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POLAND - INFORMATION SHEET

BACKGROUND

Called the Republic of Poland, the country has a population of approximately 38.6 million and is the seventh largest country in Europe. It is bordered by Germany in the West, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in the South, by the Ukraine and Belarus in the East, Lithuania, the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and the Baltic Sea lie to the North.

LANGUAGE

Polish is the official language of Poland.

RELIGION

According to the 2006 International Religious Freedom Report by the US Department of State more than 96 % of citizens were identified as Roman Catholic. The rest of the population consists mainly of Eastern Orthodox Jehovah's Witnesses and various Protestant religious minorities.



RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

CHRISTMAS - Christmas preparations involve hanging mistletoe over the front door to ward off evil and placing wheat in the dining room corners and under the tablecloth to chase away misery. The table is set for one extra person to remember absent family members or accommodate an unexpected guest. The dinner begins with a prayer and sharing of blessed *Oplatek* bread (Christmas wafers) to represent Communion.

EASTER - In Poland people hang symmetrical cut-paper designs called *wycinanki* (Polish paper cutting pronounced VIH-CHEE-NON-KEY) inside their homes before Easter. The designs tend to be of animals, trees or flowers. They remain on the walls until the following year, when they are replaced by new *wycinanki*.

NAME DAYS - Many families in Poland still observe former naming customs where a child is named after a patron saint. Parents look for a saint whose feast day is on or near the birth or baptismal date of their child. Often the name day is more important to remember than the birthday. This anniversary is important for Poles and in no other culture is it celebrated with equal fanfare.

Other religious holidays observed include Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15th), All Saints' Day (November 1st) and Corpus Christi.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Poles are reputed to be avid readers with an ardent interest in the arts. Polish writers and filmmakers, in particular, are internationally renowned. Poland has a lively cultural scene with around 280 arts festivals taking place across the country covering all types of music, film, video, theatre and the visual arts. Jazz music is particularly supported with around thirty jazz festivals taking place each year.

MARRIAGE: Polish people place great importance on family. Poland has one of the lowest divorce rates in

Europe. However, very recently, this appears to have risen due, apparently, to a huge migration of workers to the United Kingdom.

CUISINE

Polish cuisine includes Polish sausage, red beet soup, Polish dumplings, *flaczki* (tripe soup), cabbage rolls, *Oscypek*, pork chops, traditional stew, various potato dishes and a fast food sandwich *zapiekanka* filled with meats, pickles and cheeses. Traditional Polish desserts include doughnuts and gingerbread.

FAMOUS POLISH CONTRIBUTORS TO WORLD HISTORY

Thadeus Kosciuszko (Polish national hero and general who led the 1794 Kosciuszko Uprising against Imperial Russia), Marie Curie (twice awarded Nobel Prize in Physics and Chemistry for the discovery of the elements radium and polonium), Frederick Chopin (composer), Waleisa, John III Sobieski (17th century King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania), Copernicus (first astronomer to formulate a scientifically based heliocentric cosmology that displaced the Earth as the centre of the universe), Joseph Conrad (writer), Wanda Landowska (harpsichordist), Bronislaw Malinowski (anthropologist), Ignace Paderewski (pianist), Arthur Rubenstein (pianist).

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland> (accessed 25/03/08)

<http://www.mamalisa.com/world/poland.html> (accessed 25/03/08)

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~polwgv/naming.html> (accessed 25/03/08)

Kids Around the World Create! By Arlette N. Braman Jossey-bass 1999 page 8

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KEY WORDS: POLISH

WORD	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
Hello	cześć	chesh-ch
Goodbye	dowidzen	do-vee-zeny
Yes	tak	tak
Please	nie	nye
No	proszę	proshang
Thank you	dziękuję	jang-koo-yong
Mummy	mamusia	mama/mamusha
Daddy	tatuś	tata/tatoosh
Toilet	ubikacja	oobi-kats-ya
Food	jedzenie	yezenye
Are you hungry?	czy jestes godny?	che yestesh gwodne?
Are you thirsty?	czy chcecz píc?	che hzesh pich?
Drink	napój	napoo-ee
Sleep	spać	spach
Play	bawić się	bawich shang
Sick	chory	hore
Don't worry	nie martw się	nye martv shang
Be careful	uważaj	oowarjai
Come here	chodź tutaj	hodj tootai
Dummy	butelka	butelka
Hat/cap	kapelusz/czapka	kapalush/chapka
Bottle (baby)	smoczek	smochek
Shoes	buty	booty
Wash hands	myc' rece	mitch rounsair
Sunscreen cream	Krem na stonće	Ceem nar swansair
Teeth	zeby	zounbair
Fruit	owoce	ovauttsair

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:

FOR THE LETTER **A** SAY **A** AS A **U** AS IN **UP**

FOR THE LETTER **E** SAY **E** AS IN **EGG**

THE SYMBOL ´ INDICATES THE NEED TO STRESS THE WORD AS IN PHÓTO AND PHOTÓGRAPHER

OO SAY AS IN **PUT**