

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape in the Świętokrzyski region. The scene shows a patchwork of green and brown fields, interspersed with clusters of white and grey houses. The terrain is hilly, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic. The text is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font with a black outline.

# CULTURE OF ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI REGION

„ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE VOIVODESHIP  
IS THE PLACE WHERE THE HISTORY  
AND THE PRESENT DAY ARE COMBINED”

# FOLK CULTURE

The inhabitants of świętokrzyski region are said to be attached deeply to traditions. Folk culture is represented by activity of numerous artistic groups, involving children's, youth's as well as adults' groups . There are over 100 such groups, among others, folk groups of housewives are in large numbers. They carry on old traditions, customs and folk culture.



- The main areas of folk activity are:
- ❖ Customs and folk rituals
  - ❖ Folk literature
  - ❖ Song and dance groups
  - ❖ Folk pottery
  - ❖ Artistic blacksmiths' works
  - ❖ Paper cutout

# TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE OF THE REGION

In the culture of our region music, songs and dances have been very important for ages, as they have accompanied people in all most important moments in their lives. They were connected with various celebrations, rituals, customs as well as with free time and entertainment. There are a lot of folk groups in our region nowadays.



The main musical instruments used by folk groups in Świętokrzyski Region are the violin and basses. Nowadays they use very often drums with cymbals, so called "brzękadła". In the time between wars, harmoniums were used too, however, over time, they were replaced by accordions, while small drums were replaced by big drum with cymbals or triangle, called „baraban”. Later, another instruments were introduced, for example, wind instruments such as: clarinet, trumpet and saxophone.

# FOLK DANCES



Polish folk dances tend to be lively, energetic and joyful. Hops, twirls and acrobatic movements are very common. In Świętokrzyski region very popular were so called "chodzone" (walking) dances like: The Mazurka, The Oberek, The Kujawiak, The Oberek and The Krzyżak. They were danced in a quick pace, with a flourish but steady movements at the same time.

The exception was polka „trzęsiona”, where stamping feet, clinking ornaments hanging at the belts of dancers, were very important.

There are many local dances, that are typical of one region such as: skalmierzak, wiśliczak, księżak or kopieniak. During weddings, The Polonaise (Polish polonez or chodzony) was danced.

At first it started as a slow dance, then every minute it became faster and faster turning into The obertas or The krakowiak.

# FOLK SONGS

Very important element of folk culture of the region are various folk songs. They differ, depending on the occasion they are sung. Some of them were lively, some were sad. Among others, you can find satirical songs, romantic, amorous, ballads and historical ones. They accompanied people in different moments of their lives like: weddings, festivals, on the way to church as well as during household activities such as spinning wooll, tearing feathers or while having fun. Very often farmers sang special songs when they were working in the fields in spring or in autumn.



# TRADITIONAL FOLK CLOTHING OF THE ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI REGION

Poland is a land with a rich and diverse folklore. There are many regions in the country, each with their own traditions, dances, songs and costumes. Even in our Świętokrzyski region folk costumes differ, depending on the part of the region.



Costumes from Kielce



Our students in folk costumes



Costumes from Opoczno

# WOMAN'S FOLK COSTUME

Woman's costume consisted of a skirt, apron, a blouse, a jacket, a wrap and high-heeled, laced shoes. Aprons were made of wollen cloth with red and black stripes. Świętokrzyskie skirts were usually made of dark blue or black fabric. Blouses made of linen, have embroidery on the collars and cuffs. . An additional element of woman's clothing was a jacket. Women who were married sometimes wore special caps on their heads covered by embroidered wraps. Girls wore skirts made of dark red, green, dark blue or patterned cloth. On special occasions they put on embroidered aprons. Girls' vests, worn on special occasion were made of turquoise wooll, at the bottom decorated with so-called „baskinką”, the front and the back of the vest were embroidered with threads, sequins and trimmed with colourful ribbons(tapes). On special occasions, girls laced-up shoes with red tapes and put on their heads embroidered wraps with fringes. They also wore glass or coral beads. In many regions of Poland women and men still wear traditional folk costumes on church holidays, harvest festivals, village feasts, weddings or other folklore events.



apron



vest from Kielce



woman's  
blouse



vest from  
the Świętokrzyskie  
Mountains



skirt

# MAN'S FOLK COSTUME



Man's folk costume of Świetokrzyski region consisted of the overcoat, mostly made of brown cloth. The turnup collar, lapels, cuffs and the bottom of the overcoat were decorated with colourful strings and embroidery. Everyday men's shirts were made of linen without any decorations, and pants were linen too, while on special occasions shirts' collars, cuffs as well as the front of the shirt were embroidered and pants were made of woolen fabric.

In winter richer farmers wore caps made of dark blue cloth, decorated with black fur. In summer peasants wore straw hats. Another important element of a man's folk costume were boots. Costumes worn by young men were more colourful, in bright colours and rich in embroidery. Caps were decorated with peacock" feathers, while straw hats with colourful ribbons. They didn't wear overcoats, with the exception of a wedding.

# FOLK CULTURE IN THE REGION

„LIVING” MANIFESTATIONS OF FOLK CULTURE IN THE REGION ARE CHURCH FETES AND FAIRS (Witkowska Góra, Mięchocice, Bieliny, Dębno).



ALTHOUGH, IT IS VERY RARE, EVEN NOWADAYS YOU CAN MEET AT THE MARKET OLDER WOMEN WEARING APRONS (ZAPASKI). IT IS THE ONLY ELEMENT OF ŚWIETOKRZYSKI FOLK COSTUME FROM THE END OF XIX CENTURY.



The Kielce Culture Center occupies a highly valuable position in preserving and promoting regional folk culture and traditions thanks to the organization of a great number of events such as:

❖ International meetings with folklore.

Concerts of carols and christmas songs

❖ It's very important activity of the center as lively folk culture adds to the attraction of the region



**Kolędnicy – in Polish christmas traditions, young people dressed in special costumes go from house to house singing christmas carols and wishing Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**



# TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS

## CERAMICS

Świętokrzyski region has been famous for a long time as a center of folk ceramics. Some time ago it was very important area of folk art but nowadays only a few centres run pottery workshops.



## PAPER CUTOUT

Blotting paper flowers, wraths, and other ornaments were used as decorations of houses, roadside shrines, chapels and altars.



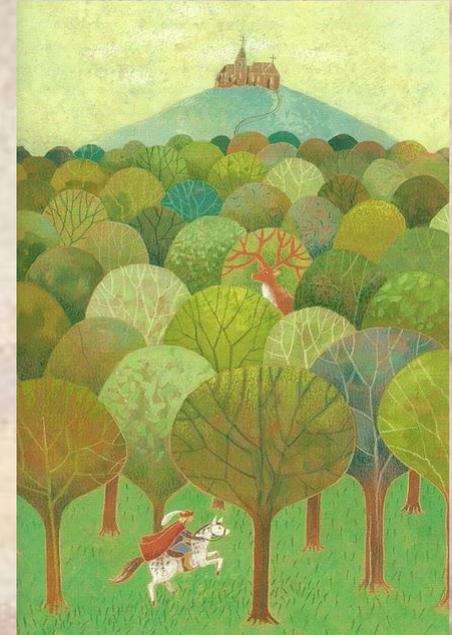


### **BLACKSMITH'S ART**

**Our region abounds in folk art and handicrafts that have endured for many years. Blacksmiths make hand-decorated tools like axes, bars, metal elements to chests and carts.**

### **FOLK LITERATURE**

**Poets and writers are often inspired by beautiful landscape, legends and folk stories and use them as the motif for their work.**



### **SPINNING**

**A VERY POPULAR AREA OF HANDICRAFTS USING TRADITIONAL ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI MOTIF (BLACK AND RED STRIPES), HAS ENDURED SO FAR.**

# FOLKLORE IN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE



Folk painters paint mainly on paper using aqua paints or dye. The main subject of sculptures and paintings on finest folk art is religious art, showing different scenes from the Bible, presenting saints, angels or Jesus Christ and his Mother.

Sculpture as well as painting is related to holy pictures. However, folk artists also try to present some scene of everyday rural life, work in the field, rituals as well as fairylike characters and creatures.







# HARVEST FESTIVAL

It is a festival of farmers' work and at the same time it has also become a religious festival and thanksgiving to God for successful harvest and crops gathered.

It is a unique folk spectacle presenting traditions and customs of Polish village. Colourful processions with wreaths being placed in churches, along with other crops of the soil, are still organized.

Everybody is dressed in traditional costume, carrying beautiful wreaths and loaves of bread baked of the present harvest flour. Apart from its religious aspect it is also a time for joy, for fun, dancing and singing, for eating and drinking. It still creates an important part of Polish folklore, bringing the past to the present and combining the old with the new and thriving with atmosphere of optimism and joy.





# WITCHES' SABBATHS AGAIN IN ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE



Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship is the region of magic and mystery. According to some legends The Świętokrzyskie Mountains were the place where famous annual witches' sabbaths took place. The witches met at midnight on the top of The Bald Mountain, prepared magic mixtures, made up new spells and had some fun. To keep alive these legends some events are organized in Kielce Amphitheatre.

They remind about the magic and unusual atmosphere of our region.



# Our students in folk costumes

