

**Polska**



# Tasty Way to Health

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Consumption of Polish fruit and vegetable juices is expected to grow in this country, while exports are forecast to increase as well.

Juices provide the same health benefits as the fruit and vegetables they are made from. They are a source of antioxidants and provide vitamins and minerals. Juices and other fruit drinks known as nectars contain provitamin A, which ensures healthy skin, eyes and mucous membranes, and vitamin PP (niacin), which helps regulate the metabolism, strengthens the nervous system, and has a beneficial effect on the skin. Fruit juices are rich in vitamin C, which helps the immune system function properly, especially during strenuous physical effort, and plays a part in the production of collagen. Vitamin C is needed for the proper functioning of blood vessels. Juices also contain vitamin E, which protects cells from damage caused by oxidation, helping to slow down the aging process and to prevent atherosclerosis.

Juices and nectars are a rich source of potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure, muscle tone and the nervous system. They also contain fiber, whose beneficial effect on the digestive system is well known. Many juice varieties contain pectin, which regulates glucose levels in the bloodstream and helps maintain a healthy level of cholesterol. Juices also contain folic acid, which is needed to produce blood cells and maintain an efficient immune system. Cells need folic acid to grow, which is what makes it particularly important during pregnancy. Since the human body is incapable of producing folic acid on its own, the substance needs to be supplied in food.

Physicians and dietitians recommend a glass of juice with a 100-percent fruit or vegetable content as a healthy start to the day. Free from any artificial colorings, flavor enhancers and preservatives, such juices owe their color and taste solely to the fruits and vegetables they contain.

On average, people in Poland drink around 20 liters of juices, nectars and non-alcoholic beverages a year. In comparison, the average German drinks 40 liters, but Poland still tops the Eastern European statistics in terms of juice consumption. A survey by the AC Nielsen company shows that Poles spend around zł.3 billion a year on soft drinks, juices, nectars and fruit-flavored drinks. The size of the Polish market for these products is estimated at 723 million liters a year and experts believe that the consumption of juices and other fruit and vegetable-based drinks will increase in both Poland and Europe.

The most popular juice and nectar flavors in the EU are orange at 38.5 percent, followed by multi-fruit drinks at 19.9 percent, apple at 13.3 percent, peach at 3.7 percent and pineapple at 3.6 percent. Consumer choices are a little different in Poland and while orange juice takes the lead at 24.6 percent, carrot-based juices come in second in Poland at 21 percent, followed by apple juice (14.5 percent), multi-fruit drinks (12.3 percent) and grapefruit (10.3 percent). Poland is the largest producer of concentrated apple juice in Europe.

Polish juices have made a name for themselves on many markets abroad. For example, Polish carrot-based juices have become popular in Britain, where they were virtually unknown until recently. Polish fruit juices are also popular in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Russia.

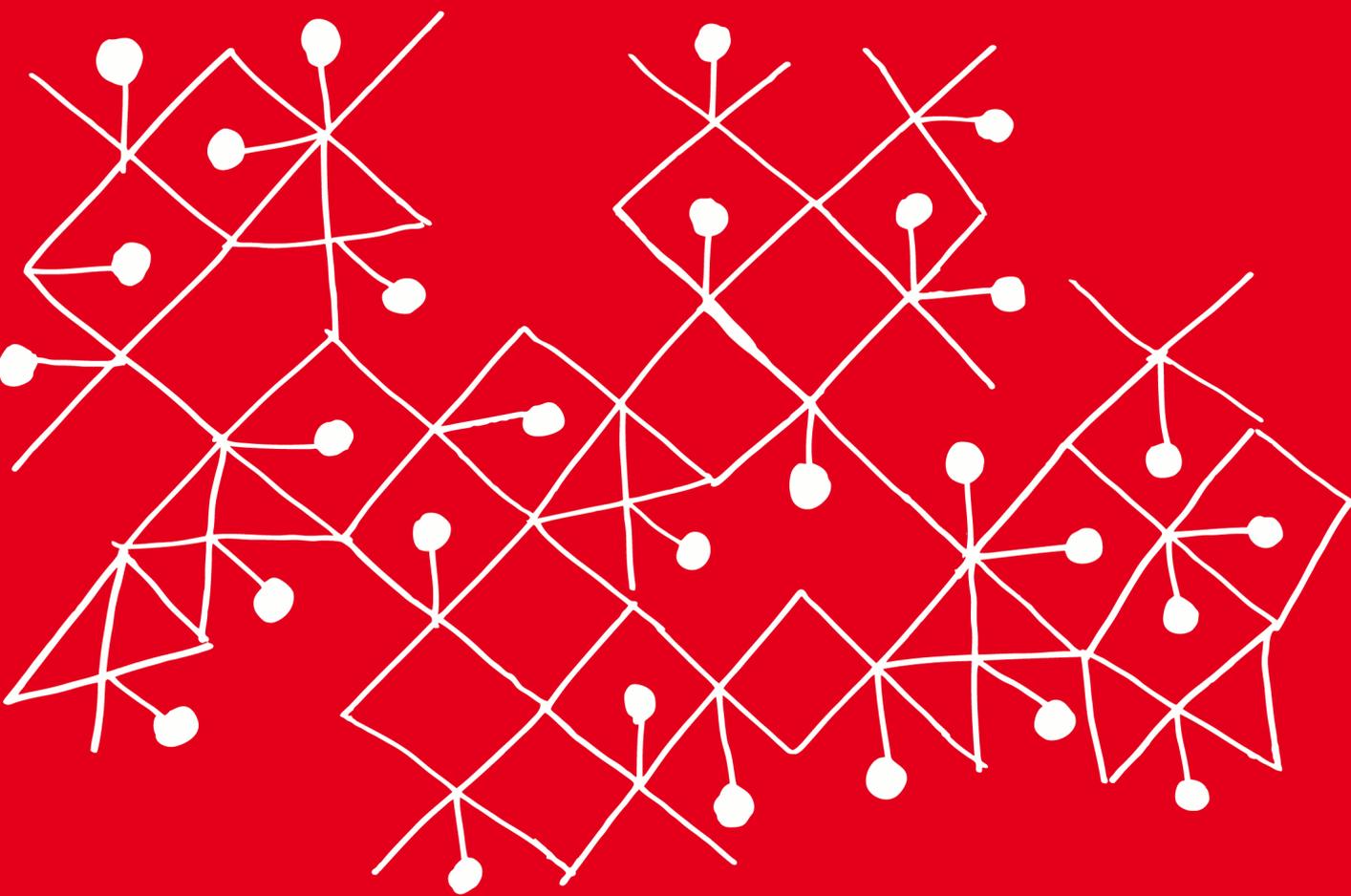
Market experts believe exports of Polish juices will increase and domestic sales are expected to go up as well. In a bid to stimulate juice consumption, Poland has launched an EU project called "5 Portions of Vegetables, Fruit and Juice" funded by the Fund for the Promotion of Fruit and Vegetables and the Polish Association of Juice Producers. Aimed at children in grades one to three in elementary schools, this nationwide campaign was first conducted in the 2010/2011 school year and became a major success, backed by both educational and healthcare institutions. It covered around 300,000 children in more than 4,100 schools across Poland.

The primary objective of the campaign is to promote a healthy and balanced diet among schoolchildren. The limited awareness among the public of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle particularly affects children. The sooner kids learn about maintaining a healthy diet that abounds in fruit, vegetables and juices, the more likely they are to develop healthy eating habits.

According to the Polish Association of Juice Producers, the 2010/2011 campaign did not promote any specific brands and producers, as the objective was to foster healthy eating habits among children. To this end, teachers and students at participating schools received educational materials for use during special classes on healthy lifestyles. Teaching aids were also handed out to parents. At the end of the project, students were able to take part in an art competition with healthy lifestyles and eating habits as the leading theme. In order to evaluate the campaign's effect on children, teachers were required to conduct polls before and after the special classes. Almost 90 percent of children were aware that they needed fruit, vegetables and juices to be healthy, strong and full of energy. At the same time, they started to eat and drink more fruit, vegetables and juices, which showed that their parents had become more aware of the importance of a healthy diet.

The "5 Portions of Vegetables, Fruit and Juices" initiative was one of the largest and most effective campaigns to promote healthy living in Poland. It has recently been relaunched.

Source: The Warsaw Voice



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