egg to see which egg is the strongest. Whoever is left with an unbroken egg win! Well, you don’t really WIN anything, but bragging rights and some satisfaction.

Many attend church and take long walks, visit friends or family gathering around the table again and again and enjoying the delights of this special holiday.

Easter Monday is called Pouring Monday – Lany Poniedziałek or Śmingus Dyngus. Tradition says that boys would throw buckets of water at girls to show their fondness towards them. Now, we just throw water at everyone. I go to bed with a full glass of water on my nightstand, so I can be ready when my grandkids sneak in with theirs to get me wet. Ideally, you're the first one to wake, so you can get everyone while they're still in bed. We're not gentle either.

I wish you a happy Easter and I hope you adopt one of my traditions into your Easter celebration.

Smacznego!

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