

Apples in Poland (Laura Hunter)

It is that time of year! Colored leaves. Cooler temperatures. Cozy sweaters. Baking, and using the *whole* kitchen again. We also make plans to visit orchards and pick apples, make cakes and pies, sample cider, and taste some new varieties.

We tend to think of Minnesota as a haven for apple orchards. It feels like there is an orchard about 20 minutes away from any one's home. Did our Ancestors enjoy fall gathering apples in Poland? We have some recipes passed down from our Polish relatives, but are they as connected as we are with the apple harvest?

One thing is certain. Poland has a **strong** apple connection. I will boldly say it is **stronger** than the one we have here in Minnesota. Let's look at what we know about Minnesota first. In the United States, Washington State takes the lead with apple production. In fact, if you add together Washington, Michigan and New York's apples, 91% of US production is covered. Minnesota doesn't hold a candle to Washington state, or Poland, in apple production.

You see, Poland is the apple growing muscle for all of Europe. Poland is the top apple producer in Europe, and 4th in the world overall (after China, Turkey, and the US). There is some evidence that Slavic tribes gathered apples from the forests. Later, around the 12th Century, Cistercian monks cultivated orchards in SE Poland by the city of Sandomierz. Their practices contributed toward the growth and expansion of apples as a major crop in Poland. This fruit has been a staple of Polish cooking over the centuries. They are part of the Polish culture. Apples make up 80% of Poland's fruit production. Two familiar varieties include Golden Delicious and Royal Gala, but at least 14 varieties are commonly grown. Changes have been made as the Polish farmers have realized that global warming could severely stress their apple production. They have been innovative in sustainable techniques the last few decades, such as integrated pest management. Poland is also expanding varietal diversity of their apples, in an effort to further protect production.

If you happen to be traveling to Poland this fall, you must be certain to visit an orchard or go to a harvest festival. Most are held in October. Cider production has also increased in Poland, and many local varieties can be sampled.

Odds are, there are several PGS members whose ancestors cultivated or worked with apples in Poland. You may uncover the location of homesteads that worked and lived near the orchards. Certainly, our ancestors made delicious apple deserts such as Szarlotka (named after princess Charlotte of France). Apples are part of our DNA, our history, and our present. We are fortunate to enjoy apples, and harvest time, right here in Minnesota. It enriches our appreciation of fall, and our palate!

Kuryer Polski Newspaper (Paula Colwell)

The link below is a current Polish Newspaper with a focus on Polish history, culture, politics, economy and security. The original Kuryer Polski was the first Polish daily newspaper printed in the United States. Its founder was Michał Kruszką who published the newspaper in June 1888 in Milwaukee, WI. The Kuryer Polski ended its run on September 23, 1962. The current version was established in 2020 and is an internet-based newspaper published in both Polish and English, and is based out of Milwaukee, like the original newspaper. The main goal of the newspaper is to promote Polish identity in the Polish-American community in the United States and to represent Polish interests in the United States. <https://www.kuryerpolski.us/>