



Poland



Welcome

When greeting your Polish guests, it is polite to shake hands and make clear eye contact with both women and men. Use the appropriate title followed by their surname, for example 'Mr Adamski'. Poland still has a relatively traditional culture, so you should usually introduce women first. When leaving, it is also polite to shake hands with everyone.

'Welcome!'
Veet-eye
Witaj!

You may find that they stand relatively close to you and that they may also touch you when speaking. This is an expression of sincerity, so try not to move away in this situation.

The Language

Hello

Tsheshch
Cześć

Goodbye

Daw vidzenya
Do widzenia

Please

Prosheh
Proszę

Thank you

Jen-kooyeh
Dziękuję

English is now studied as a second language in schools and spoken by the majority of younger people. The older generation, educated in the Communist era, are more likely to have learned Russian.

Polish is the most widely spoken Slavic language after Russian and is spoken in most homes in the country. Many sounds in Polish have no exact equivalent in English. Reading Polish can seem very difficult as the words are often very long and to the English speaker may seem to have unusual combinations of letters. Being able to say a few words of Polish will be sincerely appreciated.

The Culture

The Polish people take great pride in their heritage. Two major events in the country's recent history are also important to them: the election of the first Polish Pope, Karol Wojtyla, who became Pope John Paul II in 1978; and the successful move to a strong, market-driven economy after the

Did you know?

Poles have been settling in the UK since the 18th century. The Polish Government in exile was established in London in 1939 and only dissolved after free elections were held in Poland in 1991.



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Communist government fell in 1989. Polish people living in the country or elsewhere in the world have been involved in many significant artistic and scientific achievements over the years. Knowing a little about key historical moments or people in Poland will help you interact with visitors.

Catholicism is the main religion practised in Poland and remains a part of most Poles' lives, although fewer people go to church than in the past. Nevertheless, national holidays are based on Catholic traditions with Christmas and Easter being particularly important holidays.

Family is a strong focus for Polish life. If you are invited to use a first name, you are then considered a family friend and have been welcomed into the inner circle.

Customer Service Advice

Honesty, tidiness and order as well as good value for money are what Polish tourists look for. Detailed information about your product or service is considered more important than your presentation style.

Expect direct questions and a straightforward communication style, and remember this is not meant to sound impolite. Traditional good manners and punctuality are valued.

- **DO** try to learn a few key phrases in Polish, especially words like 'hello' or 'goodbye'.
- **DO** try to smile often and make direct eye contact.
- **DO** allow Polish people time to relax during and after a meal. They do not like to be rushed and might expect the place to close only once they have finished.
- **DO** be prepared to remind Poles about the UK smoking ban as they will not be used to smoking restrictions.



Poland



Poland's Progress

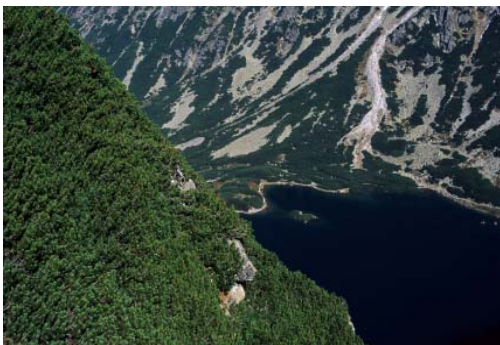
Poland has had a turbulent history. It first united as a kingdom in 1025, but has lost and gained its independence several times, most recently during World War II. Poland was amongst several countries that broke away from Communist Rule after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Poland joined the European Union in 2004. Its economy is one of the fastest growing in Europe – benefiting both from opportunities at home and from revenue generated by those supporting their families abroad.

Almost 20 million Polish people live abroad, including 10 million people in the USA, 3 million in Germany, and up to 1 million in the UK.

Key Facts

- **Population** – approx 38,500,000
- **Capital City** – Warsaw
- **Language** – Polish
- **Religions** – Catholics 97%, others <1% each
- **Currency** – Polish Zloty (PLN)
- **Exchange Rate** – 4.20 PLN = £1
- **Dialling Code** – +48
- **Time Difference** – GMT+1



Where to go next

For more information about welcoming international visitors to London, visit www.rln-london.com/welcoming

RLN London's *Service Finder* can help you find language and cultural services – including translation, detailed cultural briefing and language training.

www.rln-london.com/servicefinder

'Welcoming the World' is an initiative which aims to help people in frontline roles to give great customer service to international visitors. RLN London has endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this country profile, which is one of a wider series. However, views or opinions presented by the contributing author do not necessarily represent those of RLN London.

Remember!

These are general guidelines on how people from different cultures *might* act and the customer service they *might* expect. They can't predict every individual's behaviour in every situation.