



**PREPARATION FOR LIVING IN POLAND
GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND WORKERS**

Warsaw, October 2019



© Copyright by Zabielski Foundation, Warsaw 2019

Zabielski Foundation
Warsaw, Poland
ul. Podwale 13/15, 00-252 Warsaw
www.zabielskifoundation.org
e-mail: info@zabielskifoundation.org
tel. (+48) 518 078 003



Table of content

1. ABOUT ZABIELSKI FOUNDATION.....	6
1.1. Mission and goals	6
1.2. Activities and projects	7
1.2.1 Smart Community Accelerator	8
1.2.2 Education Innovation LAB.....	8
1.2.3 Center for Suicide Prevention.....	9
1.2.4 Entrepreneurship and Creative Industry Valley.....	10
1.3. Educational programmes	11
1.3.1 Vocational courses.....	11
1.3.2 Polish language courses for foreigners.....	15
1.3.3 English preparatory language courses.....	15
1.3.4 IT courses.....	16
1.4. Assistance and services for foreigners.....	18
1.4.1 Legalization of stay in Poland	18
1.4.2 Immigrant Integration Programme.....	18
2. POLAND – ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS.....	19
2.1 The Republic of Poland.....	19
2.2 Territory and geography	20
2.3 Climate.....	22
2.4 Political system	23
2.5 History.....	24
2.6 Polish economy.....	28
2.7 Polish culture	29
2.8 Famous Poles.....	30
2.9 Tourist attractions	34
3. STAY REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGNERS	42
3.1. Visa requirements	42
3.2 Temporary residence permit	43
3.3. Work permit	44

4. SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION.....	47
4.1. International students in Poland	47
4.2. Universities and higher vocational schools.....	47
4.3. Work while studying	48
5. LIVING IN POLAND.....	49
5.1. Accommodation.....	49
5.2. Cost of living	50
5.3. Polish cuisine	51
5.4. Holidays	52
5.5. Customs and manners	55
6. POLISH LANGUAGE - BASIC EXPRESSIONS	57

1. ABOUT ZABIELSKI FOUNDATION

The Zabielski Foundation is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization, entered in the Register of foundations under reference no. REGON 382837667, operating in accordance with the provisions of the Act on Foundations in Poland.

1.1 Mission and goals



The mission of the Zabielski Foundation is to make a progress on difficult social and developmental problems by creating solutions, inspiring and connecting people to change the world.

The statutory goals of the Foundation include:

- **Entrepreneurship**
Supporting economic development for future generations, including entrepreneurship and activity of society.
- **Social services**
Assistance for the people in difficult life situation, including seniors, children and disabled.
- **Education**
Initiatives in the area of practical and vocational education, based on the new learning techniques.
- **Mental health**
Initiatives against addiction and depression, in particular among children and young people.
- **Religion and tradition**
Maintaining traditions, religion and cultural identity.

- **Smart communities**
Supporting peripheral, rural areas, implementing models of smart development.
- **Employment**
Promoting employment, vocational activation against social and work exclusion.
- **Social innovation**
Development of innovation, using the latest technologies to improve quality of life.
- **Applied research**
Cooperation for applied research in the area of socio-economic and technological development.
- **Integration of foreigners**
Initiatives aimed at social, cultural and vocational integration.
- **Environmental protection**
Initiatives in the area of natural environment for sustainable development.
- **Development of democracy**
activities including civil education, protecting human rights.

1.2 Activities and projects

The Zabielski Foundation develops the initiatives aimed at:

- creating and developing smart communities
- development of entrepreneurship, small firms and employment
- implementing new technologies in the social services
- help for the most vulnerable social groups
- initiatives against addictions and for mental health
- education for gaining vocational and practical skills
- developing the integration programmes for immigrants
- cooperation for applied research
- initiatives in the area of environmental protection
- activities for building civic society
- cooperation to international partners

The Foundation sustains cooperation with other nonprofit organizations, catalyzes projects, collaborates and partners with other grant making institutions and fills gaps in education, applied research, local economic development and social services. Within the framework of our activities we use the following tools allowing to achieve our goals:

- programmes and projects
- think-tanks, thematic labs and institutes
- platforms and networks
- educational courses and trainings
- workshops, seminars and conferences
- publishing and consulting services
- charity work and social services

1.2.1. Smart Community Accelerator



The Smart Community Accelerator was established to create complex programmes for underdeveloped peripheral regions to become smart local communities. We mobilize and invest technical and financial resources to improve the quality of life and promote community development. Implementing latest technologies allows to improve the quality of life in rural areas and small towns and stop depopulation.

We work with community foundations and local governments to identify the opportunities for investment and activities that can help these communities to solve social and developmental problems. We conduct the following expert services allowing to identify development opportunities:

- research of the local potentials (economy, society, culture, tradition),
- identification of the economic and/or social needs at the local level,
- proposal of the projects necessary for the socio-economic development,
- formulation of the tailored concept of smart community,
- development strategy for the rural community,
- social consultation concerning new projects,
- promotion activities for new projects.

1.2.2. Education Innovation LAB

The Education Innovation LAB was established to create a place where we can explore new approaches of education. The LAB is a collaborative platform dedicated to further developing the culture of learning by promoting teaching innovations. We develop the projects in the fields of the game – based learning and artificial intelligence.



Our aim is to create a new learning culture. Together with our experts we develop modern learning methods. We collaborate with primary and secondary schools, universities and higher vocational schools to explore creative tools to teaching and learning.

The new development trends in our society cause challenges to the existing education systems. In addition to required knowledge, the development of new skills plays an important role. The most preferred skills include creativity, innovation, personal communication and the use of latest technologies. The new learning techniques are attractive especially for the youngest generations, so they should play a crucial role in teaching programmes. In the digital era using of the game-based learning becomes required part of the learning process.

1.2.3. Center for Suicide Prevention

We have started work aimed at the establishment of the Center for Suicide Prevention, providing help to schools in the area of mental health for children and youth.



Special attention shall be paid to the increasing number of suicides and suicide attempts among children and youth. Poland is one of the leaders in this infamous classification, taking second place in Europe and in the top of the world. Suicide was a taboo subject for many years. Now the situation is critical and needs actions.

According to statistics of the World Health Organization relating to the suicides, the number of people dying every year by suicide is 800,000. Every 40 seconds one life dies. Only 38 countries report having a national strategy for suicide prevention and only 60 countries have good-quality vital registration data on suicide.

In Poland more people die because of suicides than traffic accidents. In the year 2017 it was 5.2 thousands people, 80% of whom were men. The number of suicides is probably higher than shown in police statistics, because many incidents are not recorded at all. Every fifth death of a teenager in Poland was caused by suicide. A suicide attempt takes place in Poland every 47 minutes.

Center for Suicide Prevention is a project deloped as a part of the [Mental Health Institute](#), what aims to generate innovative knowledge, build capacity and develop collaboration in the area of mental health.



- (1) Institute conducts the education and trainings programmes to improve the understanding and support the people living with mental disorders.
- (2) Research support and consulting services in the field of mental health.
- (3) Seminars, conferences and publishing activities in the area of mental health.
- (4) Institute develops projects using latest technology for mental healthcare.
- (5) Network including istitutions providing services to combine research and practice.
- (6) Building capacities for evaluation, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of people with mental disorders.

1.2.4. Entrepreneurship and Creative Industry Valley

According to the most used definition, the creative industries have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential to create wealth and jobs by generating and exploiting intellectual property.



The sector of creative industries can stimulate economic development of regions. The main effects include creation of work places, tax revenues to the central and local budgets, impact on the other sectors of the economy.

Significant role plays also activating the community by creating new markets, local promotion, transformation processes in selected areas and activities against social and economic exclusion. The creative industries have been seen to become very important to socio-economic development because human creativity is an unlimited resource.

Our activities are aimed at supporting entrepreneurship in the area of creative industries. To achieve this goal we develop a complex project combining knowledge, business praxis and innovation.

We built projects relating to the following creative industries: educational games, crafts, advertising, design, arts & culture, publishing.

Second path of activities in the field of entrepreneurship is [Sharing Economy Forum](#) as a collaborative community dedicated to connecting researching and building the sharing economy. Our group includes entrepreneurs, business leaders, economists, investors, researchers, foundations and other organizations.

The purpose of the Forum is to foster communication among entrepreneurs. Participants of the Forum can discuss current developmental trends, best practices and new challenges. The Forum also monitors the state of the market, develops collaborative programmes and conducts interdisciplinary courses for the future entrepreneurs. The next aim of the Forum is to provide effective resources for educators and researchers of sharing economy.

1.3 Educational programmes

Our aim is to make high quality, practical business education as an alternative to traditional university scientific approach. To achieve this goal we develop the tailored specialist, certificated vocational trainings combining business knowledge, praxis and innovation.

The programmes are prepared as a result of cooperation with business environment, including corporations, business schools, associations, recruitment institutions, foundations, regional development agencies, international networks and media. We built the real environment for development of business education in international sense.

1.3.1 Vocational courses

• Vocational Course E-COMMERCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The specialist course allows you to gain the skills required to work in the field of internet entrepreneurship. Practical skills gained during the 6-month or 12-month course, include:

- establishment and operating e-commerce
- knowledge of the regulation for e-commerce
- creating business models and business plans
- internet site design and copywriting
- social media in e-business, public relation
- tools of internet marketing
- brand creating in e-commerce

The training plan includes the following issues: • World Economy • Company Internationalisation • International Competitiveness • International Trade • International Marketing • International Law • Marketing • Social Media in Business • International Settlements • Strategies for Product and Brand • e-Commerce • Business Negotiations • International Finance • International Business Management • International Accounting • Cultural Differences and Interpersonal Communication • Public Relations • Leadership.

• **Vocational Course HOTEL MANAGEMENT**



The course allows you to gain the skills required to work in hotel industry. Practical skills and competences gained during the 6-month or 12-month, include:

- knowledge of hotel economy and operations
- creating business plans in hotel business
- development of marketing plans
- hotel employment management
- hotel inventory management
- organisation of hotel events
- knowledge of hospitality law
- knowledge of specialized hotel technologies
- food and beverage systems
- interpersonal communication

The training hotel management plan includes: • Hotel Economics • Hotel Operations • Hospitality Law • Hotel Events • Technology in Hotel • Global Tourism • Purchasing • Fundamentals of Food Preparation • Meeting Planning • Principles of Hotel Management • e-Commerce • Hospitality Marketing • Labour Relations • Cost and Resource Control • Food and Beverage Systems • Negotiations • Interpersonal Communication.

• **Vocational Course MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

The training allows you to gain the skills required to work in the online marketing and online business models. Practical skills and competences gained during the 6-month or 12-month course, include:

- new consumer trends
- planning and building the website

- content marketing
- blogging
- social media marketing
- web analytics
- online advertising
- e-mail marketing



The course plan includes the following issues: • e-Marketing Tools • Online Business Models • Planning the Website • Building the Website • Content Marketing • Blogging • Social Media Marketing • Information Society • Web Analytics • Advertising Strategies • Internet Advertising • Email Marketing • Internet Public Relations • Markets of e-Services • Legal Aspects on Online Marketing • Negotiations • Consumer Trends.

• Vocational Course HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The training allows you to gain the skills required to work as an economist in the field of human resource management. Practical skills and competences gained during the 6-month or 12-month , include:

- recruitment and selection of employees
- tools of employee appraisal
- systems of salaries
- regulations of employment law
- personnel and salaries
- staff management
- human resources
- motivation systems
- creating business models
- negotiation techniques
- interpersonal communication
- personal marketing



The course plan includes following issues: • Personal Policy • Assessment of Work Position • Motivation Systems • Competences Management • Talent Management • Employee Training • Personal Auditing • Leadership Negotiation • Personal Controlling • Recruitment and Selection • IT System in HR Management • Personal Consulting • Employee Appraisal • Employment Law.

After receiving certificate of the completion of the specialist vocational course participants of the courses can apply for the study in a selected university and also apply for temporary residence permit (TRC). All vocational courses are organized as 6-month or 12-month and run by the Zabielski Foundation /www.zabielskifoundation.org/.

1.3.2. Polish language courses for foreigners



We are pleased to offer the 6-month and 12-month Polish language courses. After completing the Polish language programme the participants are ready to find themselves in the Polish environment.

The competence of our instructors and motivating teaching methods ensure a high success rate. After completing the course, participants receive the final certificate. All participants gain knowledge about the language but also about the Polish culture.

1.3.3. English preparatory language courses



We are pleased to offer the English 6-month and 12-month language programme. The courses are planned accordingly to the needs of future university students, to help them plan their pathway to their education and improve their English language.

The preparatory course aims to improve English knowledge to the level B1 or B2 and skills with the objective to prepare international students for academic courses taught in English. The course has been designed to meet the needs of non-native English speakers who wish to develop their English language competences and be able to communicate in an academic environment.

1.3.4. IT courses

- **Vocational IT Course WEB DESIGN AND DIGITAL MEDIA**



Programme of the vocational 6-month or 12-month course allows you to gain the skills required to work as an expert in the field of web design and digital media. Web sites are becoming more advanced and utilize the latest multimedia, e-commerce and advanced engagement tools to draw traffic. Practical skills gained during study, include:

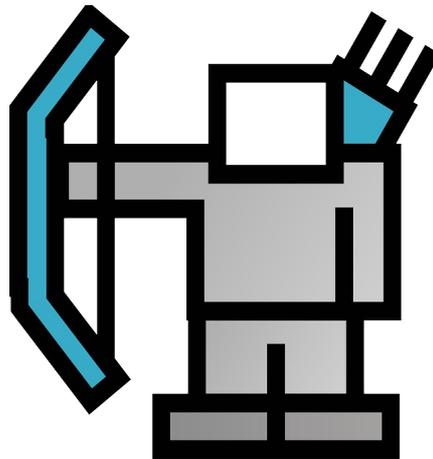
- planning the websites
- web page construction
- digital media
- graphic design

- programming
- visualisation
- advanced web development

The course plan includes the following industry issues:

- Principles of computer networks
- Graphic design
- Planning the website
- Principles of programming
- Building the website
- SEO optimization
- Mobile programming
- Content marketing
- Web analytics
- Internet advertising
- e-marketing
- Copywriting and translations
- Legal aspects on e-marketing
- Database systems
- Human computer interactions
- Programming for web applications
- Advanced web development
- Mobile applications

- **Vocational IT Course GAME DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING**



Programme of the vocational course allows you to gain the skills required to work as the programmer in the field of game design and programming. The programme blends the disciplines of visual design, video, animation, game programming, game design and 3D modelling and motion capture. Practical skills gained during study, include:

- creating the computer/video games
- principles of game design
- applied ludology
- strategic and educational games
- 3D modelling and texturing
- game technology
- game engine architecture
- game production
- mobile games development
- creative tools and methods

The course plan includes the following industry issues:

- Introduction to programming
- Strategic and educational games
- Game systems
- Game technology
- Game history
- Game architecture
- Visual communication for game design
- Computer law and cyber security
- Graphics and animations
- Modelling and texturing
- 3D Graphics
- Game engine architecture
- Sound and music processing
- Human computer interactions
- Artificial intelligence for simulations
- Aesthetic interactions
- Game marketing and PR
- Computer ethics
- Projects.

1.4 Assistance and services for foreigners

Within the framework of our programme for foreigners we offer support including integration, legalization of stay, education and vocational trainings. We assist also in other matters related to stay in Poland.

1.4.1 Legalization of stay in Poland

Legalization of stay in Poland relates to the following possibilities:

- Temporary residence registration
- Obtaining PESEL number
- Residence permit for education/TRC
- Permanent residence permit
- Long-term EU residence permit
- Assistance in preparing of documents in Polish

Our assistance in obtaining TRC/Karta pobytu as the most often needed, includes:

- 1) Consultation on requirements for TRC/Karta pobytu for study or for vocational trainings.
- 2) Preparing the application in Polish language with checking the required attachments, ready to submit to the Office for Foreigners.
- 3) Assistance in booking an appointment in the Office for Foreigners.
- 4) Final consultation on the further proceedings.

1.4.2 Immigrant Integration Programme



Integrating activity includes:

- adaptive training after arrival to Poland (people, culture, history, traditions),
- instruction on formal and legal matters (administrative offices, residence, transport),
- access to information (accommodation, employment, system of education, study),
- cultural integration events with Polish people and other foreign nations,
- preparing the e-guide providing detailed information on living in Poland

2. POLAND – ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

2.1 The Republic of Poland

Official name of the country	The Republic of Poland (short form: Poland) <i>Rzeczpospolita Polska</i> (short form in Polish: <i>Polska</i>)
Capital city	Warsaw (<i>Warszawa</i>)
Official language	Polish
Total area	312 679 sq km
Population total	38 645 240 (1 st January 2019)
Currency	1 złoty (PLN) = 100 groszy (current exchange rates: www.nbp.pl)
GDP per capita	15 424 USD (2018)
Calling code	+48; Internet domain: .pl

Flag of the Republic of Poland



The flag of Poland is made of two horizontal parts; the upper one is white, the lower one is red.

Polish National Emblem



The white eagle wearing a crown is the symbol of Poland appearing on the country's national emblem. White-tailed and golden eagles, living in the mountain areas, are very rare and strictly protected.

Warsaw



2.2. Territory and geography

Poland lies in Central Europe, between East and West of the continent. The vertical line north-south and horizontal one west-east intersect on the territory of Poland making Warsaw, capital of Poland, a very centre of the European continent.

Map of Europe



Poland is a medium size country with a total area of 312 679 sq km and is the ninth largest country in Europe. Through the ages its territory has been changing many times. In the 16th - 18th century the territory was even 1 million sq km large, to be partitioned by Russia, Austria and Prussia later on, disappearing from the maps of Europe for 123 years.

Poland got part of its territories back after independence from 1918 but the shape of the present land was determined after the World War II. Due to the post-war conferences, Poland lost around 20% of its previous territory. At present the borders of the country are determined by the Baltic Sea coastline on the north, Carpathian Mountains on the south, River Bug on the east and River Oder on the west.

Poland has a border with Germany to the west, with Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia to the east and with Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south. The longest border of Poland's territory is with the Czech Republic (790 km long) and the shortest one with Lithuania (103 km).

Poland is divided into 16 voivodships:

1. The Voivodship of Cuiavia and Pomerania (Kujawsko – Pomorskie)
2. The Voivodship of Greater Poland (Wielkopolskie)
3. The Voivodship of Kielce (Świętokrzyskie)
4. The Voivodship of Lesser Poland (Małopolskie)
5. The Voivodship of Lower Silesia (Dolnośląskie)
6. The Voivodship of Lublin (Lubelskie)
7. The Voivodship of Lubusz (Lubuskie)
8. The Voivodship of Łódź (Łódzkie)
9. The Voivodship of Mazovia (Mazowieckie)
10. The Voivodship of Opole (Opolskie)
11. The Voivodship of Podlissia (Podlaskie)
12. The Voivodship of Pomerania (Pomorskie)
13. The Voivodship of Silesia (Śląskie)
14. The Voivodship of Sub-Carpathia (Podkarpackie)
15. The Voivodship of Western Pomerania (Zachodniopomorskie)
16. The Voivodship of Varmia and Masuria (Warmińsko-Mazurskie)

Administrative map of Poland



The largest Polish voivodship is Mazovia with Warsaw, the biggest city of Poland. The capital of Poland is Warsaw. Other major Polish cities are: Cracov, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Wrocław, Szczecin.

Poland is a low lying country. Its highest point is Mount Rysy in the Tatra Mountains (2499 m high). There are three main mountain ranges on the territory of Poland: Carpathian Mountains and Sudetes Mountains lying on the south and the shortest Holy Cross Mountains in the voivodship of Kielce.

The longest river in Poland is Vistula (1047 km long). There are two main Polish cities located on this river: Warsaw and Cracow. Other major rivers are: Oder, Warta, Narew, Pilica and Bóbr.

Poland has more than 9 000 lakes. The biggest Polish lake is Śniardwy in the Masuria region, and the deepest one is Lake Hańcza near the town of Suwałki.

2.3. Climate

Poland has a moderate climate, between maritima and continental, changing according to the time of the year. As the climate is variable there are problems with weather forecasting, especially in March and April. There can be observed six different seasons in Poland, apart from the typical European four seasons only, which are: early spring, spring, summer, autumn, early winter and winter.

Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter



Early spring is a typical season for Poland only, usually about one month long with daily temperatures from 0°C TO 5°C. Spring in Poland begins at the end of March and lasts for about two months with daily temperature from 5°C to 15°C. Summers are usually four months long and start in May with air temperatures above 20° C.

Autumn brings again colder days with average temperature from 5°C to 15°C. At this time leaves start falling of the trees. Early winter starts when the trees lose all their leaves and is a short period before real winter comes. Winter usually lasts until March with frost and snow.

In Poland the hottest month is July and the coldest one is January. Hot days appear from May to September and temperature exceeds 25° C. Sub-zero temperatures appear between November and March. The hottest region of Poland is Silesia and the coldest part is north-eastern Suwałki.

Winds in Poland are rather weak or moderate. Really strong winds appear at the seaside and in the mountains. Especially in the Tatra Mountains there is a very strong wind called *halny*. In Poland there are many cloudy days, especially in the lake districts and mountains.

2.4. Political system



Government	Parliamentary republic with multi-party system
Political system	Democracy
Political system defined by	Polish Constitution
Head of state	President
Head of government	Prime Minister
Parliament	Bicameral: consisting of two chambers: Lower House: <i>Sejm</i> Senate: <i>Senat</i>
Presidential elections	President chosen in popular vote for a five-year term
Prime Minister elections	Appointed by the president and confirmed by the Sejm
Government elections	Both chambers chosen in popular vote for four-year term
Current President	Andrzej Duda
Current Prime Minister	Mateusz Morawiecki

2.5. History

Piast dynasty

The viability of the emerging state was assured by the early Piast leaders persistent territorial expansion, which beginning with a very small area around Gniezno, lasted throughout most of the 10th century, resulting in a territory approximating that of the present day Poland. The Polanie tribe conquered and merged with other Slavic tribes and formed a tribal federation and then a centralized state, which after the addition of Lesser Poland and Silesia stretched across most of what is now Poland.

The first mention of Mieszko I, the ruler of the Polan tribal union comes from the year 962. A pagan Duke, Mieszko in 965 married Dubrawka, a Czech Christian princess. Mieszko's 966 conversion to Christianity is considered by many to be the founding event of the Polish state. By 990, when Mieszko I officially submitted to the authority of the Holy See, he had transformed his country into one of the strongest powers in Eastern Europe.

Kazimierz (Casimir) the Great was the last of the Piast dynasty, considerably strengthened the country's position in both foreign and domestic affairs. Before his death in 1370, the heirless king arranged for his nephew, Louis of Hungary of the Angevin dynasty, to inherit the throne.

Jagiellonian Era

With the death of Casimir the Great the period of hereditary monarchy in Poland ended, as Casimir did not have any male heirs to succeed him. Between 1370 and 1493 was established a constitutional monarchy. During the reign of King Louis I, Poland formed a union with Hungary. The failure of this union paved the way for the union of Lithuania and Poland.

In 1385, the union was signed between Louis' daughter Jadwiga and the Grand Duke of Lithuania Ladislaus II, beginning the Polish – Lithuanian Union and strengthening both nations. Between 1386 and 1572 Poland and Lithuania were ruled by a succession of constitutional monarchs of the Jagiellon dynasty.

The first king of the new dynasty was the Grand Duke of Lithuania Ladislaus II Jogaila (Władysław Jagiełło) and the King of Poland. He was elected a King of Poland after becoming a Christian and marrying Jadwiga of Anjou, daughter of Louis I, who was Queen of Poland in her own right. Władysław Jagiełło was later the victor in the famous Grunwald Battle.

The Jagiellonian Era is often regarded as a period of maximum political power, great prosperity, and in its later stage the Golden Age of Polish culture.

Free elections of kings

During the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the 16th century, Poland became an elective monarchy, in which the king was elected by the hereditary nobility. This king would serve as the monarch until he died, at which time the country would have another election. In 1572, the Polish King Sigismund II Augustus died without any heirs. The first such Polish royal election was held in 1573 and the winner was Henri of Valois (Henryk Walezy), who was the brother of the King of France. From 1569 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth suffered a series of Tatar invasions. From 1593 to 1654 several Cossack uprisings took place.

The elections of kings lasted until the Partitions of Poland. The elected king were: Henri of Valois, Stefan Batory, Zygmunt III Vasa, Władysław IV Vasa, Jan Kazimierz, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, Jan III Sobieski, Augustus II the Strong, Stanisław Leszczyński, Augustus III and Stanisław August Poniatowski.

Jan III Sobieski commanded the allied Relief of Vienna operation in 1683, which turned out to be the last great victory of the “Republic of Both Nations”. The last of the Polish kings, Stanisław August Poniatowski, was a controversial figure. On the one hand he was a driving force behind the substantial and constructive reform belatedly undertaken by the Commonwealth. On the other, by his weakness and lack of resolve, especially in dealing with imperial Russia, he doomed the reforms together with the country they were supposed to help.

By the beginning of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the largest European state, was little more than a pawn of its neighbours (the Russian Empire, Prussia and Austria) who interfered in its domestic politics almost at will.

With the coming of the Polish Enlightenment in the second half of the 18th century, the movement for reform and revitalization of the country made important gains, culminating in the adoption of the Constitution of May 3, the first modern codified constitution on the European continent. The reforms were viewed as dangerous by Poland's neighbours, who didn't want the rebirth of the strong Commonwealth.

Partitioned Poland

Polish independence ended in a series of Partitions (1772, 1793 and 1795) undertaken by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Russia gained most of the Commonwealth's territory including nearly all of the former Lithuania, Volhynia and Ukraine. Austria gained the populous southern region henceforth named Galicia-Lodomeria, after the Duchy of Halicz and Volodymyr.

In 1795 Austria also gained the land between Kraków and Warsaw, between the Vistula and Pilica rivers. Prussia acquired the western lands from the Baltic through Greater Poland to Kraków, as well as Warsaw and Lithuanian territories to the north-east and Podlasie.

With Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 converted most of the Duchy of Warsaw into the so-called Kingdom of Poland, ruled by the Russian tsar. After the January Rising of 1863 the Kingdom was fully integrated into Russia proper.

The opportunity for freedom appeared only after World War I, when the oppressing states were defeated or weakened by war and revolution.

Polish independence 1918 and Second Republic

World War I and the political turbulence that was sweeping Europe in 1914 offered the Polish nation hopes for regaining independence. By the end of World War I Poland had seen the defeat or retreat of all three occupying powers. On the outbreak of war the Poles found themselves conscripted into the armies of Germany, Austria and Russia, and forced to fight each other in a war that was not theirs.

Polish independence was proclaimed on November 3, 1918 and later confirmed by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The same treaty also gave Poland some territories annexed by the Germans and Austrians during the partitions. The post-war eastern borders of Poland were determined by Polish victory in the Polish-Soviet War.

From the mid 1920s to mid 1930s the Polish government was under the control of Józef Piłsudski, the politically-moderate war hero who had engineered the defeat of the Soviet forces. Polish independence had boosted the development of culture, but Poland was hit hard by the Great Depression. The new Polish state had had only 20 years of relative stability and uneasy peace before Poland's aggressive neighbours tried to wipe her from the map of Europe again.

In 1939, under constant threat from Germany, Poland entered into a full military alliance with Britain and France. In August, Germany and Russia signed a secret agreement concerning the future of Poland, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

World War II

On August 23, 1939 Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Ribbentrop-Molotov non-aggression pact, which secretly provided for the dismemberment of Poland into Nazi and Soviet-controlled zones.

On September 1, 1939 Hitler ordered his troops into Poland. On September 17 the Soviet troops invaded and took control of most of the areas of eastern Poland having significant Ukrainian and Belarusian populations under the terms of this agreement. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Poland was completely occupied by German troops. The Poles formed an underground resistance movement and a Polish government in exile, first in Paris and later in London.

During the war around 6 million Polish citizens were killed by the Germans. And 2.5 million were deported to Germany for forced labour or to extermination camps such as Oświęcim-Brzezinka. In 1941-1943 Ukrainian nationalists massacred more than 100 000 Poles in Galicia and Volhynia. In April 1943 the Soviet Union broke relations with the Polish government in exile after the German military announced that they had discovered mass graves of murdered Polish army officers at Katyń.

Poland lost 38% of its national assets (Britain lost 0.8%, France lost 1.5%). Half of the pre-war Poland was expropriated by the Soviet Union, including the two great cultural centres of Lwów and Wilno. Many Poles could not return to their country for which they had fought because they belonged to the “wrong” political group, or came from pre-war eastern Poland incorporated into the Soviet Union, or having fought in the West were warned not to return because of the high risk of persecution. Others were arrested, tortured and imprisoned by the Soviet authorities for belonging to the Home Army, or persecuted because of having fought on the western front.

Communist regime

In June 1945, following the February Yalta Conference, the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity was formed. The US recognized it the next month. Although the Yalta agreement called for free elections, those held in January 1947 were controlled by the Communist Party. The communists then established a regime entirely under their domination.

In October 1956, after the 20th Soviet Party Congress in Moscow ushered in destalinization and riots by workers in Poznań ensued, there was a shakeup in the communist regime. While retaining most traditional communist economic and social aims, the regime of First Secretary Władysław Gomułka began to liberalize internal Polish life.

In 1968 that trend was reversed when student demonstrations were suppressed and anti-zionist campaign initially directed against Gomułka supporters within the party eventually led to the emigration of much of Poland's remaining Jewish population. In December 1970, disturbances and strikes in the port cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Szczecin, triggered by a price increase for essential consumer goods, reflected deep dissatisfaction with living and working conditions in the country. Edward Gierek replaced Gomułka as First Secretary.

Fueled by large infusions of Western credit, Poland's economic growth rate was one of the world's highest during the first half of the 1970s. But much of the borrowed capital was misspent, and the centrally planned economy was unable to use the new resources effectively. The growing debt burden became insupportable in the late 1970s, and economic growth had become negative by 1979.

In October 1978, the Archbishop of Kraków, Cardinal Karol Józef Wojtyła, became Pope John Paul II, head of the Roman Catholic Church. Polish Catholics rejoiced at the elevation of a Pole to the papacy and greeted his June 1979 visit to Poland with an outpouring of emotion.

On July 1, 1980, with the Polish foreign debt at more than 20 billion USD, the government made another attempt to increase meat prices. A chain reaction of strikes virtually paralyzed the Baltic coast by the end of August and, for the first time, closed most coal mines in Silesia. Poland was entering into an extended crisis that would change the course of its future development.

On 31 August 1980, workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, led by an electrician named Lech Wałęsa, signed a 21-point agreement with the government that ended their strike. Similar agreements were signed at Szczecin and in Silesia. The key provision of these agreements was the guarantee of the worker's right to form independent trade unions and the right to strike. After the Gdańsk agreement was signed, a new national union movement "Solidarity" swept Poland. The discontent underlying the strikes was intensified by revelations of widespread corruption and mismanagement within the Polish state and party leadership.

Alarmed by the rapid deterioration of the PZPR's authority following the Gdańsk agreement, the Soviet Union proceeded with a massive military buildup along Poland's border in December 1980. In February 1981, Defense Minister Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski assumed the position of Prime Minister, and in October 1981, was named First Secretary of the Communist Party. At the first Solidarity national congress in September – October 1981, Lech Wałęsa was elected national chairman of the union.

On December 12-13, 1981 the regime declared martial law, under which the army and ZOMO riot police were used to crush the union. Virtually all Solidarity leaders and many affiliated intellectuals were arrested or detained. The United States and other Western countries responded to martial law by imposing economic sanctions against the Polish regime and against the Soviet Union.

In December 1982, martial law was suspended, and a small number of political prisoners were released. Although martial law formally ended in July 1983 and a general amnesty was enacted, several hundred political prisoners remained in jail.

In July 1984, another general amnesty was declared, and two years later, the government had released nearly all political prisoners. The authorities continued, however, to harass dissidents and Solidarity activists. Solidarity remained proscribed and its publications banned. Independent publications were censored. In late 1980s the government was forced to negotiate with Solidarity in the Polish Roundtable Negotiations. The Polish legislative elections in 1989 became one of the important events marking the fall of communism in Poland.

The Third Republic

The government's inability to forestall Poland's economic decline led to waves of strikes across the country in April, May and August 1988. The “round-table” talks with the opposition began in February 1989. These talks produced an agreement in April for partly-open National Assembly elections. The failure of the communists at the polls produced a political crisis. The round-table agreement called for a communist president, and on July 19, the National Assembly, with the support of a number of Solidarity deputies, elected General Wojciech Jaruzelski to that office. However, two attempts by the communists to form governments failed.

On August 19, 1989 President Jaruzelski asked journalist and Solidarity activist Tadeusz Mazowiecki to form a government; on September 12, the Sejm voted approval of Prime Minister Mazowiecki and his cabinet. For the first time in more than 40 years, Poland had a government led by noncommunists.

In December 1989, the Sejm approved the government's reform program to transform the Polish economy rapidly from centrally planned to free-market, amended the constitution to eliminate references to the “leading role” of the Communist party, and renamed the country the “Republic of Poland”. The Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party dissolved itself in January 1990, creating in its place a new party, Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland.

In the early 1990s, Poland made great progress towards achieving a fully democratic government and a market economy. Lech Wałęsa was elected President for a 5-year term. In 1993 the Soviet Northern Group of Forces finally left Poland. In May 2004 Poland joined the European Union.

2.6 Polish economy

The economy of Poland is the sixth largest economy in the European Union. Since 1990 Poland has pursued a policy of economic liberalization and its economy was the only one in the European Union to avoid a recession through the 2007-2008 economic downturn.



As of 2019 the Polish economy has been growing steadily for the past 28 years, a record high in the EU. Such growth has been exponential, with GDP per capita at purchasing power parity growing on average by 6% p.a. over the last 20 years, the most impressive performance in Central Europe. The analysts see growth at 4,2% in 2019 and 3,5% in 2020.

Poland is classified as a high-income economy by the World Bank and ranks 21st worldwide in terms of GDP as well as 24th in the 2017 Ease of Doing Business Index. Poland is a developed country in Central Europe and is ranked 44 out of 198 based on GDP per capita.

Polish positive economic reputation was earned through structural reforms: trade liberalization, low taxes, and business-friendly regulations.

Labour market and foreigners in Poland

Poland has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe but is struggling to find labour. In September 2019 the unemployment rate came in 5.8%. The decline in the unemployment rate is a result of economic progress and of the fact, that the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Poles to other EU countries. Poland is now looking to foreign countries to find the workers it needs. The gap in the labour market has far proved. As competition among firms for workers has increased, salaries have started to rise.

In 2019, there are 400,000 foreigners living on a permanent basis in Poland. Although a significant hike compared to the previous years, foreign-born nationals still roughly account for only 1% of Poland's population, compared to 5% in Czech Republic, for instance.

According to official data (Office for Foreigners), most of the foreigners come to Poland for work-related residence permit, and are mostly men aged below 40. Over half of them are aged between 20 and 39 years old, and 31% aged 40 to 59.

Ukrainians account for half of foreigners in Poland, with nearly 200,000 having been granted long-term residence in the country. Second biggest foreign-born community, Belorussians total at 23,000. Other sizable foreign-born communities in Poland includes citizens from Vietnam (12,000), India (9,600), China (8,700), Italy (8,400), the UK (6,000) and Spain (5,800). Although still relatively few, Indians are the third fastest-growing foreign community in Poland after Ukrainians and Belorussians, and followed by Georgians.

2.7 Polish culture

For many centuries the Polish culture was influenced by east and west. It resulted in a unique style and is visible in Polish architecture: castles, palaces, fortresses, houses and churches; in Polish art and literature having its unique character and changing in different periods of time. Most famous Polish artists:

- Painters: Jan Matejko, Stanisław Witkiewicz, Józef Chełmoński, Jacek Malczewski, Stanisław Wyspiański
- Writers: Jan Kochanowski, Juliusz Słowacki, Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Zygmunt Krasiński, Witold Gombrowicz, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, Stanisław Lem, Ryszard Kapuściński
- Classic composers: Fryderyk Chopin, Krzysztof Penderecki, Witold Lutosławski
- Film music composers: Wojciech Kilar, Jan Kaczmarek, Zbigniew Preisner
- Film directors: Roman Polański, Krzysztof Zanussi, Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Agnieszka Holland, Paweł Pawlikowski

Polish Nobel prize winners in the area of literature:

Henryk Sienkiewicz (literature, 1905), Władysław Reymont (literature, 1924), Czesław Miłosz (literature, 1980), Wisława Szymborska (literature, 1996), Olga Tokarczuk (literature, 2018).

Polish Oscar winners:

Zbigniew Rybczyński for the animated film *Tango* (1982), Janusz Kamiński for Cinematography (1993), Allan Starski and Ewa Braun for Art Direction/Set Decoration for the film *Schindler's list* (1993), Andrzej Wajda for lifetime achievement (1999), Roman Polański for Best Director for *The Pianist* (2002), Jan A.P. Kaczmarek for best Soundtrack for *Finding Neverland* (2005), Paweł Pawlikowski for the Best Foreign Language Film *Ida* (2015).

2.8 Famous Poles

Pope John Paul II (1920 – 2005)



Pope John Paul II was born as Karol Wojtyła in 1920 in a Polish family. He completed his studies at Jagiellonian University in Cracow in Polish Philology. During the studies he was a member of literary, poetry and theatre groups giving performances. His studies were interrupted by the Second World War in 1939. During the war time he worked as labourer in a quarry and in the chemical plant. However, he did not stop his theatrical activities, establishing theatre *Teatr Rapsodyczny* and organizing secret performances.

Still during the war time in 1942 Karol Wojtyła joined the undercover catholic seminary in Cracow and started his studies at the faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University keeping it deep secret as Polish priests were persecuted by Germans. He continued his studies and work after the war and in 1946 was ordained for the priest and celebrated his first mass in Wawel Cathedral in Cracow. Working at the church and among the ordinary people, priest Karol Wojtyła never gave up his interests and working among the youth he set up amateur theatre workshop for the children and the choir.

He completed his PhD degree in Theology at the Jagiellonian University. In 1958 he was appointed an auxiliary Bishop of Wawel Cathedral in Cracow, and then in 1964 he became Archbishop of Cracow; a very important position in catholic church of Poland. On 16th October 1978 Karol Wojtyła was chosen for the pope by the Vatican conclave, as the first non-Italian pope after 455 years, and adopted the name John Paul II.

In 1981 during the ceremony in Rome, a Turkish assassin took attempt to shoot the pope. John Paul II sustained dangerous injuries and survived to forgive the assassin just right after. John Paul II created many famous works writing about love and respect for the human being and was giving the proof of his concern for the ordinary people during his many pilgrimages. He visited more than 100 countries propagating ideas of love and tolerance. He established a dialogue with all the major religions aiming at peace and mutual understanding. John Paul II died on 2 April 2005.

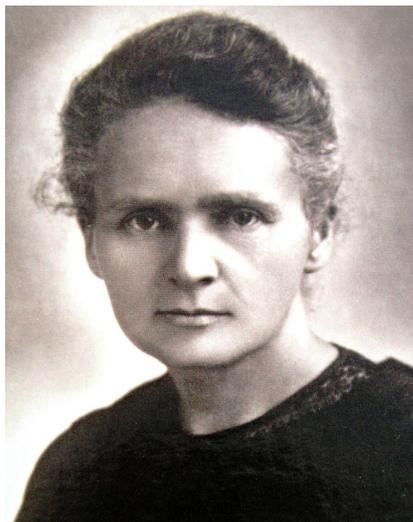
Fryderyk Chopin (1810 – 1849)



Fryderyk Chopin, born in Żelazowa Wola, was a great virtuoso pianist and the most famous Polish piano composer of classical music. Most of his life he spent abroad, mainly in France, as he had to leave the country due to the suppression of the Polish November Uprising organized against the Russian forces occupying Poland. He never came back to Poland dieing in Paris in 1849. His last wish was to have his heart removed back to Poland. And it happened, his body was buried in Paris but the heart was brought back by Chopin's sister and placed in the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw.

The concerts, sonatas, waltzes and polonaises created by Fryderyk Chopin became world wide known having a strong influence on the music of the end of 19th and early 20th centuries.

Maria Skłodowska – Curie (1867-1934)



Maria Skłodowska – Curie (Madame Curie) was born and brought up in Warsaw and studied in France, where she got married to Pierre Curie. From the University of Paris she obtained the master's degree in mathematics and later doctoral degree becoming the first female professor at that university and the first woman in France to complete a doctorate.

She concentrated her work on studying radioactive materials. Together with her husband Pierre Curie she discovered chemical element which she called polonium in honor of the country she was from, Poland and also another chemical element which they called radium.

For their effort on research of radiation together with Henri Becquerel, Maria and Pierre Curie three together were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903. In 1911 Maria Skłodowska – Curie again was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discovering two chemical elements: polonium and radium and for extraction of pure radium.

Maria Skłodowska – Curie was one of two persons only that were awarded the Nobel Prize in two different fields of science, and the only women in the history that won two Nobel Prizes. She died in France in 1934 from anemia caused by the long exposure to radiation. In 1935 Irene Joliot, a daughter of Maria Skłodowska – Curie and Pierre Curie followed the path of her parents and won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discovering that aluminum can be radioactive.

Adam Mickiewicz (1798 – 1855)



Adam Mickiewicz was the greatest Polish poet. He completed his studies at the University of Vilnius. During his students times he got involved with a secret Polish-Lithuanian freedom organization as Poland and Lithuania were under the rules of Russian Empire. Due to his political activities he was arrested and banished to Russia for a few years and then he emigrated to France.

Escaping Russian censorship which did not allow for patriotic writing, Adam Mickiewicz reflected in a hidden form the situation of Poland and Lithuania being under the Russian oppression, creating: 'Konrad Wallenrod', 'Forefathers Eve', 'Pan Tadeusz', "Grażyna" having a strong influence on Polish minds and hearts. He died suddenly in Constantinople in 1855 while organizing a Polish legion against Russia. His body was removed and buried first in France and then in Poland in the Wawel Cathedral in Cracow among kings and the greatest people of the Polish nation.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)



Nicolaus Copernicus was a world famous astronomer of Polish nationality, born in the city of Toruń. He studied medicine at few universities: in Cracow, in Bologna, Padua and Ferrara. He was also cartographer, economist, physician and public administrator of the King of Poland.

Nicolaus Copernicus was a great scientist of his times. He was the first person in the history presenting a theory of the heliocentric Solar System claiming that all the planets are circling around the sun. He presented this theory in his famous work 'On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres'.

Adam Małysz (born 1977)



Adam Małysz is a Polish former famous ski jumper. In ski jumping he competed from 1995 to 2011, and is one of the most successful athletes in the history of the sport. His many accomplishments include 4 World Cup titles, 4 individual Winter Olympic medals, 4 individual World Championship gold medals, 39 individual World Cup competition wins, 96 World Cup podiums (individual and team). He is also a winner of the Four Hills Tournament, the three-time winner of the Nordic Tournament, and a former ski flying world record holder.

After retiring from ski jumping, Adam Małysz competed in the Dakar Rally in 2012, 2013 and 2014 finishing 37th, 15th and 13th respectively. He currently acts as a director-coordinator of ski jumping and Nordic combined at the Polish Ski Federation.

2.9 Tourist attractions

Poland is a country of variety, with mountains in the north and sea in the south, big cities with restaurants, theatres and clubs, historical old towns and small country villages. Poland is a safe and friendly country where people are open and hospitable, which results in increasing number of foreign visitors.

Cracow

The Wawel Castle



Cracow is one of the oldest Polish cities. It used to be a leading centre of art, culture and science as well as a former capital of Poland. Cracow's historic centre including the Old Town, Kazimierz and the Wawel Castle, have been listed as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The most famous landmarks of Cracow are: Collegium Maius of the Jagiellonian University, the old Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, main Market Square dated from the Middle Ages, Planty Park, St. Florian Gate, St. Mary's Basilica, Sukiennice Cloth hal, the Wawel Castle and the Wawel Cathedral, the Zygmunt Bell.

The Market Square is the biggest mediaeval square in Europe concentrating the city life here ages ago and at present. The square is occupied by the pigeons flying over the heads of the visitors. In the middle of the square there is located Sukiennice Cloth Hall being a trade centre a few ages ago and now offering all kinds of the souvenirs to the tourists. Very close to the this old square there is the royal Castle on Wawel Hill at the river Vistula which was a residence of the Polish kings. Very often visited place is also Kazimierz – a Jewish quarter from the 14th century with one of the most valuable Jewish architecture.

Cracow is also one of the biggest students' centres in Poland. There is located one of the oldest European universities there – the Jagiellonian University, founded in 1364. Apart from its many historical landmarks, the city offers to its visitors various big city entertainments. Cracow is known from its hundreds of different cafes, restaurants, pubs and clubs.

Warsaw

Warsaw, located in the center of the country on the river Vistula, is the capital of Poland and seat of the Polish government. The symbol of the city is a mermaid with a sword. The city has not as long as Cracow but also interesting history. It was almost completely destroyed during World War II. Most of its valuable landmarks are the result of the post-war reconstruction.

The Old Town of Warsaw



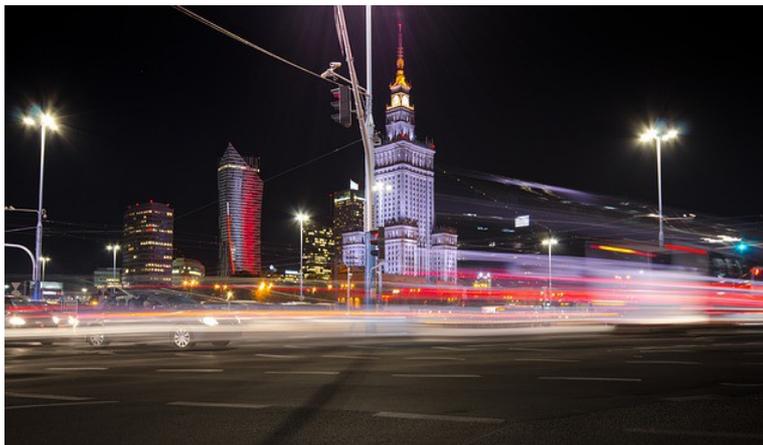
On the UNESCO list there is the Old Town of Warsaw. The Old Town is colourful, full of colourful houses, churches and narrow streets. There is located the Royal Castle being a museum now and King Sigismund's Column in front of it. There are even the whole streets reconstructed. The most famous include Krakowskie Przedmieście and Nowy Świat with short old-stylish colourful buildings, friendly outdoor cafes and gourmet restaurants very popular with walking tourists and the citizens of Warsaw.

The Royal Castle is a castle residency that formerly served throughout the centuries as the official residency of the Polish monarchs. Burned and looted by the Nazi Germans following the invasion in 1939 and almost completely destroyed in 1944 after the failed Warsaw Uprising, the castle was completely rebuilt and reconstructed. Reconstruction of the castle carried out in 1971-1984.

In 1980, the Royal Castle, together with the Old Town was registered as a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today it is a historical and national monument, and is listed as a national museum visited by over 500,000 people every year. The Royal Castle in Warsaw, due to its iconic appearance and its long history, is one of Warsaw's most recognizable landmarks.

There are many beautiful parks in the city. The biggest one is Łazienki Park, created in the 18th century. This park is famous for its Castle on the water and monument of Fryderyk Chopin, a famous Polish composer. Every Sunday in the summer there are organized piano concerts in front of the monuments. Another beautiful park together with a palace is Wilanów Park and Palace being a former residence of king Jan III Sobieski. There is also Powązki Cemetery worth visiting while being in Warsaw – one of the oldest cemeteries in Europe serving different religious groups: Catholics, Jews, Muslims and Protestants.

Palace of Culture and Science



The most famous building of Warsaw is Palace of Culture and Science located in the very center. This is a socrealist skyscraper built in 1950s according to some Soviet design. With a total height of 237 metres it is the tallest building in Poland and one of the tallest on the European continent. Constructed in 1955, it houses various public and cultural institutions such as cinemas, theaters, libraries, sport clubs, university faculties. The building also serves as an exhibition center and office complex.

Copernicus Science Centre



Copernicus Science Centre is a science museum standing on the bank of the Vistula river in Warsaw. It contains over 450 interactive exhibits that enable visitors to single-handedly carry out experiments and discover the laws of science for themselves. The Centre is the largest institution of its type in Poland and one of the most advanced in Europe. Since its opening, it had been visited by over 8 million people.

The first module of the Centre building was opened in 2010 with five galleries: On the Move, Humans and the Environment, Roots of Civilization, Lightzone, Bzzz! - gallery for preschool children. In the year 2011 were opened: the exhibit for teenagers – RE: generation, a planetarium The Heavens of Copernicus, the Discovery Park, chemistry laboratory, biology laboratory, robotics workshop and physics laboratory.

The Heavens of Copernicus is a modern planetarium where you can see more than just images of the starry sky and related films. The shows concern a variety of popular science issues, including from the field of astronomy, natural science and ethnography.

Warsaw is not only a place of historical landmarks but mainly a business heart of Poland with modern glass skyscrapers, headquarters of the biggest international companies, huge shopping malls, stock exchange, banks and luxurious apartments.

Toruń

The Old Town in Toruń



Toruń is another Polish city listed as UNESCO World heritage Site due to its architecture dating back to the Middle Ages. There are many Gothic buildings, churches and military structures. One of the most representative old buildings is Toruń's Town Hall built in the 13th century and being one of the oldest in Central Europe. There are also in Toruń various Gothic churches among which the best known one is the Cathedral of St. John the evangelist and John the Baptist, built in the 14th century.

Another tourist attraction is the military fortress with city gates and watchtowers with the most famous Learning Tower at Vistula river. Toruń is also famous of being the birthplace famous astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus. The Gothic house where he was born open to the visitors. Also the whole Old Town itself is worth visiting, especially at night.

Częstochowa – the spiritual capital of Poland

The Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa, is a famous Polish shrine to the Virgin Mary and one of the country's places of pilgrimage. The image of the Black Madonna in Częstochowa, also known as Our Lady of Częstochowa, to which miraculous powers are attributed, is one of Jasna Góra's most precious treasures.

Jasna Góra Monastery was founded in 1382 by Pauline monks who came from Hungary at the invitation of Władysław, Duke of Opole. The monastery has been a pilgrimage destination for hundreds of years, and it contains an important icon of the Virgin Mary. The icon, depicting the Mother of God with the Christ Child is known as the Black Madonna of Częstochowa or our Lady of Częstochowa, which is widely venerated and credited with many miracles. Among these, it is credited with miraculously saving the Jasna Góra monastery during the Siege of Jasna Góra that took place at the time of The Deluge, a 17th-century Swedish invasion.

Jasna Góra Monastery



The Poles could not immediately change the course of the war, but after an alliance with the Crimean Khanate, they repulsed the Swedes. Shortly thereafter, in the cathedral of Lwów (Lviv), on April 1, 1656, Jan Kazimierz, the King of Poland, solemnly pronounced his vow to consecrate the country to the protection of the Mother of God and proclaimed Her the Patron and Queen of the lands in his kingdom.

In the most difficult moments of history, the Poles go to her, whom they chose for the Protectress of the Nation. Pilgrims went to Jasna Góra even during the partitions, occupation and communist regime. In free Poland, pilgrims go to the Mother of Jasna Góra in numerous pilgrimages – walking, cycling, motorcycling – to entrust to Mary their personal and national intentions.

It is estimated that 4 million pilgrims from Poland and the countries around the world visit yearly the sanctuary of Black Madonna in groups and individually. The pilgrimage peak falls on July and August when pilgrims in over 40 diocesan and several dozen regional pilgrimages walk to Jasna Góra.

The Seaside – Baltic Sea

Poland has one of the longest coasts in the whole Europe at the Baltic Sea in the north of the country. There are clean sandy beaches with almost no one being there, or coastal tourist villages offering all the facilities for the visitors. There are spa resorts, luxurious hotels, guesthouses, student hostels and bed and breakfast rooms for rent. Everyone can find something for oneself there: sandy beaches with clean sea, children entertainment on the beach, wild forests on the cliffs, local pubs or discos, colourful promenades in the villages, small harbours with lighthouses and traditional fishing industries. There are different sports facilities offered, including diving into the ships wrecks, sailing, ship cruises, fishing, horse-riding or cycling.

The most famous tourist villages at the seaside include: Łeba, Mielno, Międzyzdroje, Świnoujście, Ustka, Ustronie, Władysławowo. There are also cities, next to the tourist resorts, with old town centres and various landmarks and city attractions, such as: Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot, Szczecin.

Baltic Sea is also known from one more thing: amber. A precious brownish or golden stone which can be collected from any beach, especially after the storm in the early morning.

Sopot

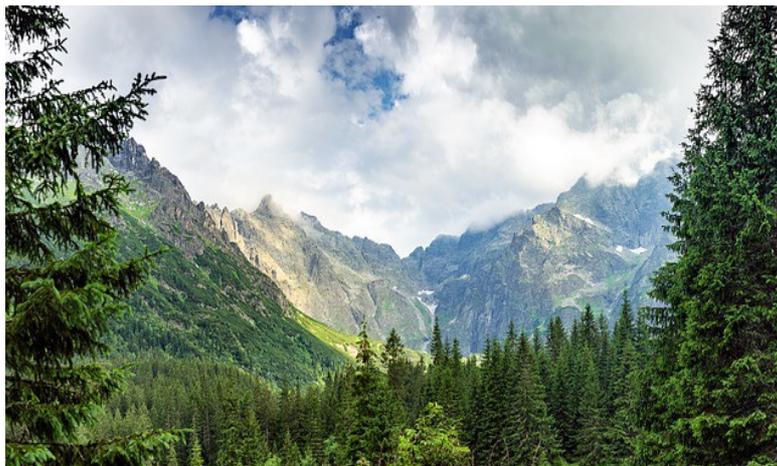


Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot are three cities next to each other called 'Threecity'. Gdańsk is famous for its very long old street called 'Long Street' and long market located along this street and Arthur's Court. Gdynia is well known of its port and Westerplatte – military area famous from the World War II.

There are two national parks on the Polish coast of Baltic Sea: The Wolin Park and the Słowiński Park. The Wolin Park is placed in the area of the biggest Polish island on the sea – Wolin. The Słowiński National Park, listed on the UNESCO list of the World Biosphere Reserves, is famous for its huge shifting sand dunes, the biggest in the Central Europe.

The Tatra Mountains

Morskie Oko



Tatra Mountains is the highest mountain chain in Poland, right on the Polish border with Slovakia, being a part of the Carpathian range. The highest peak is Rysy – 2499 m high. Tatras are well known for its alpine landscape and beautiful valleys: Chochołowska and Kościeliska Valleys are worth visiting. In Tatras there can be also found the highest waterfall in Poland – Wielka Siklawa – 70 m high.

Hidden among the mountains there are several beautiful lakes, with the best known Valley of Five Polish Lakes. The biggest lake is Morskie Oko. In summer this is a great place for trekking and in winter for skiing. Zakopane is known as 'winter capital' of Poland. There live ethnographic groups of highlanders continuing their old customs and traditions. They are very open to the tourists greeting all the passing travellers. Tatras are best known Polish mountains and favourite ones of the Pope John Paul II.

Masuria – a land of thousands lakes

Masuria



Masuria, a naturally beautiful region is on the north-eastern side of the country, with thousand lakes and large forests. The biggest Polish lake is there, called Lake Śniardwy, 113 sq km large, giving the impression of a sea while looking at it from the coast. Lovers of canoeing or sailing can find their place at one of the beautiful lakes as most of them are connected with rivers and canals. In the Masuria region there is also Pisz Forest, a good example of unspoilt nature. As forests are full of mushrooms, very popular in this region is their picking in the autumn season. In the small villages there are traditional taverns serving fresh fish where sailors' songs can be heard.

In Masuria region there are many young people spending summer in a tent. Most popular tourist places are: Giżycko, Mikołajki or Węgorzewo. The biggest city of Masuria region is Elbląg. One of its biggest tourist attractions is Elbląg Canal where boat cruises are organized on.

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Auschwitz-Birkenau during the World War II was a death camp organized in German-occupied southern Poland by the Nazis Germany, the biggest concentration camp. The camp consisted of three main parts: administrative, extermination and work camp. There were murdered thousands of Poles, Jews and other European nations by Germans during the war.

It is estimated that even 2.5 million people died there. Most of the people were killed by the chemical gas; others died cause of hunger, diseases, medical experiments, hard work or executions. It was the main element of the Holocaust.



At present there is a museum organized there, reminding of the past of this place, listed by UNESCO as the World Heritage Site. The place is visited by thousands of tourists from all over the world. Visitors can see different remains, hair and bones of the victims, their personal belongings, buildings they were living in. Over the main gate there is still the same sentence: "Work makes you free".

3. STAY REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGNERS

3.1. Visa requirements

The two main documents you will need to enter Poland if you are not a EU citizen are a valid travel document (passport) and a visa (if required). As a general rule you need a visa to enter Poland. There are, however, a number of countries that are free of this requirement. You can check if your country is on the list here: <http://www.msz.gov.pl>

There are several types of visas to choose from:

- „A” type – an airport transit Schengen visa, so it cannot be used by a student coming to Poland.
- „C” type – a short-term Schengen visa allowing the holder to stay in the Schengen territory for up to 90 days in 180 days period.
- „D” type – a long-term **national visa** issued for up to one year allowing travel around the Schengen area for up to 90 days in a 180 days period. A visa can only be extended in exceptional situations. Should you need to stay in Poland longer than specified in your visa please do apply for the temporary residence permit.

Poland is a part of the Schengen zone. **The Schengen Area** is an area comprising European states that have officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders. The area mostly functions as a single jurisdiction for international travel purposes, with a common visa policy.

22 of the 28 EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) participate in the Schengen Area. Of the 6 EU members that are not part of the Schengen Area, 4 countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania – are legally obliged to join the area in the future, while the other 2 countries – Ireland and the United Kingdom – maintain opt-outs. The 4 EFTA member states – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – are not members of the EU, but have signed agreements in association with the Schengen Agreement. 3 European microstates that are not members of the European Union but which are enclaves or semi-enclave within an EU member state – Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City – are part of the Schengen Area.

• The EU citizens

If you are a citizen of an EU member state the only thing you need to have to enter Poland is a valid travel document or a document confirming identity and citizenship (i.e. your national ID). However, if you wish to go abroad during your stay in Poland it is a good idea to have a passport with you, as it is necessary to visit the Poland's neighbours that don't belong to the European Union.

For a stay shorter than 3 months there are no formal requirements. Your studies will however take more time. For such a stay a registration of residence is necessary. You should register with Voivodship (Provincial) Office.

• The non-EU citizens

Main steps to get a visa

- 1) Find a Polish consulate that can process your application. You can use the MFA's search engine <http://mfa.gov.pl>
- 2) Read carefully all the information concerning visa application on the consulate's website and follow all the instructions.
- 3) Set a visa appointment with the consulate. In most cases you will have to register through the website: <http://www.e-konsulat.gov.pl>
- 4) Prepare the necessary documents, including: application form, travel document (passport), biometric photo, health insurance, sufficient means to support yourself, documents confirming the purpose of your stay. The specifics of the required documentation may vary among consulates, so confirm them with the consulate's website.
- 5) Submit all the documents including a printed and signed application form and the visa fee. Your visa application is complete. It will take up to 15 days for it to be reviewed.

3.2. Temporary residence permit for study or vocational courses

Every Non-EU student needs Temporary Residence Permit. You should apply for a Temporary Residence Permit before your visa expires. When you receive the permit you will be issued a Temporary Residence Card, an ID card that proves that you have a residence permit. Together with your travel document it allows you to cross the Polish border as many times as you wish.

The first residence permit is issued for the period of 15 months. It can be renewed for periods of up to 3 years but for no longer than the remainder of your studies. You should apply for the Temporary Residence Card (TRC) when you are legally staying in Poland, which means after you arrive, but before the expiry of your visa.

TRC for study in Poland

In the case of the application for temporary residence permit/card (TRC) the following documents are required:

- 2 copies of the application for a temporary residence permit,
- a valid travel document (2 photocopies),
- confirmation from the university of acceptance for studies or continuation of studies,
- proof of payment of the required tuition fees, if they are payable,
- documents confirming having health insurance or coverage by the insurer of the cost of treatment in Poland,
- evidence of sufficient funds to cover the costs of living and return travel to the country of origin or residence and the cost of tuition,
- documents confirming having a place of residence in the territory of Poland,

- 4 recent colour photographs, undamaged, size 45x35 mm, made in the last six months on a plain white background, with good focus, clearly showing the eyes and face from the top of the head to the top of the shoulders; the face should occupy 70-80% of the photograph,
- confirmation of administrative fee payment (340 PLN)

TRC for vocational courses

Requirements and documents if you intend to take up or continue vocational trainings.

- 2 copies of the application for a temporary residence permit,
- 4 recent colour photographs, undamaged, size 45x35 mm, made in the last six months on a plain white background, with good focus, clearly showing the eyes and face from the top of the head to the top of the shoulders; the face should occupy 70-80% of the photograph,
- a valid travel document (2 photocopies),
- documents confirming having health insurance or coverage by the insurer of the cost of treatment in Poland,
- documents confirming having a stable and regular source of income sufficient to cover the costs of living for yourself and dependent family members,
- documents confirming having a place of residence in the territory of Poland,
- certificate confirming being enrolled in or continuing vocational training,
- confirmation of administrative fee payment (340 PLN).

3.3. Work permit

A work permit is issued by the Province Office (Urząd Wojewódzki) competent for the registered seat or the address of the employer who intends to employ the foreigner, or the seat of the entity where the foreigner is delegated.

The work permit is only issued upon the application submitted by the employer who intends to employ the foreigner. The work permit indicates:

- the name of employer,
- position and type of work,
- expiration date,
- the lowest possible remuneration that the employer may receive,
- working time or number of working hours in a week or month,
- type of contract being the basis for performing work
- period of validity of the permit

Work Permit type A - when the foreigner performs work on the territory of the Republic of Poland on the basis of the agreement with the entity, whose seat, place of residence or section, institution or other form of organized activity is localised on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

In order to get **Work Permit A**, you have to submit the following documents:

- application for issuing the work permit

- valid ID card or valid travel document, or in case of not having such a document and being unable to obtain one, other valid document confirming identity – in case when the legal entity providing work is a natural person,
- Company Foundation Deed – in case when the legal entity providing the foreigner with work is a limited liability company in the process of formation or a civil law partnership or notary deed of company foundation – in case when the legal entity providing the foreigner with work is a joint stock company in the process of formation,
- the copy of every filled in page from valid travel document of the foreigner concerned by the application, and in case, when the foreigner has no valid travel document and is unable to get one – a copy of other valid document confirming his or her identity,
- documents confirming fulfilling by the foreigner requirements referred to in Article 88c, Paragraph 8 of the Act – provisions about salary and information from PUP (Poviat Job Agency) are not applied in case of:
 - a) foreigners who had finished school or university with a seat on the territory of the Republic of Poland, other EEA country or Swiss Federation, within 3 years before submitting the application for issuing a Work Permit, or
 - b) foreigners, who had been legitimate residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland for 3 years previous to submitting of the application, with the exception of cases specified in Art. 110 of the Act of 13 June 2003 on foreigners, i.e. arrested foreigner, placed in a guarded centre, in a jail in order to be expelled, to whom a preventive measure have been used in the form of a ban on leaving the country or detained as a result of enforcement of judgements made pursuant to acts,
- information from the starost competent due to the main work location of the foreigner, on the legal entity ordering the work for the foreigner, confirming, that it has no possibility of having enough staff needed basing only on the unemployed and job seeking people register or on the negative result of recruitment organized for the employer, if this information had been provided not earlier than 180 days before the application was submitted, in case when such an information is required; In case when the kind of work makes specification of the main place of performing it impossible, the above information is provided by the starost competent due to the seat or place of residence of the employer,
- the document issued by the employer of the user, confirming the agreement on directing the foreigner by a temporary employment agency – in case when this agency is the entity providing the work,
- the proof of payment pursuant to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy Regulation of 10 December 2013 on the amount of payment made due to submitting an application for issuing a Work Permit for a foreigner (Dz. U of 2013, item 1644),
- documents confirming fulfilment of the requirements specified in separate regulations, which can influence the result of the proceedings,
- the original document of the letter of authority / mandate (in case when the employer does not apply in person)

Additional informations

- the copies of documents have to be enclosed to the application, however it is necessary to present their original versions,

- the work permit obtained by one employer is not applicable if the foreigner wants to start working in other workplace,
- the documents have to be signed by an authorized person,
- documents issued in the foreign language, with the exception of ID cards or travel documents, serving as proof in the proceeding for issuing a permit, are submitted together with their translation into Polish, made by a sworn translator,
- instead of the original document, a party can submit its certified copy, if it has been certified as true copy by a notary or by the proxy pleading in the party's case, being an attorney, legal advisor, patent lawyer or a tax advisor,
- the employer is obliged to pass one copy of the permit to the foreigner and include terms and conditions in a written agreement with the foreigner, including the amount of salary specified in the application for issuing the Permit,
- the employer has an obligation to sign an agreement with the foreigner and to register him or her for social insurance purposes,
- the employer has an obligation to make a copy of a document entitling the foreigner to stay in Poland and to keep it for the whole employment period,
- in case of changing any of the terms and conditions of employment, including also the case of an employee who stops performing his work or does not start performing it, it is necessary to inform the competent Voivod about this fact,
- the employer must apply for work permit prolongation no sooner than 90 days but no later than 30 days before the expiration date of a current work permit,
- the employer does not have to apply for a new work permit in the following cases:
 - a) change in the registered seat or address, company name or type of business entity as well as in the case of a takeover of the entire company or its part, transfer of the workplace or part of it to another employer or replacement of a civil law contract with an employment contract;
 - b) employment of the foreigner for a period not exceeding 30 days within a calendar year in a job of a different type or in a different position than that indicated in the work permit, provided that other conditions indicated in the work permit and requirements indicated in Article 88 of the Act are met;
 - c) situation when the employer reduces the foreigner's working time as referred to in the Act of 11 October 2013 on special solutions related to the jobs protection.
 - the work permit is issued for a fixed period of time but for not longer than 3 years and may be renewed. In the case of the foreigner who:
 - a) works as a member of the board of a legal person, who at the date of the submission of the application employs over 25 people, a work permit may be issued for a period of exceeding 5 years,
 - b) is delegated by a foreign employer to provide an export service, a work permit may be issued for the period of delegation.

4. SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN POLAND

4.1. International students in Poland

There are 72,743 (2018) foreign students from 170 countries studying in Poland. Foreign students currently make up 5.63% of the total number of students in the country. The upward trend has been maintained since 2005 (according to Foreign students in Poland: www.studyinpoland.pl).

Students from Ukraine and Belarus are dominant group at Polish universities. In the academic year 2017/2018, 37,829 Ukrainians and 6,044 Belarusians were studying in Poland. This is another increase in the number of students from these countries. It results, among others, from a similar culture, close neighborhood and Poland's membership in the EU.

Among other nationalities that decide to study in Poland are students from India, who rank third in the list of foreigners studying in Poland (2987), and from Spain (1889), Sweden (1160), Norwegien (1466), Turkey (1807), Czech Republic (1448) and Germany (1257).

The number of students from Asia increased, for example from Taiwan (853). Polish universities pay more and more attention to Chinese education market. Poland has 1164 visitors from China. There is also a growing number of students from Kazakhstan (796), Azerbaijan (479), Nepal (404), Thailand (216), Bangladesh (214) and Tajikistan (187). However students from Europe continue to be the main group studying at Polish universities. The number of students from the United States is on the same level as in the previous academic years. Currently, 768 Americans are studying in Poland, while the number of Canadians has increased (393). There are small numbers of students from Africa studying at Polish universities.

A rapid upward trend is observed, as far as students from India are concerned. Currently there are 2987 people from India studying in Poland. Another future market for Polish universities is Kazakhstan. In the academic year 2017/2018 there was 796 students from this country. Their number consistently grows from year to year. Despite the spectacular growth, there is still fewer percentage of foreign students studying in Poland in comparison to OECD countries.

4.2. Universities and higher vocational schools

The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Poland are divided into state (public) and private (non-public) institutions. There are two main categories of higher education institutions: university-type and non-university institutions (higher vocational schools). In the university-type HEIs, at least one unit is authorised to confer the academic degree (PhD), i.e. it offers at least one doctoral programme.

HEIs means a level education that is provided by universities, vocational universities, communit colleges, liberal arts colleges, institutes of technology and other collegiate level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools, that award academic degrees or professional certifications.

The types of the institution of higher education (HEIs) in Poland.

- 1) Universities of Technology
- 2) Medical Universities
- 3) Universities of Economics
- 4) Universities of Agriculture and Life Sciences

- 5) Universities of Pedagogy
- 6) Universities of Arts
- 7) Universities of Physical Education
- 8) Maritime Universities
- 9) Military HEIs
- 10) Government Service HEIs
- 11) Higher Schools of Professional Education
- 12) Church Higher Schools

Poland follows the Bologna scheme and most of its tertiary level programmes are made of two cycles: a three-year bachelor's degree followed by a two-year master's degree. Some master's degrees are however granted after a unique long-cycle programme, lasting between four and six years (pharmacy, medicine). Doctoral programmes are achieved in about three years. The diploma of primary school teachers requires three years of study within a teacher training college.

Academic education uses a numeric system of grades from 2 to 5. The highest grade is 5. The grading is done every semester (twice a year). Depending on the subject, the final grade may be based on the result of a single exam, or on the student's performance during the whole semester. As a failing grade (2) means merely having to repeat the failed subject, and can usually be corrected on a retake exam.

In addition to grading scale, there are HEIs in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) under which a certain number of credits are allocated to a given subject, independently of the grade awarded. To complete a year successfully, a student has to collect 30 credits per semester.

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is the standard adopted by all universities in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the process of convergence between Europe's higher education systems. Since 2007, all Polish higher education institutions have been required to use ECTS for both credit transfer and accumulation within their degree programmes. The ECTS credits allow foreign students' periods of study at HEIs in Poland to be recognised.

4.3. Work while studying

International students have the right to work while studying in Poland as long as they are enrolled in an institution. Students who are not nationals of EU member countries must also hold a valid residence permit. The students with the status of full-time study can undertake work without work permit. In other cases (part-time study) work permit will be needed.

The official minimum salary in Poland in the year 2019 is 2250 PLN (gross salary) or 14,70 PLN per hour. Poland has one of the highest minimum salaries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The average monthly salary in Poland in 2018 in Warsaw was around 6000 PLN, or approximately 1500 USD. In other important cities of Poland, the average salary is lower, in Cracow – around 5200 PLN, Wrocław 5100 PLN, Bydgoszcz 4200 PLN, Białystok – 3900 PLN.

5. LIVING IN POLAND

5.1. Accommodation



Warsaw is by far the most expensive city when it comes to renting a flat. The average cost of a medium size flat in the capital can reach even as high as 2800 PLN per month. The cheapest large city in Poland is Bydgoszcz with rents as low as 1300 PLN a month for a medium size flat.

Cost of accommodation in Warsaw

Rent per month in a shared flat (or dormitory)	400-800 PLN
Rent per month in apartment in city centre	2 600 PLN
Rent per month in apartment outside of centre	2 000 PLN

Useful links

Student House /www.student-house.pl

Student Depot /www.studentdepot.pl

Private dormitory /www.pokojstudenta.waw.pl

Dormitories /Osiedle Przyjaźń /www.osiedleprzyjazn.pl

Hostel Student House /www.eholiday.pl

Accommodation /www.nocowanie.pl

Student Campus /www.studiocampus.pl

5.2. Cost of living

In comparison to other European countries Poland is relatively cheap place to live and study. Prices depend greatly on the city, but a student can get by with about 300 EUR at their monthly disposal. Average cost of student living range from 350 EUR up to 550 EUR. It should be noted, that to be able to study in Poland non-EU/EEA students have to possess sufficient means to cover the living costs.

Below are some examples to give an idea of the amount spend per month.

Average monthly expenses

Rent in a shared flat (or dormitory)	80 – 150 EUR
Food	100 – 150 EUR
Transportation (in big cities)	15-20 EUR
Telephone/mobile/internet	20 – 30 EUR
Study materials	30-50 EUR
Other expenses (leisure/entertainment)	70-100 EUR

Other selected prices

bread (1 loaf)	0.80 EUR
milk (1 litre)	0.70 EUR
lunch at a canteen	3.00 EUR
coffee in a cafe	2.50 EUR
cinema ticket	5.00 EUR

Minimum salary in Poland in 2019 and 2020

Minimum salary from 1st January 2019 - 2250 PLN (gross)

Minimum wage rate from 1st January 2019 – 14,70 PLN per hour (gross)

New minimum salary from 1st January 2020 – 2600 PLN (gross)

New minimum wage rate from 1st January 2020 – 17 PLN per hour (gross)

Prices in PLN (Polish Złoty)

Markets

Milk (1 liter)	2.60 PLN
Loaf of fresh white bread (500 g)	3.00 PLN
Rice (white)/1 kg	3.30 PLN
Eggs (12)	8.00 PLN
Local cheese (1 kg)	26.00 PLN
Chicken breasts (boneless, skinless) /1 kg	17.00 PLN
Beef round (1 kg)	38.00 PLN

Apples (1 kg)	2.80 PLN
Banana (1 kg)	4.30 PLN
Tomato (1 kg)	5.00 PLN
Potato (1 kg)	3.00 PLN
Oranges (1kg)	5.00 PLN

Restaurants

Meal, inexpensive restaurant	25 PLN
Meal for 2 people, Mid-range restaurant	120 PLN
McMeal at McDonalds	20 PLN
Water (0,33 liter bottle)	3 PLN
Coke/Pepsi (0,33 liter bottle)	4 PLN
Cappuccino (regular)	10 PLN

5.3. Polish cuisine



Poland is known for its tasty and fine cuisine. To its best known and best specialties belong:

- Dumplings (pierogi) – made from noodle dough and stuffed with meat, mushrooms, sauerkraut, cottage cheese or fruits;
- Bigos – made of sauerkraut with strips of different meats, mushrooms and prunes – all cooked together, served usually during the winter;
- Gołąbki – stuffed cabbage leaves with meat and rice;
- Red borsch – also called *żurek*, a soup made of rye flour and dried bread sourdough, served with boiled egg and white sausage, which is one of the oldest Polish dishes;
- Bread – there can be found various types of bread, from sweet croissants, through white bread used for sandwiches to dark bread which cannot be found anywhere else;
- Cold smoked meats – best known is the sausage appearing in many kinds, made on the basis of traditional recipes different according to the region where it's made; Polish ham is also seen as one of the best in Europe;
- Oscypek – smoked Polish cheese produced in the mountains from the ewe's milk.

Typical Polish dinner consists of 3 courses: soup, the main course, which is usually meat or fish with potatoes, noodles, kasha or rice and boiled or fresh vegetables and dessert. Traditional Polish dessert is a cake made from yeast, cheesecake, roll cake with poppyseed, apple Charlotte or gingerbread.

5.4 Holidays

There are various religious and secular holidays in Poland, as well as those unofficial set up by a tradition:

Religious holidays

Easter – movable, usually in April/May

Corpus Christi – movable, usually in June

Assumption of the Virgin Mary - 15th August

All Saints' Day - 1st November

Christmas - 25th – 26th December

Secular holidays

New Year's Day - 1st January

Labour Day - 1st May

Constitution Day - 3rd May

Independence Day - 11th November

Other traditional holidays (unofficial)

Fat Thursday – the last Thursday of the carnival

St. Valentine's Day - 14th February

Women's Day - 8th March

Mother's Day - 26th May

Children Day - 1st June

St. Sylvester's Day - 31st December

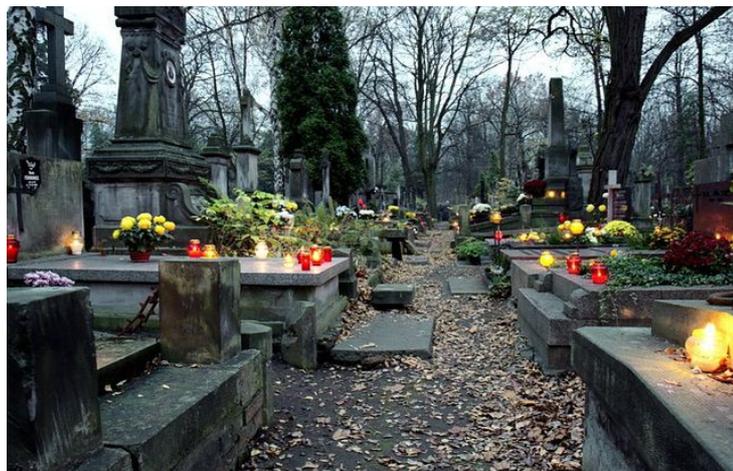
Easter is the most important Catholic holiday. It is preceded by Palm Sunday – a very colourful feast, on the last week before Easter, commemorating Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. On that day people carry to the church colourful richly decorated palms. Easter itself includes five days: Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), Good Friday, Holy Saturday (Easter Eve), Easter and Easter Monday.

On Holy Saturday people bring baskets with food to the church for blessing. There are put into the basket: colourful painted eggs being a symbol of life and re-birth, a sugar lamb as a symbol of Jesus Christ's resurrection, bread ensuring good fortune is a symbol of Christ's Body, salt for keeping away all evil, meat ensuring health, horseradish representing strength, cheese being a symbol of friendship between man and nature and cake as an example of skills. This food is eaten at breakfast on Easter Sunday after the Resurrection Mass and shared by the whole family. The next day, known as Wet Monday, next to its religious role has also its old secular tradition. It is a day when boys used to sprinkle attractive girls with water.

Corpus Christi is a day when every church in Poland makes a procession on the streets attracting many Catholics. During the procession a priest carries bread being a symbol of Jesus Christ and all the people follow him praying together.



All Saints Day is a day commemorating of the death. On this day people visit the graves of their dead relatives, praying all together. It is also an occasion for the family meeting.



Christmas is celebrated almost everywhere in the world, not only by Catholics. Catholic Christmas takes place on 25th - 26th December and is preceded by the Christmas Eve on 24th December. People believe that this day affects the entire new year so it used to be spent in a peace and harmony. The whole families sit down at one table after the dusk when the first star appears in the sky.

The house is decorated with Christmas tree. Everyone wishes to each other all the best, sharing Christmas wafers being a symbol of the Holy Bread. The blessed wafer is put in the middle of the table on a small bunch of hay commemorating the poverty in which Jesus Christ was born. There are always an extra cover left at the table for unexpected guest.



Traditionally Christmas dinner consists of meatless dishes. According to Polish tradition there should be twelve different dishes served and everyone should try everything that is on the table. These are usually beetroot soup with small dumplings stuffed with mushrooms or mushroom soup, dumplings with mushrooms, cabbage with mushrooms, different kinds of fish dishes and drink made of dried fruits. Among the fish served there has to be typical Christmas fish – carp. After the dinner the whole family sing the Christmas carols and open the presents found under the Christmas tree. At midnight lots of people attend the Shepherds’ Mass in the local church.

Constitution Day is a national holiday commemorating establishing the constitution of Poland on 3rd May 1791 which was the first modern constitution in Europe and second one in the world after the USA. This is a day appearing after 1st of May Labour Day and which together gives very popular longer May holidays in Poland.

Constitution of Poland on 3rd May 1791



Independence Day is a national holiday celebrating the restoration of Poland’s independence on 11th November 1918. This is very official holiday with different ceremonies and various festivities.

Fat Thursday is the last Thursday of the carnival when Poles eat a lot. To the obligatory dishes of this day belong: doughnuts (*pączki*) and *faworki* – deep fried sweet strips of pastry.

Women’s Day is a holiday originating from American Women Rights’ movement, but was much celebrated in the communist past of Poland. It is still very welcome by most of the women. On this day they receive small gifts and fresh flowers from the men.

St. Andrew's Day represents old Polish tradition. This is the last festive day before Advent. On this day especially girls used to check what the future would bring by pouring hot wax into cold water and reading its shapes. It is a day of fortune telling.

St. Sylvester's Day is a New Year's Eve. This day opens a carnival period with parties and balls. Most of the Poles used to spend this day at clubs, discos, home parties or open air concerts having lots of fun. At midnight everyone welcome new year wishing all the best in new coming year to each other, drinking champagne and watching the fireworks illuminating on the sky. Traditionally there used to be organized sleigh rides on this night, with horses pulling the sledges on the snow, which is still very popular.

5.5. Customs and manners

Greetings

Men in Poland while meeting shake the right hands each other. Girls usually kiss each other on their cheeks. When a man and a girl are in a group greeting they usually shake rights hands or just say 'hello' to each other. One of the old Polish habits is kissing women's hands by men. This is still practiced by older man only.

Names or official forms

Polish language identifies two different forms of communication: informal and formal. Using informal form people call each other by the first name. In formal form people use always title Mr., Mrs., Director, Doctor, Professor – depending on the person they talk to. The older people should be always called Mr. or Mrs. Employers, people in the shops, hotels or offices should be also called in formal form if a person comes as a customer. Academic staff at the university should be called due to their academic titles. Young people being in a similar age from the beginning start calling each other by the first names.

Drinks

In Poland there are commonly drunk tea and coffee. A guest entering a Polish house is usually immediately offered one of those beverages. Poles drink especially lots of tea, using glasses or big cups to it.

Poles are often seen abroad as drinking lots of alcohol. Poland is one of the most famous producers of various kinds of vodka. But vodka can be now more rarely seen on the Polish tables. In the pubs and parties people usually choose beer or cocktail. Poles have a habit of making toasts by saying '*na zdrowie*' (to your health).

Name - day

In Poland, next to birthdays, there are celebrated also name-days – a Christian saint patron's day. The dates, when the name-day for each name is, are easily available in any calendar. Name-day is more popular among adults than birthday and is similarly celebrated to the birthday. It is a good habit to offer good wishes on someone's birthday and especially on name-day personally or via telephone or e-mail.

Hospitality

Poles are reknown for their hospitality. There is an old saying: 'A guest in the home, God in the home'. In practice it means that a guest used to be offered all the best things available. Another saying characterizes right another approach of many Polish families: 'Get into debt but do it in style'. All these values are still seen in the behaviour of many Poles making this nation very open and hospitable.

Home pets

Polish people like to keep home animals, usually dogs or cats. Almost each Polish family has at least one of those pets. There can be observed many people walking their dogs in the streets. Dog is also seen as 'best friend of a man'.

6. POLISH LANGUAGE – BASIC EXPRESSIONS

Yes / No	Tak/Nie [<i>tak /n'yeh</i>]
Please	Proszę [<i>prosheh</i>]
Thank you	Dziękuję [<i>djyen'kooyeh</i>]
Thank you very much	Dziękuję bardzo [<i>djyen'kooyeh bardzo</i>]
Sorry / Excuse me	Przepraszam [<i>pshe-prasham</i>]
Never mind	Nie szkodzi [<i>nje shkodjee</i>]
Don't mention it	Nie ma za co [<i>n'ye ma za tso</i>]
Here you are	Proszę [<i>prosheh</i>]
May I ?	Czy mogę [<i>tshi mogeh</i>]
I've got...	Mam... [<i>mam</i>]
I haven't got any...	Nie mam... [<i>nyeh mam</i>]
I don't remember	Nie pamiętam [<i>nyeh pahmjentam</i>]
I don't know	Nie wiem [<i>nyeh wjehm</i>]
Could you ?	Czy mógłbyś ? [<i>tshi mogwbis</i>]
Sorry, I can't	Niestety, nie mogę [<i>nyestetih, nye mogeh</i>]
With pleasure !	Z przyjemnością ! [<i>s-pshiemnos-thong</i>]

Greetings

Hello / Hi	Dzień dobry / Cześć [<i>djyen' dobri</i>] / [<i>chesh'tch</i>]
Good morning	Dzień dobry [<i>djyen' dobri</i>]
Good afternoon	Dzień dobry [<i>djyen' dobri</i>]
Good evening	Dobry wieczór [<i>dobri v-yechoor</i>]
Good night	Dobranoc [<i>dob-ranots</i>]
Good-bye	Do widzenia [<i>do -vee dzenja</i>]
See you later	Do zobaczenia [<i>do zoba-chenya</i>]
See you tomorrow	Do jutra [<i>do yootrah</i>]
In the morning	Rano [<i>rahno</i>]
In the afternoon	Po południu [<i>po powoodnyoo</i>]
In the evening	Wieczorem [<i>vyechozem</i>]
At night	W nocy [<i>v notsi</i>]
Yesterday	Wczoraj [<i>fchoraj</i>]
Today	Dzisiaj [<i>dzeeshay</i>]
Tomorrow	Jutro [<i>yootro</i>]

Introductions

My name is ...	Nazywam się [<i>nazivam sheh</i>]
----------------	-------------------------------------

This is Mr...	To jest pan [<i>to yest pahn</i>]
This is Mrs.../Miss.../Ms...	To jest pani [<i>to yest pahnee</i>]
I'm very pleased to meet you	Miło mi Panią/Pana poznać [<i>meewoo mee pana poznatch</i>]
How are you ?	Jak się Pan ma [<i>yak sheh pahn ma</i>]
Very well, thank you	Dobrze, dziękuję [<i>dobzieh, djyen'kooyeh</i>]
Where are you from ?	Skąd jesteś [<i>skont yestesh</i>]
What do you do ?	Co robisz ? [<i>tso robich</i>]

Speaking and understanding

Do you speak English ?	Czy mówi Pan/Pani po angielsku ? [<i>chi moovee pahn/panee po angyelskoo</i>]
I don't speak much Polish	Nie mówię dobrze po polsku [<i>nyeh moovyeh dobzheh po polskoo</i>]
Pardon / Excuse me ?	Słucham ? [<i>swoo-ham</i>]
What does it mean ?	Co to znaczy ? [<i>tso to znachi</i>]
I understand some Polish	Rozumiem trochę po polsku [<i>ro-zoom-yem trohe po polskoo</i>]
I don't understand Polish	Nie rozumiem po polsku [<i>n'yeh ro-zoom-yem po polskoo</i>]
Do you understand ?	Czy pan/pani rozumie ? [<i>chi pahn/pahnee rozoom-ye</i>]

Eating

bread	chleb [<i>hlep</i>]
butter	masło [<i>maswo</i>]
jam	dżem [<i>jam</i>]
honey	miód [<i>m-yoot</i>]
scrambled eggs	jajecznicza [<i>yayechneetsah</i>]
eggs	jajka [<i>yayka</i>]
rolls	bułeczki [<i>boowetchkee</i>]
toasts	grzanki [<i>gzhanki</i>]
juice	sok [<i>sok</i>]
apple juice	sok jabłkowy [<i>sok yabwkovi</i>]
milk	mleko [<i>m-leko</i>]
porridge	płatki owsiane [<i>pwatkee ovshane</i>]
cottage cheese	biały ser [<i>byawi ser</i>]
sandwich	kanapka [<i>kanapkah</i>]
tea	herbata [<i>herbatah</i>]
coffee	kawa [<i>kavah</i>]
coffee with sugar	kawa z cukrem [<i>kavah s cookrem</i>]
mineral water	woda mineralna [<i>voda meeneralna</i>]
carbonated water	woda gazowana [<i>voda gazovana</i>]
non-carbonated water	woda niegazowana [<i>voda nyegazovana</i>]

Numerals

0	zero
1	jeden
2	trzy
4	cztery
5	pięć
6	sześć
7	siedem
8	osiem
9	dziewięć
10	dziesięć

Asking questions

Who ?	Kto [<i>kto</i>]
What ?	Co [<i>tso</i>]
Which ?	Który [<i>ktoori</i>]
When ?	Kiedy [<i>kyedi</i>]
Where ?	Gdzie [<i>g-diyeh</i>]
How ?	Jak [<i>yak</i>]
Why ?	Dlaczego [<i>dlachego</i>]
Whose ?	Czyj [<i>chiy</i>]
How much ?	Ile [<i>eelah</i>]
Who are you ?	Kto ty jesteś [<i>kto ti yestesh</i>]
What is this ?	Co to jest [<i>tso to yest</i>]
Where is ?	Gdzie jest [<i>g-djyeh yest</i>]

Days of week

Monday	Poniedziałek
Tuesday	Worek
Wednesday	Środa
Thursday	Czwartek
Friday	Piątek
Saturday	Sobota
Sunday	Niedziela



Zabielski Foundation
Warsaw, Poland
ul. Podwale 13/15, 00-252 Warsaw
www.zabielskifoundation.org
e-mail: info@zabielskifoundation.org
tel. (+48) 518 078 003