

Polish Culture

The first written record of Polish history began in 956 C.E., when Prince Mieszko married a Bohemian princess and accepted Christianity. Poland declared independence from years of being divided up by the Russian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire in 1918 after the end of World War I.

Polish diets normally consist of meat, bread, and potatoes. Dinner normally includes meat, mostly pork. Bread is very important to them and in the past, if bread fell on the ground, it was picked up and used to make the sign of a cross. Polish people eat three-hundred pounds of potatoes per capita per year. Meals typically start with breakfast between five to eight A.M and end with dinner between one and five in the afternoon.



About 95 percent of Polish people are Roman Catholics, and the other 5 percent are Eastern Orthodox, Protestants, Judaism, Islam, and other types of Christianity. Religion is a very important part of Polish society, and many religious holidays are also national holidays.

Economy

Poland's economy is a social market economy with large-scale privatization which started in 1990, after the fall of Communism in Europe. At that time, Eastern Europe as a whole started to switch to a free market economy in hopes of keeping communism from returning ever again.

The social market economy is based on a free market economy working with state provisions given to those unable to sell their labor, such as the disabled, elderly, and unemployed.

Poland's economy is resilient, as it was the only European country to have strong economic growth during the 2009 recession. And while the economy has had major improvements since joining the EU in 2004, the unemployment rate is 7.4%, high for EU standards. Two-thirds of Poland's total GDP is from the Private Sector, which is \$1 trillion (PPP) and \$27,700 per capita. This is also below EU standards. Poland also has high public debt, at over 51% of the GDP.

That all said, with Poland's state provisions, they have a high standard of living and good healthcare.

Poland



Capital: Warsaw

Population(2016):

38,628,927



Physical Structure

Agriculture makes about 60% of Poland's total land area. Northern Poland is fairly hilly. Central Poland is made of fertile lowlands, prime for farming.

It is 312,685 sq km and is about twice the size of the country Georgia. It is located east of Germany in Central Europe and is surrounded by 6 other countries. It is mostly flat, but North Poland is fairly hilly. Today, it has a population of 38,628,927. Since 1970, it has gained 5,654,792 people due to better healthcare and higher standards of living.

This increase in population is significant since Poland had been a war-torn country for a long time during both world wars and that left them vulnerable and with many dead. This growth is a sign of rebuilding.



Government

Poland is a democracy. It functions on checks and balances between branches like in the US. In the 1970s, Polish workers, backed by the Catholic Church, started a national movement called Solidarity (Solidarność). Even after its leaders were arrested by the government, its newspapers kept spreading Solidarity's ideas and goals throughout Poland. In May 1989 the Polish government fell, as did communist regimes throughout Europe. This spurred Poland's transformation to democracy.

A democracy promotes equality and keeps the interests of citizens protected. Democracies also rarely see revolts. However, a democracy could lead to corruption, misuse of



public funds, and some citizens may not exercise their right to vote.

The current leader of Poland is Andrzej Duda (above) and was elected into power in 2015. In the Summer of 1989, Eastern Europe had its first post-communist government. Since the start of the 21st Century, the conservative Law and Justice party has gained traction.

Important Events

1970s - Poland has relative economic prosperity because of foreign loans.

1989 - Talks between Solidarity, the Communists and the Catholic Church pave the way for fall of communism in Poland. Partially free elections see major win for Solidarity. Tadeusz Mazowiecki becomes the first non-Communist prime minister in Poland since 1946.

Start of 21st Century - Conservative groups in Poland gain more power.

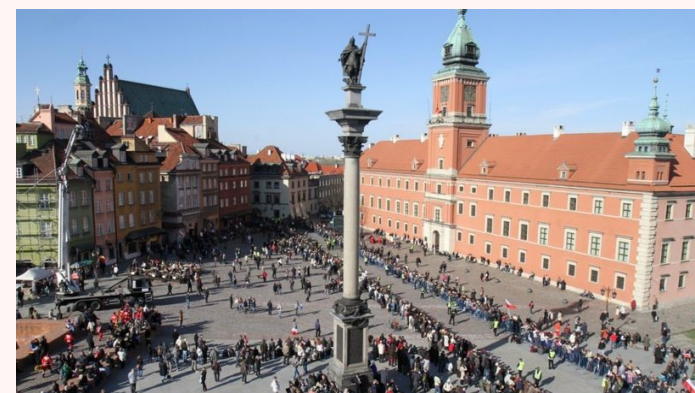
2010 - Nigerian-born John Abraham Godson became the first black member of the Polish parliament.

2013 - Many tens of thousands of protesters march in Warsaw to demand higher pay and more jobs.

2014 - PM Donald Tusk speaks out against Russia's annexation of Crimea

2015 - Conservative wins the presidential election

2016- Parliament rejects an all-out ban on abortion after mass protests



Warsaw

"Flag." Flag. Polish American Cultural Center, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.polishamericancenter.org/Flag.htm>>.

Jasiewicz, Krzysztof, and Jerzy A. Kondracki. "Poland." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 16 Feb. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Poland>>.

"The Privatization of Poland." The Privatization of Poland. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <http://econc10.bu.edu/economic_systems/Economics/Transit/Privatization/privatization_poland.htm#Blom>.

"Poland." Poland Economy: Population, GDP, Inflation, Business, Trade, FDI, Corruption. Heritage Foundation, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.heritage.org/index/country/poland>>.

"Prezydent.pl." President of the Republic of Poland / About Poland / Polish political system. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.president.pl/en/about-poland/polish-political-system/>>. The official website of the president of Poland.

"Europe/." World Atlas - Maps, Geography, travel. Worldatlas, 13 July 2016. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/poland/pland.htm>>.

"Poland country profile." BBC News. BBC, 18 Nov. 2016. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17753718>>.

"Guide To Poland - Etiquette, Customs, Culture & Business." Kwintessential UK. Kwintessential Ltd, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/guides/guide-to-poland-etiquette-customs-culture-business/>>.

"Poland." Countries and Their Cultures. Advameg, Inc., n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Poland.html>>.