

Poland

By Gunit



What are the Key Geographical Features of Poland?

What are the physical features of Poland?

Continent and Neighbouring Countries:

Poland is on the continent of **Europe**.

This country has many neighbours:

- Belarus
- Czech Republic
- Germany
- Lithuania
- Russia
- Slovakia
- Ukraine



Adjacent oceans and seas

The Baltic Sea is the only sea nearby Poland.

There are no oceans near.

Germany is to the west.

Czech Republic and Slovakia are to the south.

Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania are to the east.

The Baltic Sea is to the north of Poland.



Baltic Sea

What are the major rivers of Poland?

The largest river in Poland:
Vistula River (1047 km)

Odar River (854 km)

Warta River (808 km)

Bug River (772 km)



Vistula River



What are the major lakes of Poland?

Largest lake: Lake Sniardwy (113.8 sq. km)

Lake Mamry (considered 2nd largest)

Lake Lebsko (16.4 km)

Lake Drawsko (12.6 km)

Lake Jamno (10.1 km)



Lake Sniardwy

What are the major mountain ranges in Poland?

Largest mountain range:
Gerlachovsky Stit (2,655 m)

Lomnický Stit (2,634 m)

Ladový Stit (2,627 m)

Pysný Stit (2,621 m)

Zadný Gerlach (2,616 m)

Lavinový Stit (2,606 m)

Ladová Kopa (2,602 m)



Gerlachovsky Stit

What are the major peaks of Poland?

Largest peak: Mount Rysy (8,199 ft)

Mięguszowiecki Szczyt Wielki (7,999 ft)

Svinica (7,549 ft)

Kozi Wierch (7,516 ft)

Miedziane (7,326 ft)

Klin (7,139 ft)

Kresanica (6,962 ft)

Smreczyński Wierch (6,785 ft)



Mount Rysy

What is the climate?



Poland lies in the temperate zone: the climate is warm in the summer, and cold in the winter. Spring starts in March – like in Canada and other countries north of the equator – bringing both sunny and rainy days. Autumn in Poland has changeable weather.

What are the seasons like?

Summer:

- Can rise to 75°F (24°C)
- Highest temperature can go as high as 90°F and 100°F (38°C) in the southwestern areas.

Winter:

- Can go low to mid-30s F

Spring:

- Brings sunny days
- Sometimes rain
- Sometimes light frost
- Daily temperatures can be from 5°

Autumn:

- Mostly changeable
- Warm temperatures from September to October
- November brings low temperatures and rain

What are the natural plants and trees?

Plants (flowers):

Some common flowers in Poland:

- Chrysanthemum
 - Corn Poppy
 - Crocuse
 - Flax

Chrysanthemum:

- Rare variety
- Looks similar to white and yellow daisies (commonly found in the United States)

Corn Poppies:

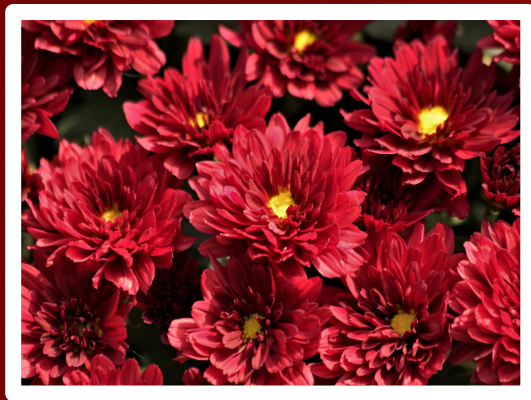
- Bright red
- Unofficial symbol of Poland
- Blooms in late spring on the Polish fields
- Common



Corn Poppies



Crocuses



Chrysanthemums



Flax Flowers

Trees:

Polish forests include...

- Black Alder
- Common Elm
- Common Oak
- Evergreen Trees (Pine Trees)
 - Larch Tree (Polish Larch)
 - White Willow

Evergreen Trees: Pine Trees:

- Most trees have been replaced with evergreen trees during winter, those who lose their leaves.
- Many evergreens have been planted. Pines and spruces now make up a great amount of trees found in Polish forests.

Larch trees called 'Polish Larch':

- Found exclusively
- Found in lowland regions (northern Poland)



Black Alder



Common Elm



Common Oak



White Willow



Larch Trees



Pine Trees

What is the wildlife?

- Bird Life
- Bison
- Horse
- Wolves

Mammals:

- Brown Bears
- Elk
- Lynx
- Red Deer
- Wild Boar
- Wildcats

Bird Life:

- Golden Eagles
- Hazel Grouses
- Thrush Nightingales
- White-Backed and 3-toed woodpeckers

There are even more!
Around 200 other species
of nesting birds.



Thrush Nightingale



Golden Eagle



Hazel Grouses



Elk



Lynx



Bison

What is the human geography of Poland?



Warsaw

Capital City: Warsaw

Other Major Cities:

- Krakow (2nd largest city)
- Lodz
- Wroclaw
- Poznan
- Gdansk
- Szczecin
- Bydgoszcz
- Lublin
- Katowice

What are major forms of transportation?



Along rivers and lakes: boats

In the countryside: horses

In cities: buses, cars and trucks,
metro, trams, trolley cars



What are some major tourist attractions?

Gdansk Old Town:

- Located in the city of Gdansk
 - Located on the Baltic Coast
- The area has many 17th century structures including churches, granaries, and mills.



Gdansk Old Town

Main Market Square:

- In Old Town in Krakow
- One of the biggest town squares in Europe
- Surrounded by churches, historical townhouses, historic buildings, and palaces
- Center square is ruled by the Cloth Hall



Main Market Place

Malbork Castle:

- Located in the city of Malbork
 - Found in 1274 (by Teutonic Knights)
 - Teutonic Knights' headquarters to defeat enemies and to rule northern Baltic territorier.



Masurian Lakeland:

- Located in the lower Vistula River to the Lithuania border
- The lake contains more than 2,000 connected by a system of canals and rivers.



Warsaw Old Market Place:

- Located in the city of Warsaw
 - Was destroyed in WW2
- Rebuilt carefully after the war
 - Market square has a bronze sculpture of the Warsaw mermaid – symbol of Poland's capital.



Wawel Castle:

- Located in the city of Krakow
 - Built in the 14th century

A command to build this castle by the Polish monarch at the time, Casimir the third.



The Wieliczka Salt Mine:

- Located in the city of Krakow
- One of the oldest companies in the world
- Salt has been mined since the 13th century
- Underground city, carved all out of rock salt
- Ancient sculptures (carved from salt)
 - New sculptures from artists



Wieliczka Salt Mine

Expressing Thoughts And Feelings

What do Polish people speak mostly?

Country's Official Language: Polish

- Since the 10th century
- Almost everyone in the country speaks the language
- Polish language is part of a group of languages called 'Slavic Languages.'
- Polish is the second common in the Slavic language in the world
- Large number of Polish speakers are also in neighboring countries – Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine.



There are 4 generally accepted dialects or versions.

Lesser Polish: commonly used in the south part

Greater Polish: commonly used in the west part

Masovian: heard in the eastern and central areas

Silesian: spoken in the southwest

Goral dialect: spoken by Goral people by the mountains of southern

What is the religion today?



Religion Today:

- Catholicism had become a main religion in Poland
- Poland's constitution allows all kinds of religions for all people, regardless of their faith.
- There is no official religion
- The majority - around 87% - of the population are Roman-Catholic. (2021)

What are some popular sports?

Soccer (known as Football):

- Most popular in Poland
- Polish national team have won a gold Olympic medal in 1972
- A silver medal in 1976 and 1992
- Played in schools and community teams



Basketball:

- The poland teams have won several medals

Motorsports:

- Practiced in Poland since the 1930s
- Popular event is Speedway. 4 or 6 motorcyclists are on an oval track. They use 1 gear, no brakes, ride only 4 times around the track.



Volleyball:

- The men's team won the European Championship in 2009
- Women's team won the Olympic games in 1960s
- Women's team won the European Championships in 2003 and 2005.

What are the arts?

Folk arts, crafts and music:

- Strongest in the mountain side:
Folk Culture
- Folk music have been kept alive by certain groups of people.
 - Some museums have the best traditional arts and crafts.

Visual Arts:

- Visual arts have been influenced by the nation's struggle for their independence.
- After the WW2, artists often express the lost of their people by making drawings and paintings.

Music:

- Developing since 1500s (unique type of music)
 - Musicians took traditional dances and included them to their work
- The oldest type of music in Poland goes back to the 13th century. Later on, Polish musicians were focused on religious music and also opera which started to grow in Poland.

National Anthem of Poland

In Polish:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOTqo7gihqg>

In English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4HxUTxItP4>

Literature:

- Produced masterpieces by authors
- Has been hard for centuries
- Poland has 5 winners who won the Nobel Prize in Literature

5 Nobel Winners in Literature:

- Henryk Sienkiewicz won in 1905
Made great novels about Poland's history.
- Wladyslaw Reymont won in 1924
Wrote many novels.
- Isaac Bashevis Singer won in 1978
Wrote many memoirs and childrens' books.
- Poet Czeslaw Milosz won in 1980
Wrote about Polish history and philosophy
- Wislawa Szymborska won in 1996
Wrote poetry books.

What are some holidays and celebrations?

Public Holidays:

- **Epiphany** - Jan.6
- **Easter Sunday** - March or April
- **Easter Monday** - March or April
- **Pentecost Sunday** - May or June
- **Feast of Corpus Christi** - May or June
- **Assumption Day** - August 15
 - **All Saints' Day** - Nov.1
 - **Christmas** - Dec.25



Epiphany Day

Public Holidays:

- **New Year's Day** – January 1
 - **State Holiday** – May 1
- **Constitution Day** – May 3
 - **Ascension Day** – May 13
- **Independence Day** – 11 November



Fireworks on New Year's Eve

How do Poles celebrate Christmas Eve?

- 3 - day affair, starting on December 24 (Christmas Eve)
 - Poles decorate their christmas trees on the 24th of December
 - The day ends with great feast
 - In some houses, bits of hay decorate the table

How do Poles celebrate Christmas Day?

- May attend a second church service
- Travel to family and friends
- Poles exchange gifts but enjoy family gatherings
- Christmas carols are sung
- Churches continue to celebrate Christmas season into January

Easter:

- Children paint hard-boil eggs
- Boys are allow to wake up girls by throwing water at them.
- Girls get revenge by doing the same ritual.
- Girls avoid Monday soaking by paying one or more of their brightly painted eggs.



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Assumption Day: (Assumption of Mary)

- Celebrates the Catholic belief
 - Go to churches
 - Have church services



Corpus Christi:

- Poles observe by attending Sunday service
 - Poles enjoy eating a feast
- Many communities have public gatherings and processions



Keeping Organized: Government

What are the 3 branches?

Executive Branch:

- President
- Prime Minister
- Council of Ministers



Executive Branch Role:

- Carries out laws
- Oversees military, carries out policies and proposes
- Performs general duties
- Head executive of Poland is the president

Legislative Branch:

Senate - 100 members

In Poland, instead of calling 'the house of commons,' they call them the 'Sejm'.

Sejm - 460 members



Legislative Branch:

- Legislative Branch is the Polish parliament
- Senate (100 members) and (460 members) are elected every 4 - year terms
- Citizens must be 18 to vote - like in Canada

Judicial Branch:

Courts:

- Supreme Court
- Appellate Courts
- Regional Courts
- District Courts

Judicial Branch Role:

Role: ensures laws

Highest Court: Supreme Court

Judicial Branch:

Another Role:

The Constitutional Tribunal

“The tribunal function is to ensure that all parts of Poland’s constitution are honored.”

GOVERNMENT



LEGISLATIVE



makes laws



EXECUTIVE



carries out laws



JUDICIAL



evaluates laws



LEGISLATIVE



EXECUTIVE



JUDICIAL

What are the roles of the leaders?

Prime Minister:

- Oversees the day - to - day affairs of parliament
 - Presiding over the council of Minister, or the cabinet
 - Assisted by the deputy prime minister

President:

- Acts as the representative of the nation
- Performs symbolic duties
- Has limited political power
- Commanding military forces
- Able to veto any laws passed by the parliament
- Can serve for 2 year terms
- Elected to 5 - year term

What are some political parties?

Civic Platform Party:

- Found in 2001
- Tends to be conservative on social issues.

Civic Platform Party: Members

- The party held power since the election of 2007
- Bronisław Komorowski: has served as president
- Donald Tusk: has served as prime minister

Democratic Left Alliance:

- “Takes liberal stance on most issues”

Law and Justice Party:

- Founded in 2001
- More conservative than the Civic Platform Party

Polish People’s Party:

- Represents farmers
- Represents other working-class citizens

The United Poland Party:

- “Reflects a conservative stance often parallel to the Catholic Church”

Palikot Movement:

- Liberal party that opposes the influence of religious priests on the government.

The Legal and Judicial System:

Legal System:

“The Polish legal system is based on the continental legal system (civil law tradition). The common courts in Poland are the courts of appeal, provincial courts and district courts.”

The laws of the Poland government are more similar to the United States of America than Canada.

What are the Economics like?

Exports (Leading Export Items):

- Boats
- Cars
- Golf Carts
- Heavy Machinery
- Sowmobiles
- Transportation Equipment
- Trucks

Exports (Variety of Exports):

- Beauty Products
- Computers
- Electronics
- Furniture (small amount)
- Household Appliances
- Medications
- Telephones
- Televisions

Exports (percentages):

2/3s of exports go to other countries

- Germany gets about 26% of Polish exports
- United Kingdom takes 6% of Polish exports
- 5% of Polish exports goes to Czech Republic, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Russia



Imports:

Most imports are related to construction and manufacturing.

Major imports include...

- Chemical Products
- Industrial Machinery
- Transportation Equipment

Few imports are intended for use by individuals or in the home.



Imports (percentages):


- About 25% from Germany
- Russia gives about 12%
- And around 5% from China, Czech Republic, France, and Netherlands

Why is Poland important to remember?

Canada bought over \$733.24 million of goods from Poland, in 2019.

Canada imports...

- Electronic Equipment
- Furniture
- Machinery
- Ships and Boats



This country is important because of its difficult past. Poland's history spans over a thousand years. Poland was one of Europe's most powerful nations. Unfortunately, the country's power collapsed. Later on, the world wars began, which Poland suffered through a lot. After everything, Poland rapidly restored its democracy. Today, Poland is a beautiful country in Europe and still has its democracy.

Why did I chose Poland?

I chose this country for three major reasons...

- I read a book that was set in Poland, which made me curious.
- I discovered that this country has a really interesting background which made me even more curious.
- Fortunately, the library has plenty of interesting books about Poland.

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