



Poland

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Best Places to Stay

- » Castle Inn (p397)
- » Hotel Żubrówka (p404)
- » Grand Hotel Lublinianka (p419)
- » Hotel Sabata (p426)
- » Dom Zachariasza Zappio (p445)

Best Places to Eat

- » Sketch (p398)
- » Momo (p413)
- » Restauracja JaDka (p435)
- » Restauracja Pod Łosiosiem (p446)

Why Go?

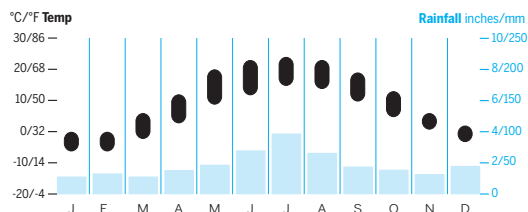
If they were handing out prizes for ‘most eventful history’, Poland would be sure to get a medal. The nation has spent centuries at the pointy end of history, grappling with war and invasion. Nothing, however, has succeeded in suppressing the Poles’ strong sense of nationhood and cultural identity. As a result, centres such as bustling Warsaw and cultured Kraków exude a sophisticated energy that’s a heady mix of old and new.

Away from the cities, Poland is a diverse land, from its northern beaches to its magnificent southern mountains. In between are towns and cities dotted with ruined castles, picturesque squares and historic churches.

Although prices are rising as its post-communist economy gathers momentum, Poland is still good value for travellers. As the Polish people work on combining their distinctive national identity with their place in the heart of Europe, it’s a fascinating time to visit this beautiful country.

When to Go

Warsaw



May–June

Indulge in the asparagus season, when Poland’s restaurants serve this vegetable.

July–August

Hit the beaches on Poland’s long, sandy Baltic coast.

September

Walk in the Tatra Mountains, bedding down in a cosy hikers’ refuge.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Złoty (zł)
- » **Language** Polish
- » **Money** ATMs all over; banks open Mon-Fri
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 312, 685 sq km
- » **Capital** Warsaw
- » **Telephone country code** 48
- » **Emergency:** 999 (ambulance), 998 (fire), 997 (police), 112 (from mobile phones)

Exchange rates

Australia	A\$1	2.90zł
Canada	C\$1	2.86zł
euro	€1	3.95zł
Japan	¥100	3.31zł
New Zealand	NZ\$1	2.18zł
UK	UK£1	4.48zł
USA	US\$1	2.75zł

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 150zł
- » **Two-course meal** 50zł
- » **Museum entrance** 10zł
- » **Beer** 6-9zł
- » **City transport ticket** 2.50zł

Resources

- » **Official travel site** (www.poland.travel)
- » **News and website directory** (www.poland.pl)

Connections

Due to its central position, Poland offers plenty of possibilities for onward travel. The country is well connected by train: there are direct connections to Berlin from both Warsaw (via Poznań) and Kraków; to Prague from Warsaw and Kraków; and to Kyiv from Warsaw and Kraków (via Przemyśl and Lviv). Trains also link Warsaw to Minsk and Moscow, and Gdańsk to Kaliningrad. International buses head in all directions, including eastward to the Baltic States. From southern Zakopane, it's easy to hop to Slovakia via bus, or even minibus. And from the Baltic coast ports of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Świnoujście, ferries head to various ports in Denmark and Sweden.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Spend a day exploring Warsaw with a stroll round the Old Town and a stop at the Warsaw Rising Museum. The next day, head to Kraków for three days, visiting the Old Town, Wawel Castle, the former Jewish district of Kazimierz, and Wieliczka. Take a day trip to Oświęcim, then head on to Zakopane for two days.

Two Weeks

Follow the above itinerary, then on the eighth day travel to Wrocław for two days. Progress north to Toruń for a day, then onward to Gdańsk for two days, exploring the Old Town and visiting Westerplatte. Wind down with a couple of days at the seaside in Sopot.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Żurek** This hearty sour soup comes with sausage and hard-boiled egg, or try *barszcz* (red beetroot soup).
- » **Bigos** Extinguish hunger pangs with this thick sauerkraut and meat stew, or *placki ziemniaczane* (potato pancakes often topped with a meaty sauce).
- » **Beer** It's good, cold and inexpensive, and often served in colourful beer gardens.
- » **Vodka** Try it plain, or ask for *myśliwska* (flavoured with juniper berries).
- » **Szarlotka** Sweets include this apple cake with cream and the weighty *sernik* (baked cheesecake).