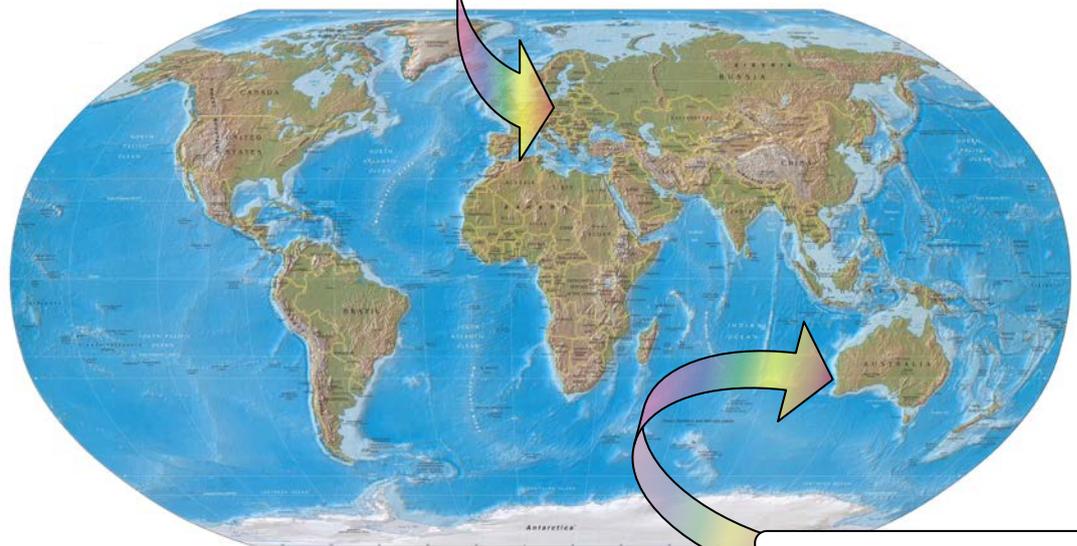


# P O L A N D



We were there



Now we are here

## **FACTS:**

- **Full name:** Republic of Poland
- **Population:** 38.2 million (via UN, 2006)
- **Capital:** Warsaw
- **Area:** 312,685 sq km (120,728 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Polish
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 70 years (men), 78 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 zloty = 100 groszy
- **Main exports:** Machinery and transport equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals
- **GNI per capita:** US \$7,100 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Internet domain:** .pl
- **International dialing code:** +48

## **Polish Community in WA**

There were three distinct waves of migration of Polish people:

1. Post war migration of people from Europe and Africa
2. Post Solidarity migration in the 1980's
3. Economic migration at different times.

Currently in Australia there are 52,256 Poland-born people: 28,613 are females and 23,643 males.

There are 27,677 Poland-born people 55+ years of age: 15,314 are females and 12,363 males.

Currently in Western Australia there are 5,729 Poland-born people: 3100 are females and 2629 males. The majority live in Perth.

There are 1809 Poland-born people 65+ years of age: 1044 are females and 765 males.

**Polish Community Council of WA** - 33 Eighth Avenue Maylands WA 6051

**The West Australian Association of Polish Women Inc.** - 33 Eighth Avenue Maylands WA 6051

Ph: 9271 2036 Fax: 9271

0917

**Franciscan Fathers** - 35 Eighth Avenue Maylands WA 6051

**Polish Roman Catholic Centre** - 35 Eighth Avenue Maylands Wa 6051

**Salvatorian Fathers** - Po Box 428 Midland WA 6936

**Cracovia Club** - 111 Bennett Springs Drive Beechboro WA 6063

**Polish Association In WA** - 33 Eighth Avenue Maylands WA 6051

**Polish Club Generał Sikorski** - 7 Bellevue Street Bellevue WA 6056

## **Overview of cultural groups**

In terms of ethnicity, Poland has been a homogeneous state since the end of World War II.

Poles (including Silesians and Kashubians) make up an overwhelming 99.3% majority of the Polish population. According to the 2002 census, the remainder of the population is made up of small minorities of Germans 152,897; Belarusians 49,000; and Ukrainians 30,000; as well as Tatars, Lithuanians, Roma, Lemkos, Russians, Karaites, Slovaks, and Czechs. Among other ethnic groups the Vietnamese are the largest followed by Greeks, and Armenians.

## **Language/dialects spoken**

**Polish** (*język polski, polszczyzna*) is the official language of Poland. It is the most spoken West Slavic language.

The Polish language originated in the areas of present-day Poland from several local Western Slavic dialects, most notably those spoken in Greater Poland and Lesser Poland. It shares some vocabulary with the languages of the neighboring Slavic nations, most notably with Slovak, Czech, Ukrainian, and Belarusian.

"Standard" Polish is still spoken somewhat differently in different regions of the country, although the differences between these broad "dialects" are slight. There is never any difficulty in mutual understanding, and non-native speakers are generally unable to distinguish among them easily. The differences are slight compared to different dialects of English.

## **Dietary preferences**

**Polish Cuisine** (Polish: *kuchnia polska*) is a mixture of Slavic and foreign culinary traditions. Born as a mixture of various culinary traditions, both of various regions of Poland and surrounding cultures, it uses a variety of ingredients. It is rich in meat, especially pork, cabbage (for example in the dish **bigos**), and spices, as well as different kinds of noodles and dumplings, the most notable of which are the pierogi. It is related to other Slavic cuisines in usage of *kasza* and other cereals, but was also under the heavy influence of Turkish, Germanic, Hungarian, Jewish, French and Italian cuisines. Generally speaking, Polish cuisine is substantial. Poles allow themselves a generous amount of time to enjoy their meals, with some meals taking a number of days to prepare in their entirety.

A typical lunch is usually composed of at least three courses, starting with a soup, such as **barszcz** (beet) or **żurek** (sour rye meal mash), followed perhaps in a restaurant by an **appetizer of salmon or herring** (prepared in either cream, oil, or vinegar). Other popular appetizers are various meats, vegetables or fish in aspic. The main course may be the national dish, **bigos** (cabbage with pieces of meat, mostly pork) or **kotlet schabowy** (crumbed pork cutlet). Meals often conclude with a dessert such as ice cream (*lody*), makowiec (poppy seed cake), or drożdżówka, a type of yeast cake.

Other Polish specialties include **chlodnik** (a chilled beet or fruit soup for hot days), **golonka** (pork knuckles cooked with vegetables), **kolduny** (meat dumplings), **zrazy** (stuffed slices of beef), **salceson** and **flaczki** (tripe). Many dishes contain quarks.

**Salceson** is a type of Polish sausage. There are several varieties of **salceson** which depend on the ingredients:

- Black "Salceson" which contains blood
- White "Salceson" made with a mixture of seasoned meats, without blood
- Ozorkowy (Tongue) "Salceson" where the major meat component is tongue.

Typical ingredients: Pork or veal tongues (cured), Pork Jowl, Skins, Pork liver.

## **Religion/spirituality/observances**

Poland is almost uniformly Catholic. About 97% of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, with 58% as practising Catholics according to 2005 survey by the Centre for Public Opinion Research. Though rates of religious observance are currently lower than they have been in the past, Poland remains one of the most devoutly religious countries in Europe.

Religious minorities include Polish Orthodox 1.3%, Jehovah's Witnesses 0.3%, Eastern Catholics 0.2%, Lutherans 0.2%, and smaller minorities of Mariavites, Polish Catholics, Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jews, Muslims (including the Tatars of Białystok) and various Protestants (about 86,880 in the largest Evangelical-Augsburg Church, plus about as many in smaller churches).

From the socio-political emancipation of the country, freedom of religion has become guaranteed by the 1989 statute of the Polish constitution, allowing for the emergence of additional denominations.

### **Public Holidays:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>English Name</b>	<b>Local Name</b>
May 3	National 3 <sup>rd</sup> of May Holiday	Święto Narodowe Trzeciego Maja ( <i>Święto Konstytucji Trzeciego Maja</i> )
7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter	Pentecost Sunday	Pierwszy Dzień Zielonych Świątek ( <i>Zielone Świątki</i> )
9 <sup>th</sup> Thursday after Easter	Corpus Christi	Dzień Bożego Ciała ( <i>Boże Ciało</i> )
August 15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Wniebowzięcie Najświętszej Maryi Panny
November 1	All Saints' Day	Wszystkich Świętych
November 11	Independence Day	Narodowe Święto Niepodległości ( <i>Dzień Niepodległości</i> )

## **Customs/traditions**

**Dożynki** was a great landowners' festival in the time of big country estate economy (16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century). It had the characteristics of a feast and a dance, given by the owners of the estate in honor of all their servants and farm workers.

Saint John's festival called **Sobótka**, (from the ritual bonfires lit on that night), or **St John's night** (from John the Baptist) is celebrated the night from June 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup> at the time of summer solstice.

The **Karnawał** (Carnival) is a joyful time in Poland between the end of Christmas holidays and the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday). In the old days it was a period of active socializing in Poland.

**New Year's Eve** in the city in Poland is celebrated at more or less formal balls. Some of them have a long-lasting tradition, as for example the ball at the Warsaw Philharmonic Society, the sportsmen's ball or the ball at the castle in Golub-Dobrzyn.

**November 29<sup>th</sup> - Eve of St. Andrew's Day (Andrzejki)** - This is special night for young Polish girls who want to find a husband. They melt wax and pour it into a bowl of cold water. Wax is then picked

up from the water, raised to the light, and the girls try to see the similarities of it to real objects. Depending on the shapes, fortunes are told for the following year.

**Sharing of opłatek** was, and still is the core and essence of Christmas Eve celebration throughout Poland. Opłatek is essentially unconsecrated bread wafer of the type used during Holy Communion in many different Christian religions.

## **Recreational activities**

Team sports and spectator sports thrive in Poland. Professional soccer teams attract large crowds in the towns, and local authorities provide facilities for athletics (track and field) and swimming. Skiing and mountaineering in the Tatras and sailing on the Baltic or the Masurian Lakes are popular. In addition, many Poles enjoy cycling, horseback riding, and exploring caves. There are a large number of recreation clubs devoted to football, volleyball, table tennis, athletics, basketball, and martial arts.

Since 1924 Poland has participated in all summer and Winter Olympic Games, with the exception of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, boycotted by the communist regime along with other Soviet-bloc governments. Among Poland's most accomplished Olympians were Irena Kirszenstein-Szewinska, who participated in the Olympic Games from 1964 to 1980 and won seven medals (three gold) in track and field; Józef Szmidt, a triple jumper who dominated the event for six years and won two gold medals; and Robert Korzeniowski, who at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, became the first man to win both walking events. The Polish national football team won the Olympic gold medal in 1972 and earned third place at the 1974 World Cup. In 1982 the team, led by star forward Zbigniew Boniek, again reached the World Cup semifinals.

## **Environment**

Poland is situated in eastern Europe and has an area of 312,680 sq km, extending 689 km E-W and 649 km N-S. It is bounded on the North by the Baltic Sea, on the N-E by Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, on the South by Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and on the West by Germany, with a total land boundary of 2,788km and a coastline of 491km. Comparatively, the area occupied by Poland is slightly smaller than the American State of New Mexico.

The climate is mostly temperate throughout the country. The climate is oceanic in the north and west and becomes gradually warmer and continental as one moves south and east. Summers are generally warm, with average temperatures between 20°C and 27°C. Winters are cold, with average temperatures around 3°C in the northwest and (-8°C) in the northeast.

## **Your Notes and Comments:**