



Poland

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Best Places to Eat

- » Sketch, Warsaw (p964)
- » Momo, Kraków (p970)
- » Magia, Lublin (p973)
- » Bazylika, Wrocław (p977)
- » Gospoda Pod Modrym Fartuchem, Toruń (p984)

Best Places to Stay

- » Castle Inn, Warsaw (p963)
- » Mama's Hostel, Kraków (p969)
- » Hotel Patio, Wrocław (p977)
- » Dom Zachariasza Zappio, Gdańsk (p982)
- » Green Hostel, Toruń (p984)

Why Go?

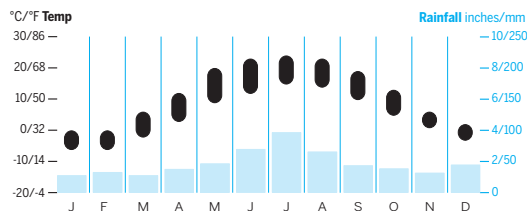
If they were handing out prizes for 'most eventful history', Poland would be sure to get a medal. The nation has spent centuries at the pointy end of history, grappling with war and invasion. Nothing, however, has succeeded in suppressing the Poles' strong cultural identity. As a result, centres such 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 beaches to its magnificent mountains. Everywhere in between are towns and cities dotted with ruined castles, picturesque squares and historic churches.

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

When to Go

Warsaw



May–Jun Indulge as Poland's restaurants serve dishes starring fresh asparagus.

Jul–Aug Hit the beaches on Poland's long, sandy Baltic coast

Sep Go walking in the beautiful Tatra Mountains, bedding down in a cosy hikers' refuge

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, Belarus and Ukraine. From southern Zakopane it's easy to hop to Slovakia via bus, or even minibus. And from the Baltic coast ports of Gdańsk and Gdynia, ferries head to various ports in Scandinavia.

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 sobering 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 Gothic Toruń for two days, then onward to Gdańsk for three days, exploring its Main Town and taking a day trip to the magnificent castle at Malbork.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Soups** Hearty examples include *żurek* (sour soup with sausage and hard-boiled egg) and *barszcz* (red beetroot soup).
- » **Stomach-filling dishes** Extinguish hunger pangs with *bigos* (a thick sauerkraut and meat stew), *pierogi* (dumplings stuffed with various fillings), or *placki ziemniaczane* (potato pancakes often topped with a meaty sauce).
- » **Beer** Good, cold and inexpensive, and often served in colourful beer gardens.
- » **Vodka** Try it plain, or ask for *myśliwska* (flavoured with juniper berries), *wiśniówka* (with cherries) or *zubrówka* (flavoured with bison grass from the Białowieża Forest).
- » **Something sweet** *Szarlotka* (apple cake with cream), or the weighty *sernik* (baked cheesecake).

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Złoty
- » **Language** Polish
- » **Money** ATMs are everywhere
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply; see p1319

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 312,685 sq km
- » **Capital** Warsaw
- » **Country code** ☑48
- » **Emergency** ☑112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	2.80zł
Canada	C\$1	2.75zł
Euro Zone	€1	3.94zł
Japan	¥100	3.37zł
New Zealand	NZ\$1	2.20zł
UK	UK£1	4.42zł
USA	US\$1	2.70zł

Set Your Budget

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

Resources

- » **Official tourism site** (www.poland.travel)
- » **News and website directory** (www.poland.pl)
- » **Comprehensive government portal** (www.poland.gov.pl)