

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Poland has a wide choice of accommodation options to suit most budgets. And while prices have risen in recent years, they're still low compared to Western Europe. Cheap, however, doesn't always mean good value – standards can vary greatly from one place to the next, with one hotel offering excellent facilities and the next god-awful rooms for around the same price.

Room prices are usually displayed at the reception desk. You are most likely to find listings for *pokój 1-osobowy* (single rooms) and *pokój 2-osobowy* (double rooms), possibly *z łazienką* (with bathroom) or *bez łazienki* (without bathroom), or *z umywalką* (with

basin only). Rates normally include value-added tax (VAT), so you will be charged the rate shown, unless indicated otherwise.

Warsaw is the most expensive place to stay, followed by Kraków, Poznań and other major cities. The further away from the big cities you go, the cheaper accommodation gets. The summer resorts, particularly those on the Baltic coast, on the Masurian lakes and in the mountains, have higher prices in the high season (July and August). Similarly, the mountain ski centres put their prices up in winter. The price of accommodation is the same for foreigners as for Poles, except in some youth hostels, which charge foreigners marginally more.

In this book, budget listings generally include anything costing less than 150zł for a double room; midrange covers hotels priced from approximately 150zł to 300zł a double, and anything over 300zł is considered top end. In Warsaw and Kraków the midrange category is between 200zł and 400zł. Parking almost always costs extra, and can be anything from 5zł to 30zł, while breakfast is generally included in the price. Sleeping options in this book are listed from lowest to highest by double-room price.

Note that the wheelchair icon has only been used if a place is accessible to mobility-impaired people. This could mean a lift or ramps for easy access to reception and rooms, or that there are no stairs to contend with.

## Agrotourist Accommodation

Known as *kwatery agroturystyczne*, agrotourist accommodation refers to rooms in farms, country houses and cottages. Meals can normally be provided on request, and sometimes

### BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

there are opportunities for horse riding, fishing, canoeing, cycling and such. They're a great way to meet locals on their own turf, sample home-cooked regional food and enjoy a bit of country lifestyle. In most cases, rooms are simple and rarely have private bathrooms, but prices are reasonable, usually between 20zł and 50zł per bed.

The owners of these places are affiliated with *stowarzyszenia agroturystyczne* (agrotourist associations), which have 30-plus regional offices around the country; contact local tourist information centres for more details.

While this accommodation type is generally not included in this book (as most require your own transport to get to), information is easy to track down – most local tourist offices have a list of places in their region.

### Apartments

In recent years fully equipped apartments in larger cities such as Warsaw and Kraków have become handy accommodation options. They range from simple studios to two-bedroom luxury establishments, and are often centrally located. Prices vary wildly, but a little internet research can save a fair amount of cash. Be sure to check the size of the apartment before making a booking, as some are so tiny you could be sleeping standing up.

### Camping

Poland has over 500 camping and bivouac sites registered at the **Polish Federation of Camping & Caravanning** ([www.pfcc.info](http://www.pfcc.info)). The sites are distributed throughout the country, and

can be found in all the major cities (usually on the outskirts), in many towns and in the countryside.

About 40% of registered sites are camping grounds with full facilities, including lighting, electricity, running water, showers, kitchen and caravan pitches. Many places also have wooden cabins for rent, which are similar to very basic hotel rooms. The remaining 60% are bivouac sites, the equivalent of very basic camp sites, usually equipped with toilets and not much else. The *Campingi w Polsce* map, available from bookshops, has details of registered camping and bivouac sites.

Private camping grounds also exist in Poland. They range from small back gardens with a bathroom in the owner's house to large grounds with bungalows, cafés, shops, bike and boat hire, and so on.

Most camping grounds are open from May to September, but some run only from June to August. The opening and closing dates given here are a rough guide only: sites may open and close earlier or later in the season, depending on factors such as the weather, flow of tourists or the owner's whim.

Fees are usually charged per tent site, plus an extra fee per person and per car.

### Holiday Homes

In popular holiday areas, such as the mountains or the coast, you'll come across workers' holiday homes, known to Poles as *domy wczasowe* or *domy wypoczynkowe*. In communist times, these large establishments either served the employees of a company or were

directed centrally by the Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych (FWP; Workers' Holiday Fund). Nowadays they welcome everybody. Most are open in summer only, but some run year-round. They tend to be full in July and August, but it's relatively easy to get a room in June or September. Their standards vary but on the whole they're not bad, and prices are usually reasonable. Almost all houses have their own dining rooms. Full board is usually optional but in some homes it can be compulsory.

### Hostels

#### YOUTH HOSTELS

Poland has just under 600 *schroniska młodzieżowe* (youth hostels), which are operated by the **Polskie Towarzystwo Schronisk Młodzieżowych** (PTSM; Polish Youth Hostel Association; ☎ 022 849 8128; [www.ptsm.org.pl](http://www.ptsm.org.pl); ul Chocimska 14, Warsaw), a member of Hostelling International (HI). Of this 600 hostels, around 20% open year-round and the rest in July and August only; all are listed in *Informator PTSM* (8zł), a PTSM-produced guidebook available at hostels throughout the country.

The all-year hostels have more facilities, including showers, a place to cook and a dining room. Some hostels are in poor shape, while others are good and modern. Hostels are normally marked with a sign, featuring a green triangle with the PTSM logo inside, placed over the entrance.

The PTSM also runs seasonal hostels, which are usually located in schools while pupils are on holidays. These schools are in no way adapted to being hostels – they hardly ever have showers or kitchens, and hot water is rare.

Youth hostels are open to all, members and nonmembers alike, and there is no age limit. Curfew is normally 10pm, and almost all hostels are closed between 10am and 5pm. A dorm bed in a hostel costs from 15zł to 40zł, depending on the hostel's category. Singles, doubles and triples, if there are any, cost about 20% to 50% more. A hostelling card gives a 10% to 25% discount off these prices for nationals and, in some places, for foreigners. Bed sheets are available for 4zł to 6zł (not available in some seasonal hostels).

#### PRIVATE HOSTELS

Private hostels are making inroads into Poland, but at present are restricted to the bigger cities – Kraków, and to a lesser extent

Warsaw, are awash with them. They normally market themselves to backpackers, providing kitchens, laundry facilities, plenty of tourist information and sometimes a lounge and bar. Standards are normally high, and staff are young, multilingual, knowledgeable and friendly.

#### PTTK & MOUNTAIN HOSTELS

The **Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze** (PTTK; Polish Tourist & Countryside Association; [www.pttk.pl](http://www.pttk.pl)) has built up a network of its own hostels, called *dom turysty* or *dom wycieczkowy*. They are aimed at budget travellers, providing basic accommodation for hikers and backpackers throughout the country. Single rooms are a rarity, but you'll always have a choice of three- and four-bed rooms, usually with shared facilities, where you can often rent just one bed (not the whole room) for around 20zł to 40zł. Some PTTK hostels, particularly those in the cities, are now under private management and cost more.

PTTK also runs a network of *schroniska górskie* (mountain hostels). Conditions are usually simple but prices are low and hot meals are available. The more isolated mountain hostels are obliged to take in all-comers, regardless of how crowded they get, which means that in the high season (summer and/or winter) it can sometimes be hard to even find a space on the floor. These hostels are open all year, though it's best to check at the nearest regional PTTK office before setting off.

#### STUDENT HOSTELS

From July to late September many student dormitories in schools, universities and even kindergartens become student hostels. These are run by the schools themselves. Standards are basic but good and facilities are usually shared, although some hostels have rooms with private bathrooms. Expect to pay anything between 60zł and 120zł for a double room. Note that some dorms have a limited number of rooms available year-round.

#### Hotels

Most accommodation in Poland falls under this category. It is also the most diverse group, encompassing an immense variety of old and new places ranging from ultrabasic to extralush.

The old generation of hotels, dating from before the fall of communism, was graded

#### PRACTICALITIES

- Catch up on Polish current affairs in the *Warsaw Voice* ([www.warsawvoice.pl](http://www.warsawvoice.pl)), a weekly available from major newsagencies. Foreign newspapers can be found at EMPIK stores, foreign-language bookshops and newsstands in the lobbies of upmarket hotels.
- The state-run Polskie Radio is the main radio broadcaster, operating on AM and FM in every corner of the country; all programmes are in Polish. You can pick up BBC World Service on short wave on 6195KHz, 9410KHz and 12095KHz.
- Poland has two state-owned, countrywide TV channels: TVP1 and the more educational and culture-focused TVP2. There are also several private channels, including the countrywide PolSat.
- Video recorders use the PAL system.
- Electrical sockets are 220V, 50Hz, and plugs with two round pins are used, the same as in the rest of continental Europe.
- Poland uses the metric system. There's a conversion table on the inside front cover of this book.

from one to five stars, intended to reflect the quality and price. The rudimentary one-stars are mostly confined to the smaller provincial towns, whereas the upmarket five-star establishments, now monopolised by **Orbis** ([www.orbis.pl](http://www.orbis.pl)), dot the central areas of big cities.

Orbis runs 63 hotels across the country. Focusing on affluent tourists and locals, Orbis hotels keep their prices high – about 170zł to 370zł a single and 250zł to 550zł a double, or even more in some establishments in Warsaw, Kraków and Wrocław. Various international hotel chains have also entered the market, mostly building places in the bigger cities with standards equivalent to Western Europe.

There are also plenty of small, mostly private hotels, many of which cater to the middle-priced market. Standards can vary wildly, so if possible check the room before accepting. Don't be fooled by the hotel reception areas, which may look great in contrast to the rest of the establishment. If you ask to see a room, you can be pretty sure that they won't give you the worst one, which may happen otherwise.

Close to the bottom rung of the hotel ladder are sports hotels and workers' hotels. Sports hotels were built in sports centres in order to create facilities for local and visiting teams. In many aspects they are similar to the PTTK hostels: they seldom have singles, offer mostly shared facilities and you can usually pay just for your bed, not the whole room. Expect to pay 30zł to 60zł per head. Sports hostels are usually located next to the local sports stadium, often well away from the town or city centre. Most commonly, they are called *hotel sportowy*, *hotel OSiR* or *hotel MOSiR*, and some offer camping grounds in summer.

Workers' hotels mushroomed in the post-war period of industrial development, when large factories and other enterprises had to provide lodging facilities for their workers, many of whom came from other regions. These hotels are generally found in the cities, particularly industrial ones. They are almost always large, drab apartment blocks, often a long way from the city centre. They are called *hotel pracowniczy* or *hotel robotniczy*, though most have disguised themselves under a proper name. Their standards are usually low, but so is the price (20zł to 40zł per bed in a double, triple or quad). Singles are rare, as are private bathrooms. They are just about the

cheapest hotels you can find and, judging by their facilities, could be classified as hostels.

## Pensions

*Pensjonaty* (pensions) are small, privately run guesthouses that provide bed and half- or full board. By and large, pensions are clean, comfortable, friendly and good value: singles/doubles cost around 80/120zł. Some of them are aimed specifically at Western European tourists, particularly Germans, and may have higher prices.

## Private Rooms

These are rooms in private homes. They are available in some major cities and many smaller tourist hot spots, and can be arranged through specialist agencies or directly with the owners. They're often a lottery: you don't know what sort of room you'll get or who your hosts will be. It's therefore a good idea to take the room for a night or two and then extend if you decide to stay longer.

Staff in agencies will show you what's available, you then decide, pay and go to the address given to you. Be sure to check the location before forking over cash as some places are frustratingly far from the centre.

In the large cities (such as Warsaw or Kraków), rooms cost from 60zł to 80zł for singles and from 100zł to 120zł for doubles. In popular holiday resorts, you'll find plenty of signs saying '*pokoje*' (rooms) or '*noclegi*' (lodging) at the entrances to private homes. They are usually cheaper than in the cities – 30zł to 60zł a head in most cases.

## ACTIVITIES

See Activities (p75) at the beginning of the book for details.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Consider the following as a rough guide only; hours can vary considerably from shop to shop (or office to office) and from the city to the village.

Most grocery shops open from 7am or 8am to 6pm or 7pm on weekdays and to around 2pm on Saturday. Delicatessens and supermarkets usually stay open longer, until 8pm or 9pm (and are often open on Sunday from 9am to 7pm), and there's at least one food shop in every major town and every district of the city that opens for 24 hours. Shops normally open at 10am and close at

6pm (at 2pm or 3pm on Saturday). The office working day is theoretically eight hours long, Monday to Friday, and there's usually no lunch break.

In the larger towns and cities, banks keep their doors open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday, and in smaller hamlets from 9am to around 4.30pm weekdays only.

Larger city post offices are normally open from 8am to 8pm weekdays and 8am to 1pm Saturday, and one will usually stay open 24 hours. In smaller localities, business hours may only be until 4pm weekdays.

Restaurants tend to open between 11am and 11pm, while opening hours for bars vary greatly; it is, however, a given that most stay open well after midnight on Friday and Saturday.

There are no standard opening hours for museums and other attractions. Most museums are closed on Monday; some of them also stay closed on the day following a public holiday. Many museums close one or two hours earlier in the low season, and usually stop selling tickets half an hour (sometimes even one hour) before their official closing time.

Churches are a bigger puzzle. The major churches in the main cities are often open all day long. On the other hand, rural churches in small villages will almost always be locked except during Mass, which may be only on Sunday morning.

## CHILDREN

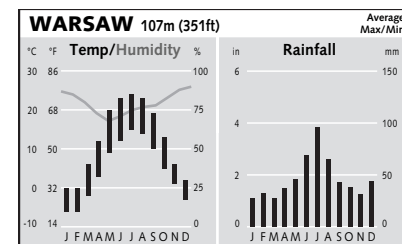
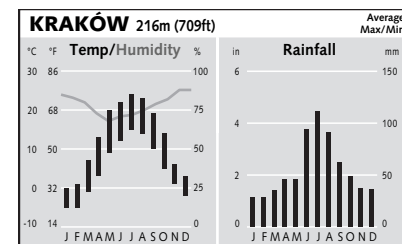
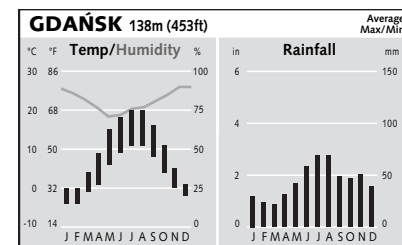
Travelling with children in Poland doesn't create any specific problems: children enjoy privileges on local transport, and with accommodation and entertainment; age limits for particular freebies or discounts vary from place to place, but are not often rigidly enforced; and basic supplies for children are easily available in cities. There are quite a few shops devoted to kids' clothes, shoes and toys, and you can buy disposable nappies (diapers) and baby food in supermarkets and pharmacies. For general suggestions on how to make a trip with kids easier, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*, by Cathy Lanigan.

## CLIMATE CHARTS

Poland's climate is influenced by a continental climate from the east and a maritime climate

from the west. As a result, the weather is changeable, with significant differences from day to day and from year to year. Winter one year can be almost without snow, whereas another year very heavy snows can paralyse transport for days. Summer can occasionally be cold, wet and disappointing.

The seasons are clearly differentiated. Spring starts in March and is initially cold and windy, later becoming pleasantly warm and often sunny. Summer, which begins in June, is predominantly warm but hot at times, with plenty of sunshine interlaced with heavy rains. July is the hottest month. Autumn comes in September and is at first warm and usually sunny, turning cold, damp and foggy in November. Winter lasts from December to March and includes short or long periods of snow. High up in the mountains, snow stays well into May. January and February are the coldest months. The temperature sometimes drops below -15°C, or even -20°C.





## COURSES

Polish language courses are available in a number of spots across the country, such as Sopot (p425), Kraków (p195), Warsaw (p103) and Wrocław (p322). They last anywhere between one week to an entire summer, and can be tailored to fit student needs.

Train buffs can learn to drive a steam train in Wolsztyn (p389) and foodies can learn to cook proper *pierogi* (Polish dumplings) in a handful of places, including Warsaw (p65).

## CUSTOMS

As with other EU countries, you're allowed to bring duty-free articles for your personal use while you travel and stay in Poland. Unlimited amounts of foreign currency can be brought into the country, but only up to the equivalent of €10,000 can be taken out by a foreigner without a declaration.

Travellers arriving from non-EU countries can bring in up to 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g of pipe tobacco, up to 2L of nonsparkling wine, and up to 1L of spirits. If you're arriving from an EU member state, the allowances increase to 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars or 1kg of pipe tobacco, and up to 110L of beer, 90L of wine and 10L of spirits.

When leaving the country, you may take out gifts and souvenirs of a total value not exceeding €90, duty free. The export of items manufactured before 9 May 1945 is strictly prohibited, unless you first get a *pozwolenie eksportowe* (export permit). Official antique dealers – such as **Desa Unicum** ([www.desa.pl](http://www.desa.pl) in Polish) – may offer to help you out with the paperwork, but the procedure is bureaucratic and time-consuming, and involves paying a fee equivalent to 25% of the item's value. Beware of dealers who tell you that the law has changed since Poland's accession to the EU – it has not.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Poland is a relatively safe country to travel in, but it does have its fair share of crime. Always keep your eyes open and let common sense prevail. Problems mostly occur in big cities, with Warsaw being perhaps the least safe place in Poland. Take care when walking alone at night, particularly in the suburb of Praga, and be alert at Warszawa Centralna (Warsaw Central) train station, the favourite playground for thieves and pickpockets. Other large cities appear to be quieter, but keep your

wits about you. By and large, the smaller the town, the safer it is.

Keep a sharp eye on your pockets and your bag in crowded places such as markets or city buses and trams. Beware of being short-changed at train stations, taxis, restaurants etc. Always have some smaller bills in order to make change more easily. Hotels are generally safe, though it's better not to leave valuables in your room. In most places you can deposit them at the reception desk.

While car theft is on the decrease, those travelling in cars with foreign number plates should use secure parking at night. 'Pirate' or 'mafia' taxis can be a problem in Warsaw (see p119) and some other large cities. Poles have an aversion to stopping at zebra crossings – be very careful when stepping out into the road.

If your passport, valuables and/or other belongings are lost or stolen, report it to the police. They will give you a copy of the statement, which serves as a temporary identity document; if you have insurance, you'll need to present the statement to your insurer in order to make a claim. English-speaking police are rare, so it's best to take along an interpreter if you can. Don't hold high hopes of having your possessions returned to you, for the police earn next to nothing and can be rather cynical about a 'rich' foreigner complaining about losing a few dollars.

Heavy drinking is a way of life in Poland and drunks may at times be disturbing. Poles smoke a lot and so far there has been little serious antitobacco campaigning. Polish cigarettes are of low quality and the smoke they produce is barely tolerable for anyone not used to them, let alone a nonsmoker.

Slow and impolite service in shops, offices and restaurants is slowly being eradicated, though you can still occasionally experience it. By the way, if a couple of young boys offer to bag your shopping at a supermarket, they're not begging or scamming – they're boy scouts collecting for charity.

Since WWII Poland has been ethnically an almost entirely homogeneous nation, and Poles, particularly those living in rural areas, have had little contact with foreigners. As a result, travellers racially different to the average Pole may attract some stares and a few giggles from the locals. In most cases, this is just a curiosity, without any hostility in mind. While there have been some acts of racism

in the cities, it's still not a social problem by any definition.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

There are numerous tourist-oriented discount cards for Polish cities, including Warsaw (p87), Poznań (p373) and Kraków (p166). The Tri-City Tourist Card covers Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia (p406). The Pomeranian region is also covered by the Pomeranian Tourist Card (p406).

## Hostel Cards

A HI membership card can gain you 10% to 25% discount on youth hostel prices, though some hostels don't give discounts to foreigners. Bring the card with you, or get one issued in Poland at the provincial branch offices of the PTSM in the main cities. Go to [www.ptsm.org.pl](http://www.ptsm.org.pl) to find an office.

## Student Cards

Students receive great discounts in Poland, such as 50% on museum admissions, 20% on Pol ferry ferries, 10% on LOT domestic flights, 50% on urban transport in Warsaw and 33% on InterCity trains. These discounts normally only apply to students under the age of 26 with an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), but not always – museums generally don't stick to this rule and will give discounts to students of any age with or without an ISIC card. ISIC cards are available in Poland at the **Almatur Student Bureau** ([www.almatur.pl](http://www.almatur.pl)), which has offices in most major cities. The card costs 30zł and requires you to submit a photo.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

**Australia** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 521 3444; [www.australia.pl](http://www.australia.pl)); 3rd fl, ul Nowogrodzka 11, Warsaw

**Belarus** Białystok (Map p140; ☎ 085 664 9940; ul Elektryczna 9, Białystok); Gdańsk (☎ 058 341 0026; ul Noakowskiego 9, Gdańsk); Warsaw (☎ 022 742 0990; [www.belembassy.org/poland](http://www.belembassy.org/poland); ul Wiertnicza 58, Warsaw)

**Canada** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 584 3100; [www.canada.pl](http://www.canada.pl)); ul Matejki 1/5, Warsaw

**Czech Republic** Katowice (☎ 032 609 9960; ul Stalmacha 21, Katowice); Warsaw (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 525 1850; [www.mfa.cz/warsaw](http://www.mfa.cz/warsaw); ul Koszykowa 18, Warsaw)

**France** (Map p84; ☎ 022 529 3000; [www.ambafrance-pl.org](http://www.ambafrance-pl.org); ul Piękna 1, Warsaw)

**Germany** Gdańsk (☎ 058 340 6500; Al Zwycięstwa 23, Gdańsk); Kraków (☎ 012 424 3000; ul Stolarska 7, Kraków); Warsaw (Map p84; ☎ 022 584 1700; [\[ambasadaniemiec.pl\]\(http://ambasadaniemiec.pl\); ul Dąbrowiecka 30, Warsaw\);](http://www</a></p>
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Wrocław (☎ 071 377 2700; ul Podwale 76, Wrocław)

**Ireland** (Map p84; ☎ 022 849 6633; [www.irelandia.pl](http://www.irelandia.pl); ul Mysia 5, Warsaw)

**Japan** (Map p84; ☎ 022 696 5000; [www.pl.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.pl.emb-japan.go.jp); ul Szwoleżerów 8, Warsaw)

**Latvia** (Map p84; ☎ 022 617 4389; [embassy.poland@mfa.gov.lv](http://embassy.poland@mfa.gov.lv); ul Królowej Aldony 19, Warsaw)

**Lithuania** Sejny (☎ 087 517 3790; ul 22 Lipca 9, Sejny); Warsaw (Map p84; ☎ 022 625 3410; [ambasada@lietuva.pl](http://ambasada@lietuva.pl); Al Ujazdowski 14, Warsaw)

**Netherlands** (Map p84; ☎ 022 559 1200; war@minbuza.nl; ul Kawalerii 10, Warsaw)

**New Zealand** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 521 0500; [nzswb@nzembassy.pl](http://nzswb@nzembassy.pl); Al Ujazdowski 51, Warsaw)

**Russia** Gdańsk (☎ 058 341 1088; ul Batorego 15, Gdańsk); Kraków (☎ 012 422 2647; ul Biskupia 7, Kraków); Poznań (☎ 061 841 7523; ul Bukowska 53a, Poznań); Warsaw (Map p84; ☎ 022 621 3453; [www.poland.mid.ru](http://www.poland.mid.ru); ul Belwederska 49, Warsaw)

**Slovakia** (Map p84; ☎ 022 525 8110; [www.ambasada-slowacji.pl](http://www.ambasada-slowacji.pl); ul Litewska 6, Warsaw)

**South Africa** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 625 6228; [saembassy@supermedia.pl](http://saembassy@supermedia.pl); 6th fl, ul Koszykowa 54, Warsaw)

**UK** Katowice (☎ 032 206 9801; ul PCK 10, Katowice); Kraków (☎ 012 421 7030; ul Św Anny 9, Kraków); Szczecin (☎ 091 487 0302; ul Starego Wiarusa 32, Szczecin); Warsaw (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 311 0000; [www.britishembassy.pl](http://www.britishembassy.pl); Al Róż 1, Warsaw); Wrocław (☎ 071 344 8961; ul Oławska 2, Wrocław)

**Ukraine** (Map p84; ☎ 022 629 3446; [www.ukraine-emb.pl](http://www.ukraine-emb.pl); Al Szucha 7, Warsaw)

**USA** Kraków (☎ 012 424 5183; ul Stolarska 9, Kraków); Poznań (Map pp376-7; ☎ 061 851 8516; ul Paderewskiego 8, Poznań); Warsaw (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 504 2000; [poland.usembassy.gov](http://poland.usembassy.gov); Al Ujazdowski 29/31, Warsaw)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Apart from some well-established national or international festivals of film, theatre and music, there are plenty of small local feasts, fairs, contests, meetings and competitions, some of which involve local folklore. Add to this a lot of religious celebrations. The following are some of Poland's biggest festivals and events.

### Festivals

#### FEBRUARY

**Shanties** ([www.shanties.pl](http://www.shanties.pl) in Polish; Kraków) Celebration of old sailors' songs, accompanied by copious quantities of beer.

**Musica Polonica Nova** ([www.musicapolonicanova.pl](http://www.musicapolonicanova.pl) in Polish; Wrocław) International festival of contemporary music.

**MARCH**

**Poznań Jazz Festival** ([www.jazz.pl](http://www.jazz.pl); Poznań) Week-long event with local and international jazz stars.

**MAY**

**Juvenalia** Student carnival with fancy dress held in Kraków, masquerades and dancing in the street.

**Gaude Mater** ([www.gaudemater.pl](http://www.gaudemater.pl); Częstochowa) Week-long international festival of religious music.

**JUNE/JULY**

**Jewish Culture Festival** ([www.jewishfestival.pl](http://www.jewishfestival.pl); Kraków) Biggest festival of its kind in Europe.

**Mozart Festival** ([www.operakameralna.pl](http://www.operakameralna.pl); Warsaw) Performances of all 26 of Mozart's stage productions.

**Summer Jazz Festival** ([www.cracjazz.com](http://www.cracjazz.com); Kraków) Best of modern Polish jazz.

**AUGUST**

**International Festival of Mountain Folklore** ([www.zakopane.pl](http://www.zakopane.pl); Zakopane) Poland's oldest and biggest festival of folk culture.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Warsaw Autumn** ([www.warsaw-autumn.art.pl](http://www.warsaw-autumn.art.pl); Warsaw) Ten-day international festival of contemporary music.

**OCTOBER**

**JVC Jazz Festival Warsaw** ([www.festivalproductions.net](http://www.festivalproductions.net); Warsaw) One of the most prestigious jazz festivals in Europe, this three-day festival attracts some of the greatest jazz musicians on the planet.

**Warsaw International Film Festival** ([www.wff.pl](http://www.wff.pl); Warsaw) A packed programme of art-house film premieres, lectures and screen-writing workshops.

**NOVEMBER**

**Camerimage** ([www.camerimage.pl](http://www.camerimage.pl); Łódź) An international festival celebrating the art of cinematography in late November/early December.

**Religious Events**

Given the strong Roman Catholic character of the nation, religious feasts are much celebrated in Poland, especially in the more conservative countryside areas. The Church calendar is marked by two major cycles, which culminate in Boże Narodzenie (Christmas) and Wielkanoc (Easter). There are also a number of feast days devoted to particular saints, of whom the Virgin Mary is the most widely celebrated.

**CHRISTMAS**

The Christmas cycle begins with Advent (Advent), a four-week period that precedes

Christmas, and is characterised by the preparation of Nativity scenes in churches. Kraków is particularly notable for this, holding a competition for the best scenes.

As for Christmas itself, Wigilia (Christmas Eve) is the day most celebrated in Polish homes, culminating in a solemn supper that begins when the first star appears in the evening sky. Before the meal the family shares *opłatek* (holy bread), wishing each other all the best for the future. Then the supper, which traditionally consists of 12 courses, including some of the best of traditional Polish cuisine, begins. An extra seat and place setting are left prepared for an unexpected guest. Kids will find their gifts under the *choinka* (Christmas tree), or sometimes they will be handed out by Święty Mikołaj (Santa Claus) himself.

In the more traditional rural homes, there will still be much magic and witchcraft involved in Christmas Eve ceremonies, the forms differing from region to region. It's believed, for example, that animals speak with human voices on that one night, and that at midnight the water in wells turns into wine.

After supper is finished, the family set off for church for the specially celebrated Pasterka (Christmas Mass) at midnight. The service is held by most churches, and all are packed.

Christmas Day is, like the previous day, essentially a family day, featuring Mass, eating and relaxing. The holiday atmosphere continues for the remaining days of the year up until Sylwester (New Year's Eve), when the action starts with a variety of formal balls and private parties, held principally among urban communities.

On 6 January comes Dzień Trzech Króli (Epiphany), marked by groups of carol singers, usually armed with a small portable crib or other religious images, who go from door to door. On this day people have a piece of chalk consecrated in church, then use it to write 'K+M+B' (the initials of the three Magi) on their front doors, to ensure Heaven's care over the home.

**EASTER**

Easter is a moveable feast falling on the first Sunday following the first full moon after 21 March (which can be any day between 22 March and 25 April). It's preceded by Wielki Post (Lent), the season of fasting and penitence, which begins on Środa Popielcowa (Ash Wednesday), 40 weekdays prior to Easter.

Wielki Tydzień (Holy Week) commences with Niedziela Palmowa (Palm Sunday), a reminder of the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, where he was welcomed with date-palm branches. Today the most common substitutes are willow branches overspread with white catkins, though there are still some villages, notably Rabka, Tokarnia (which is near Rabka) and Łyse (in the Kurpie region), where the tradition is taken quite seriously: the 'palms' made there are elaborate works of art stretching up to 10m in height.

Palm Sunday also marks the beginning of the famous ceremony in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (p259) near Kraków, which reaches its zenith on Wielki Czwartek (Maundy Thursday) and Wielki Piątek (Good Friday), when a Passion play is performed, re-enacting the last days of the life of Christ. In a blend of religious rite and popular theatre, local amateur actors take the roles of Roman soldiers, apostles, Jewish priests and Christ himself, and circle 20-odd Calvary chapels, representing the stages of the Way of the Cross, accompanied by a crowd of pilgrims and spectators.

On Good Friday people visit the Holy Sepulchres set up in churches, while on Wielka Sobota (Holy Saturday) the faithful go to church with baskets filled with food, such as bread, sausage, cake and eggs, to have them blessed. The eggs are decoratively painted, sometimes with elaborate patterns. Inspired by this tradition, eggs made of wood are painted and sold as souvenirs.

Niedziela Wielkanocna (Easter Day) begins with Mass, which is usually accompanied by a procession. After that, the faithful return home to have a solemn breakfast, at which the consecrated food is eaten. Before breakfast, family members share eggs while wishing each other well.

Lany Poniedziałek (Easter Monday) is when Polish people sprinkle each other with water, which can be anything from a symbolic drop of perfumed water to a bucket of water over the head, or even a dousing from a fire engine.

Zielone Świąta (Pentecost) falls on the 50th day after Easter Day (hence its name), and 10 days later comes Boże Ciało (Corpus Christi). The latter is characterised by processions held all over the country, of which the best known is that in Łowicz (p131).

**OTHER FEASTS**

Among the feasts related to the Virgin Mary, the most important is the Święto Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny (Assumption) on 15 August, celebrated throughout Poland, but nowhere as elaborately as in the Monastery of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa (p215), where pilgrims arrive on that very day, sometimes after a journey of several days on foot.

Dzień Wszystkich Świętych (All Saints' Day) on 1 November is a time of remembrance and prayers for the souls of the dead. On no other day do cemeteries witness so many people leaving flowers, wreaths and candles on graves, and they look most spectacular at night. The celebrations continue to a lesser extent on the following day.

**FOOD**

The eating listings in this book are ordered from lowest to highest by the price of the average main course. In general, mains are less than 15zł (20zł in Warsaw) for budget places, from 15zł to 40zł (25zł to 50zł in Warsaw) for midrange, and more than 40zł (50zł in Warsaw) for top end. For more on Polish food and drink see p60.

**GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS**

Homosexuality is legal in Poland; the age of consent is 15, which is the same as for heterosexual sex. Despite the fairly liberal legal situation, Polish society is overwhelmingly conservative and, for the most part, deeply hostile towards homosexuality.

The Polish gay and lesbian scene is fairly discreet; Warsaw and Kraków are the best places to find bars, clubs and gay-friendly accommodation, and Sopot is noted as gay-friendly compared to the rest of Poland (which isn't saying much). The best source of information for Poland's scene is <http://warsaw.gayguide.net> and [www.innas.trona.pl](http://www.innas.trona.pl).

**HOLIDAYS**

The following are public holidays in Poland:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Easter Monday** March or April

**Labour Day** 1 May

**Constitution Day** 3 May

**Corpus Christi** A Thursday in May or June

**Assumption Day** 15 August

**All Saints' Day** 1 November

**Independence Day** 11 November

**Christmas** 25 and 26 December



## INSURANCE

Insurance can cover you for medical expenses, theft or loss, but also for cancellation of, or delays in, any of your travel arrangements. There's a variety of policies and your travel agent can provide recommendations.

Make sure the policy includes health care and medication in Poland. See p530 for information on health insurance and p523 for car insurance.

Always read the small print of a policy carefully. Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities' such as scuba diving, motorcycling, skiing, mountaineering and even trekking.

Not all policies cover ambulances, helicopter rescue or emergency flights home. Most policies exclude cover for pre-existing illnesses.

## INTERNET ACCESS

A growing number of Poland's citizens are savvy internet users, which is having a positive knock-on affect for travellers – all large towns and cities (and a growing number of smaller ones) now have at least one internet café. But the life span of said cafés is often short, with many going out of business within a few months. Other options include tourist offices, hotels and public libraries, which sometimes have internet terminals for public use.

There are also an increasing number of hot spots in Polish cities where you can access the internet with a wi-fi-enabled laptop. Many cafés and top-end hotels provide network access for free; <http://intel.jiwire.com> is a good starting point for tracking places down, but there are many more unlisted locations.

If you're travelling with a laptop, you should be able to log on via a hotel room phone socket for the cost of a local call by registering with an internet roaming service such as **MaGlobe** ([www.maglobe.com](http://www.maglobe.com)), which has access numbers for Poland. Most newer midrange and top-end hotels have telephone jacks (usually US-standard RJ-11), which you can plug your modem cable into.

Buy a line tester (a gadget that goes between your computer and the phone jack) so that you don't inadvertently fry your modem. Get on and off quickly, as calls from hotels are expensive. For more information on travelling with a laptop see [www.kropla.com](http://www.kropla.com).

Major internet-service providers, such as **AOL** ([www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com)), **CompuServe** ([www.compuserve.com](http://www.compuserve.com))

and **AT&T** ([www.attbusiness.net](http://www.attbusiness.net)), have dial-in nodes in Poland. If you have an account with one of these ISPs, you can download a list of local dial-in numbers before you leave home.

For a list of useful Polish internet resources, see p21.

## LEGAL MATTERS

Foreigners in Poland, as elsewhere, are subject to the laws of the host country. While your embassy or consulate is the best stop in any emergency, bear in mind that there are some things it can't do for you, like getting local laws or regulations waived because you're a foreigner, investigating a crime, providing legal advice or representation in civil or criminal cases, getting you out of jail and lending you money.

A consul can, however, issue emergency passports, contact relatives and friends, advise on how to transfer funds, provide lists of reliable local doctors, lawyers and interpreters, and visit you if you've been arrested or jailed.

## MAPS

Poland has plenty of good quality, inexpensive maps that are readily available. Apart from the state-run map producer, the **PPWK** ([www.ppwk.pl](http://www.ppwk.pl)), there are also a number of private map publishers. Polish maps are also easy to decipher. Most symbols are based on international standards, and they are explained in the key in three foreign languages, English included.

The selection of maps is extensive too. You can buy a single map covering the whole country or a set of four or eight sheets (sold separately) that feature fragments of the country on a larger scale and provide greater

detail. The book-format *Atlas Samochodowy* (Road Atlas) is also available, including sketch maps of major cities, Polish road signs and a full index.

All cities and most large towns have their own city maps; the **Demart** ([www.demart.com.pl](http://www.demart.com.pl)) city plans, with orange covers, are excellent. These maps include tram and bus routes, alphabetical lists of streets, post offices, hotels, hospitals, pharmacies and the like. They often cover a number of towns on a single map. On city maps, the word for street, *ulica* or its abbreviated version *ul*, is usually omitted, but *Aleje* or *Aleja*, more often shortened to *Al*, is placed before the names of avenues to distinguish them from streets.

Other very useful maps are the large-scale tourist maps (usually between 1:50,000 and 1:75,000) of the most popular destinations. They cover a relatively small sector, a single mountain range or a group of lakes, and are very detailed. These maps show marked hiking routes and practically everything else you may be interested in when hiking, driving, biking etc. They are a must if you plan on doing any serious walking.

All maps mentioned above are easy to find in the larger urban centres; buy them there (at bookshops and/or tourist offices), as they may be hard to come by in the smaller towns. Maps (including city maps) cost anywhere between 5zł and 15zł.

## MONEY

Following its accession to the EU, Poland declared its intention to adopt the euro as its currency as soon as possible, but due to the poor state of the economy it probably won't happen before 2012.

The official Polish currency is the zloty (literally, 'golden'), abbreviated to zł and pronounced *zwo-ti*. It is divided into 100 groszy, which are abbreviated to gr. Banknotes come in denominations of 10zł, 20zł, 50zł, 100zł and 200zł, and coins in 1gr, 2gr, 5gr, 10gr, 20gr and 50gr, and 1zł, 2zł and 5zł. The banknotes feature Polish kings, come in different sizes and are easily distinguishable.

Try to keep some small-denomination notes for shops, cafés and restaurants – getting change for the 100zł notes that ATMs often spit out can be a problem.

For an indication of costs in Poland, see p18. For exchange rates, see the inside front cover of this book.

## ATMs

Most towns in Poland have a couple of *bankomaty* (ATMs), and the majority accept Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro cards.

The easiest and cheapest way to carry money is in the form of a debit card, with which you can withdraw cash either over the counter in a bank or from an ATM. Charges are minimal at major Polish banks (typically from zero to about 2%) and some home banks charge nothing at all for the use of their cards overseas. Check with your bank about transaction fees and withdrawal limits.

## Cash

The ubiquitous *kantor* (private currency-exchange office) is the place to exchange cash. They are either self-contained offices or just desks in travel agencies, train stations, post offices, department stores and the more upmarket hotels. The further out from the cities you go, the less numerous they are, but you can be pretty sure that every medium-sized town will have at least a few of them. *Kantors* are usually open between 9am and 6pm on weekdays and to around 2pm on Saturday, but some open longer and a few stay open 24 hours.

*Kantors* change cash only and accept major world currencies. The most common and thus the most easily changed are US dollars, euros and UK pounds. Most other currency is somewhat exotic to Poles and not all *kantors* will change them. There's no commission on transactions – the rate you get is what is written on the board (every *kantor* has a board displaying its exchange rates). The whole operation takes a few seconds and there's no paperwork involved. You don't need to present your passport or fill out any forms.

*Kantors* buy and sell foreign currencies, and the difference between the buying and selling rates is usually not larger than 2%. Exchange rates differ slightly from city to city and from *kantor* to *kantor* (about 1%). Smaller towns may offer up to 2% less, so it's better to change money in large urban centres if you can.

To avoid hassles when exchanging currency, one important thing to remember before you set off from home is that any banknotes you take to Poland must be in good condition, without any marks or seals. *Kantors* can refuse to accept banknotes that have numbers written on them (a common practice of bank cashiers totalling bundles of notes) even if they are in otherwise perfect condition.

### WHEN YOU'RE LEGAL

In Poland the following are the minimum legal ages:

- drinking alcohol: 18
- driving: 17
- heterosexual/homosexual sex: 15\*
- marriage: 18
- voting: 18

\*Travellers may be subject to the laws of their own country in regard to sexual relations.

## Credit Cards

Credit cards are increasingly widely accepted for buying goods and services, though their use is still limited to upmarket establishments, mainly in major cities. Among the most popular cards accepted in Poland are Visa, MasterCard, Amex, Diners Club, Eurocard and Access.

Credit cards can also be used for getting cash advances in banks – the best card to bring is Visa, because it's honoured by the largest number of banks, including the Bank Pekao, which will also give cash advances on MasterCard.

## International Transfers

You can have money sent to you through the **Western Union** ([www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com)) money transfer service. Money is received within 15 minutes of the sender transferring it (along with the transaction fee) at any of the 30,000 Western Union agents scattered worldwide. Western Union outlets can be found in all Polish cities and most large towns. Information on locations and conditions can be obtained toll-free on ☎ 0800 120 224.

## Taxes

Poland's VAT is calculated at three levels: zero (books, press, some basic food products); 7% (most food); and 22% (fine food, hotels, restaurants, petrol, luxury items). The tax is normally included in the advertised price of goods and services.

## Tipping & Bargaining

Tipping in hotels is essentially restricted to the top-end establishments, which usually have decent room service and porters, who all expect to be tipped. Taxi drivers are normally not tipped, unless you want to reward someone for their effort.

Bargaining is not common in Poland, and is limited to some informal places such as flea markets, fruit bazaars and street stalls.

For information and advice on tipping in restaurants, see p64.

## POST

Postal services are provided by **Poczta Polska** ([www.poczta-polska.pl](http://www.poczta-polska.pl)). In large cities there will be a dozen or more post offices, of which the *poczta główna* (main post office) will usually have the widest range of facilities, including poste restante and fax.

Letters and postcards sent by air from Poland take about one week to reach a European destination and up to two weeks if sent to anywhere else. The cost of sending anything up to 50g costs 2.40zł to any destination in the world. Packages and parcels are reasonably cheap if sent by surface mail but they can take up to three months to reach their destination. The cost of sending airmail packages is comparable to that in Western Europe.

You can receive mail care of poste restante in large cities such as Warsaw, Kraków and Gdańsk. Mail is held for 14 working days, then returned to the sender. Amex customers can receive poste restante mail via the Warsaw Amex offices (p86).

## SHOPPING

Folk art and handicrafts can be seen and bought across Poland. Common crafts of the country include paper cut-outs, wood-carving, tapestries, embroidery, paintings on glass, pottery and hand-painted wooden boxes and chests. Look for **Cepelia** ([www.cepelia.pl](http://www.cepelia.pl)) shops, with branches in all large cities, which specialise in local handicrafts.

Amber is typically Polish. It's the fossil resin of ancient pine trees, and occurs as translucent nuggets in earthy hues ranging from pale yellow to reddish brown. You can buy amber necklaces in Cepelia shops, but if you want a designer look, check out specialist jewellery shops or commercial art galleries. Prices vary with the quality of the amber and the level of craftwork. You'll find the best choice of amber jewellery in Gdańsk (p422).

Polish contemporary painting, original prints and sculpture are renowned internationally and sold by commercial art galleries. Galleries in Warsaw and Kraków have the biggest and the most representative choice. Polish posters are among the world's finest (a tempting souvenir). The best selection is, again, in Warsaw and Kraków.

The main seller of art and antiques is a state-owned chain of shops called **Desa Unicum** ([www.desa.pl](http://www.desa.pl) in Polish). These shops often have an amazing variety of old jewellery, watches, furniture and whatever else you can imagine. Remember that it's officially forbidden to export any item manufactured before 9 May 1945, works of art and books included, unless you've got a permit (see p506).

Poland publishes an assortment of well-edited and lavishly illustrated coffee-table books about the country, many of which are also available in English and German. Polish music (pop, folk, jazz, classical and contemporary) is available on CD and easily purchased.

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

Travelling by yourself in Poland is easy and fairly hassle-free. Note, though, that solo hitching anywhere in Poland isn't wise. The biggest nuisance for solo travellers is the extra cost of single rooms in hotels and pensions, compared with sharing a double. The easiest places to meet other people, be it English-speaking locals or other travellers, is in hostels and internet cafés. Outside the big metropolises however, don't assume you'll meet travel companions along the way.

See p514 for information on women travelling alone.

## TELEPHONE

The state telecommunications provider is **Telekomunikacja Polska** (TP; [www.tp.pl](http://www.tp.pl) in Polish), which usually has a telephone centre near or inside a town's main post office. Card-operated public phones can be found pretty much everywhere. The international code for Poland is ☎ 48.

## Local & International Calls

All land-line numbers throughout the country have seven digits, preceded by a two-digit area code. To make a local call, dial 0, then the area code, then the seven-digit subscriber number – this applies even when you're making a call within the same town or city. Cheap rates on long-distance calls operate from 6pm to 8am daily.

To call abroad from Poland, dial the international access code (☎ 00), then the country code, then the area code (minus any initial zero) and number. You can also use the Home Country Direct service to make reverse-charge (collect) calls, or credit- or charge-card calls, or to connect to an operator in your home country. Inquire at any TP office for the toll-free number for the country you want to call, then call from any public or private telephone (you'll still need a phone card, though it will only be charged one unit – around 50gr).

## Mobile Phones

Codes for mobile phones usually begin with ☎ 05, ☎ 06, ☎ 07 or ☎ 09. Poland uses the GSM 900/1800 network, which covers the rest of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, but isn't compatible with the North American GSM 1900 or the totally different system in Japan (though some North Americans have GSM 1900/900 phones that will work in Poland). If you have a GSM phone, check with your service provider about using it in Poland, and beware of calls being routed internationally (very expensive for a 'local' call). Those with a European phone can check prices online by going to [www.roaming.gsmeurope.org](http://www.roaming.gsmeurope.org).

A cheaper – and often better – option is to buy a Polish prepaid SIM card. They sell for as little as 9zł and can be organised relatively quickly and painlessly at any provider shop (GSM, Orange etc). No ID is required, and top-ups can be bought at phone shops, newspaper kiosks and even some ATMs. Before purchasing a SIM card be sure your phone is unlocked (able to accept foreign SIM cards).

## Phonecards

There are no coin-operated public phones in Poland; all of them work using a phonecard, which you can buy from post offices, newspaper kiosks, and some tourist offices and hotel reception desks. TP cards cost 9/15/24zł for a 15-/30-/60-impuls (unit) card. A 60-impuls card is enough for an 11-minute call to the UK, or an eight-minute call to the USA.

Alternatively, you can buy a calling card from a private telephone service provider, such as **Intrafon** ([www.intrafon.pl](http://www.intrafon.pl)), whose international rates are much cheaper – 0.67zł a minute to the UK and 0.59zł to the USA.

## TIME

All of Poland lies within the same time zone, GMT/UTC+1, the same as most of continental Europe (see the World Time Zones map on pp562–3). Poland observes Daylight Saving Time (DST), and puts the clock forward one hour at 2am on the last Sunday in March, and back again at 3am on the last Sunday in October.

The 24-hour clock is used for official purposes, including all transport schedules. In everyday conversation, however, people commonly use the 12-hour clock.

**TOILETS**

Toilets are labelled 'toaleta' or simply 'WC'. The gents will be labelled 'dla panów' or 'męski' and/or marked with a triangle, and the ladies will be labelled 'dla pań' or 'damski' and/or marked with a circle.

Public toilets in Poland are few and far between and often in a sorry state of disrepair – and cleanliness. A better option is to nip into the nearest eatery, museum or hotel and ask nicely to use the facilities. If you do use public toilets, the fee is usually 1zł, which is collected by a toilet attendant sitting at the door. It's a good idea to bring your own toilet paper, just in case.

**TOURIST INFORMATION****Local Tourist Offices**

Larger cities – and an ever-increasing number of smaller towns – have local tourist offices, which are usually good sources of information; most also sell maps and tourist publications. Most staff members speak a small amount of English and/or German.

In places where there are no general tourist offices, look for a PTTK office (see p503). PTTK was once a helpful organisation, focusing on outdoor activities such as hiking, sailing, cycling and camping. Today it's just another travel agency, but many of its offices are wellstocked with maps and trekking brochures, can arrange guides and accommodation, and provide tourist information.

**SHIFTING BORDERS**

Since Poland's entry into the Schengen zone of EU countries in December 2007, there have been no border posts or border crossing formalities between Poland and Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania. Thus, having legally entered Poland, a traveller can continue on to any of the Schengen countries without encountering further checks. However, it's worth noting that the 90-day, visa-free entry period into Poland has now been extended to all the Schengen countries; so if travelling from Poland through Germany and France, for example, you can't exceed 90 days in total. Once your 90 days is up, you must leave the Schengen zone for a minimum 90 days before you can once again enter it visa-free.

**Tourist Offices Abroad**

Polish tourist offices abroad include the following:

**France** (☎ 01 42 44 19 00; www.tourisme.pologne.net; 9 rue de la Paix, 75002 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 30-210 09 2-0; www.polen-info.de; Kurfürstendamm 71, 10709 Berlin)

**Netherlands** (☎ 20-625 35 70; www.members.tripod.com/~poleninfo; Leidsestraat 64, 1017 PD Amsterdam)

**UK** (☎ 0870 067 5010; www.visitpoland.org; Level 3, Westec House, West Gate, London W5 1YY)

**USA** (☎ 201-420 9910; www.polandtour.org; 5 Marine View Plaza, Hoboken NJ 07030)

**TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Poland is not well equipped for people with disabilities, even though there has been a significant improvement over recent years. Wheelchair ramps are available only at some upmarket hotels and restaurants, and public transport will be a challenge for anyone with mobility problems. Few offices, museums or banks provide special facilities for the disabled traveller, and wheelchair-accessible toilets are few and far between.

Those with some Polish language skills can go to www.niepełnosprawni.pl for up-to-date information on the current situation for disabled people in Poland. In the USA, travellers with disabilities may like to contact the **Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality** (☎ 212-447 7284; www.sath.org; Ste 610, 347 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10016) before departing, while in the UK a useful contact is the **Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation** (☎ 020-7250 3222; www.radar.org.uk; 12 City Forum, 250 City Rd, London EC1V 8AF).

**VISAS**

Citizens of EU countries do not need visas to visit Poland and can stay indefinitely. Citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel and Japan can stay in Poland for up to 90 days without a visa.

Other nationalities should check current visa requirements with the Polish embassy or consulate in their home country. Alternatively, check the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mfa.gov.pl) website.

**WOMEN TRAVELLERS**

Women are unlikely to have any particular problems travelling in Poland (our wonderful female author found Poland to be a 'freakishly hassle-free clockwork country of smooth sailing all the way'), although common-sense

caution should always be observed, especially in towns and cities. Women can enter most pubs alone, but there are still a few places where this may attract undesirable attention. Cosmopolitan city pubs are fine – you'll get a pretty good idea as soon as you enter. Sticking to pubs frequented by travellers or populated by an even spread of both sexes is always a safe bet.

On the other hand, a woman travelling alone, especially in remote rural areas, may expect to receive more help, hospitality and generosity from the locals than would a man on his own.

**WORK**

Without a high standard of Polish, most people will need to arrange a job in Poland through an international company or be prepared to teach English. English teachers are currently in hot demand, with schools popping up in cities and towns across the country. Teacher standards are generally high, however, and you'll probably need a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate to secure a job.

English-language supplements, such as the *Warsaw Voice* (www.warsawvoice.pl), sometimes advertise jobs in various fields.



# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY Passport

See p514 for which countries require a visa to travel to Poland. Theoretically, the expiry date of your passport should not be less than three months after the date of your departure from Poland.

### AIR Airports & Airlines

The vast majority of international flights to Poland arrive at **Warsaw-Frédéric Chopin Airport** (Port Lotniczy im F Chopina, WAW; Map p84; ☎ 022 650 4220; www.lotnisko-chopina.pl), although there is

#### THINGS CHANGE

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

an increasing number of international carriers choosing to land at the country's other international airports:

- Gdańsk – Lech Wałęsa** (GDN; ☎ 058 348 1154; www.airport.gdansk.pl)
- Katowice** (KTW; ☎ 032 392 7385; www.gtl.com.pl)
- Kraków-Balice** (KRK; ☎ 012 639 3000; www.lotnisko-balice.pl)
- Wrocław** (WRO; ☎ 071 358 1381; www.airport.wroclaw.pl)

Poland's national carrier **LOT** (LO; ☎ 0801 703 703, from mobile phones 022 9572; www.lot.com) flies to all major European capitals as well as most major cities in Germany. Outside Europe it has direct flights to/from Chicago, Istanbul, New York, Tel Aviv and Toronto. Competition is currently fierce in the Polish market, with a wave of budget airlines, including CentralWings, EasyJet, GermanWings, SkyEurope, Ryanair and Wizz Air, moving in and offering cheap flights to not only Warsaw but also Wrocław, Kraków, Gdańsk, Poznań, Bydgoszcz, Katowice, Łódź, Szczecin and Rzeszów.

Fares vary greatly depending on what route you're flying and what time of year it is. Poland's high season (and that of Europe in general) is in summer (June to August) and a short period around Christmas. The rest of the year is quieter and cheaper.

The following are the Polish contact details for airlines flying to and from Poland:

- Aeroflot** (SU; ☎ 022 628 1710; www.aeroflot.ru; hub Moscow)
- Air France** (AF; ☎ 022 556 6400; www.airfrance.com; hub Paris)
- Alitalia** (AZ; ☎ 022 692 8285; www.alitalia.it; hub Rome)
- British Airways** (BA; ☎ 0800 4411 592; www.ba.com; hub London)
- CentralWings** (CO; ☎ 0801 080 112; www.centralwings.com; hub Warsaw)
- EasyJet** (EZY; www.easyjet.com; hub London)
- GermanWings** (4U; www.germanwings.com; hub Cologne/Bonn)
- KLM** (KL; ☎ 022 556 6444; www.klm.com; hub Amsterdam)
- Lufthansa** (LH; ☎ 022 338 1300; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt)

**Malev** (MA; ☎ 022 697 7474; www.malev.hu; hub Budapest)

**Ryanair** (FR; www.ryanair.com; hub Dublin)

**SkyEurope** (NE; www.skyeurope.com; hub Bratislava/Vienna)

**WizzAir** (W6; ☎ 022 351 9499; www.wizzair.com; hub Katowice)

### Tickets

Fierce competition on most European routes has resulted in price wars between no-frills carriers and full-service airlines. Discounted web fares offer the best deals, and one-way tickets make it easy to fly into one city and out of another. Note that if you're booking on short notice (that is, less than around three or four weeks before departure), national carriers often offer better prices than the budget airlines.

On transatlantic and long-haul flights your travel agent is probably still the best source of cheap tickets, although there is an increasing number of online booking agencies. Be sure to check the terms and conditions of the cheapest fares before booking.

### Australia

There are no direct scheduled flights between Australia and Poland; generally it's cheapest to fly into London, Frankfurt or Amsterdam

### DEPARTURE TAX

The departure tax is included in your ticket when flying out of Poland.

and continue to Warsaw from there. Round-the-world (RTW) tickets are another good bet and are often better value than standard return fares. There are a number of well-known travel agencies in Australia; **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) have offices throughout the country. For online bookings, try www.travel.com.au.

### Continental Europe

Both LOT and other carriers fly to Warsaw from all major European capitals, and the list of regional airports supported by budget airlines is constantly growing – check their websites, opposite, for the latest destinations.

The following are recommended travel and ticket agencies:

#### FRANCE

**AnyWay** (☎ 08 92 30 23 01; www.anyway.fr)

**Lastminute.com** (☎ 08 99 78 50 00; www.fr.lastminute.com)

**Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)

### CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

#### Flying & climate change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

#### Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

**Voyageurs du Monde** (in Paris ☎ 08 92 23 56 56; www.vdm.com)

## GERMANY

**Expedia** (www.expedia.de)

**Just Travel** (☎ 0897 473 330; www.justtravel.de)

**Lastminute.com** (☎ 01805 777 257; www.de.lastminute.com)

**STA Travel** (☎ 069 743 032 92; www.statravel.de)

Specialises in student travel.

## ITALY

**CTS Viaggi** (☎ 199 501 150; www.cts.it)

## NETHERLANDS

**Airfair** (☎ 0900 7717 717; www.airfair.nl)

## SPAIN

**Barceló Viajes** (☎ 902 11 62 26; www.barceloviajes.com)

## UK & Ireland

Flights on the London Heathrow–Warsaw route are offered daily by both LOT and British Airways. LOT also has direct flights from Manchester and Dublin to Warsaw.

Budget airline Ryanair offers the most comprehensive coverage of Poland, connecting 10 of the country's largest cities with London Stansted, Bristol, Liverpool, East Midlands, Glasgow, Dublin and Shannon. CentralWings comes a close second, covering eight Polish cities with flights to London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Shannon and Cork. No-frills flyer EasyJet has flights from London Luton and Bristol to Warsaw and Kraków, along with Liverpool, Belfast and Newcastle to Kraków, and London Gatwick, Bristol, Belfast and Edinburgh to Gdańsk. Sky Europe flies between Kraków and Manchester, Birmingham and Dublin, while WizzAir has expanded its coverage and now connects Warsaw, Katowice, Gdańsk, Wrocław and Poznań with a plethora of destinations in the UK and Ireland.

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, in *Time Out*, the *Evening Standard* and in the free magazine *TNT*.

The following are recommended travel agencies:

**ebookers** (☎ 0871 223 5000; www.ebookers.com)

**Flight Centre** (☎ 0870 499 0040; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

**North-South Travel** (☎ 01245-608 291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk) Donates part of its profit to projects in the developing world.

**STA Travel** (☎ 0871 230 0040; www.statravel.co.uk) For travellers under the age of 26.

**Trailfinders** (☎ 0845 050 5945; www.trailfinders.com)

**Travel Bag** (☎ 0870 814 4441; www.travelbag.co.uk)

## USA & Canada

**LOT** (☎ in USA 212-789 0970, in Canada 416-236 4242) has direct flights from New York, Chicago and Toronto to Warsaw.

Agents often use indirect connections with other carriers such as British Airways, Lufthansa, KLM or Air France. Not only may these work out cheaper, but they can also let you break the journey in Western Europe for the same price or a little extra – a bonus if you want to stop en route in London, Paris or Amsterdam.

**Travel Cuts** (☎ 1866-246 9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency. For online bookings try www.expedia.ca and www.trave locity.ca.

In the USA, a reputable discount travel agency is **STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.sta.com). The following agencies are recommended for online bookings:

**American Express** (www.itn.net)

**CheapTickets** (www.cheaptickets.com)

**Expedia** (www.expedia.com)

**Lowestfare.com** (www.lowestfare.com)

**Orbitz** (www.orbitz.com)

**Travelocity** (www.travelocity.com)

## LAND

### Border Crossings

Sitting in the middle of Europe and sharing its borders with seven countries, Poland has plenty of rail and road crossings. Border crossings are more numerous with Germany to the west, and the Czech and Slovak republics to the south, than they are with the Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia to the east and northeast.

Remember that Poland's eastern border is now one of the external borders of the EU. If you're travelling overland to Russia, be aware that you may need a Belarusian transit visa, which must be obtained in advance.

The following is a list of 24-hour border crossings for heading east out of Poland by road:

**Belarusian border** (south to north): Terespol, Kuźnica Białostocka

**Lithuanian border** (east to west): Ogrodniki, Budzisko

## THEFT ON TRAINS

Rumours abound regarding theft on Polish trains; these rumours are mainly a result of the rise in thefts in the '90s (after the fall of communism). These days gangs of thieves are known to work the trains sometimes, but this is becoming less and less frequent due to increased security on the part of Polskie Koleje Państwowe (PKP; Polish State Railways). Reports of theft still surround the Kraków–Prague overnight train though, and travellers should be particularly alert when taking this route.

As with travel in general, common sense should prevail. Don't tempt fate by sitting alone in a compartment; join other passengers. On overnight trains sleepers are the safest way to go as cabin doors have a lock and security chain and there is a sleeper attendant on duty. Watch your luggage and your pockets closely when you are getting on or off the train, as these are the most convenient moments for pickpockets to distract you. Warsaw's central train station is a favourite stalking ground for thieves – be particularly alert when passing through.

**Russian border** (east to west): Bezdedy, Gronowo

**Ukrainian border** (south to north): Medyka, Hrebenne, Dorohusk

## Belarus, Lithuania & Russia

### BUS

**Eurolines Polska** (www.eurolinespolska.pl) has daily buses to Warsaw from Minsk (85zł, 12 hours) in Belarus and Vilnius (125zł, 12 hours) in Lithuania. Polish State Railways also operate an overnight bus between Warsaw and Vilnius (€22, 10 hours).

### TRAIN

Warsaw has direct trains to Kyiv (from €47, 15 hours) in the Ukraine and Minsk (from €36, 10 hours) in Belarus. These trains are sleeper only, and you'll be automatically sold a sleeping berth when buying your ticket.

The fastest option from Warsaw to Vilnius (€21, 9½ hours) in Lithuania travels through Suwałki and requires a change in Šeštokai across the border. It's a good option as there is no need to arrange a transit visa for Belarus.

Travel to Russia, however, requires a Belarusian transit visa. Without one you'll be sent back to Warsaw by Belarusian border guards. One direct train daily over summer travels between Warsaw and St Petersburg (from €69, 30 hours), while three daily head year-round for Moscow (from €62, 20 hours); both are sleeper trains and pass through Minsk.

## Czech Republic

### BUS

**Eurolines-Sodeli CZ** (☎ 245 005 245; www.eurolines.cz; Senovážné nám 6, Nové Město, Prague) runs buses from Prague to Warsaw (125zł, 14 hours) via Wrocław (110zł, five hours).

## TRAIN

There are daily express trains from Prague to Warsaw (€56, 9½ hours) via Katowice, and to Kraków (€45, 8½ hours).

## UK

### BUS

**Eurolines** (☎ 08705 808080; www.eurolines.co.uk) runs buses from London to Warsaw (one way UK£62, 26½ hours) via Poznań and Łódź, and to Kraków (UK£62, 26¼ hours) via Wrocław and Katowice. The frequency of the service varies depending on the season: it's as often as daily in summer and slows down to twice weekly the rest of the year. Tickets can be bought from any National Express office and a number of travel agencies.

## TRAIN

You can travel from London to Warsaw via the Channel Tunnel, with a single change of train at Brussels (20 hours). The normal 2nd-class, one-way fare is around €170.

## Western Europe

### BUS

**Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com) operates an extensive network of bus routes all over Western Europe. Standards, reliability and comfort may vary from bus to bus, but on the whole are not too bad. Most buses are from the modern generation, and come equipped with air-conditioning, toilet facilities and a video.

As a rough guide only, average one-way fares and journey times between some Western cities and Warsaw are as follows:

To	One-way fare	Time
Amsterdam	€78	21hr
Brussels	€78	21hr
Cologne	€61	20hr

Frankfurt	€69	19hr
Hamburg	€49	16hr
Munich	€71	20hr
Paris	€77	27hr
Rome	€110	27hr

## TRAIN

A number of German cities are linked by train (direct or indirect) with major Polish cities. Direct connections with Warsaw include Berlin, Cologne, Dresden and Leipzig. There are also direct trains between Berlin and Kraków (via Wrocław; €50, 9½ hours).

The Warsaw–Berlin route (via Frankfurt/Oder and Poznań; €39, six to 8½ hours) is serviced by five trains a day.

There are no direct trains from Brussels (Bruxelles-Nord) to Warsaw (from €91, 14½ hours); the quickest route is via Cologne. From Paris to Warsaw (€160, 16½ hours), a change is required in Cologne and Brussels.

## SEA

Poland has regular car-ferry services plying the routes from Denmark and Sweden to Gdańsk and Świnoujście on the coast of Poland. The fares quoted here are for a foot passenger throughout the year.

### Denmark

**Polferries** (www.polferries.pl) From Copenhagen to Świnoujście (410kr to 450kr, 10 hours, five times a week in summer).

### Sweden

**Polferries** (www.polferries.pl) Operates the Ystad–Świnoujście (490kr to 540kr, seven hours, daily), Nynäshamn–Gdańsk (560kr to 670kr, 18 hours, daily) and Ronne–Świnoujście (250kr, 5¼ hours, Saturday only) routes.

**Stena Line** (www.stenaline.com) From Karlskrona to Gdynia (from Skr290, 11 hours, daily).

**Unity Line** (www.unityline.pl) From Ystad to Świnoujście (Skr470 to Skr790, seven to nine hours, daily).

## GETTING AROUND

### AIR

**LOT** (www.lot.com) operates a comprehensive network of domestic routes. There are daily flights between Warsaw and Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Wrocław and Zielona

Góra. All flights between regional cities travel via Warsaw and connections aren't always convenient. Currently there is no domestic competition, but this may change if **DirectFly** (www.directfly.pl) resumes operations in the future.

The regular one-way fare on any of the direct flights to/from Warsaw starts at 116zł and can reach up to 500zł. Tickets can be booked and bought at any LOT or Orbis office, and from some other travel agencies.

Senior citizens over 60 years of age pay 80% of the full fare on all domestic flights. Foreign students holding an ISIC card get a 10% discount. There are attractive stand-by fares (about 25% of the regular fare) for people aged between 20 and 24; tickets have to be bought right before scheduled departure. There are also some promotional fares on selected flights in certain periods (eg early or late flights, selected weekend flights); they can be just a third of the ordinary fares and are applicable to everybody.

Most airports are a manageable distance – between 10km and 20km – from city centres and are linked to them by public transport. Only Szczecin and Katowice airports are further out. You must check in at least 30 minutes before departure. Have your passport at hand – you'll be asked to show it as ID. There's no departure tax on domestic flights.

## BICYCLE

Poland has great potential as a place to tour by bicycle – most of the country is fairly flat and you can throw your bike on a train to cover long distances quickly. Camping equipment isn't essential, as hotels and hostels are usually no more than an easy day's ride apart, although carrying your own camping gear will give you more flexibility.

Major roads carry pretty heavy traffic and are best avoided. Instead, you can easily plan your route along minor roads, which are usually much less crowded and in reasonable shape. Stock up on detailed tourist maps, which feature all minor roads, specifying which are sealed and which are not, and which also show marked walking trails. Some of these trails are easily travelled by bike, giving you still more options.

On a less optimistic note, the standard of driving in Poland may not be what you're used to at home. Some drivers hug the side of the road, thus giving cars and trucks more

room to overtake, but pass perilously close to cyclists. Note that in Poland cyclists are not allowed to ride two abreast.

Cities are often not the most pleasant places to cycle either; dedicated cycle paths are few and far between, some drivers don't give a damn about two-wheeled travellers, city roads are often in poor shape, and cobbled streets are not uncommon. More than likely (simply for safety's sake) you'll end up sharing the footpath with pedestrians and local cyclists.

Hotel staff will usually let you put your bike indoors for the night, sometimes in your room. Bikes, especially those in good condition, are attractive to thieves, so it's a good idea to carry a solid lock and chain (for the frame and both wheels), and always use them when you leave the bike outdoors, even if only for a moment.

Some long-distance trains have a baggage car where you can store your bicycle. If this is the case, you should normally take your bike to the railway luggage office, fill out a tag and pay a small fee. They will then load the bike and drop it off at your destination. It's a good idea to strip the bike of anything easily removable and keep an eye out to be sure it has actually been loaded on the train. You can also take your bike straight to the baggage car (which is usually at the front or the rear of the train), but this can be difficult at intermediate stations where the train may only stop for a few minutes.

Bikes are not allowed on express trains or on those that take reservations, since these trains don't have baggage cars. Many ordinary trains don't have baggage cars either, but you can try to take the bike into the passenger car with you as some Poles do. Check at the baggage window in the station before you do so. Buses don't normally take bikes.

Cycling shops and repair centres are popping up in large cities, and in some of the major tourist resorts. Western bikes for sale are on the increase, as are some popular spare parts. For rural riding, you should carry all essential spare parts, for it's unlikely there'll be a bike shop close at hand. In particular, spare nuts and bolts should be carried.

Bike-hire outlets are growing in number, but they still aren't numerous. They seldom offer anything other than ordinary Polish bikes, the condition of which may leave a little to be desired.

## BOAT

Poland has a long coastline and lots of rivers and canals, but passenger-boat services are limited and operate only in summer. There are no regular boats running along the main rivers or along the coast. Several cities, including Szczecin, Gdańsk, Toruń, Poznań, Wrocław and Kraków, have local river cruises during the summer, and a few coastal ports (Kołobrzeg and Gdańsk) offer sea excursions. There are also trips out of Elbląg to Frombork and Krynica Morska.

On the Masurian lakes (p490), excursion boats run in summer between Giżycko, Mikołajki, Węgorzewo and Ruciane-Nida. Tourist boats are also available in the Augustów area where they ply part of the Augustów Canal (p154). The most unusual canal trip is the full-day cruise along the Elbląg-Ostróda Canal (p486).

## BUS

Poland has a comprehensive bus network (far greater than the rail network) covering most villages accessible by road. They are often more convenient than trains over a short distance and occasionally longer ones when, for instance, the train route involves a long detour. The frequency of service varies greatly: on the main routes there may be a bus leaving every quarter of an hour or so, whereas some small, remote villages may get only one bus a day. Ticket prices also vary greatly due to fierce competition between bus companies, so shop around. In the mountains you'll often travel by bus because trains are slow and few. Almost all buses run during the daytime, sometimes starting very early in the morning.

Most of Poland's bus transport is operated by the former state bus company, PKS (Państwowa Komunikacja Samochodowa), although deregulation of the country's bus system has made room for a plethora of private operators. What this means for travellers is a broader range of options and frequent promotions; don't automatically assume PKS offers the lowest prices and best service.

PKS can be a good code word when seeking directions to bus stations – it's now a term for buses in general.

You can find details of their services online at their various websites, which mostly take the form www.pks.warszawa.pl, www.pks.krakow.pl etc. Just insert the city or town you will depart from before '.pl' in the web ad-



dress. Very few sites have English versions, but with a little time and effort it's easy enough to find timetables.

Normally the *dworzec autobusowy PKS* (local PKS bus station) is found alongside the train station, but in some towns it's centrally located. Save for large terminals in major cities, bus stations have pitiful facilities (no left-luggage service or even a place for coffee) but most do have some sort of information counter with surprisingly helpful staff. They close at night.

PKS' main competitor is **Polski Express** ([www.polskiexpress.net](http://www.polskiexpress.net)), a joint venture with Eurolines National Express based in the UK. It runs several long-distance routes out of Warsaw serving most of the country's large cities. Its buses are faster and more comfortable than PKS ones, but cost much the same.

Minibuses are an additional option to the bigger buses of PKS and Polski Express. They are generally more frequent and much faster than their bigger brothers, and service more routes. There is rarely any sort of information counter at minibus stands, but schedules are clearly displayed. Minibus stations are usually in the vicinity of the PKS station.

## Costs

The approximate fares for intercity bus journeys are as follows:

Distance	Fare
20km	6-7zł
40km	9-10zł
60km	11-12zł
80km	13-15zł
100km	15-18zł
150km	21-24zł
200km	26-29zł
250km	30-35zł
300km	36-40zł

Note that while prices listed were accurate at the time of research, don't be surprised to find them a few złoty different when you hit the road. The entire bus system is still in a state of flux.

## Tickets

The only place to buy PKS tickets is at the bus station itself, either from the information/ticket counter or the bus driver. Tickets on long routes serviced by fast buses can be bought up to 30 days in advance and are

best bought from ticket counters – tickets are numbered, and buying one at the counter assures you of a seat – but those for short, local routes are only available the same day and are just as easily purchased from the driver. If you get on the bus somewhere along the route, you buy the ticket directly from the driver.

Tickets for Polski Express buses can be bought at the bus stations and from some Orbis Travel offices.

## Timetables

Timetables are posted on boards either inside or outside PKS bus terminal buildings. There are also notice boards on all bus stops along the route (if vandals haven't damaged or removed them). The timetable of *odjazdy* (departures) lists *kierunek* (destinations), *przez* (the places passed en route) and departure times.

Keep in mind that there may be more buses to the particular town you want to go to than those that are mentioned in the destination column of the timetable under the town's name. You therefore need to check whether your town appears in the *przez* column on the way to more-distant destinations. If you want to circumvent a long wait grab a bus to another hub and travel on from there – it may end up saving loads of time.

Also check any additional symbols that accompany the departure time. These symbols can mean that the bus runs only on certain days or in certain seasons. They're explained in the key at the end of the timetable.

You can find online bus timetables at [www.polskibus.pl](http://www.polskibus.pl).

## Types of Bus

There are two types of PKS bus service: ordinary and fast. The *autobusy zwykle* (ordinary or local buses) stop at all stops en route and their average speed barely exceeds 35km/h. The standard of these buses is sometimes barely satisfactory. Their departure and arrival times appear in black on timetable boards. The *autobusy pospieszne* (fast buses), marked in red, mainly cover long-distance trips and manage an average speed of 45km/h to 55km/h. As a rule, they take only as many passengers as they have seats, and the standards are better than that of the ordinary buses.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE Automobile Associations

The **Polski Związek Motorowy** (PZM, Polish Automobile & Motorcycle Federation; ☎ 022 849 9361; [www.pzm.pl](http://www.pzm.pl) in Polish; ul Kazimierzowska 66, 02-518 Warsaw) is Poland's national motoring organisation. It provides a 24-hour national **roadside assistance** (☎ 9637) service and if you are a member of an affiliated automobile association, will help you on roughly the same terms as your own organisation would. If not, you must pay for all services.

## Bring Your Own Vehicle

Many Western tourists, particularly Germans, bring their own vehicles into Poland. There are no special formalities: all you need at the border is your passport (with a valid visa if necessary), your driving licence, vehicle registration document and third-party insurance (called a Green Card). If your insurance isn't valid for Poland, you can buy an additional policy at the border (depending on the size of the engine, this costs from 67/95zł for 15 days/one month). Fines are severe if you're caught without insurance. A nationality plate or sticker must be displayed on the back of the car.

If you do decide to bring your own vehicle to Poland, remember that life will be easier for you if it's not brand-new. Expensive recent models are favourite targets for gangs of organised car thieves in large cities. The shabbier your car looks, the better.

## Driving Licence

Foreign driving licences are valid in Poland for up to 90 days. Strictly speaking, licences that do not include a photo ID need an international driving permit as well, although this rule is rarely enforced.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

*Benzyzna* (petrol) is readily available at petrol stations throughout the country. There are several different kinds and grades of petrol available; most hire cars run on *bezołowiowa* (98-octane unleaded) or *diesel* (diesel). The price of fuel can differ from petrol station to petrol station by up to 10%. An increasing number of petrol stations accept credit cards.

Virtually all petrol stations have adopted a self-service system and offer services com-

monplace in the West. Air and water are usually available, as well as oil, lubricants and basic spare parts such as light bulbs or fuses. An increasing number of new stations also offer food and drink. Many stations located along main roads and in the large cities are open round the clock.

There's a widespread network of garages that specialise in fixing Western cars (though not many for motorcycles), but they mostly deal with older, traditional models with mechanical technology. The more electronic and computer-controlled bits your car has, the more problems you'll face having something fixed. These parts can be ordered for you, but they'll usually take a while to arrive.

## Hire

Car-hire agencies will require you to produce your passport, a driving licence held for at least one year, and a credit card. You need to be at least 21 or 23 years of age (depending on the company) to hire a car, although hiring some cars, particularly luxury models and 4WDs, may require a higher age.

One-way hire within Poland is possible with most companies (usually for an additional fee), but most will insist on keeping the car within Poland. No company is likely to allow you to take its car beyond the eastern border.

High insurance premiums mean that car hire in Poland is not cheap, and there are seldom any promotional discounts. As a rough guide only, economy models offered by reputable local companies can be as low as 120/800zł per day/week (including insurance and unlimited mileage). Rates at the big international agencies start at around 225/1000zł per day/week. It's usually cheaper to book your car from abroad or over the internet.

## LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL CAR-HIRE AGENCIES

**Avis** (☎ toll-free 0801 120 010; [www.avis.pl](http://www.avis.pl); ul Łopuszarzaka 12a, Warsaw)

**Budget** (☎ in Warsaw 022 650 4062; [www.budget.pl](http://www.budget.pl); Terminal 1, Warsaw-Frédéric Chopin Airport)

**Europcar** (☎ in Warsaw 022 650 2564; [www.europcar.com.pl](http://www.europcar.com.pl); Terminal 1, Warsaw-Frédéric Chopin Airport)

**Hertz** (☎ in Warsaw 022 650 2896; [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com); Terminal 1, Warsaw-Frédéric Chopin Airport)

**Local Rent-a-Car** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 022 826 7100; [www.lrc.com.pl](http://www.lrc.com.pl); ul Marszałkowska 140, Warsaw)



If you are caught without a ticket, it's best to pay the fine straight away. Never give an inspector your passport, even if they threaten you with police intervention if you don't.

## Taxi

Taxis are easily available and not too expensive. As a rough guide, a 5km taxi trip will cost around 15zł, and a 10km ride shouldn't cost more than 25zł. Taxi fares are 50% higher at night (10pm to 6am), on Sunday and outside the city limits. The number of passengers (usually up to four) and the amount of luggage doesn't affect the fare.

There are plenty of taxi companies, including the once monopolistic, state-run **Radio Taxi** (☎ 9191), which is the largest and operates in most cities. Taxis are recognisable by large signs on the roof with the company's name and phone number. There are also pirate taxis (called 'mafia' taxis by Poles), which usually have just a small 'taxi' sign on the roof with no name or phone number. These are best avoided.

Taxis can be waved down on the street, but it's easier to go to a *postój taksówek* (taxi stand), where you'll almost always find a line of them. There are plenty of stands and if you ask around somebody can usually tell you where the nearest is. Taxis can also be ordered by phone, and there's usually no extra charge for this.

When you get into a taxi, make sure the driver turns on the meter. Also check whether the meter has been switched to the proper rate: '1' identifies the daytime rate, and '2' is the night-time rate. A typical scam against foreigners is to drop the flag to the higher night-time rate during the daytime.

Remember to carry small bills, so you'll be able to pay the exact fare. If you don't, it's hard to get change from a driver who's intent on charging you more. It's always a good idea to find out how much the right fare should be by asking hotel staff or an attendant at the airport before you leave.

## TOURS

The following Polish agencies offer organised tours in Poland:

**Fabricum** (p123) Specialises in tours of Poland's UNESCO sights and following in the footsteps of the country's beloved John Paul II.

**Jarden Tourist Agency** (p195) A Jewish-interest agency that organises tours of Kraków and its surrounds.

**Kampio** (p87) Focuses on ecotourism, organising biking tours in Masuria, bird-watching in Białowieża and kayaking in Biebrza National Park.

**Mazurkas Travel** (p104) Major tour operator with tours of Warsaw plus trips to Kraków, Gdańsk and Białowieża.

**Our Roots** (p104) Specialises in tours of Jewish sites, including trips around Warsaw and sites throughout the country.

**PTTK Mazury** (p481) Runs kayak tours along the country's best rivers in and around the Great Masurian Lakes.

## TRAIN

Trains will be your main means of transport, especially when travelling long distances – they are good value and usually run on time. Outside peak holiday periods in July and August, it should be no problem finding a seat.

The railways are administered by the **Polskie Koleje Państwowe** (PKP; Polish State Railways, www.pkp.pl in Polish). With over 27,000km of lines, the railway network is extensive and covers most places you might wish to go to. Predictably, the network covers less of the mountainous parts of southern Poland, and trains are slower there.

## Costs

Tickets for fast trains (see p528 for information on train types) are about 60% more expensive than those for ordinary trains, and an express train costs 50% more than a fast train. First class is 50% more expensive than 2nd class. Fares are dependent on distance; fares in the following table are approximate prices for 2nd-class tickets.

Distance	Ordinary	Fast
50km	10zł	16zł
100km	15.50zł	24zł
150km	19.50zł	33zł
200km	22zł	36zł
250km	25zł	42zł
300km	27zł	46zł
350km	28zł	47zł
400km	29zł	49zł
450km	31zł	52zł
500km	32zł	54zł

A reservation costs an additional 10zł (25zł on InterCity trains) regardless of distance. A 2nd-class couchette sleeping 3/6 persons costs an additional 50/70zł, while a sleeper for

two is 130zł. A 1st-class compartment on an overnight train costs an additional 240zł.

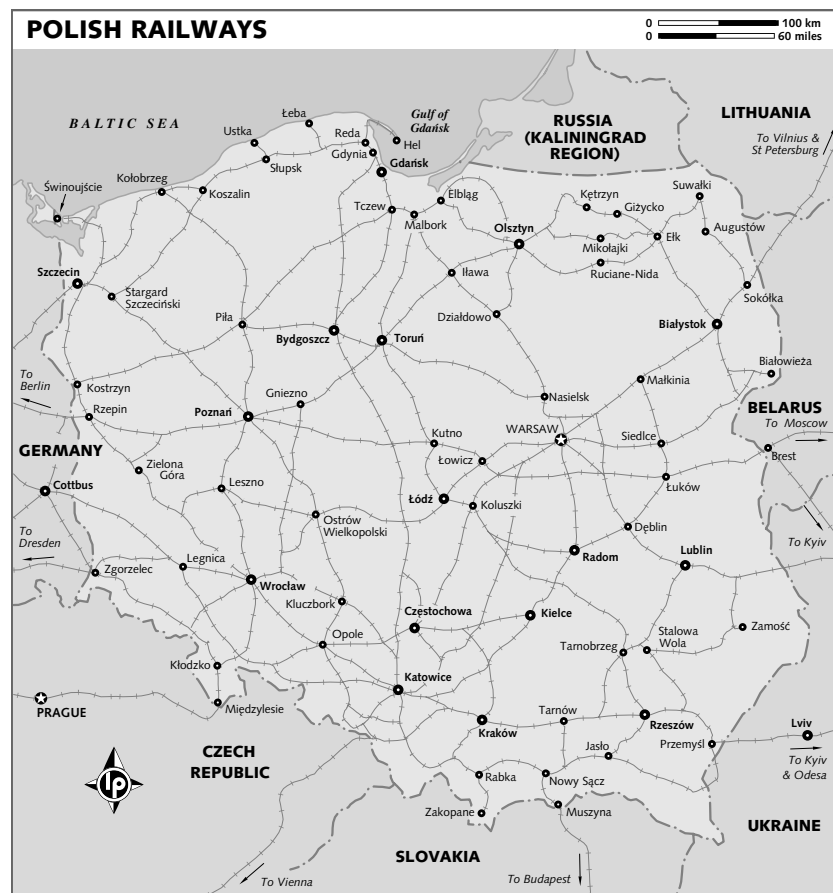
The approximate fares on InterCity trains (including the compulsory seat reservation) from Warsaw to either Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków or Poznań are 96/132zł in 2nd/1st class.

## Discounts

Foreign students under the age of 26 receive a 33% discount on InterCity trains but still must pay the 25zł reservation fee. Persons over 60 can purchase a *legitymacja seniora* (senior concession) card for 75zł which provides 50% discount on 1st- and 2nd-class seats on all Polish trains.

## Tickets

Since most train-station ticket offices have been computerised, buying tickets is now less of a hassle than it used to be, but queuing is still a way of life. Be at the station at least half an hour before the departure time of your train and make sure you are queuing at the right ticket window. As cashiers rarely speak English, the easiest way of buying a ticket is to have all the relevant details written down on a piece of paper. These should include the destination, the departure time and the class – *pierwsza klasa* (first) or *druga klasa* (second). If seat reservation is compulsory on your train, you'll automatically be sold a *miejscówka* (reserved-seat ticket); if it's op-





tional, you must state whether you want a *miejscówka* or not.

If you are forced to get on a train without a ticket, you can buy one directly from the conductor for a small supplement – 4zł on ordinary and fast trains, and 6zł express and InterCity trains. On ordinary and fast trains you must seek out the conductor otherwise you'll be fined for travelling without a ticket; on express and InterCity trains you'll be sold the ticket when the conductor comes by.

Couchettes and sleepers can be booked at special counters at larger stations; it's advisable to reserve them in advance. Advance tickets for journeys of over 100km and couchette and sleeper tickets can also be bought at any Orbis Travel office and some other agencies – perhaps a quicker option.

### Timetables

*Rozkład jazdy* (train timetables) are displayed in stations, with *odjazdy* (departures) on yellow boards and *przyjazdy* (arrivals) on white.

Ordinary trains are marked in black print, fast trains in red, and if you spot an additional 'Ex', this means an express train. InterCity trains are identified by the letters 'IC'. The letter 'R' in a square indicates a train with compulsory seat reservation. There will be some letters and/or numbers following the departure time; always check them in the key below. They usually say that the train *kursuje* (runs) or *nie kursuje* (doesn't run) in particular periods or days. The timetables also indicate which *peron* (platform) the train departs from.

You can check train timetables online at <http://rozkład.pkp.pl/bin/query.exe/en?>

### Train Passes

If you're planning to do a lot of travel around Poland, consider buying an InterRail pass. Passes are only available to those resident in Europe for at least six months and are priced in three bands: youth (under 26), adult 2nd class, and adult 1st class. Tickets cover three/four/six/eight day's travel within a month and range from €45 to €188. See [www.interrail.net](http://www.interrail.net) for more information.

### Train Stations

Most larger train stations have a range of facilities, including waiting rooms, snack bars, newsagents, left-luggage and toilets. The biggest stations in the major cities may

also have a restaurant, a *kantor* (currency-exchange office) and a post office. In some small villages, on the other hand, the station may be no more than a shed with just a ticket window, which will be open for a short time before a train arrives. If there's more than one train station in a city, the main one is identified by the name *główny/główna* (main) or *centralny/centralna* (central).

Some train stations – even major ones – are poorly marked, and, unless you're familiar with the route, it's easy to miss your stop. If in doubt, asking fellow passengers is probably the best plan of action.

All large stations have *przechowalnia bagażu* (left-luggage rooms), which are usually open round the clock. You can store your luggage there for up to 10 days. There's a low basic daily-storage charge per item (3zł), plus 1% of the declared value of the luggage as insurance. One thing to remember is that they usually close once or twice a day for an hour or so. The times of these breaks are displayed over the counter. If you've put your baggage in storage, be sure to arrive at least half an hour before your departure time to allow time for some queuing and paperwork. You pay the charge when you pick up your luggage, not when you deposit it.

### Types of Train

There are three main types of train: express, fast and ordinary. The *pociąg ekspresowy* or *ekspres* (express train) is the fastest and the most comfortable, operating on long intercity routes and only stopping at major cities en route. They carry only bookable seats; you can't travel standing if all the seats are sold out. Express trains tend to run during the daytime, rather than overnight. Their average speed is from 80km/h to 100km/h.

A more luxurious version of the express train, InterCity trains are even faster and more comfortable than regular express trains, and a light snack is included in the price (EuroCity trains are international InterCity trains). These trains run on some major routes out of Warsaw (a full list can be found on [www.intercity.pl](http://www.intercity.pl)) and they don't stop en route at all. The main destinations (along with distances and approximate travelling times) include Gdańsk (4½ hours, 333km); Katowice (two hours and 50 minutes, 303km); Kraków (three hours, 297km); Poznań (three hours

and 50 minutes, 311km); and Szczecin (five hours and 30 minutes, 525km).

*Pociąg pospieszny* (fast trains) stop at more intermediate stations. Usually not all carriages require booking; some will take passengers regardless of how crowded they are. At an average speed of between 60km/h and 80km/h, they are still a convenient way to get around the country and are one-third cheaper than express trains. They often travel at night, and if the distance justifies it they carry *kuszetki* (couchettes) or *miejsca sypialne* (sleepers) – a good way to avoid hotel costs and reach your destination early in the morning. Book as soon as you decide to go, as there are usually only a couple of sleeping cars and beds may sell out fast.

The *pociąg osobowy* (ordinary or local train) is far slower as it stops at all stations along the way. These trains mostly cover shorter distances, but they also run on longer routes. You can assume that their average speed will be between 30km/h and 40km/h. They are less comfortable than express or fast trains and don't require reservations. They are OK for short distances, but a longer journey can be tiring.

Almost all trains have two classes of carriage: 2nd class and 1st class. The carriages of long-distance trains are usually divided into compartments: the 1st-class compartments have six seats, while the 2nd-class ones contain eight seats. Smoking is only allowed in designated compartments, but in practice

# Health

Dr Caroline Evans

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Travel health depends on your predeparture preparations, your daily health care while travelling and how you handle any medical problem that does develop. There's a popular Polish saying: 'To be ill in Poland, it helps to be healthy'. It's a wryly humorous reference to the poor state of health care in the country; political mismanagement and lack of investment have seen the health service decline in the last five years. Fortunately, there are private hospitals and clinics in the main cities where the level of care is the same as you'll find in the West (see Medical Services, p86 and p166).

## BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while you are abroad. A little planning before your departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later: see your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

## INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), available from health centres or, in the UK, post offices, covers you for most medical care. It will not cover you for nonemergencies or emergency repatriation. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Poland. If you do need health insurance, strongly consider a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or if they'll reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. The former option is generally preferable, as it doesn't require you to pay for services in a foreign country.

## RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their intended destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before your departure.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

*International Travel and Health*, a publication of the WHO, is revised annually and is available online at [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith). Other useful websites include [www.mdtravel.health.com](http://www.mdtravel.health.com) (travel health recommendations for every country, which are updated daily), [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk) (general travel advice for the layperson), [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk) (advice on travel for the elderly) and [www.maristopes.org.uk](http://www.maristopes.org.uk) (information on women's health and contraception).

It's also a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure:

- Australia** ([www.dfat.gov.au/travel](http://www.dfat.gov.au/travel))
- Canada** ([www.travelhealth.gc.ca](http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca))
- United Kingdom** ([www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk))
- United States** ([www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel))

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

## IN POLAND

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

High-quality medical care is not always readily available outside of major cities, but embassies, consulates and five-star hotels can usually recommend doctors or clinics. In some cases, medical supplies required in hospital may need to be bought from a pharmacy and nursing care may be limited. Note that there can be an increased risk of hepatitis B and HIV transmission via poorly sterilised equipment.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Tick-borne encephalitis is spread by tick bites. It is a serious infection of the brain, and vaccination is advised for those in risk areas who are unable to avoid tick bites (such as campers, forestry workers and walkers). Two doses of vaccine will give a year's protection, and three doses will cover you for up to three years.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Europe. They are a particular pest around the region of the Great Masurian Lakes. They may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Bees and wasps only cause major problems to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings carry an 'EpiPen' or similar adrenaline injection.

Bed bugs lead to very itchy, lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with crawling insect killer after changing bedding will get rid of them.

Scabies are tiny mites that live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. Scabies are easily treated with lotion from a pharmacy; other members of the household also need treating to avoid spreading scabies between asymptomatic carriers.

### TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up-to-date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure, as some vaccines are not suitable for children under one year of age.

In hot, moist climates any wound or break in the skin is likely to let in infection. The area should be cleaned and kept dry.

Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water.

Children should be encouraged to avoid and mistrust any dogs or other mammals because of the risk of rabies and other diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should immediately be thoroughly cleaned. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected with rabies, medical assistance should be sought immediately.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for

travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

### **SEXUAL HEALTH**

Emergency contraception is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex. The **International Planned Parenthood Federation**

([www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org)) can advise about the availability of contraception in different countries.

When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means that they have been rigorously tested, and then keep them in a cool, dry place or they may crack and perish.



# Language

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Polish is a western variety of the Slavonic languages found in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Croatian, Czech, Russian, Serbian, Slovak and Slovene.

Ideally, everyone who wants to travel in Poland should know some basic Polish – the more you know the easier your travel is likely to be and the more you'll get out of your time in the country. For a more comprehensive guide to the language, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Polish Phrasebook* or *Small Talk Eastern Europe*.

## THE POLISH ALPHABET

Polish letters with diacritical marks are treated as separate letters, and the order of the Polish alphabet is as follows:

**a** **ą** **b** **c** **ć** **d** **e** **ę** **f** **g** **h** **i** **j** **k** **ł** **m** **n** **ń** **o** **ó** **p** **(q)** **r** **s** **t** **u** **(v)**  
**w** **(x)** **y** **z** **ź** **ż**

The letters **q**, **v** and **x** appear only in words of foreign origin.

## PRONUNCIATION

Written Polish is phonetically consistent, which means that the pronunciation of letters or clusters of letters doesn't vary from word to word. The stress almost always falls on the second-last syllable.

## Vowels

Polish vowels are pure, consisting of one sound only, and are of roughly even length. Their approximate pronunciations are as follows:

<b>a</b>	as the 'u' in 'cut'
<b>ą</b>	a highly nasalised vowel; a cross between the 'awn' in 'lawn' and the 'ong' in 'long'
<b>e</b>	'e' in 'ten'
<b>ę</b>	also highly nasalised; like the 'eng' in 'engage' (where the 'ng' is one sound, not 'n' followed by 'g'); pronounced as <b>e</b> when word-final
<b>i</b>	as in 'police' but shorter
<b>o</b>	as in 'not'
<b>ó</b>	the same as Polish <b>u</b>
<b>u</b>	as in 'put'
<b>y</b>	as the 'i' in 'bit'

## Consonants

Most Polish consonants are pronounced as in English. However, there are some very fine distinctions between certain consonants in Polish, which English speakers may find difficult to produce. The following guide only gives approximations of the correct pronunciation – your best bet is to listen to and learn from native speakers:

<b>c</b>	as the 'ts' in 'its'
<b>ch</b>	as the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i>
<b>cz</b>	as the 'ch' in 'church'
<b>ć</b>	similar to <b>c</b> but pronounced with the tongue a little further back on the roof of the mouth; pronounced as 'tsei' before vowels
<b>dz</b>	as the 'ds' in 'adds up'
<b>dź</b>	similar to <b>dz</b> but pronounced with the tongue a little further back on the roof of the mouth; pronounced as 'dzi' before vowels
<b>dż</b>	as the 'j' in 'jam'
<b>g</b>	as in 'get'
<b>h</b>	the same as <b>ch</b>
<b>j</b>	as the 'y' in 'yet'
<b>ł</b>	as the 'w' in 'wine'
<b>ń</b>	as the 'ni' in 'onion'; written as <b>ni</b> before vowels

<b>r</b>	always trilled
<b>rz</b>	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
<b>s</b>	as in 'set'
<b>sz</b>	as the 'sh' in 'show'
<b>ś</b>	a soft 'sh' sound, similar to <b>sz</b> ; written as <b>si</b> before vowels
<b>w</b>	'v' in 'van'
<b>ż</b>	as the 's' in 'pleasure'; written as <b>zi</b> before vowels
<b>ź</b>	the same as <b>rz</b>
<b>szcz</b>	the most obtuse-looking consonant cluster; pronounced as the 'shch' in 'fresh cheese'

The following consonants are unvoiced when they are word-final: **b** is pronounced as 'p', **d** as 't', **g** as 'k', **w** as 'f', **z** as 's' and **rz** as 'sz'.

Finally, here's the favourite Polish tongue-twister for you to test your pronunciation skills on:

*Chrzyszcz brzmi w trzcinie.*

The cockchafer buzzes in the weeds.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Where can I find a ...?

*Gdzie mogę znaleźć...?* gjuje *mo-ge zna-leshch ...*

#### camping ground

*camping* kam-peenk

#### guesthouse

*pensjonat* pen-syo-nat

#### hotel

*hotel* ho-tel

#### youth hostel

*schronisko młodzieżowe* sro-nees-ko mwo-jye-zho-ve

### Where is a cheap hotel?

*Gdzie jest tani hotel?* gjuje *yest ta-nee ho-tel*

### What is the address?

*Jaki jest adres?* ya-kee *yest ad-res*

### Please write down the address.

*Proszę to napisać.* pro-she *to na-pee-sach*

### Do you have any rooms available?

*Czy są wolne pokoje?* chi *som vol-ne po-ko-ye*

### I'd like (a) ...

*Poproszę o ...* po-pro-she *o ...*

#### bed

*łóżko* woosh-ko

#### single room

*pokój jednoosobowy* po-kooy *yed-no-o-so-bo-vi*

#### double bed

*podwójnym łóżkiem* pod-vooy-nim *woosh-kyem*

#### room

*pokój* po-kooy

### twin room with two beds

*pokój dwuosobowy* po-kooy *dvoo-o-so-bo-vi*

### room with a bathroom

*pokój z łazienką* po-kooy *s wa-zhen-kom*

### to share a dorm

*łóżko w sali zbiorowej* woosh-ko *fsa-lee zbyo-ra-vey*

## MAKING A RESERVATION

(for written and phone inquiries)

<b>from ...</b>	<i>od ...</i>
<b>to ...</b>	<i>do ...</i>
<b>date</b>	<i>data</i>
<b>surname</b>	<i>nazwisko</i>
<b>I'd like to book ...</b>	<i>Chcę zarezerwować ...</i>
<b>price</b>	<i>cena</i>
<b>credit card</b>	<i>karta kredytowa</i>
<b>number</b>	<i>numer</i>
<b>expiry date</b>	<i>data ważności</i>

### How much is it per night?

*Ile kosztuje za noc?* ee-le *kosh-too-ye za nots*

### May I see it?

*Czy mogę go zobaczyć?* chi *mo-ge go zo-ba-chich*

### Where is the bathroom?

*Gdzie jest łazienka?* gjuje *yest wa-zhen-ka*

### Where is the toilet?

*Gdzie są toalety?* gjuje *som to-a-le-ti*

### I'm leaving today.

*Wyjeżdżam dziś.* vi-yesh-iyam *jyeesh*

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Dzień dobry.</i>	<i>jyen do-bri</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Do widzenia.</i>	<i>do-vee-dze-nya</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>Tak.</i>	<i>tak</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Nie.</i>	<i>nye</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Proszę.</i>	<i>pro-she</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Dziękuję.</i>	<i>jyen-koo-ye</i>
<b>You're welcome.</b>	<i>Proszę.</i>	<i>pro-she</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Przepraszam.</i>	<i>pshe-pra-sham</i>
<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Przepraszam.</i>	<i>pshe-pra-sham</i>
<b>I like ...</b>	<i>Lubię ...</i>	<i>loo-bye ...</i>
<b>I don't like ...</b>	<i>Nie lubię ...</i>	<i>nye loo-bye ...</i>
<b>Just a minute.</b>	<i>Chwileczkę.</i>	<i>hfee-lech-ke</i>

### What's your name?

*Jak masz na imię?* yak *mash na ee-mye*

### My name is ...

*Mam na imię ...* mam *na ee-mye ...*

### I'm from ...

*Jestem z ...* yes-tem *s ...*

### Where are you from?

*Skąd pan/pani jest?* skont *pan/pa-nee yest (pol, m/f)*

*Skąd jesteście?* skont *yes-tesh (inf)*

## DIRECTIONS

### Where is ...?

*Gdzie jest ...?* gjuje *yest ...*

### Go straight ahead.

*Proszę iść prosto.* pro-she *eeshch pros-to*

### Turn left.

*Proszę skręcić w lewo.* pro-she *skren-cheech fle-vo*

### Turn right.

*Proszę skręcić w prawo.* pro-she *skren-cheech fpra-vo*

### at the corner

*na rogu* na *ro-goo*

### at the traffic lights

*na światłach* na *shfya-twah*

## SIGNS

<b>Wejście</b>	Entrance
<b>Wyjście</b>	Exit
<b>Informacja</b>	Information
<b>Otwarte</b>	Open
<b>Zamknięte</b>	Closed
<b>Wzbroniony</b>	Prohibited
<b>Posterunek Policji</b>	Police Station
<b>Toalety</b>	Toilets/WC
<b>Panowie</b>	Men
<b>Panie</b>	Women

<b>behind</b>	<i>za</i>	<i>za</i>
<b>in front of</b>	<i>przed</i>	<i>pshet</i>
<b>opposite</b>	<i>naprzeciwko</i>	<i>na-pshe-cheef-ko</i>
<b>far (from)</b>	<i>daleko</i>	<i>da-le-ko</i>
<b>near (to)</b>	<i>blisko</i>	<i>bles-ko</i>

<b>beach</b>	<i>plaża</i>	<i>pla-zha</i>
<b>bridge</b>	<i>most</i>	<i>most</i>
<b>castle</b>	<i>zamek</i>	<i>za-mek</i>
<b>cathedral</b>	<i>katedra</i>	<i>ka-te-dra</i>
<b>church</b>	<i>kościół</i>	<i>kosh-choow</i>
<b>island</b>	<i>wyspa</i>	<i>vis-pa</i>
<b>lake</b>	<i>jezioro</i>	<i>ye-zho-ro</i>
<b>main square</b>	<i>plac główny</i>	<i>plats gwoov-ni</i>
<b>market</b>	<i>targ</i>	<i>tark</i>
<b>old city (town)</b>	<i>stare miasto</i>	<i>sta-re mya-sto</i>
<b>palace</b>	<i>pałac</i>	<i>pa-wats</i>
<b>ruins</b>	<i>ruiny</i>	<i>roo-ee-ni</i>
<b>sea</b>	<i>morze</i>	<i>mo-zhe</i>
<b>square</b>	<i>plac</i>	<i>plats</i>
<b>tower</b>	<i>wieża</i>	<i>vye-zha</i>

## HEALTH

### I'm ill.

*Jestem chory/a.* yes-tem *ho-ri/a (m/f)*

### It hurts here.

*Tutaj mnie boli.* too-tay *mnye bo-lee*

## EMERGENCIES

### Help!

*Na pomoc!* na *po-mots*

### It's an emergency.

*To jest nagły przypadek.* to *yest na-gwi pshi-pa-dek*

### I'm lost.

*Zgubiłem się.* zgoo-*bee-wem she (m)*

*Zgubiłam się.* zgoo-*bee-wam she (f)*

### Leave me alone!

*Proszę odejść!* pro-she *o-deyshch*

### Call ...!

*Proszę wezwać ...!* pro-she *vez-vach ...*

#### a doctor

*lekarza* le-*ka-zha*

#### the police

*policję* po-*lee-tsye*

### I'm asthmatic/epileptic.

*Mam astmę/epilepsję.* mam *as-tme/e-pee-lep-sye*

### I'm diabetic.

*Jestem diabetikiem.* yes-tem *dya-be-ti-kyem*

### I'm allergic to ...

*Mam uczulenie na ...*

*mam oo-choo-le-nye na ...*

<b>antibiotics</b>	<i>antybiotyki</i>	<i>an-ti-byo-ti-kee</i>
<b>penicillin</b>	<i>penicylinę</i>	<i>pe-nee-tsi-lee-ne</i>
<b>bees</b>	<i>pszczolę</i>	<i>pshcho-wi</i>

<b>antiseptic</b>	<i>antyseptyczny</i>	<i>an-ti-sep-tich-ni</i>
<b>aspirin</b>	<i>aspiryna</i>	<i>as-pee-ri-na</i>
<b>condoms</b>	<i>kondomy</i>	<i>kon-do-mi</i>
<b>contraceptive</b>	<i>środek anty-konieczynny</i>	<i>shro-dek an-ti-kon-tsep-tsiy-ni</i>

<b>diarrhoea</b>	<i>biegunka</i>	<i>bye-goon-ka</i>
<b>medicine</b>	<i>lek</i>	<i>lek</i>
<b>nausea</b>	<i>mdłości</i>	<i>mdwash-chee</i>
<b>sunblock cream</b>	<i>krem do opalania</i>	<i>krem do o-pa-la-nya</i>
<b>tampons</b>	<i>tampony</i>	<i>tam-po-ni</i>

## LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

### Do you speak English?

*Czy pan/pani mówi* chi *pan/pa-nee moo-vee*

*po angielsku?* po *an-gyel-skoo (m/f)*

### Does anyone here speak English?

*Czy ktoś tu mówi* chi *ktosh too moo-vee*

*po angielsku?* po *an-gyel-skoo*

### How do you say ...?

*Jak się mówi ...?* yak *she moo-vee ...*

### What does it mean?

*Co to znaczy?* tso *to zna-chi*

### I understand.

*Rozumiem.* ro-*zoo-myem*

### I don't understand.

*Nie rozumiem.* nye *ro-zoo-myem*

**Could you write it down, please?**

*Proszę to napisać.* pro-she to na-pee-sach

**Can you show me (on the map)?**

*Proszę mi pokazać (na mapie).* pro-she mee po-ka-zach (na ma-pye)

**NUMBERS**

0	zero	ze-ro
1	jeden	ye-den
2	dwa	dwa
3	trzy	tshi
4	cztery	chte-ri
5	pięć	pyench
6	sześć	sheshch
7	siedem	she-dem
8	osiem	o-shem
9	dziewięć	jye-vyench
10	dziesięć	jye-shench
11	jedenastę	ye-de-nash-che
12	dwanaście	dwa-nash-che
13	trzynaście	tshi-nash-che
14	czternaście	chter-nash-che
15	piętnaście	pyent-nash-che
16	szesnaście	shes-nash-che
17	siedemnaście	she-dem-nash-che
18	osiemnaście	o-shem-nash-che
19	dziewiętnaście	jye-vyet-nash-che
20	dwadzieścia	dwa-jyesh-cha
21	dwadzieścia jeden	dwa-jyesh-cha ye-den
22	dwadzieścia dwa	dwa-jyesh-cha dva
30	trzydzieści	tshi-jyesh-chee
40	czterdzieści	chter-jyesh-chee
50	pięćdziesiąt	pyen-jye-shont
60	sześćdziesiąt	shesh-jye-shont
70	siedemdziesiąt	she-dem-jye-shont
80	osiemdziesiąt	o-shem-jye-shont
90	dziewięćdziesiąt	jye-vyen-jye-shont
100	sto	sto
1000	tysiąc	ti-shonts

**PAPERWORK**

<b>given names</b>	<i>imiona</i>	ee-myo-na
<b>surname</b>	<i>nazwisko</i>	naz-vees-ko
<b>nationality</b>	<i>narodowość</i>	na-ro-do-voshch
<b>date of birth</b>	<i>data urodzenia</i>	da-ta oo-ro-dze-nya
<b>place of birth</b>	<i>miejsce urodzenia</i>	myey-stse oo-ro-dze-nya
<b>sex/gender</b>	<i>pleć</i>	pwech
<b>passport</b>	<i>paszport</i>	pash-port
<b>visa</b>	<i>wiza</i>	vee-za

**QUESTION WORDS**

<b>Who?</b>	<i>Kto?</i>	kto
<b>What?</b>	<i>Co?</i>	tso
<b>What is it?</b>	<i>Co to jest?</i>	tso to yest
<b>When?</b>	<i>Kiedy?</i>	kye-di

<b>Where?</b>	<i>Gdzie?</i>	gije
<b>Which?</b>	<i>Który?</i>	ktoo-ri
<b>Why?</b>	<i>Dlaczego?</i>	dla-che-go
<b>How?</b>	<i>Jak?</i>	yak

**SHOPPING & SERVICES****I'd like to buy ...**

*Chcę kupić ...* htse koo-peech ...

**How much is it?**

*Ile to kosztuje?* ee-le to kosh-too-yue

**I don't like it.**

*Nie podoba mi się.* nye po-do-ba mee she

**May I look at it?**

*Czy mogę to zobaczyć?* chi mo-ge to zo-ba-chich

**I'm just looking.**

*Tylko oglądam.* til-ko o-glon-dam

**It's expensive.**

*To jest drogie.* to yest dro-gye

**I'll take it.**

*Wezmę to.* vez-me to

**Can I pay by credit card?**

*Czy mogę zapłacić kartą kredytową?* chi mo-ge za-pwa-cheech kar-tom kre-di-to-vom

<b>more</b>	<i>więcej</i>	vyen-tsey
<b>less</b>	<i>mniej</i>	mnyey
<b>smaller</b>	<i>mniejszy</i>	mnyey-shi
<b>bigger</b>	<i>większy</i>	vyenk-shi

**Where's ...?**

*Gdzie jest ...?* gije yest ...

<b>a bank</b>	bank
<b>the church</b>	kosh-choow
<b>the city centre</b>	tsen-troom
<b>the ... embassy</b>	ambasada ...
<b>the hospital</b>	shpee-tal
<b>the hotel</b>	ho-tel
<b>an internet café</b>	ka-vyar-nya een-ter-ne-to-va
<b>the market</b>	tark
<b>the museum</b>	moo-ze-oom
<b>the police station</b>	pos-te-roo-nek po-lee-tsyeey
<b>the post office</b>	poch-ta
<b>a public phone</b>	aw-to-mat te-le-fo-neech-ni

<b>a public toilet</b>	<i>toaleta publiczna</i>	to-a-le-ta poo-bleech-na
<b>the tourist information office</b>	<i>biuro informacji turystycznej</i>	byoo-ro een-for-ma-tsyeey too-ris-tich-ney

**POLISH COMPUTER JARGON**

If you surf the web at a Polish internet café you may have to do it in Polish. The following is a bit of useful Polish cyberspeak:

<b>Bookmark</b>	<i>Zakładka</i>
<b>Close</b>	<i>Zamknij</i>
<b>Copy</b>	<i>Kopiuuj</i>
<b>Cut</b>	<i>Wytnij</i>
<b>Delete</b>	<i>Usuń</i>
<b>Edit</b>	<i>Edycja</i>
<b>Exit</b>	<i>Zakończ</i>
<b>File</b>	<i>Plik</i>
<b>Help</b>	<i>Pomoc</i>
<b>Insert</b>	<i>Wstaw</i>
<b>New</b>	<i>Nowy</i>
<b>Open</b>	<i>Otwórz</i>
<b>Paste</b>	<i>Wklej</i>
<b>Print</b>	<i>Drukuj</i>
<b>Save</b>	<i>Zapisz</i>
<b>Save As</b>	<i>Zapisz Jako</i>
<b>Search</b>	<i>Szukaj</i>
<b>View</b>	<i>Widok</i>

**TIME & DATES****What time is it?**

*Która jest godzina?* ktoo-ra yest go-jee-na

**It's 10 o'clock.**

*Jest dziesiąta.* yest jye-shon-ta

<b>in the morning</b>	<i>rano</i>	ra-no
<b>in the afternoon</b>	<i>po południu</i>	po po-wood-nyoo
<b>in the evening</b>	<i>wieczorem</i>	vye-cho-rem
<b>today</b>	<i>dziś or dzisiaj</i>	jeesh/jee-shay
<b>tomorrow</b>	<i>jutro</i>	yoo-tro
<b>yesterday</b>	<i>wczoraj</i>	fcho-ray

<b>Monday</b>	<i>poniedziałek</i>	po-nye-jya-wek
<b>Tuesday</b>	<i>wtorek</i>	fto-rek
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>sroda</i>	shro-da
<b>Thursday</b>	<i>czwartek</i>	chfar-tek
<b>Friday</b>	<i>piątek</i>	pyan-tek
<b>Saturday</b>	<i>sobota</i>	so-bo-ta
<b>Sunday</b>	<i>niedziela</i>	nye-jye-la

<b>January</b>	<i>styczeń</i>	sti-chen
<b>February</b>	<i>luty</i>	loo-ti
<b>March</b>	<i>marzec</i>	ma-zhets

<b>April</b>	<i>kwiecień</i>	kfye-chen
<b>May</b>	<i>maj</i>	may
<b>June</b>	<i>czerwiec</i>	cher-vyets
<b>July</b>	<i>lipiec</i>	lee-pyets
<b>August</b>	<i>sierpień</i>	sher-pyen
<b>September</b>	<i>wrzesień</i>	vzhe-shen
<b>October</b>	<i>październik</i>	pazh-jyer-neek
<b>November</b>	<i>listopad</i>	lees-to-pat
<b>December</b>	<i>grudzień</i>	groo-jyen

**TRANSPORT  
Public Transport****What time does the ... leave/arrive?**

*O której odchodzi/przychodzi ...?*

*o ktoo-rey ot-ho-jee/pshi-ho-jee ...*

<b>boat</b>	
<i>łódź</i>	wooch
<b>bus</b>	
<i>autobus</i>	aw-to-boos
<b>plane</b>	
<i>samolot</i>	sa-mo-lot
<b>train</b>	
<i>pociąg</i>	po-chonk
<b>tram</b>	
<i>tramwaj</i>	tram-vay

**I'd like a ... ticket.**

*Poproszę bilet ...*

*po-pro-she bee-le ...*

<b>one-way</b>	
<i>w jedną stronę</i>	fyed-nom stro-ne
<b>return</b>	
<i>powrotny</i>	po-vrot-ni

**I want to go to ...**

*Chcę jechać do ...* htse ye-hach do ...

<b>1st class</b>	<i>pierwsza klasa</i>	pyer-fsha kla-sa
<b>2nd class</b>	<i>druga klasa</i>	droo-ga kla-sa
<b>cancel</b>	<i>odwołać</i>	ot-vo-wach
<b>delay</b>	<i>opóźnienie</i>	o-poozh-nye-nye
<b>the first</b>	<i>pierwszy</i>	pyer-fshi
<b>the last</b>	<i>ostatni</i>	os-tat-ni
<b>platform</b>	<i>peron</i>	pe-ron
<b>ticket office</b>	<i>kasa biletowa</i>	ka-sa bee-le-to-va
<b>timetable</b>	<i>rozkład jazdy</i>	ros-kwat yaz-di
<b>train station</b>	<i>dworzec kolejowy</i>	dvo-zhets ko-le-yo-vo

**Private Transport****I'd like to hire a ...**

*Chcę wypożyczyć ...*

*htse vi-po-zhi-chich ...*

<b>bicycle</b>	
<i>rower</i>	ro-ver



**car***samochód* sa-mo-hoot**motorbike***motocykl* mo-to-tsikl**Where's the nearest petrol station?***Gdzie jest najbliższa* gjye yest nay-bleesh-sha*stacja benzynowa?* sta-tsya ben-zi-no-va**Please fill it up.***Proszę napelnić bak.* pro-she na-peo-neech bak**I'd like ... litres.***Poproszę ... litrów.* po-pro-she ... leet-roof**petrol***benzyna* ben-zi-na**unleaded***bezołowiowa* be-so-wo-vyo-va**diesel***diesel/* dee-sel*olej napędowy* o-ley na-pen-do-vi**ROAD SIGNS**

<b>Objazd</b>	Detour
<b>Parkowanie Wzbronione</b>	No Parking
<b>Uwaga</b>	Caution
<b>Wjazd</b>	Entry
<b>Wjazd Wzbroniony</b>	No Entry
<b>Wyjazd</b>	Exit

**Is this the road to ...?***Czy ta droga prowadzi* chi ta dro-ga pro-va-jee*do ...?* do ...**Can I park here?***Czy można tu parkować?* chi mozh-na too par-ko-vach**How long can I park here?***Jak długo można* yak dwoo-go mozh-na*tu parkować?* too par-ko-vach**I need a mechanic.***Potrzebuję mechanika.* pot-she-boo-ye me-ha-nee-ka**The car has broken down.***Samochód się zepsuł.* sa-mo-hoot she zep-soow**It won't start.***Nie zapala.* nye za-pa-la**I have a flat tyre.***Złapałem gumę.* zwa-pa-wem goo-me (m)*Złapałam gumę.* zwa-pa-wam goo-me (f)**I've run out of petrol.***Zabrakło mi benzyny.* za-brak-wo mee ben-zi-ni**TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****Where can I find a baby-sitter?***Gdzie można znaleźć opiekunkę do dziecka?**gjye mozh-na zna-leshch o-pye-koon-ke do jyets-ka***Can you put an extra bed in the room?***Poproszę o dodatkowe łóżko w pokoju.**po-pro-she o do-dat-ko-we woosh-ko fpo-ko-yoo***I need a car with a child seat.***Potrzebuję samochód z fotelikiem dla dziecka.**pot-she-boo-ye sa-mo-hoot sfo-te-lee-kyem dla jyets-ka***Do you have a children's menu?***Czy są jakieś dania dla dzieci?**chi som ya-kyesh da-nya dla jye-chee***Could you make it a child's portion?***Czy mogę prosić o porcję dla dziecka?**chi mo-ge pro-sheech o por-tsye dla jyets-ka***Are children allowed to enter?***Czy dzieci mogą wejść?**chi jye-chee mo-gom veyshch***Are there any facilities for children?***Czy są jakieś udogodnienia dla dzieci?**chi som ya-kyesh oo-do-go-dnye-nya dla jye-chee*Also available from Lonely Planet:  
*Polish Phrasebook*

# Glossary

The following is a list of terms and abbreviations you're likely to come across in your travels through Poland. For food and drink terms, see p60.

**Aleja or Aleje** – avenue, main city street; abbreviated to Al in addresses and on maps  
**apteka** – pharmacy

**bankomat** – ATM  
**bar mleczny** – milk bar; a sort of basic self-service soup kitchen that serves very cheap, mostly vegetarian dishes  
**bazylika** – basilica  
**bez łazienki** – room without bathroom  
**biblioteka** – library  
**bilet** – ticket  
**biuro turystyki** – travel agency  
**biuro zakwaterowania** – office that arranges private accommodation  
**brama** – gate  
**britzka** – horse-drawn cart

**Cepelia** – a network of shops that sell artefacts made by local artisans  
**cerkiew (cerkwie)** – Orthodox or Uniat church(es)  
**cukiernia** – cake shop

**Desa** – chain of old art and antique sellers  
**dom kultury** – cultural centre  
**dom wycieczkowy** – term applied to PTTK-run hostels; also called dom turysty  
**domy wczasowe** – workers' holiday homes  
**dwór** – mansion

**góra** – mountain  
**gospoda** – inn, tavern, restaurant  
**grosz** – unit of Polish currency, abbreviated to gr; plural groszy; see also złoty

**jaskinia** – cave

**kancelaria kościelna** – church office  
**kantor(s)** – private currency-exchange office(s)  
**kawiarnia** – café  
**kemping** – camping  
**kino** – cinema  
**kolegiata** – collegiate church  
**komórka** – literally, 'cell'; commonly used for cellular (mobile) phone  
**kościół** – church  
**księgarnia** – bookshop

**kwatery agroturystyczne** – agrotourist accommodation  
**kwatery prywatne** – rooms for rent in private houses

**miejscówka** – reserved-seat ticket  
**muzeum** – museum

**na zdrowie!** – cheers!; literally, 'to the health'  
**noclegi** – accommodation

**odjazdy** – departures (on transport timetables)  
**ostrów** – island  
**otwarte** – open

**park narodowy** – national park  
**parking strzeżony** – guarded car park  
**pchać** – pull (on door)  
**pensjonat(y)** – pension or private guesthouse(s)  
**peron** – railway platform  
**piekarnia** – bakery  
**PKS** – Państwowa Komunikacja Samochodowa; former state-run company that runs most of Poland's bus transport  
**Plac** – Sq  
**poczta** – post office  
**poczta główna** – main post office  
**pokój 1-osobowy** – single room  
**pokój 2-osobowy** – double room  
**przechowalnia bagażu** – left-luggage room  
**przez** – via, en route (on transport timetables)  
**przyjazdy** – arrivals (on transport timetables)  
**PTSM** – Polskie Towarzystwo Schronisk Młodzieżowych; Polish Youth Hostel Association  
**PTTK** – Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze; Polish Tourist & Countryside Association

**rachunek** – bill or check  
**riksza** – bicycle rickshaws  
**rozkład jazdy** – transport timetable  
**Rynek** – Town/Market Sq

**sanktuarium** – church (usually pilgrimage site)  
**schronisko górskie** – mountain hostel, providing basic accommodation and meals, usually run by the PTTK  
**schronisko młodzieżowe** – youth hostel  
**Sejm** – the lower house of parliament  
**skansen** – open-air museum of traditional architecture  
**sklep** – shop  
**stanica wodna** – waterside hostel, usually with boats, kayaks and other water-related facilities  
**stare miasto** – old town/city  
**Stary Rynek** – Old Town/Market Sq

**stołówka** – canteen; restaurant or cafeteria of a holiday home, workplace, hostel etc  
**święty/a (m/f)** – saint; abbreviated to Św  
**szopka** – Nativity scene

**teatr** – theatre  
**toalety** – toilets

**ulica** – street; abbreviated to ul in addresses (and placed before the street name); usually omitted on maps

**Uniat** – Eastern-rite Catholics

**wódka** – vodka; the number one Polish spirit

**z łazienką** – room with bathroom

**zajazd** – inn (sometimes restaurant)

**zamek** – castle

**zdrój** – spa

**złoty** – unit of Polish currency; abbreviated to zł; divided into 100 units called *grosz*

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