



## EASTER EGGS

Easter eggs are colored during Holy Week. Though their origin lies in pre-Christian times, the Church Christianized them, making them symbols of the Resurrection. The ancient writers, Pliny and Ovid, were familiar with them. The two most prominent types of Easter eggs are pisanki and kraszanki. Pisanki designs are "written" on an egg with a hot stylus dipped in wax. As the designs are written on the egg, it is next plunged into successive layers of dye. At the end of the process, the wax is melted off the egg, revealing a rich array of folk motifs. Pisanki are not eaten but used as talismans, also conveying specific wishes by way of the ancient symbols written on them. Kraszanki, on the other hand, are dyed a single color, often red, and are edible.

There is an old Polish-Slavic legend which explains the origin of Easter eggs. It is said that a man on his way to market to sell eggs, left his basket in order to help Christ bear his cross. Upon returning, he found that his eggs had been miraculously transformed into beautiful, colored Easter eggs, which fetched a much higher price than the plain white eggs that he had started out with.

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*"The pisanki derive from an ancient tradition when eggs, the symbol of life, were endowed with magical properties and were thought to ensure both a plentiful harvest and good health. The name Pisanki comes from the Polish word "pisac", which means to write.*

*The practice of coloring Easter eggs is very much alive in Poland today as well as enjoyed by Polish people all over the world. There are several techniques for making pisanki including the use of wax flowing from a pipe or funnel, producing richly ornamented designs or the etching of designs onto a previously colored egg. The geometric and floral patterns or the animal and human images produced reveal a high level of craftsmanship and artistry.*

*These eggs are exchanged among friends and relatives with good wishes. Many American Poles design eggs with the names of their friends written on them. They exchange these decorated eggs with each other during their Easter visitations along with their good wishes."*

Source: <http://www.polishamericancenter.org/Pisanki.htm>