



International Medical Relief

PROVIDING COMMUNITY HEALTH
TO POPULATIONS MOST IN NEED

Poland



PRE-FIELD BRIEFING PACKET

Poland

ABOUT THIS PACKET

This packet has been created to serve as a resource for the Poland Medical Team.

This packet is information about the country and can be read at your leisure or on the airplane. The final section of this booklet is specific to the areas we will be working near (however, not the actual clinic locations) and contains information you may want to know before the trip.

The contents herein are not for distributional purposes and are intended for the use of the team and their families. Sources of the information all come from public record and documentation. You may access any of the information and more updates directly from the World Wide Web and other public sources.



BACKGROUND

Restored as a nation in 1918 but ravaged by two world wars, Poland suffered tremendously throughout the course of the 20th century. World War II was particularly damaging, as Poland's historically strong Jewish population was almost wholly annihilated in the Holocaust. Millions of non-Jewish Poles also died, victims of more partition and conquest. With the fall of the Third Reich, Poland effectively lost its independence once again, becoming a communist satellite state of the Soviet Union. Nearly a half century of totalitarian rule followed, though not without strong challenges on the part of Poland's workers, who, supported by a dissident Catholic Church, called the economic failures of the Soviet system into question. In the late 1970s, beginning in the shipyards of Gdańsk, those workers formed a nationwide movement called Solidarity (Solidarność). Despite the arrest of Solidarity's leadership, its newspapers kept publishing, spreading its values and agenda throughout the country. In May 1989 the Polish government fell, along with communist regimes throughout eastern Europe, beginning Poland's rapid transformation into a democracy. By the turn of the 21st century, Poland was a market-based democracy, abundant in products of all kinds and a member of both NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the European Union (EU), allied more strongly with western Europe than with eastern Europe but, as always, squarely between them. A land of striking beauty, Poland is punctuated by great forests and rivers, broad plains, and tall mountains. Warsaw (Warszawa), the country's capital, combines modern buildings with historic architecture, most of which was heavily damaged during World War II but has since been faithfully restored in one of the most thoroughgoing reconstruction efforts in European history. Other cities of historic and cultural interest include Poznań, the seat of Poland's first bishopric; Gdańsk, one of the most active ports on the busy Baltic Sea; and Kraków, a historic centre of arts and education and the home of Pope John Paul II, who personified for the Polish their country's struggle for independence and peace in modern times.



EXTENDING YOUR STAY

WHAT TO SEE IN POLAND

Poland has survived centuries of conflict to emerge as a proud, independent country, ready to assume her new role in modern history. Visitors to Poland are discovering what the locals have long known, that Poland is a country rich in fine culture, scenic landscapes and extraordinary historical sites. Whether exploring the nation's vibrant cities, the lakes and forests of her picturesque countryside or some of the other tourist attractions in Poland, visitors are sure to bring away rich memories.

#1: Main Market Square

Dating back to the 13th century, the Main Market Square in the Old Town in Kraków is the largest medieval town square in Europe and one of the main tourist attractions in Poland. The square is surrounded by historical townhouses, historic buildings, palaces and churches. The center of the square is dominated by the Cloth Hall, rebuilt in 1555 in the Renaissance style, topped by a beautiful attic.



#2: Gdansk Old Town

Located on the Baltic coast, the city of Gdansk's history includes a long occupation by 14th century Teutonic Knights whose fortresses contrasted strongly with the existing town that came to be known as Altstadt, or "Old Town." In the 15th century, Casimir IV of Poland allowed the structures built by the Teutonic Knights to be demolished. Gdansk's Old Town area includes many 17th century structures, including granaries, mills and churches.

#3: Wieliczka Salt Mine

Located on the outskirts of Krakow, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is considered one of the oldest companies in the world. Salt has been mined from the site continuously since the 13th century. The site features an underground city, all carved out of the rock salt, including a chapel that is said to have the best acoustics of any structure in Europe. Dozens of ancient sculptures carved from salt are augmented by new sculptures from contemporary artists.



#4: Malbork Castle

Malbork Castle was founded in 1274 by the Teutonic Knights who used it as their headquarters to help defeat Polish enemies and rule their own northern Baltic territories. The castle was expanded several times to host the growing number of Knights until their retreat to Königsburg in 1466. Today it is the most popular tourist attraction in the city of Malbork.



#5: Slowinski Sand Dunes

Situated in northern Poland, the Slowinski Sand Dunes are part of the Slowinski National Park located on the coast of the Baltic Sea. The park is named after the Slovincians who once lived there, and an open-air museum in the town of Kluki features artifacts of their culture. The dunes themselves are formed as waves and wind carry sand onshore and can reach as high as 30 meters. Their forms change with the season and are known as the “moving dunes.”

#6: Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial

A visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau is a powerful experience that words can scarcely describe. The immense size of the infamous Nazi concentration camp is the first thing to strike visitors as they approach the entrance to the memorial and museum in Oswiecim, Poland. Devoted to the memory of the murders in the camps during World War II, Auschwitz-Birkenau has been visited by more than 25 million people.



PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

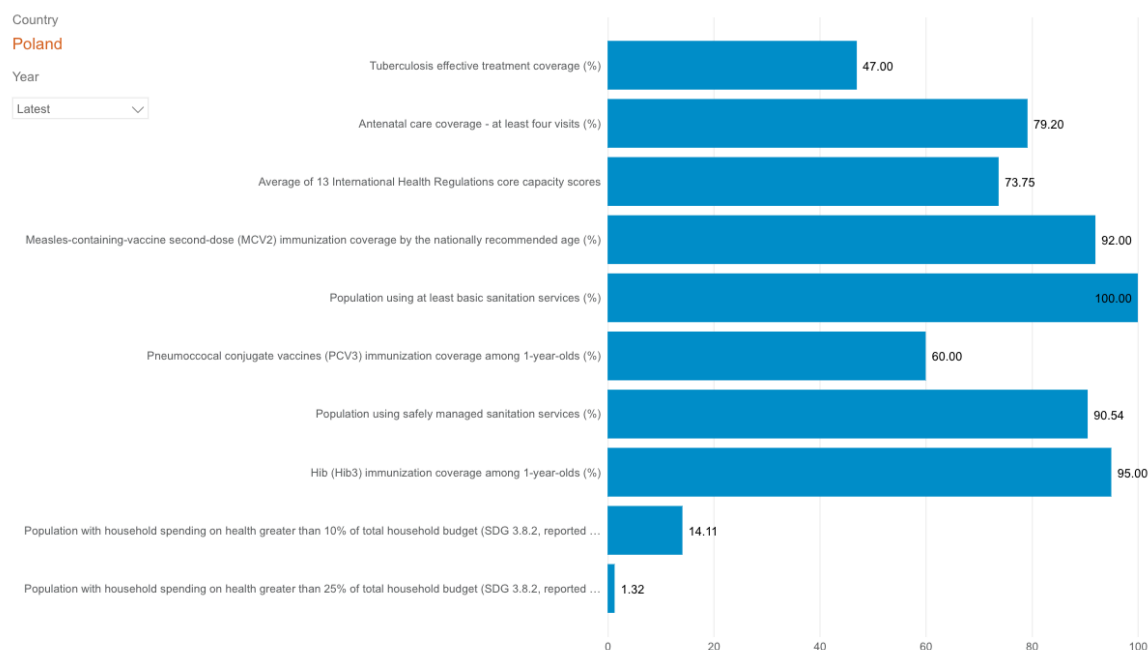
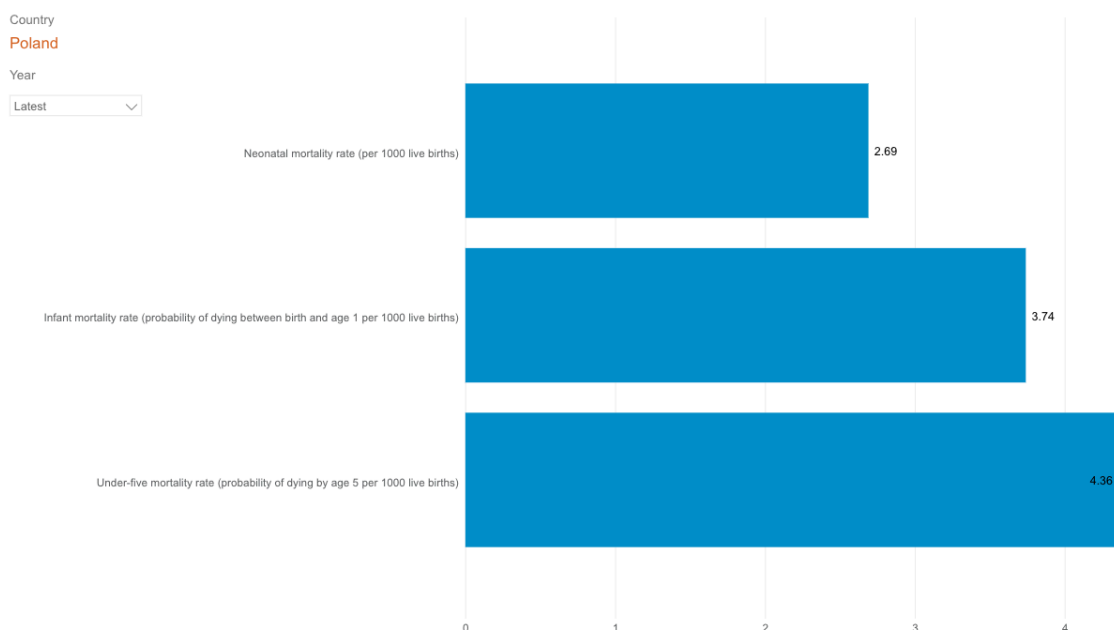
Nearly all European countries have free and universal healthcare, and Poland is no exception. The country offers a free public healthcare system in which every Polish and E.U. resident has the right to accessible healthcare, supported by the National Health Fund. The organization's funding consists of a mandatory contribution from every Polish citizen: an 8.5% deduction from individual income. These deductions are the main source of funding for public and free health insurance. However, Poland does offer private health insurance as well. As of 2017, 91% of Poland's population has insurance. Although Poland's healthcare coverage is impressive, organizational problems, politics, underfunding and outdated technology still plague the system. The percentage of the population that has insurance is high, at 91%, but this is still lower than in many other European countries. Poland's organizational structure is also incredibly understaffed in physicians, and especially specialists. Under the current Polish government, funding for the National Health Fund is also converting into a federal budget funding system, further complicating the bureaucracy of Polish healthcare.



A problem that plagues healthcare in Poland is the disparity of health between high income- and low-income groups. According to Poland's 2017 health profile, 71% of high-income citizens report that they are in good health while only 53% of low-income citizens state the same. This 18 point difference is sizeable, considering Poland's population. Poland's life expectancy rate is also lower than most European countries, ranking 24th in the E.U. at around 77.5 years. With the improvement of its healthcare system, Poland has the potential to increase its life expectancy and

decrease the health gap. Poland's healthcare system is effective in providing basic primary care to its residents. One can attribute this to both the improved treatment for cardiovascular disease- the leading cause of death in Poland- and the centralization of Poland's healthcare system since 1999. However, the nation must prioritize the improvement of its organizational structure and funding system to continue to benefit its citizens. Poland's healthcare system is keeping most citizens healthy, but there are further improvements necessary in order for the current system to increase efficiency and reach beyond-average higher standards of health. Healthcare in Poland may not currently live up to the standards of other western European countries, but it has the potential to improve its healthcare structure to compete with and possibly surpass them in the future, considering its relative economic stability. In pursuit of this goal, Poland is taking steps to improve its healthcare system. The Polish Ministry of Health has begun using electronic prescriptions and other e-health technologies to improve coordination between hospitals, physicians and patients. The Ministry is also working on plans to further increase the number of physicians and specialists available in the public sector. Such reforms are essential to remaining competitive with other European countries.

The US Embassy advises tourists considering medical treatment in Poland to learn as much as they can about the institution and the medical staff. Before traveling, medical tourists should double-check that the facilities they're contemplating are accredited, buy medical evacuation insurance, and make sure that the cost and payment for their treatment are clear to all parties. In addition to other publicly available information, U.S. citizens can find a list of hospitals and air ambulance services on the U.S. Embassy's website.



HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Health care in Poland is Insurance based and is delivered through a publicly funded health care system called the Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia, which is free for all the citizens of Poland provided they fall into the "insured" category (usually meaning that they have their health insurance paid for by their employer, or are the spouse or child of an insured person). According to Article 68 of the Polish Constitution everyone has a right to have access to health care. Citizens are granted equal access to the publicly funded healthcare system. In particular, the government is obliged to provide free health care to young children, pregnant women, disabled people, and the elderly. However, private healthcare use is very extensive in Poland. Patients who are uninsured have to pay the full cost of medical services. According to a study conducted by CBOS in 2016, out of 84% patients taking part in the survey, 40% declared use of both private and public health services, 37% use only public health care, and 7% use only private health services. 77% of all responders declared using private health care is caused by long waiting for public health care services. The main financing source is health insurance in the National Health Fund. Citizens are obligated to pay insurance fees (redistributed tax) which is 9% deducted from personal income (7,75% is deducted from the tax, 1,25% covered by insured goes directly to the National Health Fund). The national budget covers around 5% of all health care expenses. Since 2007 emergency rescue services are financed in total from the national budget. About 70% of health expenses in Poland are covered by the National Health Fund, with the remaining 30% coming from private health insurance.

COMMON DISEASES AND HEALTH FACTORS

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports noncommunicable diseases are one of the major health and development challenges of the 21st century. Low and middle-income countries suffer the most from these diseases, but even high-income countries such as Poland are affected. According to the Institution for Health Metrics and Evaluation, ischemic heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and lung cancer are some of the most common diseases in Poland.



The American Heart Association identifies ischemic heart disease as a condition in which heart complications develop due to the narrowing of heart arteries. As a result, heart attacks, strokes and other life-threatening problems can occur. Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death worldwide. Over three-quarters of those deaths take place in low and middle-income countries. In 2015 alone, approximately half of the deaths in Poland resulted from heart-related diseases. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that the reasoning behind this large statistic could be caused by Poland's lack of partaking in risk-reducing behavior. The adult smoking rate in Poland is 23.8 percent. This is higher than the OECD average of 20.9 percent. The reported prevalence of high blood pressure is also high at 37.2 percent; this is 11 percent over the OECD average. Fortunately, 2013 marked the year 193 UN member states joined the WHO to reduce preventable noncommunicable diseases. Targets include a 25 percent decrease in the global occurrence of high blood pressure and the prevention of heart-related complications. Each country's progress is set to be assessed in 2018.

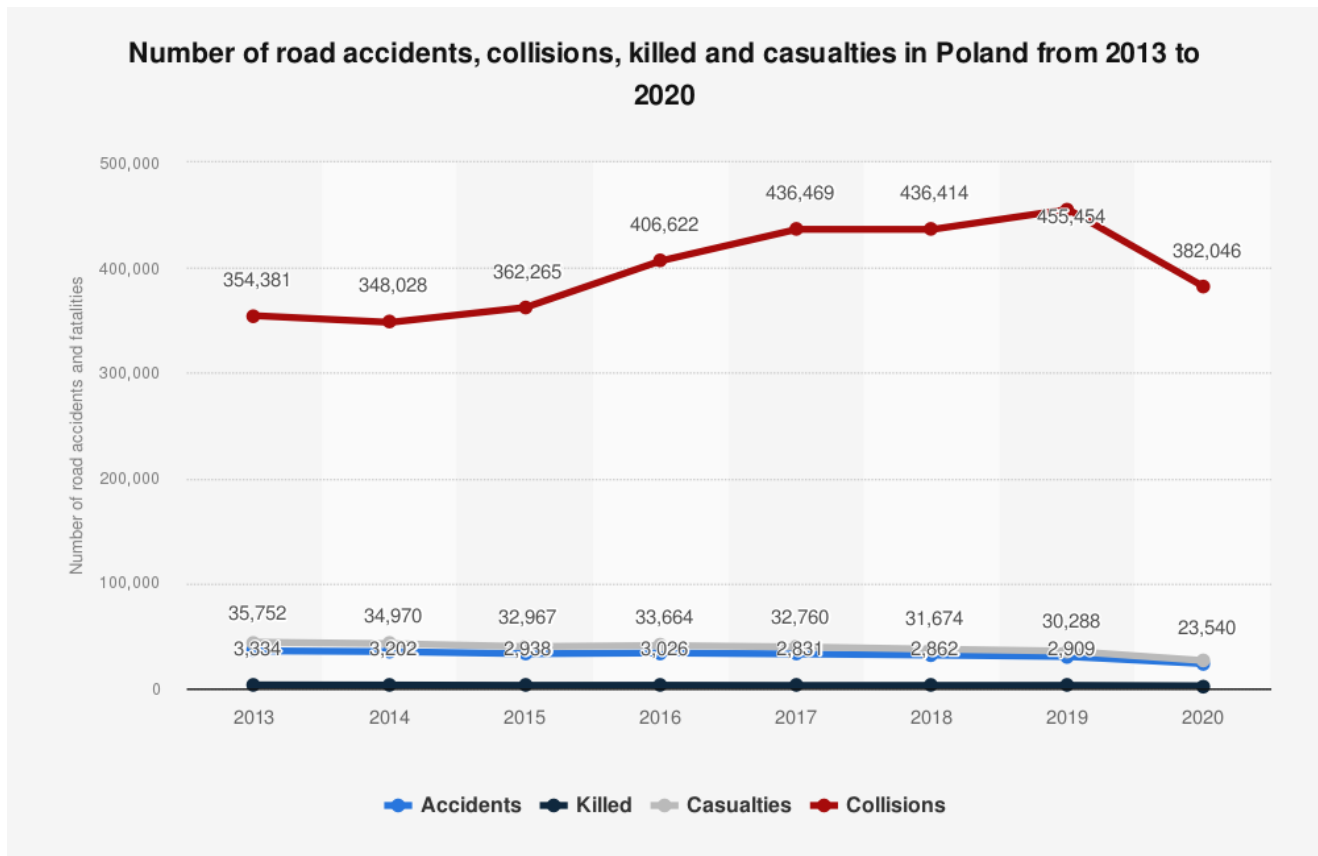
Alzheimer's is a manifestation of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time. The 2016 World Alzheimer Report claims that approximately 47 million people globally are living with dementia. As subsequent populations continue to live longer, this number is expected to rise. Regrettably, people living with Alzheimer's have poor access to adequate healthcare. Even in high-income countries, such as Poland, a mere 50 percent of people living with dementia receive a diagnosis. In low and middle-income countries, these numbers are worse - less than 10 percent of cases are properly identified. Poland, specifically, has seen an increased rate of Alzheimer's over the past decade. The Institution for Health Metrics and Evaluation marks a rise of almost 38 percent. Luckily, the WHO and the OECD have noticed the issues associated with dementia and have decided to take action. Policies introduced include better care, early diagnosis, implementing innovation in science and technology and having open access to data.

The uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in one or both lungs is the definition of lung cancer. These irregular cells fail to make healthy lung tissue and can interfere with the function of the lung. Symptoms include coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath and coughing up blood. The WHO states that cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, with lung cancer being the most common type of cancer in the world. North America and Europe have the most cases of lung cancer, with Poland being in the top 20 countries. Smoking is connected to 85 percent of all lung cancers. Men dominate this percentage, landing Poland another



spot in the top seven countries. The OECD says the adult smoking rate in Poland is about 40 percent for men, which is about 16 percent higher than the OECD average. As a consequence, the rate of lung cancer - specifically in men - is exceptionally high, keeping Poland as one of the most-affected countries. The country has experienced a 2 percent rise over the last decade. In response to these numbers, the WHO's Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases aims to reduce the overall mortality rate from cancer by 25 percent. Objectives include prevention, control, high-quality research and evaluation. The decrease in cancer cases is set to be achieved by 2025. Recognizing common diseases in Poland is critical to improving the well-being of its citizens. All of these noncommunicable diseases share increased prevalence, inadequate health care or preventable behavior. The WHO Global NCD Action Plan will use this information to create and monitor progress. Once this is completed, we will hopefully see a decrease in these diseases.

This country has either areas with high altitude (2400m or more) or/and areas with very high altitude (3658m or more). Travelers who may go into areas of high altitude should take care to avoid ill effects of being at altitude including Acute Mountain Sickness, a potentially life-threatening condition.

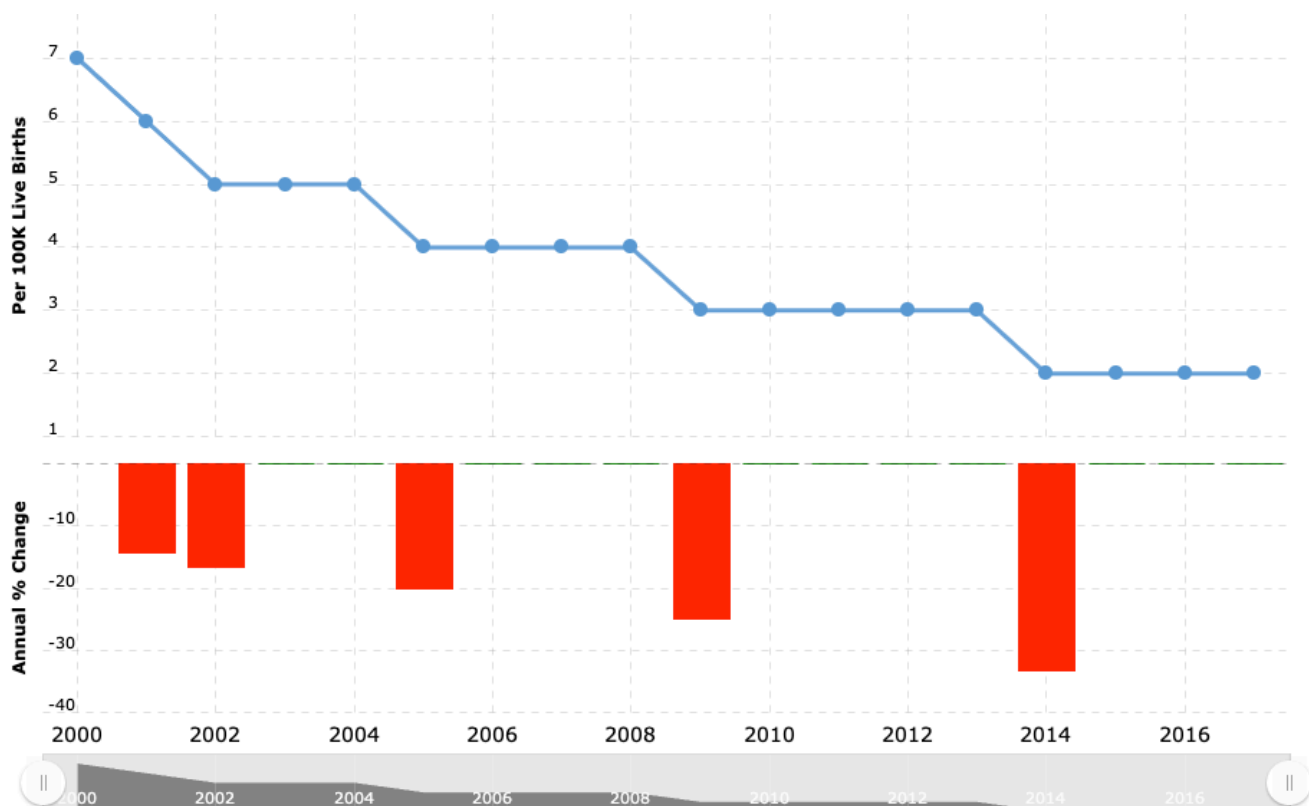


MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

In 2011, the Polish Ministry of Health issued the first national Prenatal and Postnatal Care Standards, in line with WHO guidelines. The standards outline a woman's right to choose the place and method of birth, to decide who is in the delivery room and to be with her newborn at least 2 hours after birth, among others. WHO, the Childbirth with Dignity Foundation, the Polish Ministry of Health and other organizations are now monitoring the improvements. Soon a hospital assessment tool will be launched to assess the implementation of these national standards and ensure the adherence to proven norms of care. The Childbirth with Dignity Foundation has also launched a website where parents can easily view data from hospitals and decide where to give birth.

Results show that prenatal and maternal health in Poland has significantly improved. Infant mortality has dropped from 1 in 66 in 1990 to 1 in 222 in 2013. However, national breastfeeding rates still remain low: less than 10% of women exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first 6 months. WHO continues to work with the Polish Ministry of Health to implement the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative. Currently, 90 hospitals in the country have been certified as baby-friendly.

Maternal mortality ratio is the number of women who die from pregnancy-related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100,000 live births. The data are estimated with a regression model using information on the proportion of maternal deaths among non-AIDS deaths in women ages 15-49, fertility, birth attendants, and GDP:



FLAG



The National Flag of Poland features two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red. The flag colors have long been associated with Poland and its coat of arms. The white color represents the hope for peace by all the people of Poland. The red color symbolizes the many struggles for freedom over the centuries. In 1138, the Kingdom of Poland was made up of several duchies, each of which had its banner. In 1320, Poland became unified under King Wladyslaw, whose coat of arms consisting of a white eagle with a crown on its head, was used as the national symbol. In 1569, through the Union of Lublin, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania united to become a commonwealth. The colors of the flag were adopted from the coat of arms of both the nations and consisted of the eagle of Poland and the mounted knight of the King of Lithuania. At the end of the 18th century, Austria, Russia, and Prussia collaborated to dissolve the commonwealth and break the union between Poland and Lithuania. Subsequently, Poland became a partitioned territory for the next 123 years. A new coat of arms was adopted by most of the partitioned regions, while some of them chose to retain the white eagle. During WWI, the German control over the Western-Polish Lithuanian region broke due to the Bolshevik Revolution, resulting in the crippling of Russia's authority over the region. As a result, Poland became independent of these foreign powers. However, the previous red flag with the white eagle was rejected and a simple horizontal bicolor (white-red) flag was adopted as the national flag.

Country Overview

General Overview

Poland is located at a geographic crossroads that links the forested lands of northwestern Europe to the sea lanes of the Atlantic Ocean and the fertile plains of the Eurasian frontier. Now bounded by seven nations, Poland has waxed and waned over the centuries, buffeted by the forces of regional history. In the early Middle Ages, Poland's small principalities and townships were subjugated by successive waves of invaders, from Germans and Balts to Mongols. In the mid-1500s, united Poland was the largest state in Europe and perhaps the continent's most powerful nation. Yet two and a half centuries later, during the Partitions of Poland (1772-1918), it disappeared, parceled out among the contending empires of Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

Even at a time of national crisis, however, Polish culture remained strong; indeed, it even flourished, if sometimes far from home. Polish revolutionary ideals, carried by such distinguished patriots as Kazimierz Pułaski and Tadeusz Kościuszko, informed those of the American Revolution. The Polish constitution of 1791, the oldest in Europe, in turn incorporated ideals of the American and French revolutions. Poles later settled in great numbers in the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Australia and carried their culture with them. At the same time, Polish artists of the Romantic period, such as pianist Frédéric Chopin and poet Adam Mickiewicz, were leading lights on the European continent in the 19th century. Following their example, Polish intellectuals, musicians, filmmakers, and writers continue to enrich the world's arts and letters.

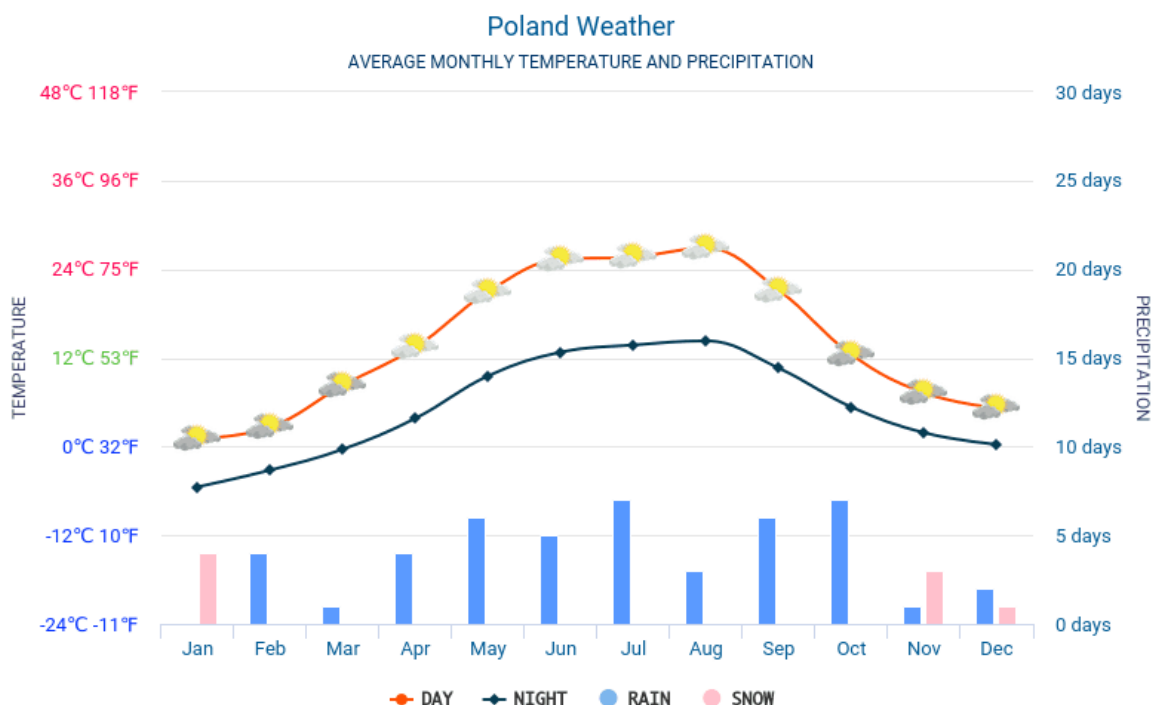
Restored as a nation in 1918 but ravaged by two world wars, Poland suffered tremendously throughout the course of the 20th century. World War II was particularly damaging, as Poland's historically strong Jewish population was almost wholly annihilated in the Holocaust. Millions of non-Jewish Poles also died, victims of more partition and conquest. With the fall of the Third Reich, Poland effectively lost its independence once again, becoming a communist satellite state of the Soviet Union. Nearly a half century of totalitarian rule followed, though not without strong challenges on the part of Poland's workers, who, supported by a dissident Catholic Church, called the economic failures of the Soviet system into question. In the late 1970s, beginning in the shipyards of Gdańsk, those workers formed a nationwide movement called Solidarity (Solidarność). Despite the arrest of Solidarity's leadership, its newspapers kept publishing, spreading its values and agenda throughout the country. In May 1989 the Polish government fell, along with communist regimes throughout eastern Europe, beginning Poland's rapid transformation into a democracy.

By the turn of the 21st century, Poland was a market-based democracy, abundant in products of all kinds and a member of both NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the European Union (EU), allied more strongly with western Europe than with eastern Europe but, as always, squarely between them. A land of striking beauty, Poland is punctuated by great forests and rivers, broad plains, and tall mountains. Warsaw (Warszawa), the country's capital, combines modern buildings with historic architecture, most of which was heavily damaged during World War II but has since been faithfully restored in one of the most thoroughgoing reconstruction efforts in European history. Other cities of historic and cultural interest include Poznań, the seat of Poland's first bishopric; Gdańsk, one of the most active ports on the busy Baltic Sea; and Kraków, a historic centre of arts and education and the home of Pope John Paul II, who personified for the Polish their country's struggle for independence and peace in modern times.

CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Varying types of air masses collide over Poland, influencing the character of both weather and climate. The major elements involved are oceanic air masses from the west, cold polar air from Scandinavia or Russia, and warmer, subtropical air from the south. A series of barometric depressions moves eastward along the polar front year-round, dividing the subtropical from the colder air and bringing to Poland, as to other parts of northern Europe, cloudy, wet days. In winter, polar-continental air often becomes dominant, bringing crisp, frosty weather, with still colder Arctic air following in its wake. Warm, dry, subtropical-continental air often brings pleasant days in late summer and autumn.

The overall climate of Poland has a transitional—and highly variable—character between maritime and continental types. Six seasons may be clearly distinguished: a snowy winter of one to three months; an early spring of one or two months, with alternating wintry and springlike conditions; a predominantly sunny spring; a warm summer with plenty of rain and sunshine; a sunny, warm autumn; and a foggy, humid period signifying the approach of winter. Sunshine reaches its maximum over the Baltic in summer and the Carpathians in winter, and mean annual temperatures range from 46 °F (8 °C) in the southwestern lowlands to 44 °F (7 °C) in the colder northeast. The climate of the mountains is determined by altitude.



GEOGRAPHY

Poland lies at the physical centre of the European continent. It is bordered to the north by the Baltic Sea, to the northeast by Russia and Lithuania, and to the east by Belarus and Ukraine. To the south the border follows the watershed of the Beskid (Beskidy), Carpathian (Karpaty), and Sudeten (Sudety) mountains, which separate Poland from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, while to the west the Neisse (Nysa Łużycka) and Oder (Odra) rivers define the border with Germany. Its current frontiers, stretching for 2,198 miles (3,538 km), were drawn in 1945. Except for its southern mountainous regions, the country consists almost entirely of lowlands within the North European Plain.

The natural landscape of Poland can be divided broadly into three relief groups: the lowlands, the highlands, and the mountains. The eastern extremes of Poland display characteristics common to eastern Europe, but the rest of the country is linked to western Europe by structure, climate, and the character of its vegetation. The lowland characteristics predominate: the average elevation of the whole country is only 568 feet (173 metres) above sea level, while more than three-fourths of the land lies below 650 feet (198 metres). Poland's relief was formed by the actions of Ice Age glaciers, which advanced and receded over the northern part of the country several times during the Pleistocene Epoch (from about 2,600,000 to 11,700 years ago). The great and often monotonous expanses of the Polish lowlands, part of the North



European Plain, are composed of geologically recent deposits that lie over a vast structural basin. In the southern part of the country, by contrast, older and more diverse geologic formations are exposed. The mountainous arc of the Carpathians, dating from the mountain-building Paleogene and Neogene periods (from about 65 to 2.6 million years ago), dominates the topography. Around the northern rim of the Carpathians lie a series of structural basins, separating the mountain belt proper from a much older structural mass, or foreland, that appears in the relief patterns of the region as the Bohemian Massif, the Sudeten, and the Little Poland Uplands (Wyżyna Małopolska). The relief structure can be divided more specifically into a series of east-west-trending zones. To the north lie the swamps and dunes of the Baltic Sea coast; south of these is a belt of morainic terrain with thousands of lakes, the southern boundary of which marks the limit of the last ice sheet. The third zone consists of the central lowlands, whose minimal relief was created by streams issuing from the retreating glaciers. This zone is the Polish heartland, the site of agriculture in places where loess has been deposited over the relatively infertile fluvioglacial deposits. The fourth zone is made up of the older mountains and highlands to the south; though limited in extent, it offers spectacular scenery. Along the southern border of the country are the Sudeten and Carpathian ranges and their foothills.

HISTORY

From medieval tribes, Christianization, and monarchy, to Poland's Golden Age, expansionism, and becoming one of Europe's largest powers, to its collapse and partitions, two world wars, communism, and the restoration of democracy, Poland's history covers over a thousand years. The origins of Polish history can be traced back to ancient times, when different tribes, including Celts, Scythians, Germanic clans, Sarmatians, Slavs, and Balts, colonized the territory that is now Poland. During the Early Middle Ages, however, it was the West Slavic Lechites, the nearest forebears of ethnic Poles, who established permanent settlements in Polish territory. The Lechitic Western Polans, whose name means "those who live in open fields," ruled the region and gave Poland its name. Poland is located in the North-Central European Plain.

Poland was founded as a state during the reign of the Piast dynasty, which governed during the 10th and 14th centuries. The reign of Duke Mieszko I, who began somewhere around 963 and died in 992, is the first period in which historical documents allude to the Polish state. Following his marriage to Princess Doubravka of Bohemia, a devout Christian, Mieszko turned to Christianity in 966. The "baptism of Poland" is a symbolic beginning of Polish sovereignty, and the day is commonly used to honor it. Mieszko completed the merger of the Lechitic tribal territory, which was essential to the creation of the new republic. Poland was headed by a series of monarchs who converted the populace to Christianity, built a strong kingdom, and cultivated a distinct Polish culture that was absorbed into greater European culture after its founding.

Duke Boleslaw I the Brave (reigned 992-1025), Mieszko's son, formed a Polish Church structure, continued territorial conquests, and was formally proclaimed the first king of Poland in 1025, near the end of his life. Boleslaw also attempted to bring Christianity to pagan portions of eastern Europe, but his finest missionary, Adalbert of Prague, was assassinated in Prussia in 997, putting an end to his efforts. Holy Roman Emperor Otto III recognized the Archbishopric of Gniezno during the Congress of Gniezno in the year 1000, an institution critical to the survival of the sovereign Polish state. Between 1002 and 1018, Boleslaw waged continuous conflicts with the Kingdom of Germany under Otto's successor, Holy Roman Emperor Henry II. Since then Poland has been through many rulers and governments.

Hitler launched the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, which marked the start of World War II. Poland had just lately forged an Anglo-Polish military alliance, and had previously allied with France. The two Western nations declared war on Germany soon after, although they were largely inactive throughout the early stages of the conflict (dubbed the "Phoney War") and provided no assistance to the attacked country. Wehrmacht troops marched rapidly eastwards, massacring Polish citizens across the conquered region. A Soviet invasion of Poland started on September 17th. Most of eastern Poland's areas with a strong Ukrainian and Belarussian minority were rapidly captured by the Soviet Union. [h] The two invading countries divided up the country according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact's secret stipulations. In mid-September, Poland's top government officials and military high command departed the conflict zone, arriving at the Romanian Bridgehead. They sought safety in Romania after the Soviet entry.

In June 1945, a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity was founded under Soviet auspices in response to the February 1945 Yalta Conference recommendations; it was quickly recognized by the United States and many other countries. The Soviet hegemony was clear from the start, when senior leaders of the Polish Underground State were tried in Moscow (the "Trial of the Sixteen" of June 1945). During the immediate postwar years, opposition groups resisted the growing communist government, notably militarily by the so-called "cursed soldiers," of whom hundreds died in violent conflicts or were hunted by the Ministry of Public Security and executed. Such guerillas frequently put their hopes on the impending onset of World War III and the Soviet Union's destruction. After the amnesty of February 1947, the Polish right-wing insurrection faded.

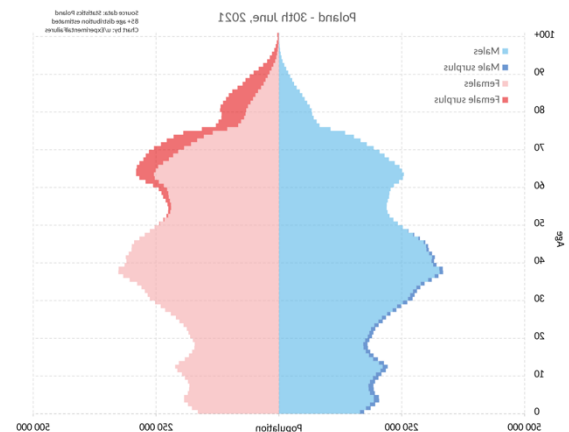
The constitution was amended in October 1990 to limit President Jaruzelski's term. With a united Germany, the German-Polish Border Treaty was signed in November 1990. Lech Wasa was elected president for a five-year term

in November 1990, making him Poland's first popularly elected president in December. In October 1991, Poland held its first free parliamentary election. The new Sejm had 18 parties, but the largest representation garnered only 12% of the overall vote..

DEMOGRAPHICS

Poland has a population of 38.0 million people living in an area of 312,685 square kilometers. The population density is 123 people per square kilometer on average. The greatest population density index is in Silesia, with 366 persons per square kilometer. The provinces of Podlasie and Warmia-Mazuria have the lowest density indexes (58 and 59 people per square kilometre respectively).

In Poland, 97.10 percent of the population claims sole or partial Polish nationality, while 98.19 percent claim to speak Polish at home. Silesian nationality was claimed by the most people among minority groups, followed by Kashubian, German, Ukrainian, and Belarusian. The figures on Ukrainians do not include recently arrived migrant workers, who were expected to number around 1 million in 2015 by the National Bank of Poland. Poland is highly homogeneous in terms of nationality or ethnicity when compared to other European countries. National minorities are projected to make up no more than 3% of the total population. Since 1989, minorities have seen a revival of national and ethnic identity. The number of schools teaching in languages of national minorities or providing additional sessions in these languages to kids from national minorities has grown fourfold since 1990.



Poland's largest church is the Roman Catholic Church. If the number of baptized is used as a criterion, the overwhelming majority (about 87 percent) of the population is Roman Catholic (33 million of baptised people in 2013). The Uniate Church (Greek-Catholic) is part of the Catholic Church and has a congregation of about 55,000 people. There are 550,000 Orthodox Christians in the world (1.4 percent of the population). The Evangelical-Augsburg Church is the largest of the thirty Protestant churches with a congregation of more than 150,000 people (0.4 percent of the population) (more than 61,000 members). There are also roughly 20 churches or other religious congregations with a total number of followers ranging from a few hundred to more than 5,000. (the only exception is Jehovah witnesses with 125,000 members).

Immigration to Poland has only recently increased after 2014, when unemployment began to decline and a larger workforce was required. The majority of migration is short-term, with employees entering for three to twelve months and then returning home with their earnings. Although some of them stay long enough to obtain permanent and long-term residence permits (see chart below), the actual number of immigrants in Poland is much larger.

MARRIAGE

Since 2008, the number of marriages in Poland has been declining; in 2013, there were over 180 thousand marriages, a decrease of over 23 thousand from the previous year and 77 thousand from 2008. In 2006-2010, the marriage rate was around 4.7, compared to 6-6.8 in 2006-2010. The downward trend in the number of marriages will almost certainly reduce the number of babies in the coming years. There has been a considerable increase in the age of people marrying in Poland during the change period. Men marry before the age of 30 (in fact, at the age of 29), whereas women marry at the age of 27. In the early 1990s, more than half of married men were under the age of 25, compared to only 17% in 2013. In 2013, the proportion of women under the age of 25 fell from 73 percent to 34 percent. In recent years, the most common age group to marry has been individuals aged 25-29, rather than the prior age group of 20-24. This category (including men and women) accounts for roughly 40% of the population (this was 28 percent in 2000 and nearly 20 percent in 1990). With the rise in the average age of marriage, the structure of newlyweds' educational levels has also changed. In 2013, brides with a high educational level were in the majority – over 47 percent had a high educational level, compared to 15 percent in 2000 and barely 4% in the 1990s. Men had a secondary education in 40% of cases, and 33% of grooms had finished further education (compared with 5 percent for the beginning of the 90s and 13 percent in 2000).

EDUCATION

In Poland, schooling is compulsory for all children from the age of seven until they reach the age of eighteen. It is also necessary for 6 year old children to attend kindergarten for one year before beginning primary school at the age of 7. Primary education lasts eight years (grades 1-8), and at the completion of the eighth grade, students must take a final exam. People normally move on to secondary school after finishing elementary school, which lasts 4 or 5 years. They can also opt to train for a specific profession or trade and gain valuable work experience and certificates through apprenticeships. After graduating from secondary school and passing the matura, or final exam, one can continue their education at a university, college, or other institution.

At the age of seven, children normally begin attending elementary school. Primary school (grades 1-8) usually takes eight years to finish. Prior to 2017, primary education only lasted six years (grades 1-6), following which children were required to attend the three-year gimnazjum (middle school). This changed in 2016, when then-Minister of Education Anna Zalewska introduced the "Law on School Education" act. Gimnazjum was discontinued in favor of an 8-year primary school curriculum (rather than the old 6-year primary school + 3-year gimnazjum system). The amendments took effect on September 1, 2017. The "reform" was highly divisive, with many critics claiming it was unneeded and potentially damaging to pupils. It did, however, have supporters.



Poland follows the Bologna system, with most tertiary education programs consisting of two cycles: a three-year bachelor's degree followed by a two-year master's degree. Some master's degrees, on the other hand, are awarded following a one-of-a-kind long-cycle program that lasts between four and six years (Ex: five years for pharmacy, six year for medicine). Doctoral programs take roughly three years to complete. A primary school teacher's diploma takes three years of study at a teacher training college. Post-secondary schools (szkoła policealna) handle vocational education, with two-and-a-half-year programs.

RELIGION

Poland is one of Europe's most religious countries. Despite the fact that Poland has a diverse religious landscape, the majority of Poles are Christians. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest grouping within this: 92.9 percent of the population identified with that denomination in 2015 (census conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS)); 36.7 percent of Polish Catholic believers attended Sunday Mass in 2015, according to the Institute for Catholic Church Statistics. Poland is one of the world's most Catholic countries; Neal Pease calls it "Rome's Most Faithful Daughter." Except for Malta and San Marino, Poland claims to have the highest proportion of Roman Catholic citizens in Europe (higher than in Italy, Spain, and Ireland, all countries in which the Roman Catholic Church has been the sole established religion). Many Poles consider Roman Catholicism to be vital in their lives, and the Catholic Church in Poland has social and political clout. Its members consider it to be a reservoir of Polish culture and tradition.

The current magnitude of this numerical supremacy is partly due to Nazi Germany's Holocaust of Polish Jews and World War II casualties among Polish religious minorities, as well as the flight and deportation of Germans, many of whom were not Roman Catholics, at the end of WWII.

Eastern Orthodox (Polish Orthodox Church - approximately 507,196 believers), various Protestant churches (the largest of which is the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, with 61,217 members), and Jehovah's Witnesses make up the rest of the population (116,935). In Poland, there are approximately 55,000 Greek Catholics. Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are among the other religions practiced in Poland by fewer than 0.1 percent of the population.

The Polish Constitution guarantees everyone's religious freedom. National and ethnic minorities also have the right to establish educational and cultural organizations, as well as religious identity protection institutions, and to participate in the resolution of issues relating to their cultural identities, according to the Constitution. Religious groups in the Republic of Poland can register with the Ministry of Interior and Administration, which will create a database of churches and other religious organizations that function under different Polish legislation. This registration is not required, but it is beneficial to the laws that protect religious freedom.

Various varieties of paganism known as Rodzimowierstwo ("native faith") have been practiced by ancient West Slavic and Lechitic peoples inhabiting the territories of modern-day Poland for centuries. Different religions have coexisted in Poland since the country's inception. With Poland's baptism in 966, the ancient pagan religions were gradually phased out over the next few decades as Poland became Christianized. However, this did not put an end to the country's pagan beliefs. The Pagan response, a series of rebellions in the first half of the 11th century that included aspects of a peasant movement against landlords and feudalism and resulted in a mutiny that destabilized the country, showing the country's perseverance. By the 13th century, Catholicism had established itself as the country's dominant religion. Despite this, Christian Poles coexisted with a sizable Jewish population in Poland. Religious tensions between Catholics and the emerging Hussite and succeeding Protestant society arose in the 15th century as a result of the Hussite Wars and pope pressure, particularly after the Edict of Wielu (1424). The Protestant movement grew in popularity in Poland, and while Roman Catholicism remained the state's majority religion, the liberal Warsaw Confederation (1573) ensured religious tolerance. However, by the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the reactionary movement had succeeded in limiting the scope for tolerance, as evidenced by events such as the Tumult of Toru (1724).



CULTURE

Polish philosophy borrowed from broader currents in European philosophy, contributing to their development. The Scholastic philosopher and scientist Vitello, in the 13th century, Pawe Wodkowic—in the early 15th century, and the Renaissance polymath Nicolaus Copernicus in the 16th century were among the most significant Polish contributions. Following that, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth took part in the Enlightenment's intellectual ferment, which for the multi-ethnic Commonwealth ended not long after the partitions and political annihilation that would last for the next 123 years, until the three partitioning empires collapsed in World War I. Between the November 1830 and January 1863 Uprisings, the Messianic period mirrored European Romantic and Idealist tendencies, as well as a Polish desire for political rebirth. It was a time when metaphysical systems were maximalist.

Polish dishes include kiebasa, pierogi (meat-filled dough balls), kopytka, gobki (meat and rice stuffed cabbage), ledzie (herring), bigos, schabowy, oscypek, and many others. Soups such flaki, rosó, zupa ogórkowa, zupa grzybowa (mushroom soup), urek, zupa pomidorowa (tomato soup) were traditionally prepared in huge containers designed for groups, necessitating the employment of devices like oars in their production. Tradition has it that hospitality is quite essential. As Poland's towns expanded in size and food markets evolved during the Middle Ages, the culinary exchange of ideas progressed, and people became acquainted with new foods and recipes. Some locations were famed for the type of sausage they produced, and many sausages still bear those names today. The peasants accepted their respectable decision, which allowed them to stay fed for extended periods of time.



Poland's architectural monuments have had a dreadful history. Ancient constructions, on the other hand, have survived: castles, churches, and stately homes, many of which are unique in the regional or European setting. Some have been painstakingly repaired, such as Wawel Castle, or totally rebuilt after being devastated during WWII, such as Warsaw's Old Town and Royal Castle, as well as the Old Towns of Gdaw and Wrocaw.

Polish art has always mirrored European influences while remaining distinctively Polish. Jan Matejko's Kraków school of Historicist painting produced colossal depictions of Polish customs and major

events in history. Stanisaw Witkiewicz was a staunch advocate of Realism in Polish painting, with Jozef Chemoski as its most prominent representation.

Famous composers such as Karol Lipiski, Frédéric Chopin, and Witold Lutosawski, as well as traditional, regionalized folk musicians, contribute to a vibrant and diverse music scene in Poland, which even acknowledges its own music genres, such as sung poetry. Trance, techno, house music, and heavy metal are all popular in Poland nowadays.

Poles have produced a major literary production in Latin since the entrance of Christianity and subsequent access to Western European civilisation. Gallus Anonymus, Wincenty Kadubek, and Jan Dugosz, author of the massive treatise on the history of Poland, are among the notable Middle Ages authors. With the entrance of the Renaissance, Poles became influenced by humanistic artistic trends, actively engaged in European affairs at the time with their Latin works.

POVERTY

Poland's extreme poverty rate in 2020 was 5.2 percent, one percent higher than in 2019. The term "minimal subsistence" refers to the degree of providing basic demands that jeopardizes survival and jeopardizes human psychophysical development.

In Poland, the extreme poverty rate was 5.2 percent in 2020, up one percentage point from 2019. The relative poverty rate, on the other hand, fell to 11.8 percent in 2020, down more than one percentage point from the previous year, due to a drop in average household expenditure induced by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 epidemic in Poland, the government imposed an economy lockdown and social contact restrictions in March 2020, which resulted in an increase in extreme poverty in 2020. Poland, by contrast, has one of the lowest rates of poverty and social exclusion in the CEE region. In 2020, 17 percent of Poles fell within this category, compared to a European average of close to 22%.

Poverty levels differed significantly depending on socioeconomic status. Households relying on so-called unearned sources other than pensions and farmers' households were the most vulnerable to economic poverty (i.e., extreme, relative, and statutory poverty) in 2020. In 2020, over 14% of persons in these two groups would be living in extreme poverty.

One of the most important elements in determining poverty risk is education. In general, the better one's education, the lower one's chances of falling into poverty. As a result, in 2020, about 12% of people from households with a minimum of a secondary education lived in extreme poverty. In comparison, the percentage of persons living in households with expenses below the extreme poverty threshold was roughly two among families with higher education. The type of home, as well as the number of children, has an impact on economic poverty. Families with three or more children under the age of 25 were the most vulnerable to economic hardship. Children and young people under the age of 18 have the highest rates of economic poverty. In 2020, this age group's reported extreme poverty range was almost six. Older adults (those aged 65 and up) were the ones who were most likely to be poor.



Survival Guide

Etiquette

Basic Etiquette:

- In Poland, people are expected to maintain a basic appearance of courtesy at all times. This involves paying attention and giving consideration to one's smaller actions, being helpful and generally professional.
- Casual clothing can be considered inappropriate in public. For example, one would rarely be seen barefoot in public. People tend to dress neatly.
- Some Poles (especially those who are older) take the time to show women a heightened degree of respect and consideration. They may offer their hand to assist a woman in getting out of her seat, offer their arm for women to walk, and hold or open doors for women. It is polite to stand when a woman enters the room or offer your seat if she needs one. This chivalry may not be so relevant for those born after the 1960s.
- Jaywalking, drinking in public places and smoking in non-designated areas are all generally frowned upon



For
to
also
her

Visiting:

- Visits from family and friends may occur unannounced in Poland.
- People may bring a bottle of wine, flowers (see Gifts below) or chocolates as a courtesy gift on arrival. The host will usually open these or place them on a table so that both hosts and guests can enjoy what was brought.
- Offer to remove your shoes before entering someone else's home. It is not always necessary to do so, but it is a polite gesture to ask.
- Make an effort to compliment a host's hospitality during your visit. If dining at their home, this can be done graciously through a toast (see Eating below for more information).

Eating:

- If you are a guest for a meal, it is best to arrive with an empty stomach to accommodate how much food will be served. Guests are usually served first and encouraged to eat more.
- In Poland, lunch (obiad) is often eaten between about 2 or 3pm (or even later). It is the main meal of the day and may consist of multiple courses.
- Dinner is generally quite a light meal.
- For religious reasons, some Polish people do not eat meat on Fridays and may replace it with fish instead.
- When about to dine, it is polite to wait for a moment to see if someone will say a prayer of thanks prior to eating their meal. Older Catholic Poles may say 'grace' before a meal.
- It is traditional Polish hospitality to offer alcohol with meals; however, it is often not drunk until someone has proposed a toast. People often toast with hard liquor to "your health" (na zdrowie) and "friendship". If your host stands to toast, follow suit. If proposing a toast yourself, it is important that you make eye contact with the people at the table as you speak.
- If you do not wish to drink, make it clear that your refusal is earnest and not just a gesture of politeness.
- If you only give a faint refusal when offered a second or third serving of food, expect it to be ignored.
- If at a restaurant, it is polite to tip around 10% of the bill. However, this is not obligatory.

Gifts:

- When visiting a home, it's a kind gesture to give the hostess an odd number of flowers, unwrapped.
- Avoid red or white flowers, especially roses (reserved for lovers), carnations (a symbol of the labour movement) and chrysanthemums (used at funerals). Gerberas may be the preferred flower.

Language

The country's official language, Polish (together with other Lekhitic languages and Czech, Slovak, and Upper and Lower Sorbian), belongs to the West Slavic branch of Slavic languages. It has several dialects that correspond in the main to the old tribal divisions; the most significant of these (in terms of numbers of speakers) are Great Polish (spoken in the northwest), Little Polish (spoken in the southeast), Mazovian, and Silesian (Ślązanie). Mazovian shares some features with Kashubian, whose remaining speakers number only a few thousand, which is a small percentage of the ethnic Kashubians in the country.

Elsewhere, the Polish language has been influenced by contact with foreign tongues. In Silesia the inimitable regional patois contains a mixture of Polish and German elements. After 1945, as the result of mass education and mass migrations, standard Polish became far more homogeneous, although regional dialects persist. In the western and northern territories, resettled in the second half of the 20th century in large measure by Poles from the Soviet Union, the older generation came to speak a language characteristic of the former eastern provinces. Small numbers of people also speak Belarusian, Ukrainian, and German as well as several varieties of Romany. Literary Polish developed from the medieval period onward, on the basis of the dialects of Great Poland and Little Poland. By the 19th century Polish was well established both as a literary vehicle and as the dominant language of common speech in Poland, despite attempts of the partitioning powers to Germanize or Russify the population. Indeed, quite the opposite happened, and the Polish language became the main touchstone of national identity.

The Polish Sign Language is the language of the deaf community in Poland. It descends from German Sign Language. Its lexicon and grammar are distinct from the Polish language, although there is a manually coded version of Polish known as System Językowo-Migowy (SJM, or Signed Polish), which is often used by interpreters on television and by teachers in schools. In 2012, under the "Sign Language Act", the language received official status and can be chosen as the language of instruction by those who require it.

Ethnologue mentions one constructed language, Esperanto (created in Poland), and one dead language, Prussian, but not two other known defunct languages: Slovincian, which consists of dialects of Pomeranian and died out in the early twentieth century and is closely related to Kashubian, and Yatvingian, which died around the mid-16th (or possibly end of the 19th) century.

Polish:

Polish was historically a linguistic franca in Central and Eastern Europe, with importance both diplomatically and academically. In Poland, over 38 million people speak Polish as their first language. Eastern Germany, northern Czech Republic and Slovakia, western Belarus and Ukraine, as well as southeast Lithuania and Latvia, speak it as a second language. Millions of Polish speakers can be found in countries such as Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States as a result of emigration from Poland at various times, most notably following World War II.

The inhabitants of different regions of Poland still speak Polish somewhat differently, although the differences between modern-day vernacular varieties and standard Polish (język ogólnopolski) appear relatively slight. Most of the middle aged and young speak vernaculars close to standard Polish, while the traditional dialects are preserved among older people in rural areas. First-language speakers of Polish have no trouble understanding each other, and

non-native speakers may have difficulty recognizing the regional and social differences. The modern standard dialect, often termed as "correct Polish", is spoken or at least understood throughout the entire country.

Polish has traditionally been described as consisting of four or five main regional dialects:

- Greater Polish, spoken in the west
- Lesser Polish, spoken in the south and southeast
- Masovian, spoken throughout the central and eastern parts of the country
- Silesian, spoken in the southwest

Useful Phrases



First words in Polish

English	Polish
Welcome	Witam
Hello	Cześć
Goodbye	Do widzenia
Good morning	Dzień dobry
Good afternoon	Dzień dobry
Thank you	Dziękuję
Sorry	Przepraszam
Please	Proszę
Yes	Tak
No	Nie
Come here	Podejdź tutaj
Well done	Dobrze
Excellent	Wspaniale

For multicultural resources - stickers, stampers, puppets and other resources visit www.the-treasure-box.co.uk

20. Weekdays

Monday	poniedziałek (m)	[pone'dʒ'awɛk]
Tuesday	wtorek (m)	['ftɔrɛk]
Wednesday	środa (ż)	['ɕrɔda]
Thursday	czwartek (m)	['tʃfartɛk]
Friday	piątek (m)	[pɔ̃tɛk]
Saturday	sobota (ż)	[so'bɔta]
Sunday	niedziela (ż)	[ne'dʒɛla]
today (adv)	dzisiaj	['dʒicaj]
tomorrow (adv)	jutro	['jutɔ]
the day after tomorrow	pojutrze	[po'jutʃɛ]
yesterday (adv)	wczoraj	['ftʃɔraj]
the day before yesterday	przedwczoraj	[pʃɛftt'ʃɔraj]
day	dzień (m)	[dʒɛɲ]
working day	dzień (m) roboczy	[dʒɛɲ ɾɔ'bɔtʃi]
public holiday	dzień (m) święteczny	[dʒɛɲ ɕɕɔ'tɛtʃɲi]
day off	dzień (m) wolny	[dʒɛɲ 'vɔlni]
weekend	weekend (m)	[u'ikɛnt]
all day long	cały dzień	['tsawi dʒɛɲ]
the next day (adv)	następnego dnia	[nastɛp'nɛgo dɲa]
two days ago	dwa dni temu	[dva dni 'tɛmu]
the day before	w przeddzień	[f 'pʃɛddʒɛɲ]
daily (adj)	codzienny	[tsɔ'dʒɛɲi]
every day (adv)	codziennie	[tsɔ'dʒɛɲɛ]
week	tydzień (m)	['tidʒɛɲ]

SAFETY

Traveling to a foreign country such as Poland can offer the experience of a lifetime. However, in the midst of all this excitement you must also be cognizant of your surroundings and take certain precautions to ensure your safety. Like many of the countries in Central America and around the world, Poland has certain neighborhoods you might be wise to avoid, and the country is currently experiencing a higher than average crime rate due to an increase in gang activity in certain regions of the country.

To help you safely enjoy all that Poland has to offer, below we have outlined a few travel safety tips you may want to keep in mind while visiting the country.

TRAVEL IN GROUPS

As the old saying goes, “there is safety in numbers.” Truer words have never been spoken. As you make your way through beautiful Poland, en route to the various sites and attractions you’ve mapped out on your itinerary, always try to travel with at least one other person (even more if you can). Research shows that criminals are less likely to approach you when they feel outnumbered.

MAKE COPIES OF ALL YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Documents can easily be misplaced or even stolen in the hustle and bustle of foreign travel, creating a nightmarish situation you just don’t need. This is why you should make copies of all your important papers. This includes copies of your passport, visa, driver’s license, social security card and medical insurance card. Travel experts suggest you keep one copy of these documents on your person at all times, and at least one other copy locked in the hotel safe.

BEWARE OF THE NIGHT

Sightseeing is an activity that should be limited to the daylight hours, as unsavory types tend to be hard at work during the nighttime, often preying on unsuspecting tourists. Enjoy your hotel during the nighttime hours, and if you must go out, try to stay in the immediate area.

GET VACCINATED

Check with your doctor regarding the vaccinations that would be appropriate when traveling to Poland and don’t let a serious illness of some type ruin your long-awaited getaway.

FOOD

When buying street food and snacks in more rural areas of Poland, take the usual precautions: don’t buy meat unless you can see it being cooked right in front of you. If you find yourself buying snacks out of a bus window, avoid anything with meat in it and try to go for fruit that you can peel.

CURRENCY

The zoty is Poland's official currency and legal money. It's broken down into 100 grosz (gr). The Polish zloty is the most frequently recognized English spelling of the currency name. It is the most widely traded currency in Central and Eastern Europe, and it is ranked 22nd in the international currency market. The word zoty is a masculine form of the Polish adjective 'golden,' which is related to the guilder, whereas the grosz component was named after the groschen, which is related to the English word groat. On February 28, 1919, it was formally launched to replace its predecessor, the Polish marka, and commenced circulation in 1924. Mennica Polska, created in Warsaw on February 10, 1766, is the only organization authorized to manufacture or mint zoty coins.



The currency was redenominated in the early 1990s as a result of inflation. As a result, 10,000 old zoty (PLZ) became one new zoty on January 1, 1995. (PLN). Since then, the currency has been reasonably stable, oscillating between 3 and 4 zoty per US dollar. Despite the fact that Poland is a member of the European Union, approximately 60% of Poles are opposed to the euro replacing the zoty.

The official currency symbol is z, which is made up of lowercase z and the first two letters of the word "zoty." It is not represented as a single symbol in the Unicode Standard, however it was previously represented on Polish typewriters.

Credit Cards:

In Poland, credit cards are readily accepted, particularly near tourist destinations. Europay International, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express are the most regularly used cards. If you have a card from a less well-known merchant, check ahead of time to see if it may be used in Poland. When you buy something in another country, many banks may charge you a foreign transaction fee, which is normally around 3%. Always tell your card issuer where you're going and when you're going when traveling overseas. This prevents them from incorrectly suspecting that your card has been stolen and freezing it.

ATMs:

In Poland, ATMs are fairly common. Bankomat is a network of ATMs in Poland that is connected to all worldwide networks. When using an ATM, you may be charged a range of fees depending on the ATM and your bank. Check with your home bank to learn what fees you'll be charged if you use an ATM outside of your home country. If your bank charges a flat fee per transaction, make large, infrequent withdrawals to avoid paying the price many times. It's possible that the ATM will charge you a fee as well. However, due to the exchange rate, it is usually always cheaper to use an ATM in Poland than to exchange cash from home.

TRAVELERS CHEQUES:

In Poland, traveller's checks can be exchanged at some banks. They cannot, however, be exchanged at Kantors. Traveller's checks were commonly used in the past as a safe way to carry money abroad but now there are quicker ways of getting cash, like at an ATM. Traveller's checks have experienced a decline in popularity so you may have trouble finding a bank that will cash your traveller's check. Banks that do will charge a fee for the service. Overall, traveller's checks simply aren't a great choice. When in Poland, you're better off using an ATM or a prepaid card.

BANKING HOURS:

The best way to exchange currency in Poland is to visit a bank, ATM, or Kantor (currency exchange service). Kantors are counter exchanges located in spots like hotels, airports or border crossings. They are normally open from 9 AM to 7 PM on weekdays, and until 2 PM on Saturdays. Busy tourist areas may have 24-hour Kantor services.

CURRENCY CONVERSION RATE:

1 Poland złoty equals

0.22 United States
Dollar

Apr 29, 12:12 AM UTC · Disclaimer

1

Poland złoty ▼

0.22

United States Dollar ▼

1D 5D 1M 1Y 5Y Max



Feedback

IMR RECOMMENDATIONS ON PERSONAL FUNDS

- Please bring the amount that you are comfortable spending on gifts or small personal articles, including snacks.
- To determine if the currency of the country you are visiting is traded in the United States, please visit www.travelex.com. Travelex has offices in all major airports and cities and you may change money before the trip for a small fee.
- Trading in the United States is the easiest way for you to trade money.
- If the currency is not traded in the United States, you will usually be able to trade in the airport upon arrival or the team leader will arrange to change money for the team once during the trip. We do not guarantee that you will be able to change money in small towns or during clinic.
- You must bring currency newer than 2006 and in perfect condition - no tears, folds, old bills.
- New bills are preferred by the international banks, as are denominations larger than \$20. The best rate is obtained trading \$100 bills.
- If you are joining us from another country, please check the trading rules of your home currency.
- Credit cards may not be accepted outside of major cities, hotels, and large restaurants.
- IMR does not pay for alcohol. If you intend to purchase alcohol, you are required to obtain and pay with a separate bill. Please have local currency for these transactions.

TIME IN POLAND



Poland is in Central European Summer Time and is 6 hours ahead of EST.

EMBASSY INFORMATION

ASSISTANCE:

Telephone

Poland:

+48 22 307 1361

US: (703) 988 7101

(8:30AM-5PM Mon-Fri)

Email

support-poland@ustraveldocs.com

Website

[U.S. Embassy Warsaw](http://U.S.EmbassyWarsaw)

EMBASSY INFORMATION:

Aleje Ujazdowskie 29/31

00-540 Warsaw, Poland

Tel.: +48 22 504 2000

Embassy hours of operation are:

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Embassy is closed for American and Polish holidays.

WEBSITES

The following websites provide information on the country you are visiting. IMR highly recommends and encourages you to view these sites prior to departure. They are frequently updated and are a tremendous resource:

- Embassy of the United States for Poland: <https://pl.usembassy.gov/>
- State Department Travel Warnings:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/poland-travel-advisory.html>
- Travel Health online: <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations/europe/poland>
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/>
- Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>
- CDC Travel Medicine for Poland: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/poland>
- CNN Weather Report: <http://www.cnn.com/WEATHER>
- Official Poland Tourism Site: <https://www.poland.travel/en>
- UNICEF Statistics: <https://data.unicef.org/country/pol/>
- Lonely Planet: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/poland>
- Wikipedia Poland : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland>