

Wedding Traditions



Differences bring Us together



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1. Wedding traditions in Poland

Old customs

In the old days, marriages were sometimes contracted while the couple was very young. Swaty – zrękowiny – it is an old Polish custom where the boy's parents choose a certain girl to marry their son. They meet the girl's parents, and if the latter agreed, the boy's parents brought him to the girl's home so that they could meet.

The bride's house was painted with lime and sometimes parents were hanging wreaths and wagon wheels to decorate the house. In the noble's houses there were „Kilimy” – rugs and „Kobierzec” – a kind of carpets.

If the reply was positive the boy and girl's parents were dealing with the organisation of the wedding whereas the reply was negative the girl's parents were given „czarna polewka” – it is kind of soup which was made from animals' blood. In the area around Rzeszów Watermelon was a symbol of negative reply.

In the XVII century the nobles and gentry were given a signet ring for bride as a symbol of engagement.

Present wedding in Poland



Since 1993 when the concordat came into life, which was established between the Apostolic Capital City and Poland, that is from 25th April 1998 in Poland. There are three acceptable types of marriage ceremonies in Poland:

Civil ceremony – the marriage is taken in the presence of the authorized employee of an office of the marital status, after filing the declaration of intent on entering the state of marriage.

Church ceremony – it is contained in the church in the presence of the priest not registered with the registry office, according to the Polish law the couple is not in the state of marriage.

Concordat marriage – 70% of marriages of that kind taken in Poland. It is both civil and church ceremony and takes place in a church.

The marriage vows in Poland take two single persons of opposite sex. Striking the relationship up is possible in case of persons who are eighteen years old. According to the Polish law, the couple cannot get marry, if related, adopted, incapacitated, or feeble-minded persons of the same sex.

The solemnization of a marriage requires the participation of two witnesses and after the vows an act of the solemnization of a marriage is received.

Traditionally the marriage ceremony mainly takes place in the parish of a bride. In



final years, pairs are diverging from practicing this custom and are deciding to set the ceremony up in the parish of the bridegroom, or in other, e.g. in the parish which the engaged couple attended while studying.

Preparations for the concordat marriage have to start no later than six months before the ceremony.

Documents required are: the

baptism certificate, the certificate of confirmation and identity cards of fiancées. Also the certificate of premarital course and compulsory meetings at the family clinic, as well as the document confirming there are no legal contraindication of the couple to marry.

The marriage ceremony has very ceremonial character. A bride according to custom is dressed in a white long dress and the veil, and the bridegroom is dressed in the suit. Right behind the happy couple a couple of witnesses is in a church which with one's signatures are confirming the fact of entering into marriage. After the solemn homily young fiancés are taking an oath for themselves, answering questions of the priest. They are putting rings on for themselves mutually in token of the conclusion of the marriage contract.

According to the old tradition, a groom arrives with his parents at the house of a bride



just before the wedding ceremony. At that time, both parents and parents-in-law give their blessing to the couple. They enter the church together and walk up to the altar followed by two witnesses and the

parents. In Poland, it is quite unusual for the bride to be walked down the aisle or to have bridesmaids and groomsmen in a wedding. The couple is assisted by two witnesses, a man (usually grooms' side) and a woman (usually brides' side) who are either family members or close friends.

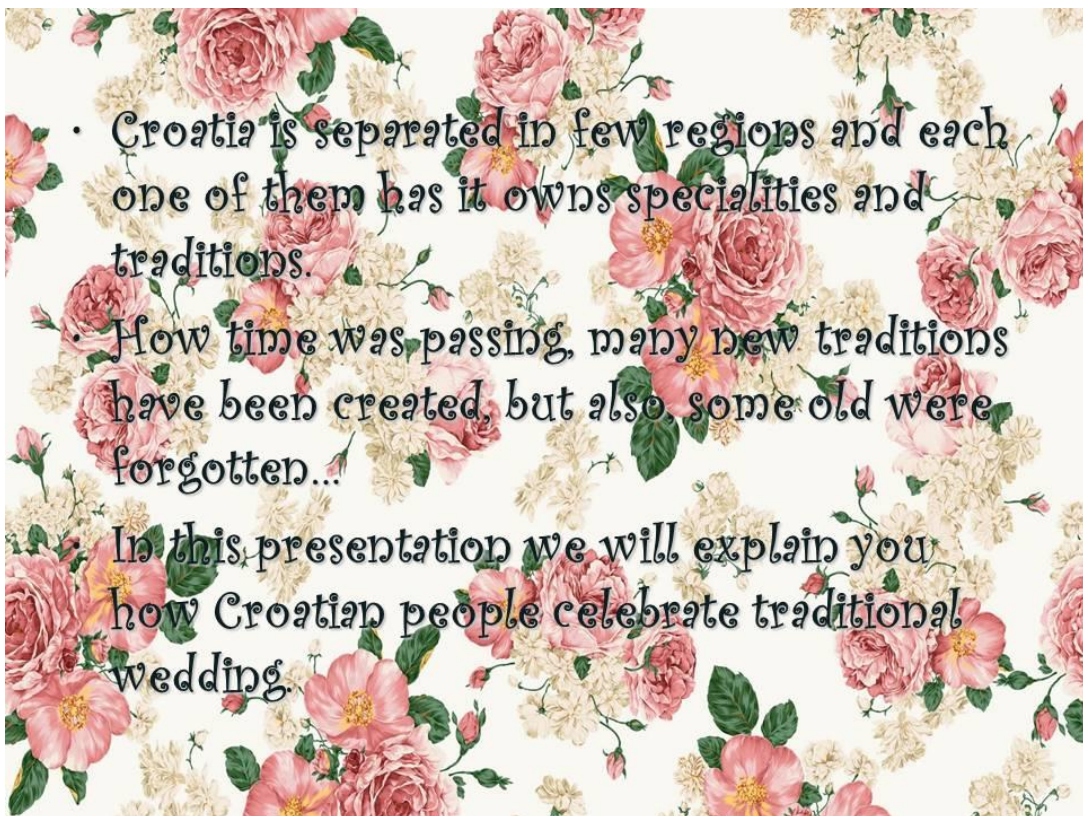
The Polish bride traditionally wears a white dress and a veil. The groom, on the other hand, usually wears a fitted suit with a bow tie and a boutonnière that matches the brides' bouquet. During the ceremony, wedding rings are exchanged and both the husband and wife wear them on their right hand. Right after the ceremony, the closest family and all the guest form a line in the front of the church to congratulate the newlyweds and wish them love and happiness. As soon as the married couple leave the church they get showered with rice for luck or guests drop coins at their feet for them to pick up. This is done to ensure a good and prosperous future for the newlyweds.



The married couple is welcomed at the reception place by the parents with bread and salt. The bread symbolizes the prosperity, salt stands for hardship of life, the parents wish the young couple that they never go hungry and learn how to deal with every day hardships together. The wedding party lasts (and the bride and groom remain) until the last guest leaves, usually until morning.



2. Wedding traditions in Croatia





Traditional way

Now we will explain and talk about some basic traditions.

1. The whole ceremony starts when bride's and groom's guests start to gather in their houses. After the gathering, all guests attend lunch.

2. After lunch groom and his guests go to pick up bride and ask her parents for blessing.



3. When parents give their blessings, guests and newlyweds go to the church and they exchange vows and rings.

4. In our traditional weddings there is always someone who is in charge for organization and we call him 'chajo'.

5. After the holy ceremony in the church, all guests go to the restaurant and celebrate with bride and groom.



Other traditions

Trowing apples over the house - symbolizes prosperity and blessing of the house in which the bride will enter .

Throwing the bouquet - a bouquet is thrown to unmarried girls , and one who catch the bouquet will be married next.



How was it in the past?

- In the past weddings were much poorer and simpler.*
- In most of the cases parents arranged marriages and weddings even though future bride and groom didn't want it*
- There were also some cases where girl was sold into the house of the groom , and sometimes have even been kidnapped .*

Then...



Now...



Then...



Now...

Then...



Now...



Then...



Now...



3. Wedding traditions in Greece

TRADITIONAL GREEK WEDDING CUSTOMS

THE ENGAGEMENT

A Greek couple becomes **engaged** by exchanging rings in the presence of family and friends. After the engagement there is always a feast. This ceremony is considered as binding as the wedding.

THE PREPARATION OF THE BED



THE PREPARATION OF THE BED

A favourite tradition is the **preparation of the matrimonial bed**, where relatives throw money, and the **baby-rolling ceremony**, to symbolise fertility. Babies of friends and family are placed on the mattress and gently rolled from side to side. The bed is also strewn with rose petals, coins and sugar-coated almonds (called **koufetta**) to bring fertility and prosperity to the couple.

THE WEDDING PROCESSION

As the couple dress for the ceremony, they may be serenaded with traditional songs. There is also dancing until it's time for the wedding procession to begin.



KOUFETTA



THE WEDDING PROCESSION

The **wedding procession** is begun at the groom's house where in some villages the wedding flag is raised. Then the flag bearer leads the group proceeds to the bride's home where the bride's mother greets the groom.

The bride is often accompanied to the church by musicians and friends.

The groom may present his bride with her bouquet at the church.

THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONY AT THE CHURCH

Greek Orthodox weddings are on Sunday. They aren't performed after Easter and Christmas, during periods of fasting and the day preceding a Holy Day.

Vows aren't exchanged because marriage is considered a union between two people in love, not a contractual agreement.

The ceremony in Greek Orthodox weddings is divided into two parts: the Betrothal and the Crowning.

The **Betrothal** Service consists of blessing the rings over the heads of the bride and groom. Then they are exchanged three times by their **Koumbaros** or **best man**.

The **Crowning** is the main part of the ceremony where the couple is crowned by garland wreaths, vines wrapped in silver or gold paper or even crowns made of semi-precious stones and metals. A white ribbon symbolising unity joins the crowns. The **crowns (stefana)** are packed in a special box after the ceremony. By ancient custom they are to stay with the couple for life - some couples are even buried in them.



THE CROWNS

The couple take three sips of wine and circle the altar three times while the guests throw rice.



Charms (traditionally in the form of a small eye) are worn by the attendants to protect the bridal party from bad luck.

Wedding bands are traditionally worn on the right hand, not the left.



The bride may throw a pomegranate for luck instead of the bouquet. The many seeds symbolise fertility because of all the seeds.

After the ceremony, the group heads to the groom's house where the flag is once again raised. The bride throws a piece of old iron to the roof to symbolise the strength of her new home.

In some of the Greek islands, the wedding ceremony will end with honey and walnuts offered to the bride and groom from silver spoons. Walnuts are chosen because they break into four parts, symbolizing the bride, groom and the two sets of family.

THE KOUFETTA AND BONBONIERES

In traditional Greek weddings, **koufetta** are placed in odd numbers in little bags. The fresh almonds have a bittersweet taste, representative of life. The sugar coating is added with the hope that the life of the newlyweds has more



sweetness than bitterness. The odd number is indivisible, symbolizing how the husband and wife will share everything and remain undivided. The **koufetta** are also carried to guests on a silver tray. The belief holds that if an unmarried woman takes them off the tray and puts them under her pillow, she will dream of the man she'll marry that night.

KARAGOUNIKOS WEDDING



Karagounides are groups residing in the plains of Thessalia. They are also spotted in other areas such as Epirus and Akarnania. Their name derives from the word Kara –which means black= and the second part of the word means either soil or Greek or fur.

THE CUSTOMS

The couple notify their groomsmen, their godfathers and their relatives for the wedding. The groomsmen wear their best-looking clothes, hold a crook and go from house to house to invite people to the wedding.

THE DOWRY

The bride's dowry is almost ready to be carried at her new house. The bride's dowry is carried in a wagon with two horses adorned with scarves and bells. The bride's friends refuse to deliver the dowry unless they are given a good tip .

THE COSTUMES

groom: kilt and tsarouhia (in the past)

bride: complicated clothing (she gets dressed with the help of other women)

THE WEDDING FEAST

The party starts on Saturday from the bridegroom's homes with songs and dances and the preparations of the wedding table. On Saturday morning, they slaughter lambs and prepare pligouri for the evening meal. The groom's godfather is the first who tastes the food at the wedding table, he gives the cook a tip and he signals the guests to start eating. The marriage is on Sunday. After the wedding ceremony, the feast continues at the couple's home.

4. Wedding traditions in Turkey

MARRIAGE



Marriage is an Association which exists since the earliest times of history and has great importance on life of human. Marriage as a term is a continuous union of a man and a woman as husband and wife under all kinds of conditions of life. That family is the foundation of the social structure has attached the event of marriage ensuring this unity a universal character. The event of marriage which has been realised in everywhere of the World in accordance with certain rules and patterns each phase of them envisaged by the type of culture to which its bound has been showing a rich table particularly in terms of celebration, customs, common usage and tradition.

It is necessary that a number of preparations and phases have to be performed and followed up in order to realise the marriage. Phases of marriage incorporate also religious and superstitious practices. At each phase implementation of rich accepted practices, customs, common usage and traditions has become obligatory, almost they became rules and principles which manage and direct the marriage. Each and every society, in compliance with certain rules and patterns conforming to their pattern of culture, has been executing the event of marriage. Phases of marriage complete with distinct and very rich customs in every region, province and even in every village of Turkey will be tried to be described by generalising them in chief points.



Kinds of Marriage:

Formerly in Turkey marriage within relatives was common. Today such kind of marriages have not been practised so much due to impact of urbanisation.

Another kind of marriage is that in case of death of a brother, marriage of a single or widower brother in law with widow sister-in law. (Levirat) In preference of such kind of marriage the purpose is not to allow properties go out after death of brother as well as situation of children. Similarly it is also

possible when sister dies sister-in law takes the place of her sister (Sororat).



Another type of marriage is “taygeldi” marriage. In this marriage while widow can marry widower, marriage of sons and daughters with one another is also possible.

Types of marriage through kidnapping a girl have been taking an important place. It is possible that girl and boy run away on mutual agreement in addition to a girl is kidnapped by force. In some regions, there is also a type of kidnapping girl and marriage called custom of “oturakalma”. In this type of marriage girl goes home of the man that she loves and settles there.

Another type of marriage which was often practised in the past is “beşik kertme”. While children were yet in their cradle their engagement was made. In the past rejection of marriage by girl and boy when they reach their age of marriage put the family in difficult situation and caused experience of bloody events. This type of marriage has not been often practised today.

Another kind of marriage experienced in Turkey is marriage of “iç güveysi”. In this marriage man settles in the home where woman lives.

Usually in case of inability to pay the necessary amount of money for the girl and absence of a son on the part of the family of woman to perform their works this type of marriage is preferred.

In another type of marriage called “Berder” or “değiş-tokuş, değişik” (exchange, changing) a family with daughter and son gives and takes girl to/from



another family who has son and daughter. Such kind of marriages release the obligation to pay money to the bride's family (Başlık).



Another type of marriage procedure is however marriage of a girl whose marriage age expired with a widower. It is also possible that a single man who was unable to marry because of various reasons may marry a widow.

According to Turkish traditions marriage between foster brothers and foster sisters is not possible. Children who suck breasts of mothers of one another are considered as brother and sister according to the religion.

In some regions marriage with more than one wife at the same time (polygamy) has been also practised. That wife unable to have a baby or she is invalid, sick is the cause for such kind of marriage. In this case solemnised marriage is on the first wife and children from the other wife is registered on the first wife.



Age of Marriage:

Although age of marriage varies according to regions today in areas where traditions are observed same has been varying between age of 17-22 for men, in some places it has been sought that men should complete their military service, and in some places however it becomes important for men to marry before their performance of military service. Similarly in the traditional section girls marry between 17-20, age difference between women and men varies between 4-5 years. Keeping the order of sequence in marriages has been still effective in some regions.



In an attempt for marriage society did not entitle women and men the same right. Man and his family takes initiative in this situation, but woman and her family remain passive. The first step comes from man and his family.

Act of go-between (Görücülük), To Ask a Girl's Hand in Marriage:

In the traditional section marriage process starts with seeing and looking for a girl. Families who want to marry their sons begins looking for girl firstly starting from their relatives,



neighbours, close friends. In this matter their neighbours and relatives also help them in their effort.

In great cities of Turkey where cultural changes are more effective marriages through directly meeting and agreement have been gradually spreading; and “Görücülük” has been still the main type of marriages which are witnessed at places where traditional procedure is more effective. “Görücülük” is that several women elected among members of family of the man wants to marry, relatives and neighbours pay a visit to the home of the girl who was formerly proposed by relatives and examine the girl closely and reveal their intention. This procedure is called “seeing a girl, to send woman to see girl, woman sent out to inquire about a prospective bride” (“kız bakma”, “görücü çıkma”, “dünür gezme” in



Turkish). After their affirmative judgement about the girl time is granted to the prospective bride’s family both for their thinking and gathering information about the prospective bridegroom. As the result of affirmative agreement by both parties task of such persons come to end. Inasmuch as the fact that the work of seeing prospective bride is done by women in the process of asking the girl’s hand in marriage assume the duty as well.

In the process of asking the girl’s hand in marriage care is taken to include among those who will visit the prospective bride’s family such respectful persons who could not be refused by the bride’s family, together with close relatives of the prospective bridegroom’s family. Because the prospective bride’s family is reluctant, visit for asking the prospective girl’s hand in marriage is repeated several times.

Agreement to Marry:

Agreement to marry (söz kesimi) follows the process of asking the prospective bride’s hand in marriage. Both families who reached an agreement by way of “Dünürçülük” (women sent out to inquire about a prospective bride) agree on marriage before crowded guests, which is called “Söz Kesme” (agreement to marry). Engagement is completed by attaching a ring



and an embroidered kerchief bought by the prospective bridegroom’s family. In some regions “Söz kesimi” is also called small engagement ceremony. Sweet dessert (ağız tatlılığı) brought by prospective bridegroom’s family is distributed to guests immediately after agreement by both parties to marry their children. Even today in some regions the prospective bridegroom is not present at the time of this ceremony. According to the attitude of the



prospective bride's father the bridegroom who is present in the bride's home and the prospective bride both kiss hand of guests. Thus ceremony held for agreement to marry is completed.

In this meeting jewellery to be bought for the bride and amount of money to be paid to the bride's family or amount of money to be paid for the bride's mother are decided in an agreement. Today, in various regions the tradition for receiving money from father of bridegroom has ceased to exist, but instead of it a certain amount of money changing according to poorness or richness of the family, which is given to the bride's mother as called "mother's share" has been given.

Engagement

The step coming after the ceremony for agreement to marry is engagement. Engagement ceremony is held in the bride's home. Costs of engagement in some regions are borne by the bridegroom's family.

After designating the date for engagement ceremony an invitation called "invitation to neighbours" is made. Guests who gather together on the day of engagement in the bridegroom's home go to the bride's home. In the traditional sections of the community women and men separately sit in the bride's home, and after having lunch jewellery called "takı" is given to the bride who dressed in special dress for engagement ceremony by her mother-in law and relatives of the bridegroom. In some areas the bridegroom does not come to the bride's home. In this case engagement ring is worn by the bride via a woman coming from the bridegroom's home. In an engagement ceremony where the bridegroom is present rings worn by the bride and bridegroom are placed by an old man on ring fingers of their right hand with accompaniment of standard words and wishes.



It is known that residence of towns rich and susceptible cultural changes rent wedding hall for engagement ceremony and women and men sit together during celebration of engagement. In cities however this celebration is performed more freely.

No definite rule is imposed for period of engagement. This period depends upon agreement of both sides. While it is considered natural that engaged couples may meet each other in cities, in districts

preserving traditional proceedings such meetings are allowed only through permission of members of the family or some one may accompany them. In case of breaking off an engagement it has not been so easy for girl and man to marry others in the same area. If the party who broke off the engagement is the girl all jewellery given as wedding present must be returned back. If the man's family break off the engagement nothing is returned.



Wedding:

Wedding ceremonies are generally start on Tuesday and end on Thursday, or start on Friday and end on Sunday. Costs and expenses of wedding are met by the bridegroom's family. Despite differences in accordance with various locations wedding may be classified mainly as planting a flag, women's entertainment of the night next before the wedding day the bride's fingers freshly tinged with henna (Kına Gecesi), fetching the bride, bride's veil.



Before the wedding as is done in the course of engagement ceremony invitation is distributed and everybody is invited for the wedding. While the bride's family tries to complete preparations for trousseau, the bridegroom's family tries to complete articles which required to be bought for the bride and which have been previously determined.

A wedding flag is planted by men coming from the noon prayer and friends of bridegroom at the bridegroom's home. At some regions such things as apple, onion, mirror, etc. are placed on top of the flag. Thus the wedding gets started.

Night Next Before The Wedding Day, A Women's Entertainment Where Bride's Fingers Are Freshly Tinged With Henna (Kına Gecesi):

This night in which the bride will be together with her family, relatives and friends all of which are women is just before the day of fetching bride as known the main wedding day. This night which is called "Kına Gecesi" is celebrated in the bride's home. The bridegroom's family and other guests are met and hosted in the bride's home.

Usually dry henna brought by the bridegroom's family is broken to pieces in a silver or copper vessel by a woman



whose father and mother alive, not experienced any separation. After preparing the bride, veil ornamented with red flake is placed over her head, and she is brought into the middle with accompaniment of hymn, folk songs about henna. Hands and feet of the bride are dyed with henna. The bridegroom's side is under the obligation to put money in the hand of the bride. Dying ceremony of henna is different according to regions. The henna so dyed has such names and types as "iplik kınası" (henna for yarn), "sıvama" (smearing), "kuşgözü" (bird eye).

After leaving woman who came together for dying henna close friend of the bride remain with her and enjoy themselves till morning.



In some of our regions henna dying ceremony for bridegroom is also held in the bridegroom's home.

Process To Fetch The Bride (Gelin Alma):

This day is named as "Gelin Alma" (to fetch the bride), "kız alma" (to fetch girl), "gelin götürme" (to carry the bride), etc. Everybody is invited to fetch the bride. Guests go to fetch the bride on foot if not far, or by cars if too far to go. In some regions the bridegroom has not been allowed to accompany the bridal procession. Wedding flag, drum-pipe is included in the bridal procession. In some regions the bride is prepared by elderly women (yenge) who help and attend the bride, but today generally in hair dresser, and then she is taken by those who came from the bridegroom's side.

"Maidenhood Belt" (Bekaret kuşağı) is tied around the Bride's waist by her brother or her close relative and then the bride says good-bye to those who stay in home. The bridegroom's family, having paid money for chest and money for door, causes the bride to get into the car.



After travelling around the village with the accompaniment of drum-pipe the wedding procession arrives in the home of the bridegroom. Mother-in law gives a gift to the bride when she comes in front of the door. After sequence of implementations believed to affect humour of the bride, the bride in the bridegroom's arm is taken inside. After a while the bridegroom is taken out by his friends to bring him back at night. After bridegroom's shaving, bath and dressing ceremonies the bridegroom is taken to the mosque for prayer at night (Yatsı Namazı) and then he is brought back home with ceremony. Religious marriage ceremony is performed for the bride and the bridegroom who is brought with accompaniment of hodja (preacher). Upon performance



of this celebration which confirms the marriage the bridegroom is allowed to enter the nuptial chamber.

Nuptial Chamber (Gerdek)

An elder woman in the nuptial chamber causes the couple to hold each other's hand. The bridegroom performs his ritual prayer, and then opens the bride's face after giving her present to see her unveiled face. They eat the meal offered by the bride's family.

In traditional communities virginity is extremely important. A certain mark is sought. Absence of such mark is the cause for the bride to be sent back. The elder woman who comes to make the bed receives the money left by the bridegroom.

In some regions in the morning of the night of the nuptial chamber the bride is elaborately dressed and a ceremony is held with participation of women only. This is called "duvak" (veil), "gelin ertesi" (after the day of bride), "gelin sabahı" (morning of the bride). In this ceremony the bride is caused to dance, her sheet is showed to those who are present. This is a tradition which has been no longer practised in some regions today.



5. Wedding traditions in Spain

How do we celebrate weddings.



In Spain, we celebrate weddings in different ways. There are Civil weddings, gay weddings, non- married couples, and Religious weddings.

About Civil Ceremony, more and more people decide to celebrate this types of weddings. It takes place at the Town Hall.

Non- married couples, a lot of couples prefer to life together without being officially married. They have their rights

and they can be separated in their future if they have problems and it is easy.

Gay marriages, in our country same sex marriages are allowed since 2005.

Religious weddings, in our country, most of them are Catholic, the bride is wearing a white dress and the groom is





wearing a suit. They exchange rings, and people throw rice when the ceremony finish. At the end of the ceremony they go for a party.

Students have been doing power points and many workshops about our weddings. Everything is our school blog for Comenius.

<http://comeniusginer1314.blogspot.com.es/>