



Viola Slodzinska (right) in her kitchen with a friend.
Photo Mike Coles

International flavour in a Polish deli

By Nick Young

Polish food is becoming more popular in Britain, and East Finchley's very own Polish delicatessen Bulka z Maslem has been doing its best to showcase food from that country.

The revamped store at 36 High Road, which came under new management in July, continues to sell Polish cuisine that is home-cooked by Viola Slodzinska.

Viola, of Durham Road, moved to London from New York three years ago and has been cooking food on a daily basis for Bulka z Maslem ever since.

A widening customer base

When she started, most of the clientele was Polish but this has gradually changed. "As well as Polish customers we have Hungarians, Slovaks and more and more British clients," Viola told THE ARCHER.

Her pierogi (traditional Polish dumplings) have even been recommended by Barbara Gallani, the director of Food Safety and Science at the UK Food and

Drink Federation and the author of *Dumplings: A World History*.

"I only found out when I took some food to the shop and an English lady told me where she had heard of them," Viola said.

As her client base has increased, Viola has found her dishes taking on a more international flavour. "Some British customers prefer my pierogi with grilled chicken, prosciutto and Parmesan cheese. But Polish people... they're more into the traditional ones." The most traditional are called ruske, "but they have nothing to do with Russian pierogi," she added.

Special event

Viola will be hosting an all-day event at Bulka z Maslem from 8 am to 7 pm on Friday 11 December, when her food – pancakes, soups and dips as well as pierogi – will be available for breakfast, lunch and dinner. "Come and taste," said Viola. "You'll find that Polish dishes prepared according to traditional recipes don't need to be heavy or greasy."

Esso filling station is flattened

This was the scene in mid-November as a demolition team ripped apart the former Esso garage on the corner of Church Lane and the High Road. Huge shards of twisted metal were brought down by the digger's arm as the forecourt and shop were cleared over the course of a few days.

Filling in the giant fuel tanks that lie below the forecourt is likely to be a longer job. The demolition and clean-up are preparing the site for its next incarnation. New flats would seem to be the most likely future use but no planning application has yet been submitted so all options are still open.

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All praise to St Delia

It's that time of year again, the turkey's voted and the new X Factor winner is trussed up and ready for the oven. Twitter is trending with the news that the first Nigella of the season has been spotted and drunken selfies have started including tinsel. Yes, folks, in these weird times some things never change and the Feast of St. Delia is one of them.

As all traditionalists know, the Feast of St Delia starts on the third of November and ends on 26 January in recognition of the original and iconic BBC TV series in 1978. However in this age of austerity the season has been shortened. Now it runs from the switching on of Regent Street lights in mid-November to the start of the Harrods sale on Boxing Day. Still, six weeks of conspicuous over-cooking is enough to set anyone up for the next great bake off.

But this not just the season to worship at the shrine of St Delia of Norwich; those people who believe in lesser saints can still celebrate in their own unique way. Followers of the Jedi religion are already recharging their light sabres as they prepare for the cinematic seventh coming of the force in the knowledge that in a galaxy far, far away someone is trying to stuff an oversized turkey in an undersized oven without making the jump into hyperspace.

Of course there are other seasonal traditions that true believers embrace at the end of the year and none is as imprinted in our DNA as sun worship, something normally done on a beach in Florida. But for the true believer there is nothing like standing naked waiting for the sun to rise at the solstice. This is not recommended at Stonehenge on 21 December, but it is a tradition on the other side of the world. Down in the land of the waltzing wallaby they call it the Christmas Beach Barbie, which probably says something more profound about Australia than anything else.



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website: <http://www.stmarys-eastfinchley.co.uk>

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Christmas Services

Thursday 24th December

No morning Mass

6 pm Children's Mass for Christmas Eve
10 pm 'Midnight' Mass

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

10 am Family Mass

12 noon Mass partly in Latin

Saturday 26th December

No confessions today

12 noon, Mass for St Stephen's Day
6 pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
6.30 pm Vigil Mass

Sunday 27th December

The usual timetable: Mass at 8.30, 10, 12

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