



# POLAND



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## 1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Location:** Central Europe.

Polish Tourism Organisation  
4-6 Chalubinskiego Street, 00-928 Warsaw, Poland  
**Tel:** (22) 630 1747. Fax: (22) 630 1762.  
**Web site:** <http://www.infolinia.pl>

Warsaw Information Centre  
Zamkowy Square 1/13, 00-262 Warsaw, Poland  
**Tel:** (22) 635 1881. Fax: (22) 831 0464. E-mail: [mit@supermedia.pl](mailto:mit@supermedia.pl) or [mit@mufa.pl](mailto:mit@mufa.pl)  
**Tourism and Cultural Information:** Aleje Jerozdimskie 54, Warsaw, Poland  
**Tel/Fax:** (22) 654 2447. Opening hours: 0800-2000 Monday-Sunday.

Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
47 Portland Place, London W1N 1JH  
**Tel:** (020) 7580 4324. Fax: (020) 7323 4018. E-mail: [pol-emb@dircon.co.uk](mailto:pol-emb@dircon.co.uk)  
**Web site:** <http://www.poland-embassy.org.uk>  
**Opening hours:** 0830-1630 Monday to Friday.

Consulate General of the Republic of Poland  
73 New Cavendish Street, London W1W 6LS  
**Tel:** (020) 7580 0476. Fax: (020) 7323 2320. Opening hours: 1000-1400 Monday to Friday (1000-1200 Wednesday).  
**Consulate General in:** Edinburgh (tel: (0131) 552 0301).

Polish National Tourist Office  
First Floor, Remo House, 310-312 Regent Street, London W1B 3AX  
**Tel:** (020) 7580 8811 (brochure request line) or 7580 6688 (tourist enquiries) or 7580 4488 (trade and press only). Fax: (020) 7580 8866. E-mail: [info@visitpoland.org](mailto:info@visitpoland.org)  
**Web site:** <http://pnto.dial.pipex.com>

British Embassy  
Aleje Róż 1, 00-556 Warsaw, Poland  
**Tel:** (22) 628 1001-5. Fax: (22) 621 7161. E-mail: [info@britishembassy.pl](mailto:info@britishembassy.pl) (information section)  
**Web site:** <http://www.britishembassy.pl>

Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
2640 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009  
**Tel:** (202) 234 3800-2. Fax: (202) 328 6271.  
**E-mail:** [embpol@dgs.dgsys.com](mailto:embpol@dgs.dgsys.com)  
**Web site:** <http://www.polishworld.com/polemb>

Consular Division of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland  
2224 Wyoming Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008  
**Tel:** (202) 234 3800. Fax: (202) 328 2152. E-mail: [polconsul.dc@ioip.com](mailto:polconsul.dc@ioip.com)  
**Other consulates in:** Chicago, Los Angeles and New York.

Polish National Tourist Office

275 Madison Avenue, Suite 1711, New York, NY 10016

**Tel:** (212) 338 9412. Fax: (212) 338 9283.

**E-mail:** pntonyc@polandtour.org

**Web site:** <http://www.polandtour.org>

Also deals with enquiries from Canada.

Embassy of the United States of America

Aleje Ujazdowskie 29/31, 00-540 Warsaw, Poland

**Tel:** (22) 628 3041. Fax: (22) 628 8298. Web site: <http://www.usaemb.pl/>

**Consulate General in:** Kraków.

Embassy of the Republic of Poland

443 Daly Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6H3

**Tel:** (613) 789 0468. Fax: (613) 789 1218. E-mail: polamb@alpahinter.net

**Web site:** <http://www.polonianet.com/eng/embassy>

**Consulates General in:** Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver.

Canadian Embassy

Reform Plaza, 10th Floor, Al. Jerozolimskie 123, 02-017 Warsaw, Poland

**Tel:** (22) 584 3100. Fax: (22) 584 3194 (visa section). E-mail: wsaw@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

**Country dialling code:** 48.

## 2 GENERAL

**Area:** 312,685 sq km (120,728 sq miles).

**Population:** 38,667,000 (1998).

**Population Density:** 123.7 per sq km.

**Capital:** Warsaw. Population: 1,625,500 (1996).

**Geography:** Poland shares borders to the east with the Russian Federation, Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania, to the south with the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic and to the west with Germany. To the north lies the Baltic Sea. The Baltic coast provides over 500km (300 miles) of sandy beaches, bays, steep cliffs and dunes. Northern Poland is dominated by lakes, islands and wooded hills joined by many rivers and canals. The Mazurian Lake District to the northeast is particularly beautiful. Lake Hancza, the deepest lake in Poland, is located in this district. The River Vistula has cut a wide valley from Gdansk on the Baltic coast to Warsaw in the heart of the country. The rest of the country rises slowly to the Sudety Mountains, which run along the border with the Czech Republic, and the Tatra mountains, which separate Poland from the Slovak Republic. To the west, the River Oder, with Szczecin at its mouth, forms the northwest border with Germany.

**Government:** Republic since 1918. Head of State: President Aleksander Kwasniewski since 1995. Head of Government: Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek since 1997.

**Language:** Polish is the official language. There is a small German-speaking community. English and Russian are also spoken.

**Religion:** More than 90% Roman Catholic; other religions include Polish Autocephalous Orthodox, Russian and Greek Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim.

**Time:** GMT + 1

**Electricity:** 220 volts AC, 50Hz; continental sockets.

**Communications:**

**Telephone:** Full IDD is available. Country code: 48. Outgoing international code: 00. Cheap rate on long-distance calls is available from 1600-0600. Telephone cards can be purchased from post offices, newsagents and hotel receptions for local calls.

**Mobile telephone:** GSM 900 and 1800 networks cover the whole country.

**Internet/E-mail:** ISPs include SuperMedia (web site: <http://www.supermedia.com.pl>).

**Telegram:** Services are provided at all main post offices and by phone.

**Post:** Service to Western Europe takes up to four days. Poste Restante facilities are available at post offices throughout the country. Post office hours: 0800-1800 Monday to Friday.

**Press:** Independent publications are flourishing following the changes in the political system; about 100 newspapers are now available. The principal dailies are Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita and Zycie Warszawy. English-language publications include The Warsaw Voice (weekly).

**BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies:** From time to time these change.

**BBC:**

MHz15.5712.109.4106.195

**Voice of America:**

MHz9.7606.0401.1970.792

### 3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
<b>British</b>	Yes	1	No
<b>Australian</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Canadian</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>USA</b>	Yes	2	No
<b>OtherEU</b>	Yes	1	No
<b>Japanese</b>	Yes	2	No

**PASSPORTS:** Passport valid for at least 6 months beyond date of arrival required by all.

**VISAS:** Required by all except the following:

- (a) 1. nationals of the UK for visits not exceeding 6 months and all other EU nationals for 90 days;
- (b) 2. nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Nicaragua, Norway, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, Uruguay and the USA for visits not exceeding 90 days;
- (c) nationals of Bulgaria, Cuba, Estonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Mongolia, Romania and Singapore for visits not exceeding 30 days;
- (d) nationals of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, provided holding an official invitation or vouchers from travel agencies;
- (e) nationals of Hong Kong (China) for stays of up to 14 days.

**Types of visa and cost:** Tourist and Business: £30 (single-entry), £60 (multiple-entry). Transit: £14 (single-entry), £41 (multiple-entry). Work: £104. Certain nationals will have to pay more for visas. Reduced prices are available for students aged under 26 and for children. Contact Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy) for further details.

**Validity:** Tourist and Business visas are valid up to 3 months from date of entry. Extensions can be arranged in Poland through the district passport office. Multiple-entry business visas are valid for 6 months. Transit visas are valid for up to 48 hours and are not required by passengers continuing their journey to a third country on the same day without leaving the transit area.

**Application to:** Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section for details.

**Application requirements:** Tourist visa: (a) Passport (must be valid for 12 months from date of issuing the visa). (b) Completed application form. (c) 2 passport-size photos. (d) Evidence of immigration status in country of residence, endorsed in current or previous passport (if applicable). (e) Fee. Multiple-entry tourist visa: (a)-(e) and, (f) Details of travel itinerary, accommodation booking or invitation from friends of family.

**Business visa:** (a)-(e) and, (f) Letter from applicant's company or organisation. For multiple-entry visas, a letter from the applicant's Polish partners.

**Transit visa:** (a)-(e) and, (f) The visa for country of destination.

**Note:** Applications submitted without these requirements will not be considered by the Consular offices and will be returned to the applicant. All visitors must possess sufficient funds to cover the cost of their stay.

**Working days required:** 3. For some passport holders it may take up to 10 days. Express visa processing within 24 hours is available for an additional £17.

**Temporary residence:** Apply to Consulate.

## 4 MONEY

**Currency:** Zloty (Zl) = 100 groszy. Notes are in denominations of Zl200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. The new coins are in denominations of Zl5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 groszy.

**Currency exchange:** Foreign currency can be exchanged at all border crossing points, hotels and bureaux de change, some of which are open 24 hours. Cash can also be obtained from Visa credit cards at banks.

**Credit cards:** American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Diners Club are accepted in larger establishments. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

**Travellers cheques:** Readily exchanged. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Zloty against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00=6.726.536.666.97 \$1.00=4.534.354.604.09

**Currency restrictions:** The import of foreign currency is unlimited, provided declared on arrival. The export of foreign currency is limited to the amount declared on arrival. The import and export of local currency is prohibited.

**Banking hours:** 0900-1600 Monday to Friday and 0900-1300 Saturday in main cities. In smaller towns, banking hours are more limited.

## 5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into Poland by persons of 18 years of age and over without incurring customs duty:

250 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 1 litre of wine and 1 litre of spirits; goods up to the value of US\$70.

**Note:** (a) Fur, leather and gold articles are subject to customs duty. (b) The export of antiques, works of art and certain other items from Poland is prohibited. (c) A customs declaration must be presented at the border. (d) Firearms and narcotics are prohibited. (e) Duty-free shops are located at border crossing points. Payment for purchases can be made either in foreign or local currency, travellers cheques or credit cards.

## 6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Apr 16 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 3 National Day. Jun 14 Corpus Christi. Aug 15 Assumption. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Nov 11 Independence Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Apr 1 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 3 National Day. May 30 Corpus Christi. Aug 15 Assumption. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Nov 11 Independence Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas.

## 7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
<b>Yellow Fever</b>	No	No
<b>Cholera</b>	No	No
<b>Typhoid and Polio</b>	No	-

<b>Malaria</b>	No	-
<b>Food and Drink</b>	1	-

**1:** Mains water is normally chlorinated, and whilst relatively safe may cause mild abdominal upsets. Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of the stay. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix. Hepatitis A and diphtheria occur. Freshwater fish from the Baltic Sea area could contain fish tapeworm, causing diphyllbothriasis. Tick-borne encephalitis occurs in forested areas. Vaccination is advisable. Campers and trekkers should wear long trousers when walking near long grass in order to avoid tick bites.

**Health care:** There are reciprocal health agreements with most European countries for hospital treatment and medical expenses. The agreement with the UK allows free medical treatment (including hospital treatment) and some free dental treatment on presentation of an NHS card. UK citizens must, however, pay a call-out charge as well as 30% of the cost of prescribed medicines obtained at a public pharmacy.

Travel - International

**AIR:** Poland's national airline is LOT Polish Airlines (LO). Other airlines serving Poland include Aeroflot, Air France, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, El Al, Lufthansa, SAS and Swissair.

**APPROXIMATE FLIGHT TIMES:** From Warsaw to London is 2 hours 30 minutes, to Frankfurt/M is 1 hour 50 minutes, and to Prague is 1 hour 10 minutes.

**INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS:** Warsaw (WAW) (Okęcie) is 10km (6 miles) southwest of the city (travel time - 30 minutes by bus; 20 minutes by taxi). Full duty-free facilities are available. Airport facilities include post office (0800-2000), bureaux de change, restaurants, left luggage facilities (24 hours), tourist information services and car hire (Avis, Budget and Hertz) Kraków (KRK) (Balice John Paul II) is 14km (9 miles) west of the city centre. Buses and taxis are available. Airport facilities include bar, bureau de change (0600-2200) and car hire (Avis, Budget and Hertz). There are no duty-free facilities.

**Wrocław (WRO) (Strachowice) (web site:** <http://www.airport.wroclaw.pl>) is 8km (5 miles) from the city centre. Buses and taxis are available. Duty-free facilities are also available. There is a daily connection to Frankfurt/M and twice-weekly (Thursday and Sunday) to Düsseldorf. Katowice (KTW) is 34km (21 miles) from the city. There are connections to Frankfurt/M daily and Monday to Friday connections to Düsseldorf. Gdansk (GDN) is the most common entry point into northern Poland.

**SEA:** Pol Ferries operates between Poland and Sweden, Denmark and Finland. For further information contact the Polish National Tourist Office (see address section) or Pol Ferries, ul. Chalubinskiego 8, 00-613, Warsaw (tel: (22) 830 0930; fax: (22) 830 0071). Tickets can also be purchased from travel agents.

**RAIL:** Polish State Railways (PKP) (web site: <http://www.pkp.pl>) operates EuroCity trains between Poland and a number of major European cities. All services from Western Europe to Poland pass through Germany, the Czech Republic or the Slovak Republic. The main routes link



Warsaw with Berlin and Cologne, Vienna, Budapest and Prague. There is a car-sleeper service from the Hook of Holland to Poznan/Warsaw.

**ROAD:** Poland is best reached from Germany and the Czech Republic or the car-sleeper rail service from the Hook of Holland to Poznan/Warsaw. There are extensive bus and coach services.

Travel - Internal

**AIR:** All internal airlines are operated by LOT Polish Airlines and there is a comprehensive network linking all major cities.

**RAIL:** Cheap and efficient InterCity trains are operated by Polish State Railways (PKP) (web site: <http://www.pkp.pl>) and link all parts of the country in a network radiating from Warsaw. There are two classes of travel. The 'Polrailpass' (and 'Junior Polrailpass' for travellers under 26) is available for 8, 15, 21 or 30 days. This pass is available from travel agents and international rail ticket outlets, as well as from railway stations and travel agents within Poland. Children under four years of age travel free. Children aged 4-10 pay half fare.

**ROAD:** Traffic drives on the right. Unleaded petrol is available in all major cities and a full list of filling stations can be obtained from the Polish National Tourist Office. The Polish motoring club Polski Związek Motorowy (PZM) can be called on 981 nationwide for assistance. For further information, contact Polski Związek Motorowy, Pulawska 28, 02-513 Warsaw (tel: (22) 496 904; fax: (22) 496 915). Bus: There are good regional bus and coach services operated by Polish Motor Communications (PKS) connecting most towns. Car hire: Self-drive cars are available at the airport or through various car rental offices in town centres. The minimum age is 21. Charges are usually based on a daily rate plus a kilometre charge. Regulations: Speed limit is 50kph (32mph) in built-up areas, 90kph (57mph) on major roads and 110kph (69mph) on motorways. Seat belts and warning triangles are compulsory. Trams have the right of way. From October 1 to April 1 all vehicles should have their lights switched on at all times. Documentation: Tourists travelling in their own cars should have car registration cards, their national driving licence and valid Green Card motor insurance. An International Driving Permit is also required.

**URBAN:** Bus: There are good services in all towns, with additional trams and trolleybuses operating in a dozen of the larger urban areas. Warsaw has bus, tramway and rail services. A flat fare is charged and there are pre-purchase tickets and passes. Tram: 7-day tourist tickets can be purchased. In 1983, trolleybuses were reintroduced on one route and construction was begun on a metro. Most public transport operates from 0530-2300. Taxi: These are available in all main towns. They are usually found at ranks or phoned. There is a surcharge from 2300-0500 and for journeys out of town, as well as at weekends. Taxi drivers may insist on payment in hard currency. Tipping is welcomed.

**JOURNEY TIMES:** The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Warsaw to other major cities/towns in Poland.

AirRoadRail  
Kraków1.404.002.35  
Poznan1.004.003.00  
Wroclaw1.156.004.35  
Gdansk1.006.003.40  
Szczecin2.008.005.40  
Katowice1.304.302.35  
Łódź-2.001.40

## 8 ACCOMMODATION

**HOTELS:** Most major international hotel chains are represented in Poland. International Student Hotels offer better facilities than youth hostels and are inexpensive, comfortable and pleasant. Grading: Hotels in Poland are graded in five categories: luxury, 4-star, 3-star, 2-star and 1-star. In addition there are tourist hotels, boarding houses and motels, each graded into three or four categories. For further information, contact the Polish Hotel Association, 28 Krucza Street, 00-522 Warsaw (tel: (22) 622 6992; fax: (22) 622 6991).

**GUEST-HOUSES:** Three categories are available in all towns and run by regional tourist boards. Reservations can be made from local offices.

**CAMPING/CARAVANNING:** There are over 200 campsites in Poland, nearly 75% of which are fitted with 220-volt powerpoints and several with 24-volt points for caravans. Facilities also include washrooms, canteens and nearby restaurants and food kiosks. The main camping season is June to August. Holders of an international camping card (FICC) qualify for a 10% rebate on rates. Grading: There are two categories. Category I sites cover an area of 100 sq m (10,764 sq ft) and have 24-hour reception and lighting.

**Youth Hostels:** There are about 1200 hostels in Poland. Addresses can be found in the Youth Hostel Handbook published by the Polish Youth Hostels Association. For further information contact the Polish Youth Hostels Association, ul Chocimska 28, 00-791 Warsaw (tel: (22) 498 128; fax: (22) 498 354).

## 9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

The following is an outline of the attractions to be encountered in a circular tour of seven of Poland's major cities. A brief description of Zakopane, Poland's premier ski resort, and of the most important national parks is also included.

### WARSAW

Spanning both banks of the River Vistula, Poland's capital and largest city was completely destroyed during World War II. Following massive and painstaking reconstruction, Warsaw's Old Town (Stare Miasto) on the west bank was authentically reconstructed using original plans. Today, it is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. Numerous cafés, restaurants, art galleries as well as a tourist information centre can be found here. Just next to it, across the major thoroughfare of Aleje Jerozolimskie, is the modern district. The Polish capital plays an important role in the country's cultural life and there are over 20 museums. One of the best is the Warsaw Historical Museum, which traces Warsaw's history and shows a film shot by the Nazis showing their systematic destruction of the city. Also worth seeing is the National Museum, which has a lovely collection of Polish paintings. The Wilanów Palace, one of the reconstructed buildings set in a beautiful park, has a rare collection of old paintings and furniture, and in the Orangerie is the Museum of Posters. The reconstructed Zamek Królewski (Royal Castle) is well worth seeing, as is the Palace of Culture and Science, with its views over the whole city. The Łazienki Palace is set in a lovely park with an open-air Greek theatre and a monument to the famous Polish composer Frederic Chopin. The city has several theatres, of which the National Theatre and the Polish Theatre are the most renowned, as well as several universities, the largest being the University of Warsaw.

**EXCURSIONS:** Zelazowa Wola, 53km (32 miles) west of Warsaw, is an attractive park in which stands the manor house where Chopin was born. Nature enthusiasts can visit the nearby Kampinos and Bialowieza national parks (for further details, see National Parks below). Lublin is a charming medieval city with five universities, 164km (102 miles) southeast of Warsaw. Still further east on the banks of the River Labunka is Zamosc, founded at the end of the 16th century and once an important link on the trade route linking Northern and Western Europe to the Black Sea. The Old Town of Zamosc has recently been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Its focal point is the Market Square from where eight streets lead off at right angles. Also worth noting are the old and new Lublin Gates, which indicate the city's former role as an important regional fortress. Several buildings were designed by Italian architects which, in addition to the large number of Armenians and Greeks who settled here, gives Zamosc a southern flavour.

## KRAKÓW

Poland's second city also stands on the banks of the River Vistula, but far to the south in the wooded foothills of the Tatra Mountains. It still retains its charming medieval air, having largely escaped destruction during World War II. The central Market Square - the largest in Europe - is where several of the city's architectural and cultural landmarks can be found. In the middle of the square, the Cloth Hall, which was reconstructed in the 19th century from 14th century merchants' stalls, houses the art and sculpture galleries of the National Museum. Opposite is St Mary's Church with its world-famous wooden altar carved by Wit Stwosz. The Jagiellonian University, founded in 1364, is one of the oldest in Europe. Among its famous students was Copernicus and visitors can see some of his astronomical instruments. Numerous cafés and restaurants are in the vicinity, some of which, such as the Jama Michalikowa café (popular with Kraków's bohemians), the Hawelka (good for snacks) or the Wierzynek, have become quite famous. At noon, visitors may listen to the Hejnal - a trumpet-call to sound the hour which, according to tradition, is abruptly cut off in mid-note. Kraków's former Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, is also worth a visit. There are numerous cafés and restaurants serving kosher specialities to a background of live music performed by Klezmer bands. The Institute of Jewish Culture organises exhibitions, lectures and concerts and it has a small café and antique shop. In the summer (June/July), Kazimierz hosts the annual Festival of Jewish Culture, which has become traditional in Kraków. Overlooking the city is the Wawel Castle, with its marvellous 16th-century tapestries and, next to it, the Royal Cathedral, where many Polish kings are buried (as Kraków was Poland's capital until 1596). Czartoryski Museum contains ancient art, European paintings, and crafts.

**EXCURSIONS:** Another of Poland's UNESCO World Heritage sites is located at Wieliczka, 13km (8 miles) from Kraków, where spectacular cathedral-like salt mines can be visited. The route spans 4.5km (2.8 miles) leading to the oldest part of the mine through 14th- and 15th-century chapels and crystal caves. 70km (43 miles) from Kraków lies the site of Oswiecim-Birkenau (Auschwitz-Birkenau) concentration camp in which four million people were killed. The camp area has been designated as a monument to the victims of Oswiecim and has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. It includes a Museum of Martyrdom. Other excursions include the Bledowska Desert, perhaps the only true desert in Europe; Wadowice, birthplace of Pope John Paul II; and the portrait of the Madonna in the huge monastery complex at Czestochowa, 100km (60 miles) north of Kraków, reputed to have been painted by St Luke.

## ZAKOPANE

About 112km (70 miles) south of Kraków, this charming resort and winter sports centre lies in the heart of the Tatra Mountains. There is a fairytale atmosphere here thanks to 'gingerbread' wooden cottages and people who still wear national dress.

**EXCURSIONS:** Organised trips are available to the Dunajec Rapids; Koscieliska Valley, through beautiful countryside; Kasprowy Wierch, by means of a cable car offering spectacular views; and Morskie Oko, a mountain lake.

## WROCLAW

The principal city of southwest Poland and capital of Lower Silesia can claim to be the cradle of **the Polish state**: it was here that the Polanie tribe built their first fortified settlement (on Ostrow Tumski Island). During the 14th century, it fell under the rule of Bohemia, followed by the Habsburgs in the 16th century, and later the Prussians and the German Reich. At the end of World War II the town was used as the 'Festung Breslau', a Nazi stronghold. The modern city is threaded with 90km (56 miles) of canals and tributaries of the River Oder and there are more than a hundred bridges. Sights include the Town Hall and the Cathedral on Ostrow Tumski ('Cathedral Island').

**EXCURSIONS:** The spas and health resorts of the Klodzko Valley; the rugged Stolowe Mountains; ski resorts in the Karkonosze Mountains on the border with the Czech Republic; and the many picturesque medieval (and earlier) towns in the region, such as Swidnica, Boleslawiec and Paczkow.

## POZNAN

This sedate city stands beside the River Warta in the middle of the flatlands of western Poland. More than half of the city was destroyed during World War II but much has been restored. Sights include the Italianate town hall in the Old Market Square, the Gorki Palace, the Dzialynski Mansion (now a hotel), the 12th-century Church of St John and Przemyslaw Castle, once seat of the Grand Dukes of Poland. Of more recent interest is the huge monument in memory of the workers killed in Plac Mickiewicza by the police during disturbances in 1956. Watersports can be enjoyed in and on the many lakes in the woods surrounding the city. The Poznan International Trade Fair is held here every year in June.

**Excursions:** Gniezno: Excursions: Gniezno also claims to be the birthplace of the Polish state. Three brothers, Lech, Czech and Rus, are said to have been the founders of the Slavic nations. Lech was supposed to have settled at Gniezno on finding white eagles nesting there. The white eagle later became the symbol of Poland. At Biskupin nearby, there is a large and well-preserved prehistoric settlement.

## SZCZECIN

Standing 60km (37 miles) upstream from the mouth of the River Oder, this is the largest port on the Baltic Sea. Formerly known as Stettin, it was the capital of Pomerania and sights include the Pomeranian princes' 14th-century chateau and the 12th-century cathedral. The city was largely rebuilt in the last century, taking Paris as a model, and has a spacious feel to it, with many wide, **tree-lined boulevards.** **Excursions:** The beach resorts of the Pomeranian coast, such as Kolobrzeg (large and fashionable) or Leba (a quiet resort with a beach of fabulous white sand); and the beech woods of the Wolin National Park, home of the rare European sea eagle.

## GDANSK

Formerly known as Danzig, this important Baltic port has had a troubled history. The Order of Teutonic Knights took it from the Poles in the 14th century and later lost it to the Prussians. In the 20th century, it lost its status as a free city when it was attacked and occupied by Nazi

Germany in 1939. Its Lenin Shipyards were the birthplace of Solidarnosc (Solidarity) and thus of today's democratic Poland. Almost the entire city was destroyed in World War II, but was later restored to its former beauty. The city is now a provincial capital at the mouth of the Vistula and Motlawa rivers and a commercial, industrial and scientific centre. Sights include the Town Hall, restored Renaissance-style houses, the largest Gothic Church in Poland, and the Church of the Virgin Mary. The 17th-century Golden Gate and the Court of the Fraternity of St George can be viewed along the spectacular Royal Way, one of Gdansk's most historic streets. The beach resort at nearby Sopot has Europe's longest pier (500m/1640ft).

**EXCURSIONS:** The forested Hel Peninsula; the Kashubian Lakeland; the narrow-gauge railway that runs along the Vistula Spit; the Teutonic castles at Malbork (Marienburg), Gniez and elsewhere. Further east is Mazuria, a huge, thinly populated area of lakes, dense forests and swamps. It is rich in wildlife, including wild bison and Europe's largest herd of elks, and offers every form of outdoor pursuit - sailing, canoeing, camping, mushroom-picking, etc. In the heart of a Mazurian forest, at Ketrzyn (Rastenburg), is the site of Hitler's 'Eagle's Nest', the concrete bunker where members of his High Staff tried to assassinate him in August 1944. Further north, the medieval walled town of Torún is another historic town on the banks of the River Vistula. Perhaps most famous for being the birthplace of Copernicus (Mikolaj Kopernik), who was born at number 17 in the street now bearing his name, Torún's Old Town is also on UNESCO's World Heritage list. The most notable historic sites include St Mary's Church (which has a Franciscan monastery); St John's Church (where Copernicus was baptised); the Town Hall (with its striking Gothic structure); and the granaries (which helped to make Torun a prosperous trade town).

#### National Parks

Poland has 23 national parks, of which a selection is briefly described below. For details of outdoor activities, see the Sport & Activities section.

**Biebrza National Park:** The country's largest park, in northeastern renowned for its marshes, and one of Europe's few remaining natural marshland regions. A good place to spot elks. The terrain can be treacherous to the uninitiated and guides are compulsory.

**Bialowieza National Park:** 1250 sq km (480 sq miles) of primeval forest straddling the border with Belarus, the last major refuge of the European bison, also inhabited by lynx, moose, wild forest ponies and other rare forest-dwellers. Listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

**Bieszczady National Park:** Part of the Carpathian mountain range and containing the surviving fragments of the Great Bieszczady Forest, home to the brown bear, lynx and wildcat.

**Kampinos National Park:** 340 sq km (130 sq miles) of forest, marsh and sand where it is possible to see wild boars and elks.

**Slowinski National Park:** A coastal park renowned for its giant 'wandering dunes' (up to 50m/164ft in height), which shift their location several metres per year.

**Pieniny National Park:** A fairly small park whose main attraction is the beautiful mountain gorge of the River Dunajec.

**Tatra National Park:** Located in Poland's highest mountains, the Tatras, this park has an alpine character.

**Wolin National Park:** This coastal park contains the islands of Wolin and part of Szczecin Bay.

**Karkonosze National Park:** Alpine in character, with an adjoining section in the bordering Czech Republic.

## 10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

**Outdoor pursuits:** Outdoor pursuits: Poland's national parks and nature reserves offer a variety of hiking trails through different types of landscapes ranging from dunes, beaches, rivers and lakes to deep forests and high mountains (see also National Parks in the Resorts & Excursions section). Nature and wildlife enthusiasts can observe elks in Poland's marshes and European bison in the Bialowieza forest. Poland is also reputed to have Europe's largest population of storks. All the parks are open to visitors, though some may only be entered on foot and others, such as the Bialowieza National Park, may only be toured with a guide. Accommodation and catering facilities are available either within or near all parks. Different types of cycling routes are available throughout the country. Special cycling lanes are provided around larger cities. Cycling tours (notably through the Great Mazurian Lake District) are offered by specialist tour operators. Mountain biking is popular in the Bieszczady and Karkonosze mountains. Horses have traditionally been popular in Poland and horseriding enthusiasts have a large choice of riding schools to choose from. Polish stud farms are internationally renowned and welcome guests; board and lodging is provided and many stables also offer riding instruction. Horse auctions are held at Poznan, Janów Podlaski, Walewice and Racot. The main horseracing tracks are Warsaw (Sluzewiec), Sopot, Raculka (near Zielona Gora), Bialy Bor (near Slupsk) and Ksiaz (near Walbrzych). Inexperienced riders may prefer riding a Hucul - a very rare Polish mountain pony.

**Wintersports:** Wintersports: The Tatra Mountains are Poland's main skiing destination, the most popular resort being Zakopane (see also Resorts & Excursions section). The season is from November through to May. The densely wooded Bieszczady Mountains in the southeast are highly rated for cross-country skiing. Another popular winter sport is ice-boating on Poland's frozen waterways. Sleigh rides used to be popular with the Polish gentry and 'traditional' rides are available in most resorts.

**Watersports:** Watersports: Poland's Baltic coast stretches for some 528km (330 miles), with long sandy beaches. Pollution levels in the Baltic sea are relatively high, particularly in the Bay of Gdansk. Water temperatures are fairly cold, rising to a maximum of 20°C (68 °F) during summer. Cleaner and safer swimming is available in the Mazurian Lake District (consisting of approximately 3000 lakes), also a favourite angling destination. Poland's rivers (such as the Rega, Parseta and Stupia) are particularly good for bull trout. Tourists need to buy a fishing licence for about £11 which is valid for 7 days. For sailing, the Mazurian, Ilawa and Augustow lakes are best. Canoeists may also head to the Mysliborz and Brodnica lakelands, or the rivers Czarna Hancza, Brda and Obra where canoeing trips lasting up to 12 days can be undertaken.

**Hang gliding:** Hang gliding and paragliding are popular in the Sudety, Bieszczady and Beskid mountains. The town of Leszno is Poland's main gliding centre.

## 11 SOCIAL PROFILE

**Food & Drink:** Poland has a distinctive cuisine, with typical ingredients being dill, marjoram, caraway seeds, wild mushrooms and sour cream, which is frequently added to soups, sauces and braised meats. The national dish of Poland is bigos, made with sauerkraut, fresh cabbage, onions and any variety of leftover meat. Polish meals start with przekaski (starters), such as pike in

aspic, marinated fish in sour cream, salted and rolled herring fillets with pickles and onions, kulebiak (a large mushroom and cabbage pastry) or Polish sausages such as the long, thin and highly spiced kabanos or the hunters' sausage (mysliwska) made with pork and game. Soups play an important part at mealtimes and are usually rich and very thick. Soups such as barszcz (beetroot soup, excellent with sour cream) or rosol (beef or chicken bouillon) are often served in cups with small hot pasties stuffed with meat or cabbage. Popular dishes include zrazy zawijane (mushroom-stuffed beefsteak rolls in sour cream) served with boiled kasza (buckwheat) and pig's knuckles. Poland is also a good country for fish (ryba) such as carp served in sweet-and-sour jellied sauce, and poached pike with horseradish in cream. Herring (sledz) is particularly popular and is served up in countless different ways. Pastries (ciastka) are also very good. Table service is the norm in restaurants. Drink: Vodka (wódka), the national drink, is drunk chilled. Wyborowa is considered the best standard vodka, but there are many flavoured varieties such as zubrowka (bison grass), tarniowka (sloe plum), sliwowica (prune) and pieprzowka (vodka with ground white pepper). Western drinks, such as whisky, gin or brandy, can be obtained in most bars but are expensive. Wine is available but, again, is imported and expensive. The best bottled beer is zywiec, a fairly strong lager-type beer. Bars have table and/or counter service. Coffee shops are very popular in Poland and are the favourite places for social meetings from early morning to late at night. They do not close during the day and have the same function as do pubs in the United Kingdom. Alcoholic drinks are available throughout the day.

**Nightlife:** Warsaw also reflects the strong theatrical and musical traditions of Poland, with about 17 theatres, and three opera companies. Cinemas in Poland show both Polish and foreign films. There are some discos in Poland, as well as a few nightclubs and music clubs in Warsaw.

**Shopping:** Special purchases: glass and enamelware, handwoven rugs, silverware, handmade jewellery with amber and silver, dolls in regional costumes, woodcarvings and clay and metal sculptures. Shopping hours: 0600-1800/1900 Monday to Friday, shorter hours on Saturday and Sunday. 'Night shops' open 2000-0800. Supermarkets and department stores open 0900-2000 Monday to Saturday. Bookshops open 1100-1900 Monday to Friday.

**Special Events:** For a full list, contact the Polish National Tourist Office (see address section). The following is a selection of major events taking place in 2001:  
Jan 9th Festival of Ancient Music, The Royal Castle, Warsaw. Apr National Memory Day, Pawiak.  
May 11th International Sacred Music Festival, Warsaw. May 12-14 Juvenalia Student Festival, Kraków. Jun 11th Mozart Music Festival, Warsaw. Jun 35th Festival of Folk Bands and Singers, Kazimierz. Jun Lajkonik Festival (medieval pageantry festival), Kraków. Jul 5th Summer Jazz Festival, Kraków. Aug 20th International Festival of Street Theatre, Jelenia Góra. Aug 4 Dominican Fair (one of Poland's oldest festivals), Gdansk. Sept/Oct Warsaw Marathon; Beit Hadesh (Jewish festival), New House, Kraków. Oct Warsaw Film Festival; Jazz Jamboree, Warsaw. Oct 21 Henryk Weiniawska International Violin Competition. Nov/Dec 12th Old Music Festival in the Royal Castle, Warsaw.

**Note:** The Cultural Information Centre publishes Karnet, a bilingual cultural monthly with details of cultural events. Contact the tourist board for further information.

**Social Conventions:** Poles are friendly, industrious people and foreigners are usually made very welcome. There are vast contrasts between urban and rural life and the Polish peasantry is very religious and conservative, maintaining a traditional lifestyle. Roman Catholicism plays an important role in daily life and criticism or jokes about religion are not appreciated, despite the general good humour of the people. Music and art are also important aspects of Polish culture. Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting. Normal courtesies are observed when visiting private homes and it is customary to bring flowers. Fairly conservative casual wear is the most suitable attire, but dress should be formal when specified for entertaining in the evening or in a

smart restaurant. Smoking is restricted in some public buildings. Photography: Military installations such as bridges, ports, airports, border points, etc should not be photographed. Tipping: 10-15% is customary in restaurants and cafés. Tipping in self-service restaurants is not expected. Tips for porter's services in hotels and train stations are customary but amounts are at the traveller's discretion.

## 12 BUSINESS PROFILE

**Economy:** As the largest economy in ex-Soviet eastern Europe, the fate of Poland was and is central to that of the whole region. The working population is divided roughly in half between agriculture and industry. In the agricultural sector, livestock is particularly important and Polish meat is a major export earner. Rye, wheat, oats, sugar beet and potatoes are the main crops. The main industries are shipbuilding, textiles, steel, cement, chemicals and food-processing. After a period of rapid growth in the 1970s, political instability and global recession pushed the industrial economy into serious difficulty. With the collapse of the communist system at the end of the 1980s, Poland adopted the 'big bang' strategy of rapid transition to a market economy. Price controls (including subsidies) were removed at a stroke; production, distribution and trade were deregulated; large parts of the economy were privatised using a voucher system; the tax and fiscal systems were overhauled; and the national currency (the Zloty) was made fully convertible. The shock of these measures and the collapse of the Comecon trading system threw the economy into temporary crisis as hyper-inflation and a plummeting currency seemed to portend economic catastrophe. Yet within two years output was growing annually and inflation was significantly reduced. In 1989 Poland instigated an ambitious programme of economic reform and regeneration, and by the mid-1990s had secured a significant level of GDP growth; a devalued 'new Zloty' was introduced onto the market in January 1995, and allowed to 'float' on international currency markets. Those parts of the economy which remained under state ownership - including several important industrial enterprises - have gradually been privatised. Western approval of Poland's economic policies has guaranteed steady financial support from the IMF and the World Bank. Long-term debt rescheduling has also been arranged, and Poland's foreign debt (once a serious obstacle to growth) has been alleviated by concessions from the 'Paris Club' of official creditors. Unemployment remains a source of concern while inflation is a manageable 10%. The present growth rate is around 5%. Several Asian countries (notably South Korea) are investing in Poland and elsewhere in eastern Europe. Poland has signed an association agreement with the European Union and expects to seek full membership around the turn of the century. Poland's main trading partners are Germany and its fellow members of the 'Visegrad Group' - Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics - who are Eastern Europe's most advanced economies. Trade with other members of the EU, including the UK, has grown rapidly during the late 1990s.

**Business:** Men are expected to wear a suit and tie at business meetings. In Poland a formal approach is favoured and it is therefore advisable to give plenty of notice of an intended visit. Employees in state organisations do not take a lunch break; they have their main meal after 1500. Office hours: 0800-1600 Monday to Friday.

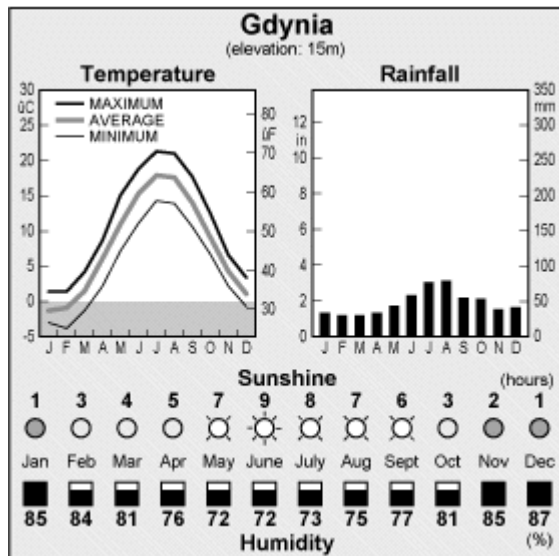
**Commercial Information:** The following organisation can offer advice: Polish Chamber of Commerce (Krajowa Izba Gospodarcza), PO Box 361, Trebacka 4, 00-074 Warsaw (tel: (22) 630 9600; fax: (22) 827 4673; e-mail: kig@kig.pl; web site: <http://www.kig.pl>).

**Conferences/Conventions:** The most popular conference venues are in Warsaw. Events are also hosted in Kraków, while Wrocław, Gdansk and other towns are used occasionally. For further information contact the Conferences & Congresses in Poland Association, Stowarzyszenie



'Konferencje i Kongresy w Polsce', Szpitalna Street 5, 00 031 Warsaw (tel/fax: (22) 827 9749; e-mail: slawrob@polbox.com or kongresy@2a.pl; web site: <http://www.2a.pl/~kongresy>).

## 13 CLIMATE



Temperate with warm summers, crisp, sunny autumns and cold winters. Snow covers the mountainous area in the south of Poland (mid-December to April). Rain falls throughout the year.

**Required clothing:** Light- to mediumweights are worn during warmer months. Medium- to heavyweights are needed during winter. Rainwear is advisable all year.

## 14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

**History:** For much of the medieval and early modern period, Poland was one of the largest states in Europe, although generally cut off from the mainstream of European life. By the 18th century, however, the combination of an antiquated social structure, the emergence of powerful neighbours, a king with no real power and a parliament which was able to veto any legislation if so much as one member voted against it (the Liberum Veto) had reduced Poland to the role of little more than a confused buffer state between Austria, Prussia and Russia. One observer commented on how the Polish state had 'legalised anarchy and called it a constitution'. The situation was finally resolved between 1772 and 1795 when, as a result of three partition treaties signed by Austria, Prussia and Russia, the country was carved up. A small area around Warsaw briefly enjoyed a form of independence between 1807 and 1831 (as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Congress Poland), but subsequently became a province of Russia. Poland did not re-acquire independence until 1918. In 1926, a military regime ousted the civilian administration and governed Poland until the country was once again dismembered by its powerful neighbours, Germany and the Soviet Union (after the 1939 Anti-Aggression Pact between the two). Prior commitments by Britain to defend Polish sovereignty led the former to declare war on Germany and initiate World War II. In 1941 Germany drove the USSR out of Poland, to be ejected, in turn, by the Soviets four years later. At the end of World War II, the Soviet-backed Polish Workers' Party formed a coalition government under Wladyslaw Gomulka, until the latter was dismissed for

'deviationism' in 1948. In the same year, the Polish Workers' Party merged with the Polish Socialist Party to form Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party). In 1956, three years after Stalin's death, Gomulka returned amid growing unrest to implement a plan of gradual liberalisation of society and the economy. Following disturbances in the industrial port of Gdansk, Gomulka was replaced as First Secretary of the party by Edward Gierek. Opposition to the regime was, significantly, led by elements of the industrial work force (in contrast to movements elsewhere in Eastern Europe which were led by intellectuals, such as Charter 77) and supported by the Catholic Church, a major political force in Poland which the communists had never been able to suppress fully. This was a vital factor in the rapid growth of the Solidarnosc (Solidarity) labour movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The PZPR's initial response to this challenge was confused. Gierek was forced into retirement (through illness). His successor, Stanislaw Kania, proved no more able to stop the growth of Solidarnosc or the declining prestige and influence of the PZPR. In December 1981, with the backing of Moscow, the former army chief-of-staff, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, who had replaced Kania two months earlier, imposed martial law and established a Military Council of National Salvation to run the country. Solidarnosc was banned and its senior figures detained, including its leader, the shipyard electrician Lech Walesa. The restrictions of martial law were gradually eased as the situation stabilised over the next few years, but it was clear that some accommodation between the Government and Solidarnosc was inevitable. The changes in the Soviet Union from 1985 onwards made this task easier. In 1988, following the near-collapse of the economy, the PZPR government resigned and was replaced by an interim Council of Ministers, which included several non-PZPR members, although it remained communist-dominated. It held serious negotiations with Solidarnosc on economic and constitutional reforms. Solidarnosc was finally legalised in 1989 to pave the way for elections to the new bicameral National Assembly (see below) in June of that year. For the first time candidates opposed to the ruling PZPR were allowed to stand for one-third of the seats; the remainder were reserved for the PZPR and its allies. Solidarnosc swept the board in those it was allowed to contest. It subsequently formed a coalition government with two smaller parties, with Tadeusz Mazowiecki becoming the first non-communist Prime Minister of a Warsaw Pact country. General Jaruzelski was re-elected as President. The Government was almost immediately faced with a deep recession which it tackled by introducing market reforms. Ironically, this exacerbated the growing divisions within Solidarnosc. A deep split occurred in the movement in the months leading up to the first wholly free presidential election in November 1990. Walesa and Mazowiecki, respective leaders of their factions, both stood. Walesa won, with Centre Alliance backing. Mazowiecki was replaced as Prime Minister by Jan Krzysztof Bielecki. October 1991 saw elections to the National Assembly. The largest proportion of the vote won by any single party was the 15% picked up by Mazowiecki's Democratic Union, which won 76 of 460 seats under the proportional representation system; the former communists, now styled the Democratic Left Alliance, came second, followed by a plethora of smaller parties including the Party of the Friends of Beer with a creditable 14 seats. In all, 29 parties were represented in the Sejm (although this was cut in subsequent elections after the introduction of a 5% threshold). Not surprisingly, stable government proved elusive, as a succession of short-lived administrations succumbed to the constant shifting of political alliances. The bitter and closely fought 1995 presidential campaign pitted Walesa against the former Communist apparatchik (and government negotiator with Solidarity) - Alexander Kwasniewski. Against most predictions, Kwasniewski won the head-to-head run-off by a margin of 3%. The new President committed himself to continuing the economic reforms already underway. Walesa's defeat surprised many in the West who failed to appreciate how unpopular he had become at home. This derived in part from the former Solidarity leader's persisting in fighting a battle against the spectre of communism (in the form of Kwasniewski) which was long since won. Nonetheless, the era continues to cast a shadow over Polish political life. The following January, premier Jan Oleski was forced from office after evidence surfaced that he had spied for the KGB. And in 1999, in an episode reminiscent of the Cold War, Poland and Russia engaged in a series of tit-for-tat expulsions of each other's diplomats for alleged espionage. The latest Sejm elections in 1997 saw the right recover its

position with one of the Solidarity offspring, Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc (AWS, Solidarity Electoral Action), leading the count. However, short of a majority, it was forced to seek out coalition partners, and did so with the right-wing Unio Wolnosci (UW, Freedom Union). The AWS/UW coalition has proved fairly durable under premier Jerzy Buzek. Shortly after the election, a new constitution came into force having been adopted by the Sejm and by popular referendum some months earlier. In early November 1997, the Sejm approved the programme of the new Government, which included as priorities rapid integration with NATO - which Poland had joined in July that year along with Hungary and the Czech Republic - and the EU, and accelerated privatisation. EU negotiations proceed apace, with some problems concerning subsidies for Poland's substantial agricultural sector, free labour movement and the country's poor record on pollution. After high initial expectations, the likelihood of Poland joining in 2003/4 is receding somewhat: the present Government is unhappy at the prospect but may not survive the 2001 general election at which the Left, who are less enthusiastic (albeit committed) about Europe, is expected to prevail.

**Government:** Under the new constitution which came into force in October 1997, legislative power in Poland is vested in a bicameral national assembly. The 460-seat lower house is the Sejm while a new 100-seat Upper Chamber has been created with the power of veto over all legislation put forward by the Sejm. Elections are by proportional representation.

## 15 OVERVIEW

**Country Overview:** Poland shares borders with the Baltic Sea, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Warsaw, the capital, was completely destroyed during the Second World War, but the Old Town has been completely rebuilt. The reconstructed Royal Castle is well worth seeing. The Lazienki Palace is set in a lovely park with an open-air Greek theatre and a monument to Chopin.

Krakow, Poland's second city, still retains its charming medieval air, having largely escaped destruction during the War. In the centre is the Cloth Hall built in the 14th century. Opposite is St Mary's Church, famous for its wooden altar carved by Wit Stwosz.

Gdansk, formerly known as Danzig, was also destroyed in the Second World War, but has been restored to its former beauty. Sights include the Town Hall, the 17th-century Golden Gate and the largest Gothic church in Poland.

Popular dishes include zrazy zawijane (mushroom-stuffed beefsteak rolls in sour cream) served with boiled kasza (buckwheat) and pig's knuckles.

Poland has strong theatrical and musical traditions. Warsaw and the main cities have theatres and opera companies that put on a whole range of musical and cultural programmes for both locals and visitors.

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