

Poland



Poland is a country located in central Europe and it consists of a population of almost 38 million citizens. Poland borders Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. Its northern border runs along the Baltic Sea coast. The capital city of Poland is Warsaw and makes up for 1.7 million residents. The climate of Poland can be considered continental, typically with very cold winters and very warm summers. The chilliest time of year is usually January and February with temperatures reaching below zero and July being the warmest time of year with temperatures recorded between 25c-35c.

Food

Polish cuisine is known for its large, comforting and hearty meals containing lots of meats and vegetables. Ingredients are usually fried or stewed.

Staple ingredients used in Polish cuisine include sauerkraut, beetroot, cucumbers (gherkins), sour cream, kohlrabi, mushrooms, sausages and smoked sausage. Many herbs are used to add flavours and taste these involve marjoram, dill, caraway seeds, parsley, or pepper. Potatoes, cabbage and pork are heavily involved in the traditional foods eaten in Poland. The most popular desserts are cakes and pastries.

The people of Poland have been known to be particular when it comes to the perfect pickled cucumber and cabbage and they tend to buy them in large quantities when the season comes around in order to perfect their techniques. This is where one of their delicacies 'Sauerkraut' comes into play. Sauerkraut is a dish containing fermented finely cut cabbage, it has a distinctive sour taste which is created by lactic acid formed when the bacteria ferment the sugars in the cabbage leaves. Sauerkraut is found in various dishes including soups, pasta and salads and they accompany every special occasion.



Clothing

Every day dress typically resembles clothing worn all over Europe and America for example jeans, suits and modern clothing. The capital city of Warsaw is known as a city for its height of fashion and the latest trends can be found there.

A traditional folk costume is a significant part of Poland's history and culture. The Polish national dress strikes everyone by bright colours and detailed embroidery.

Women tend to wear long, colourful skirts with ribbons and printed with large flowers. These are worn typically with white blouses and black or red vests that are embroidered with flowers and laced up across the front with red ribbon. Women's hairs is usually in long braids and wear beaded necklaces that are often red. Wreathes of flowers are also worn in their hair, however women that are married opt for white scarves. Girls will wear traditional leather or wooden shoes. A complete traditional costume of Polish men includes a long coat with high leather boots and a flower-covered cap. High heels in this style are designed for dancing. Men folk dress is very similar it includes white shirt, red tie and a flat topped black and red hat. Trousers tend to be tight and white in colour as do their jackets which consists of black, red and colourful flowers.

Education

In 2014, the Pearson/Economist Intelligence Unit rated Polish education as fifth best in Europe and tenth best in the world. Compulsory education in Poland starts at the age of six or seven and the system of education in Poland allows for 22 years of continuous, uninterrupted schooling.

Reception starts from the age of 6 and is known as "0" year and first grade from the age of 7 which last 8 years and is completed by a compulsory exam. Pre-school children must take part in a year of mandatory mathematics and reading before moving onto primary school at the age of 7-12.

Primary school is divided into two parts that are three years each. One single teacher will conduct all subjects alone whilst the second cycle introduces subject based learning.

Subjects include art and music, crafts and technology, Polish, mathematics, social and natural environment and physical education. After primary education and the obligatory test is completed the examination board will grant a leaving certificate.



Religion

The majority of the Polish population is Roman Catholic approximately 86.9% and a large number are practicing Catholics. Although the country claims no official religion, Poland is amongst one of the most popular Catholic countries in the world and the religion is also studied at schools. God has always had the utmost respect and leading position and has remained a key feature to Polish identity.

The rest of the population embraces mainly of Eastern Orthodox including a further 1.3%. Roughly, 0.4% of the population are thought to belong to minority religions, the most significant being Jewish. Most recently only 2.4% identify as “non-believers.”

Most of the Orthodox communities began in the Ukrainian and Belarusian territories. The Orthodox Church in Poland currently thrives in Poland and the religion plays an active role in most Churches’ associations. Orthodox beliefs share many similarities with Christian churches in the sense that God revealed himself in Jesus, however they differ substantially in their worship and lifestyle.



Language

The main language spoken in Poland is Polish and is spoken by 97% of the population. It is known as a Slavic language along with Czech and Slovak. Other languages used in Poland include German, Ukrainian, Russian, Lithuanian, Armenian and Romanian languages. The Polish language is written using the Roman alphabet however some letters take accent marks.

As Germany borders the country to the west and Ukraine to the southeast over 60,000 residents speak German and around 26,000 native Ukrainian speakers live in Poland today.

There are also 22,000 native Russian speakers in the country and nearly 7 million Polish citizens speak Russian as a second language. The second most common language includes English which makes up for 30% of the population’s speakers.





For more information

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-poland.html>

<https://www.intopoland.com/poland-info/religion.html>

<https://www.indexmundi.com/poland/religions.html>

<https://www.staypoland.com/poland/polish-food/>

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