

Our traditions

All Saints' Day in Poland

If you decide to visit any cemetery in Poland at the beginning of November, you will surely be taken aback by seeing that it is fully lit with thousands of candles and decorated with tons of flowers of all kinds (but mostly the Chrysanthemums). This is all because of the All Saints' Day, a Polish tradition during which Poles from all over the country travel to their home cities to visit the graves of their deceased relatives.

In Poland, the celebration takes place under the name of Wszystkich Świętych, which literally means All Saints. It is also quite common to hear people refer to this day as Dzień Zmarłych or Święto Zmarłych (which mean Day of the Dead) – names that had been adopted during the socialism period in Poland as they did not contain any reference to the religion. It is a bank holiday dedicated to paying tribute to the deceased, during which most of the people visit cemeteries to lay flowers and light candles on the graves of their beloved ones. Polish tradition of All Saints' Day seems to be a rather sad and serious one.





Polish Santa Claus visits twice

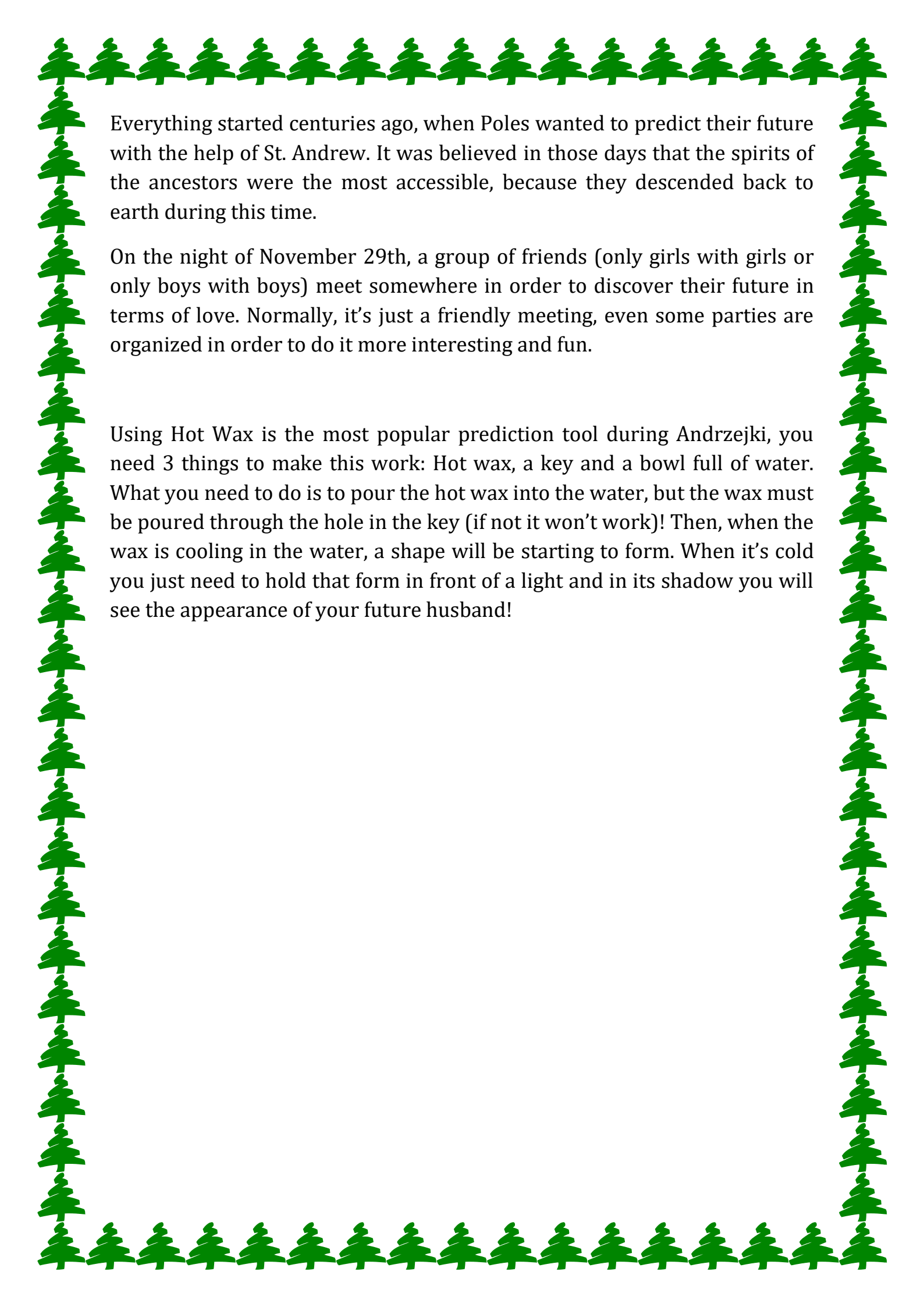
December 6th is St. Nicholas day (Mikołajki or Dzień Świętego Mikołaja), and traditionally it's been a day when people give their children small gifts. But only those who'd behaved themselves, obviously. Santa Claus for most people in Poland will more likely be associated with that day then, rather than Christmas, although – bit confusingly – for many others he is a secular symbol of Christmas and therefore comes back on Christmas Eve too with even more gifts.

St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6th – Dzień Świętego Mikołaja – starts off the Christmas holidays in Poland. It is eagerly awaited by the children in our families. Mikołaj places gifts under children's pillows. Alternatively, Mikołaj visits in person, either dressed in elegant bishop's clothing or in the merry red winter suit typical to the Western Santa Claus. During Christmas kids open their gifts (at least that is how it was in my home) after Christmas Eve dinner, once you can spot at least one star in the sky!

What Andrzejki Celebration is in Poland

St. Andrew's Day is celebrated in some countries around the world, especially in Russia, Scotland and Greece, but in Poland this day has a slightly different meaning.

It is believed that on this day, Saint Andrew can help young unmarried women to find their future husband! But in recent years, this tradition is not exclusively for women, young men have also started to ask for help to St. Andrew. But originally the day to find love for men is on Katarzynki which is on November 25th. This celebration starts on the night of the 29th of November and it continues till November 30th (St. Andrew's Day). The tradition has been remembered and celebrated since 1557. This day also marks the beginning of Advent, which is when catholic people start preparing for the Christmas celebration.



Everything started centuries ago, when Poles wanted to predict their future with the help of St. Andrew. It was believed in those days that the spirits of the ancestors were the most accessible, because they descended back to earth during this time.

On the night of November 29th, a group of friends (only girls with girls or only boys with boys) meet somewhere in order to discover their future in terms of love. Normally, it's just a friendly meeting, even some parties are organized in order to do it more interesting and fun.

Using Hot Wax is the most popular prediction tool during Andrzejki, you need 3 things to make this work: Hot wax, a key and a bowl full of water. What you need to do is to pour the hot wax into the water, but the wax must be poured through the hole in the key (if not it won't work)! Then, when the wax is cooling in the water, a shape will be starting to form. When it's cold you just need to hold that form in front of a light and in its shadow you will see the appearance of your future husband!