

MIGRANTS CHRISTMAS IN POLAND

A SURVEY | A report from the survey “Migrants – Christmas in Poland” conducted by the EWL Migration Platform, the Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market ‘EWL’ and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw.

70%

of immigrants are planning to stay in Poland for Christmas

76%

of respondents are going to celebrate Christmas in December

28%

of foreigners say they will spend Christmas in Poland with their family

11%

of immigrants in Poland will spend Christmas alone

POLISH FRIENDS

are who one in eight foreigners in Poland is planning to spend Christmas with

**470 PLN
(109 EUR)**

on average is how much immigrants are planning to spend during Christmas in Poland

DUMPLINGS WITH CABBAGE AND MUSHROOMS

is the Polish Christmas dish most liked by foreigners staying in Poland

HOPE

is the feeling that accompanies almost half of immigrants in Poland before Christmas

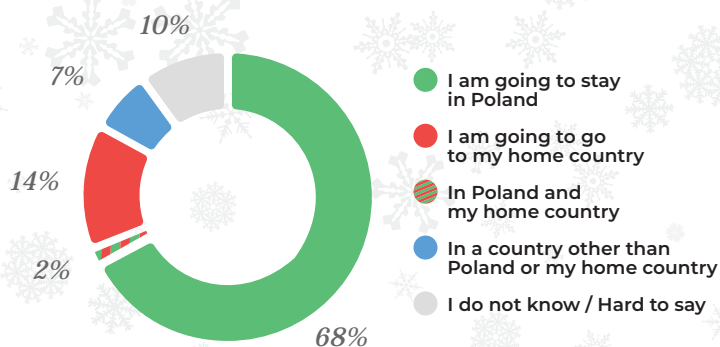
The survey with foreigners who work or study in different cities and regions of Poland was carried out using online questionnaires (CAWI) on a sample of N=506 persons, adult (18+) citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The interviews were conducted between 30 November and 11 December 2023 in Ukrainian, English and Russian. At the time of the survey the respondents were staying in Poland.

In order to comprehensively present the changes taking place in the profile of foreigners residing in Poland, current survey results were compared with those obtained in the previous edition of the Christmas survey carried out in December 2020 (N=1350).

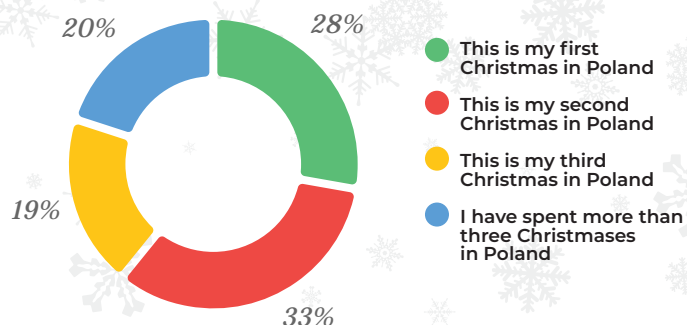
Which country do you intend to spend Christmas in this year?

N=506



Will this be your first Christmas spent in Poland? (among those planning to spend Christmas in Poland)

N=352



How are you going to spend Christmas in Poland?

(among those planning to spend Christmas in Poland, multiple responses possible)

N=352



More than two thirds of foreigners (70%) working or studying in Poland are planning to spend this year's Christmas in Poland. Only 16% of respondents declare they will return to their home country during this period, and 7% are planning to travel to other countries. In the case of Ukrainian citizens, who make up the largest group among the respondents (83%), travelling home is either impossible or difficult due to the ongoing war. In contrast, for nationals of Central, South and South-East Asian countries (7%) travelling home for Christmas is associated with high costs and long travel times.

28% of foreigners staying in Poland will celebrate Christmas in Poland for the first time. It ought to be emphasised that every third foreigner (33%) will be spending Christmas in Poland for the second time, and every fifth (19%) for the third time.

The survey showed that 28% of foreigners will spend Christmas in Poland with family members staying in our country. It is worth noting that in 2020 only 12% of immigrants declared celebrating Christmas in Poland with their family. This shows that more and more foreigners, including refugees, have moved their lives to

Poland. However, during the upcoming holidays 22% of respondents will be contacting relatives abroad by phone or via the Internet.

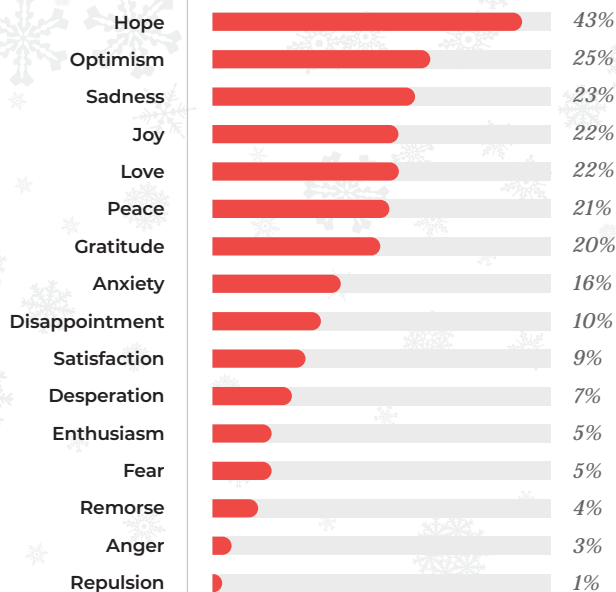
Nearly one in three foreigners staying in Poland is going to relax actively (15%) or passively (14%) over the festive period (14%), and 18% of immigrants will, as in 2020, spend the upcoming holidays with compatriots living in Poland.

It is worth noting that 12% of respondents intend to celebrate Christmas with Polish friends and acquaintances, this percentage having risen by half in the last three years (7% in 2020). There is a two-fold increase of immigrants who are planning to attend Christmas services in Poland (13% against 7% in 2020).

Only 13% of foreigners declare that they will be working during the Christmas period, which is twice as low as in 2020 (26%). However, it is worth noting that almost one in ten foreigners (11%) currently staying in Poland will spend Christmas alone. The fact that this percentage has increased almost by half (6%) is cause for concern.

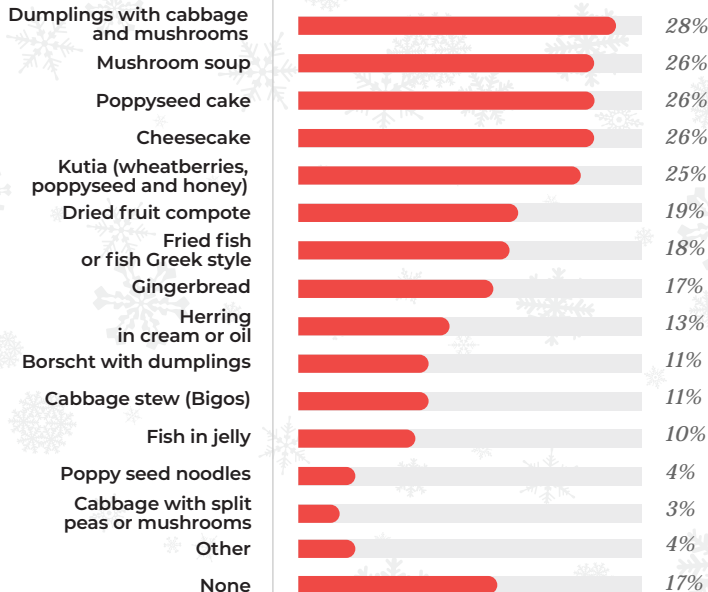
What emotions and feelings are you experiencing this year before Christmas? (multiple responses possible)

N=506



Which traditional Polish Christmas dishes do you like best? (multiple responses possible)

N=506



How much do you intend to spend on shopping (food, gifts) and travel related to Christmas? (among those planning to spend Christmas in Poland)

N=352

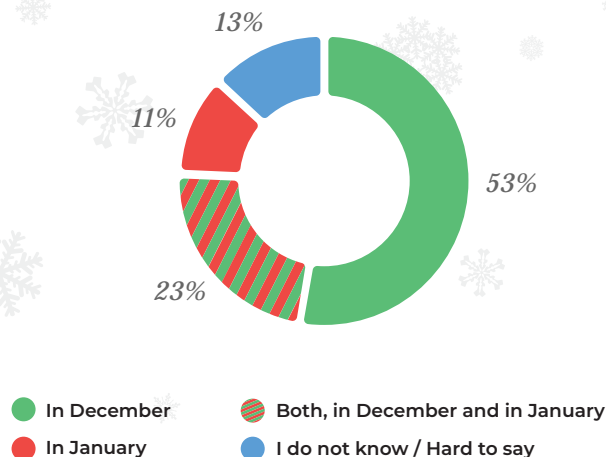


On average, immigrants are planning to spend 470 PLN (109 EUR) during Christmas in Poland.

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Are you going to celebrate Christmas this year in December or in January? (among those planning to celebrate Christmas)

N=414



More than half of the foreigners (53%) spending Christmas in Poland are going to celebrate this holiday according to the Gregorian or New Julian calendar, i.e. on 25 December. Only every tenth respondent (11%) declares to celebrate the holiday in January, according to the Julian calendar. It is worth noting that nearly one in four foreigners (23%) intends to celebrate Christmas both in December and January. This is interesting in the case of Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland (N=355), because members of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine will, from this year onwards, celebrate immovable church holidays in the same period as the Western churches. **The survey showed that 54% of Ukrainian citizens staying in Poland are going to celebrate Christmas only in December, and 10% in January. In contrast, 23% will celebrate Christmas in both December and January.**

Almost every third foreigner (30%) staying in Poland intends to spend an amount in the range of PLN 101 to PLN 500 on shopping and travelling. In turn, one in four respondents (25%) anticipates

higher expenses. Immigrants are planning to spend an average of PLN 470 in order to celebrate Christmas.

Among the favourite traditional Christmas dishes are cabbage and mushroom dumplings, indicated by as many as 28% of foreigners. In turn, 26% of those surveyed admitted that they most liked mushroom soup. In the top five most popular dishes there is also kutia (26%), which is popular in both Polish and Ukrainian cuisine, as well as cheesecake (26%) and poppy seed cake (26%). Every fifth foreigner (19%) living in Poland indicated that they liked the taste of dried fruit compote most.

In the context of emotions felt by foreigners before Christmas, hope occupies a special place, indicated by almost half of the respondents (43%). One in four respondents (25%) feels optimism. Just as often, respondents indicated joy (22%), love (22%) and peace (21%). It is worth noting that as many as 23% of foreigners admitted to feeling sadness and 16% are reporting feeling anxious.



Andrzej Korkus
EWL Group CEO,
Chairman of the EWL Foundation

At this special time, we turn our gaze towards those who find themselves far from home, seeking security, peace and new opportunities in our country. Foreigners, who make up 6.5% of the total workforce in Poland, have been contributing to the development of our economy for years. We are happy therefore that the percentage of immigrants spending their Christmas holidays in Poland with Polish friends and acquaintances has almost doubled – 12% compared to 7.4% in 2020. However, as our research carried out jointly with the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw shows, the percentage of immigrants spending the festive period alone has also doubled – 11% vs. 5.8% in 2020.

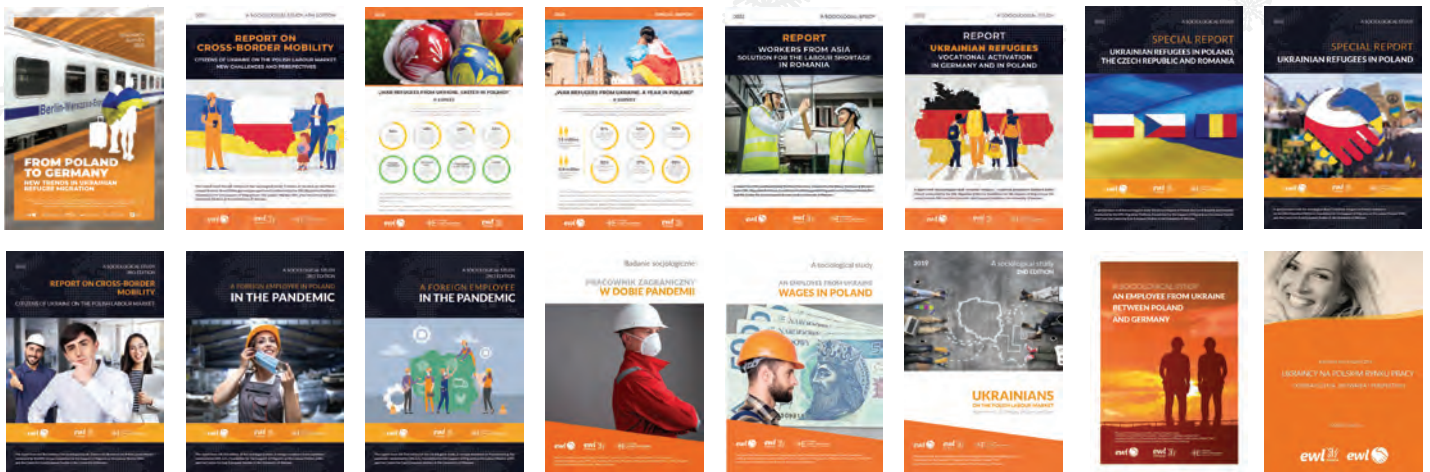
As in previous years, we are addressing all employers who employ cross-border workers to remember about those for whom the coming holidays will be marked not only by hope, but also sadness at being separated from their loved ones or longing for their homeland. At the same time, we thank the employers for respecting the Christmas calendars of all the cross-border employees, who form multicultural teams in the growing number of Polish enterprises. I hope that this year's Christmas meeting, regardless of our background or worldview, will be an opportunity for us all to have inspiring and important discussions, which foster the creation of a strong and united community.



Jan Malicki, Dr H.C.
Director of the Centre for East European
Studies at the University of Warsaw

The tradition of sharing the wafer on Christmas Eve has deep Christian roots and a universal, all-human message that symbolises unity, peace and love for one's neighbour. In recent years this image has taken on a new dimension in the face of the growing number of migrants who have been part of Polish society for years. Research carried out with EWL has shown that more than two-thirds of them will spend the coming Christmas in Poland once again. However, only 12% of migrants will spend this Christmas Eve with Polish friends. This is a figure that makes us reflect on how we can better integrate with people from other countries and cultures in our society.

Inviting our brothers to celebrate together may be a small step, but it is a fundamental step on the path to openness and mutual understanding. This makes it all the more welcome that more than 75% of migrants residing in Poland will celebrate Christmas in our country in December, according to the Gregorian or New Julian calendar. May the coming days be a time of dialogue and unity for all the inhabitants of Poland at the common Christmas table, regardless of nationality or religion.



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AUTHORS:

Anatolij Zymnin (project leader), Mariusz Kowalski PhD (social geographer, content-related supervision), Sylwia Kowcuń, Szymon Bryzek, Margaryta Sytnik, Andrzej Engelmayer, Anna Yenina, Eliza Dąbrowska, Tomasz Malinowski, Adam Cichoń (graphic design)

SPECIAL REPORT “Migrants – Christmas in Poland”.

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