

GUIDEBOOK



WELCOME TO POLAND



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VIP-SERVICE ul. Mierosławskiego 2G; 01-527 Warszawa;
fax: +48 22 839 57 42, tel. +48 663 636 262
www.vip-service.com.pl ; www.cudzoziemiec.eu, www.dr-house.com.pl
vip-service@vip-service.com.pl; info@cudzoziemiec.eu

WELCOME TO POLAND

A short manual for foreigners in Poland



Poland is becoming a popular and fashionable country to be visited. Increasing numbers of people come to Poland not only for business purposes but also to have a rest and relax among magnificent ancient monuments and unsullied nature. Here, in Poland nature delights with its diversity, Baltic sandy beaches, wide lake districts, virgin forests as well as hills and mountains which make Poland become an attractive tourist destination.

Apart from that, Poland is also the largest and most rapidly developing country in East-Central Europe. Its history is rich and turbulent cause the state has experienced moments of greatness but also of painful decline in more than thousand years. There occurred a period of enormous prosperity in 16th and 17th centuries as Poland had power to dictate conditions in this part of Europe because of riches it gained thanks to grain trade. And there was also period in 18th century when Poland vanished from the map of Europe for 123 years. However, the greatest devastation and destruction occurred in 20th century. Then, Poland was completely destroyed by two totalitarian systems and driven to become a European Cinderella.

Today, Poland is moving back to Europe in order to take place for which it can rightly claim. Fourteen years after communism was overturned, Poland has already become a completely different country – now it is much more modern but, at the same time, it prides its past and history. Why not to come to this state and convince by yourself..?

Hope to see you soon in Poland!

HOLIDAYS IN POLAND



1st January

New Year (Nowy Rok)

31st March – 01st April 2013 / movable feast/

Easter (Wielkanoc)

1st May

Labour Day (Święto Pracy)

3rd May

Constitution Day (Rocznica Uchwalenia Konstytucji 3 Maja)

30th May /moveable feast/

Corpus Christi (Boże Ciało)

15th August

Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Wniebowzięcie Najświętszej Marii Panny)

1st November

All Saint's Day (Dzień Wszystkich Świętych)

11th November

Independance Day (Dzień Niepodległości)

25th-26th December

Christmas (Boże Narodzenie)

Christmas in Poland begins on 24th December. In the evening every family eats a formal supper called "Wigilia". "Wigilia" requires special dishes since eating meat is forbidden on that day. Therefore, during this particular meal you will find 12 dishes including bigos, mushrooms and sauerkraut stuffed dumplings, carp, herring, vegetables salad and red borscht with dumplings. The dishes may vary according to the region but, generally, all those mentioned above appear in the entire country. There is also a Christmas tree with gifts from Santa Claus (we can open them just right after Wigilia). Also a special mass called 'Pasterka' is celebrated in every church at midnight.

BANKS

Banks are generally open Monday-Friday from 8 am till 6 pm or 9 am to 7 pm. On Saturdays the vast majority of them is closed.

Each bank can ask you for different documents in order to open an account. Some of them may just need your passport while others may ask you for a set of documents. The best solution is to contact a particular bank and find out about formalities before going there.



MONEY

The official currency in Poland is Polish zloty (PLN, zł). The currency can be exchanged in banks or exchange offices located throughout the entire city. 1 zloty is subdivided into 100 groszy. We can pay in notes: 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 zł or coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 gr and 1, 2 and 5 zł. In the majority of shops you can pay by credit card, however, sometimes it is possible only if a total bill exceeds 15 zł.



ATMs

There are many 24-hour ATMs in most of the Polish cities. The most useful are the ones connected to the Euronet system – they allow access with the following cards: American Express, Diners Club, Eurocard/Master Card, Maestro, Cirrus, PolCard, PolCard Bis, PolCard Tempo, Visa, Visa Electron, PLUS. Each ATM is appropriately labeled.

ATMs connected to the Euronet system can also be found in all shopping malls and hotels.

DRIVING REGULATIONS



In Poland, as in most European countries, motor traffic is right-sided.

You are obligated by law to fasten your seatbelt, this regulation is applicable also in respect of children. Those under the age of 12 are not permitted to sit in the front seat. Children under 150 cm and below the age of 12 must sit on a special safety seat.

Use of a mobile phone which requires holding the set or a microphone in your hand while driving is forbidden.

Drunk driving is very severely penalised in Poland. Accepted limit of alcohol in the blood is 0.02g/l.

The following speed limits apply:

50 km/h in city centres

60 km/h in built-up areas

90 km/h outside built-up areas

110 km/h on expressways

130 km/h on highways

MEASUREMENTS

Unlike English-speaking countries, metric system of measurement is used in Poland. It may cause a lot of problems for foreigners who were used to the imperial system. Therefore, you will find a list of the most important measurements:

Length:

1 inch (in)=2.54 cm

1 centimetre (cm)=0.394 in

1 foot (ft)=30.4 cm

1 metre (m)=1.094 yd

1 yard (yd)=91.4 cm

1 kilometre (km)=0.621 m

Surface

1 sq.cm = 0.155 sq.inch

1 m² (square metre) = 1.196 sq.yards = 10.764 sq.feet

1 km² (square kilometre) = 274.104 acres = 0.386 sq.mile

Weight

1 ounce, avoirdupois (oz avdp.) = 28.350 grams

1 pound (lb.) = 16 ozs = 0.4535 kilogram

1 quarter (qr.) = 28 lbs = 12.70 kg

1 hundredweight (cwt.) = 4 quarters = 112 lbs = 50.802 kg

1 ton = 20 cwt. = 2240 lbs = 1016 kg = 1.016 metric ton

ELECTRICITY

In Poland: 230 Volt, 50 Hz, according to European standards.



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

AMBULANCE **999**

FIRE DEPARTMENT **998**

POLICE **997**

EMERGENCY NUMBER (POLICE, AMBULANCE, FIRE DEPARTMENT) -
FROM MOBILE **112**



HEALTH SERVICE

Medical Service Information:
phone: 94 39

Central Information on Medicines:
phone: (22) 843 47 21, (22)

(22) 843 47 31, (22) 847 24 94

Simple complaints are normally dealt with at pharmacies (*apteka*) – in major cities most of staff working in a pharmacy speaks at least basic English. For more serious problems one is directed to a hospital (*szpital*). There are public and private hospitals and clinics in Poland. It is advisable to opt for private health care, as the condition and standard of the Polish public health service are hardly satisfactory.

POSTAL SERVICES



Most post offices in Poland are open Monday-Friday from 8a.m. till 8p.m. In almost every big city there is a Main Post Office which operates 24 hours 7 days a week.

Warsaw

The Main Post Office at 31/33 Świętokrzyska Str.

Cracow

The Main Post Office at 4 Lubicz Str.

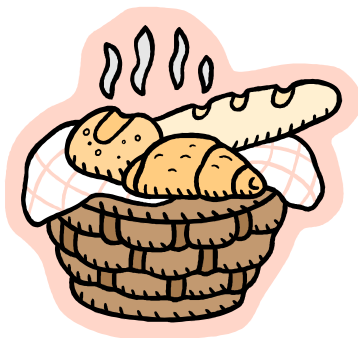
Gdansk

The Main Post Offices in Gdansk (22/28 Długa St) and Gdynia (10 10-Lutego St) are open daily from 8 am until 8 pm.



CLIMATE

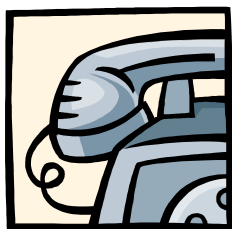
Climate has transitional character - between maritime and continental. Due to worldwide climate changes, the climate in Poland has also changed and can be really surprising. Summers may be warm and rainy or hot and dry. Generally, after a really hot day we can expect storms. Summer begins in June and lasts till September with temperatures varying from 20C to 35C. September is the beginning of Autumn which can be both, warm and sunny or cold and rainy. Winter starts in December and the temperature gradually falls, reaching even -25C. March is the beginning of Spring when everything starts to wake up after a cold winter. Actually, it is really hard to forecast the weather but, in general, the best time to visit Poland is from May till September.



CUISINE

Meat and vegetables are the most common products in the Polish traditional cuisine. Typical dishes are hearty and fat yet delicious. The most recognisable and traditional meals of the Polish cuisine are: pierogi (dumplings), bigos (sauerkraut and meat stew), kotlet schabowy (breaded pork cutlet), rosół (chicken soup), makowiec (sweet poppy cake), sernik z rodzynkami (cheesecake with raisins). Apart from these meals, each region of Poland has its own traditional dishes e.g. żurek (sour rye soup) in Silesia. Nowadays, however, Poland is being influenced by other cultures and hence introduces new dishes to the menu. What's more, in every big city you will find restaurants

which serve dishes from the whole world. So, if you don't fancy traditional Polish cuisine, you will definitely find something suitable for you.



INTERNET

Many places such as restaurants, cafes, shopping malls, hotels, railway stations and airports offer access to free hotspots. Sometimes a password is required but you can easily obtain it from the service. The free hotspots are available in every Coffee Heaven and Starbucks cafes as well as in Pizza Hut, KFC and McDonald's restaurants.

The Warsaw City Hall offers a free access to hotspot in the area of Nowy Świat Str., Krakowskie Przedmieście Str. and Zamkowy Square.



SHOPPING

Shopping centres are located in every city in Poland. We will find brands commonly known in the global market as well as those available only in Poland. Shopping malls are situated in almost every district of a city and we can easily get there by car or means of public transport. If we want to do small shopping, we can go to a supermarket, a local shop or a market. Fairs are also situated in every city district and we can buy some fresh vegetables, fruit or meat there. However, you need to remember that only payment in cash is possible there.

Example prices of everyday goods:

- a. bread – about 3zł
- b. coffee - 20-25zł
- c. milk – about 3zł
- d. 10 eggs – 3-5zł
- e. ham – 12-20zł
- f. fish – 10-20zł
- g. butter – 2-3zł
- h. sugar – 3-5zł

- i. meat 1kg – 15-25zł
- j. sausage 1kg – 12-25zł
- k. cheese – 12-20zł
- l. yoghurt – 1-3zł
- m. apples 1kg – 2-4zł
- n. bananas 1kg – 3-5zł
- o. tomatoes 1kg – 2-5zł
- p. potatoes 1kg – 1-2zł
- q. lettuce – 1-2zł
- r. cigarettes – about 12zł
- s. beer – 2-6zł
- t. vodka – 25-35zł
- u. wine – 15-30zł
- v. washing powder – about 20zł
- w. soap – about 3zł

LANGUAGE

Polish is not the easiest language in the world and learning it will take quite a lot of time and effort. Foreigners usually have problems with proper pronunciation and declination. Polish differs a lot from English and only vocabulary may be similar. Below you will find a few example words and phrases in Polish:

- dzień dobry – good morning
- do widzenia – goodbye
- dziękuję – thank you
- co słyhać? – how are you?
- przepraszam – I'm sorry; excuse me
- ile to kosztuje? – how much is it?
- gdzie jest.... – Where is....?

CULTURAL CUSTOMS

Poland, as every country, has its own cultural customs. If you live among Poles you are expected to behave in a particular way in some situations. First of all you are supposed to give your seat to an older person or pregnant woman while traveling by bus, tram or subway. Men are also expected to hold the doors for women. 'Dzień dobry' (Good morning) and 'Do widzenia' (Goodbye) should be said while entering and leaving lift. It is also important to remember that if you enter a building you should let people leave it first. Although these cultural customs might now sound strange to you, they will soon become your everyday habits.

SUPERSTITIONS

Poles are not probably more superstitious than any other nation, yet there are some superstitions that can make our lives harder.

- breaking mirror, going under the ladder and black cat crossing your path brings bad luck
- the unluckiest day to do anything is Friday 13th
- a chimney-sweeper will bring you luck if you hold your button while seeing him
- nailing a horseshoe on your door and finding a four-leaf clover are also considered as luck-bringers
- if you do not want your money to run away you should not put your bag on the floor
- carrying a Christmas carp's scale in wallet will help you maintain wealthy
- if you spill salt you will definitely have an argument with someone
- if you have an itchy nose or red ears it means that somebody is talking about you



HELP SERVICE

If you find yourself in a difficult situation, do not hesitate to call us. We are here to help you. Our hotline is 502 232 259 or 663 636 262 . You can also e-mail us: vip-service@vip-service.com.pl

Information regarding PKP trains schedule: rozklad-pkp.pl

About Poland:

Some useful information:

1. www.rozklad-pkp.pl - about train schedule
2. www.wikipedia.pl - about everything
3. www.msz.gov.pl - Polish Foreign Affairs Ministry
4. www.doyouknowpolska.com - about Poland
5. www.poland.gov.pl - officially about Poland
6. www.mazowieckie.pl - Mazowieckie Voivodeship
7. www.cudzoziemiec.eu - for foreigners in Poland

WARSAW



The capital city of Poland offers you a great range of possibilities to actively and interestingly spend time.

Welcome to Warsaw!

If you land at the Warsaw Chopin Airport and you need to get to the city centre, you can choose among:

1. a car
2. a taxi – cost of about 40PLN
3. city buses – the cost of a single ride ticket is 2,80PLN
4. a city train - the cost of a single ride ticket is 2,80PLN

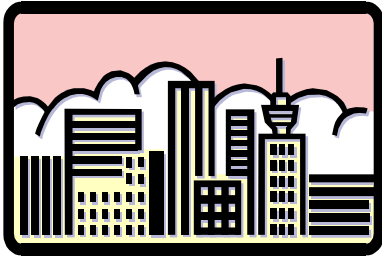
The journey will take you about 30 minutes in each case. Travelling by car, bus or taxi may be significantly longer during the rush hours.

If you land at the newly open airport in Modlin and you need to get to the city centre, you can choose among:

1. a car
2. a taxi – since the airport is situated about 50km from Warsaw the cost starts from 100PLN
3. private bus carrier or PKS Warszawa bus carrier – the time of travel varies from 60 to 90 minutes and the cost of ticket is 8PLN
4. a train – the travel takes you about 30 minutes and the cost of a ticket is 12PLN. A shuttle bus to the train station is provided by the airport.

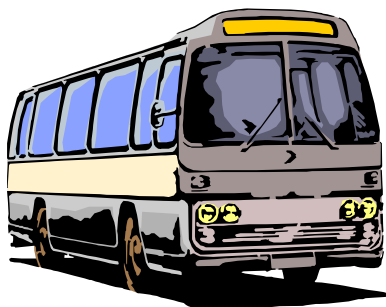
If you choose to travel by car, taxi or bus you need to remember that the traffic jam may lengthen the travel time. If you choose a bus, you need to remember that not all buses are air-conditioned and the carriers do not provide hatch for your luggage. Generally, you should be prepared to two-hour travel from the airport to Warsaw.

ACCOMMODATION IN WARSAW



If you have not yet found an apartment for rent, Warsaw offers you a wide variety of hotels. The prices differ, depending on the location (city centre or more distant districts) and standard. Living in a hotel: is, however, quite expensive and you should rent an apartment as soon as possible. You can try to find an apartment by checking advertisements on the Internet or ask a professional real estate agent for help. However, if you hire an agent you will be required to pay him commission fee. You can be certain that he will not cheat you. Agents know Warsaw and can advise you regarding the location. Additionally, they are familiar with all the laws governing the real estate market, though, can create the best possible lease agreement. As for the rent prices, the apartments depend on size, location and standard, and they start from about 3000PLN for a two-bedroom apartment.

COMMUTING IN WARSAW



Public transport is the easiest way to commute in Warsaw. You can choose among bus, tram or subway. Although there is only one subway line, it is very useful since it connects two parts of Warsaw (Kabaty and Mlociny) and enables easy transfer to all districts. Trams are right after the subway the fastest mean of transport links (they do not get stuck in traffic jams) but they are limited by the tracks. Buses, on the other hand, can take you to every part of the city. Nowadays, the second subway line is being built but it will start running in 2014.

What's behind the number:

- trams - one or two-digit numbers e.g. 1 or 25
- regular bus service - numbers start from 1xx, 2xx and 3xx, they stop at every stop
- rapid bus service – numbers start from 4xx and 5xx (written in red), they stop at selected stops
- express bus service – numbers start from E-x (written in red), they run from Monday to Friday during the rush hours and stop at main stops
- suburban bus service – numbers start from 7xx
- suburban bus service – numbers start from 8xx, they run from Monday to Friday
- night bus service – numbers start from Nxx, they run every night from 23.15 to 4.30

Inside every bus and tram there is a detailed route schedule with all stops.

Operating hours:

1. trams – 5a.m.-11p.m.
2. day buses – 5a.m.-11p.m.
3. night buses – 11.15p.m.-4.30a.m. The night buses run every 30 minutes from the Central Station.
4. Subway – 5a.m.-1a.m. from Monday to Friday, on Friday and Saturday nights till 3a.m.

Tickets: need to be validated right after entering the vehicle

1. Short term tickets:

- 20-minute ticket
- 40-minute ticket
- 60-minute ticket
- 1-day ticket
- 3-day ticket

2. long-term personal Travelcards:

- 30-day personal Travelcard
- 90-day personal Travelcard

Tickets and Travelcards can be bought in kiosks or vending machines located throughout the city.

SCHOOLS

If you want your children to learn in Poland the best solution is to enroll them into an international school in Warsaw. Usually one school enables a child go through all levels of education. The education ends with an international A-level exam.

List of international elementary, junior high and high schools in Warsaw:

English as the classroom language:

American School of Warsaw
202 Warszawska St., Konstancin-Jeziorna
www.asw.waw.pl

Canadian Primary School of Warsaw
7 Belska St., Warsaw
www.canadian-school.pl

International American School
18 Dembego St. , Warsaw
www.ias.edu.pl

International European School-Warsaw
75 Wiertnicza St. , Warsaw
www.ies-warsaw.pl

Meridian International Schools
66/74 Wawelska St. , Warsaw
www.meridian.edu.pl

St. Paul's British International School of Warsaw
14 Zielona St., Piaseczno
www.stpaulswarsaw.tripod.com

The British School No. 1
15 Limanowskiego St. , Warsaw
www.thebritishschool.pl

French as the classroom language:

Ecole Antoine de Saint-Exupery
16 Nobla St. , Warsaw
www.saint-exupery.pl

Lycee Francais de Varsovie,
13 Konstancińska St. , Warsaw (preschool and elementary school)
4/6 Walecznych St. , Warsaw (high school)
www.lfv.pl

German as the classroom language:

Willy Brandt Deutsche Schule Warschau,
2 W. Rutkiewicz St. , Warsaw
www.wbs.pl

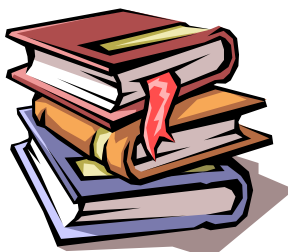
Japanese as the classroom language:

Japanese School at the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw
7a Kormoranów St. , Warsaw
www.japoland.pl/gakko

Italian as the classroom language:

Warsaw Montessori School,
4 Szwoleżerów St. , Warsaw
www.warsawmontessori.edu.pl

A BIT OF HISTORY



Establishment of the settlement in a place of today's Old Town in 13th century is considered to be the beginning of Warsaw as we know it. This fast developing settlement, called Old Warsaw, became the capital city of the Masovian district in 15th century. After the Royal Castle in Wawel had burned in 1596, king Sigismund III Vasa decided to move the capital of Poland to Warsaw. The period of economic and cultural development of the city begun in the second half of 17th century but was stopped by the outbreak of the Second World War. This era is responsible for creating the Lazienki Krolewskie Park, the National Theatre building, a stable bridge on the Vistula or still working water system. Warsaw was almost completely destroyed during the war with most of its cultural heritage razed to the ground. The post-war period was concentrated on bringing the city back to life. Rebuilding the historical buildings and districts resulted in inscribing the Old Town and the Royal Castle on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. Nowadays, Warsaw is a modern European capital city which combines development together with cultural heritage awareness.

THINGS YOU SIMPLY CAN'T MISS

1. The Palace of Culture and Science – built in the 1950s as a gift of the Soviet nation for people of Poland. It is the tallest and most recognisable building in Warsaw, loved and hated at the same time.
2. The Royal Castle – a royal residence since 1596. In 1944 the Castle was completely destroyed by the German army. The decision to rebuilt the castle was made in 1971. Although the facade was ready in 1980, it took four more years to open the interiors to visitors.
3. The King Sigismund III Vasa's Column – erected by the king Wladyslaw IV in order to honour his father. The sword and cross held by the king symbolize bravery and readiness to fight evil respectively. According to the legend, if the king's sword falls downward the city will be doomed.
4. Krakowskie Przedmieście Street– one of the most beautiful streets in Warsaw that is a part of the Royal Route (Trakt Krolewski). While walking down the street we definitely should pay attention to St. Anne's Church, the Presidential Palace, the University of Warsaw and the Church of the Holy Cross.
5. Nowy Świat Street – one of the most crowded and elegant streets of Warsaw with lots of luxurious shops, galleries, clubs, restaurants and cafes.
6. the Royal Łazienki Museum and Park– one of the most beautiful objects of this kind in Europe. The most important objects are the Palace on the Isle, the Old Orangery, the Myślewicki Palace and the statute of Fryderyk Chopin.
7. The Wilanów Museum and Park – a royal residence of the King John III Sobieski is famous for its garden designed in Italian and English style.