Magiczny Kraków

Piaszczanska Sausage

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In order to learn more about the origin of this product, we must go back to the old days, when Piaski Wielkie was one of the largest and richest villages in the Malopolska Region -, and so-called *kijacy* came to Krakow. One should also recall the legend of the clever Lascyk, who managed to outsmart the entire guild of Krakow butchers in the times of Casimir the Great.

Kijacy, as Łukasz Gołębiowski writes in a nineteenth-century publication, *People and Their Customs*, dressed in "navy blue clothing with a crimson inset, and with a green belt and a characteristic round shaped cap, covered with lamb’s wool in the winter," made a long, carved and flint stick used to herd cattle their trademark. They were also known for their excellent meat products and prices lower than the city ones, which made them not liked by Krakow butchers.

Once, while hunting, King Casimir the Great and his hunting team got lost in a dense forest near Krakow, where they stayed until night time. At one point they came across a hut owned by Lascyk. To greet the guests with dignity, Lascyk offered them his best specialty - this is how a rings of smoked sausage hit the table, since then it became the king's favorite delicacy. On the second day the generous host heard that from then on he would supply the court with delicious meat products.

Lascyk could not miss such an opportunity! Every time he visited Wawel with the best goods, he sold the excess part in the city, although he did not have permission to do so. Great quality, lower price and popularity enjoyed by Lascyk’s meat, upset Krakow's butchers who demanded that such practices be banned and obliged the city guard to stop the peasant at the gates as soon as he carried his products.

The peasant made use of his resourcefulness again. He picked up long sticks in the forest, hollowed out their center and hid the smoked sausage inside. Thus prepared, he brought his goods to the city imperceptibly. The situation was witnessed by King Casimir himself, who appreciated Lascyk's cleverness and awarded him with the so-called *wolnica*, i.e. the right to trade meat outside of the slaughterhouses - guild stores or meat stalls. Since then, Lascyk and his family were so prosperous that a settlement later called Piaski was built around his hut.

A slightly different version of this story can be found in Seweryn Udziela's twelve legends and stories

from Krakow from 1899. Inhabitants of Piaski Wielkie were to complain to King Casimir the Great about Krakow butchers who forbade them to trade in the city. The king promised to grant permission to sell the sausage if the people form Piaski managed to imperceptibly bring it through the city gates. They immediately made use of their ingenuity. They took long sticks and, after drilling appropriate holes, put the sausage inside them. Prepared in such a way, they passed the city guards unsuspectingly. The king fulfilled his promise, and the people from Piaski themselves, in memory of the ruse, got the name *kijacy [from kijek – a stick]*. All applications refer to a clever way of circumventing urban prohibitions, which had an impact on the appearance of Piaszczańska sausage – its pieces must be between 25 and 45 cm long and between 3.5 and 5 cm in diameter. *Kijacy* were indeed famous for the production of smoked sausage, and the secret was the set of herbs that they used to cure the meat.

At present, only one plant produces Piaszczańska sausage - Gawor Wędliny from Podstolice. You can buy it in Krakow at the Parsley Market [*Targ Pietruszskowy*], Ecosphere Mateczny market and in several stores: Alpo, Kabanos and Market Point.

Everything you need to know about Piaszczańska sausage:

Piaszczańska sausage traditionally comes from a former village near Krakow (now a district of Krakow) - Piaski Wielkie. Its skin is characteristic in shades from light brown to dark cherry. In a cross section, pieces of meat with lighter stuffing are visible. It differs in raw material composition from other sausages - 90% first class meat should be used for its production. It is made from chilled fresh pork, 24-96 hours after slaughter. You will recognize it by the coarse crushing, the taste of the marinade from an herbal decoction, rock salt and the naturally smoke flavor.

In 2013, Piaszczańska sausage was inscribed on the National List of Traditional Products of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and in 2017 it was inscribed on the list of protected products of the European Union (Protected Geographical Indication).