



## Your free PDF guide to the best of Wrocław published by [wroclaw-online.eu](http://wroclaw-online.eu)

Wrocław – the capital of Lower Silesia - is one of the oldest cities of Poland. Its turbulent history is embedded in the city walls and buildings. Thus, the city abounds in historic sights erected in various epochs and in different architectural styles.

The cradle of Wrocław is Cathedral Island (Ostrow Tumski) where the first settlements were built between the 7th and 9th centuries. However, the first written record goes back as far as the year 1000 when at Gniezno during the meeting of Boleslaus the Brave, Duke (later King) of Poland, with Otto III, Holy Roman Emperor, the Wrocław bishopric was established. The centuries to follow were really dramatic. In the 14th century Wrocław became part of the Kingdom of Bohemia. Two centuries later it was in the hands of the Habsburgs and finally Wrocław was incorporated into Prussia. The city also remembers the Napoleonic times when the city's fortifications were demolished by the Napoleon's Army. During World War II Wrocław became "Festung Breslau", i.e. a Nazi stronghold. When the war was over, the Germans who used to live in Wrocław had to leave the city and it was then that the displaced Poles from Lviv and Vilnius moved into Wrocław. Though seriously damaged (in approximately 70 %), almost levelled, during World War II the city was later painstakingly reconstructed to become one of the most beautiful cities of Poland.

Apart from being charmingly historic, Wrocław is also a well-known cultural centre offering world-famous artistic events like music concerts, festivals, theatrical performances, international exhibitions, etc. Thus, you will never feel bored here!

With its wide array of pubs, cafes, restaurants serving traditional Polish as well as international cuisine, historic sights, cultural events, business and educational opportunities, Wrocław has everything that tourists, investors, students might feel a craving for. Just come and see for yourself!

## Customs

The Polish people are very hospitable, warmhearted and they have a very high opinion of foreigners who know at least one word in Polish.

Roman Catholicism plays an important role in daily life and criticism or jokes about religion are not appreciated, despite the general good humour of the people. Music and art are also important aspects of Polish culture. Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting. Women have to be prepared for the old Polish custom of being kissed on the hand. Smoking is restricted in public buildings.

The Polish people are used to eating early in the morning. Breakfasts are served between 7 and 9 a.m., lunches between 12 and 2 p.m. and dinners usually between 6 and 8 p.m.

## Money

Poland's national currency is zloty (PLN). One zloty equals 100 groszy.

Banknotes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 zloty and there are 1, 2 and 5 zloty, and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 groszy coins in circulation.

Average exchange rates in Poland in December 2008 were as follows: 1 PLN = 4 EUR, 1 PLN = 3 USD, 1 PLN = 4.5 GBP.

## Time zones

Poland is among countries using Central European Time (GMT + 01:00). This time zone applies for Spain, France, Germany,

Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Slovakia, or Hungary and many other countries.

Seattle, Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles time: -9h

Chicago time: -7h

New York, Toronto time: -6h

Buenos Aires time: -5h

Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo time: -4h

London, Dublin, Lagos, Lisbon time: -1h

Helsinki, Moscow, Athens, Tel Aviv, Cairo,

Johannesburg: +1h

Abu Dhabi, Yerevan: +2h

Beijing, Manila: +7h

Tokyo, Adelaide: +8h

Sydney, Canberra: +9h

Auckland time: +10h

## Holidays – The following days all institutions, offices and shops are closed

1st January – New Year's Day

13th April – Easter Monday

1st May – Labour Day

3rd May – the 3rd May Constitution Day

1st June – Corpus Christi

15th August – Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady

1st November – All Saints' Day

11th November – Independence Day

25th and 26th December – Christmas

## Food

Nowadays, the standard of the network of fast-foods, restaurants, and cafes is similar to the European one except for cheap street bars.

In the most expensive restaurants you can expect to pay over 100 PLN for a meal for one.

If you want something cheaper, go to a small restaurant or bar, or have a pizza (from 20 PLN). "Bar mleczny" (milk bar) offers the cheapest food (5 to 9 PLN). A cake in a Wroclaw café will cost you 3-10 PLN, a cup of coffee 4-10 PLN. The price of a beer in a pub varies from 6 to 12 PLN. The majority of larger restaurants accept credit cards.

Do not forget to try the Polish specialities: bigos, made with sauerkraut, fresh cabbage, onions and any variety of leftover meat. Polish meals start with przekaski (starters), such as pike in aspic, marinated fish in sour cream, salted and rolled herring fillets with pickles and onions, kulebiak (a large mushroom and cabbage pastry) or Polish sausages such as the long, thin and highly spiced kabanos or the hunters' sausage (mysliwska) made with pork and game.

Soups play an important part at mealtimes and are usually rich and very thick. Soups such as barszcz (beetroot soup, excellent with sour cream) or rosol (beef or chicken bouillon) are often served in cups with small hot pasties stuffed with meat or cabbage. Popular dishes include pierogi (ravioli), zrazy zawijane (mushroom-stuffed beefsteak rolls in sour cream) served with boiled kasza (buckwheat) and pig's knuckles. Poland is also a good country for fish (ryba) such as carp served in sweet-and-sour jellied sauce, and poached pike with horseradish in cream. Herring (sledz) is particularly popular and is served up in countless different ways. Pastries (ciastka) are also very good.

There are a few kinds of good Polish vodkas worth recommending, e.g., zubrowka (bison grass), tarniowka (sloe plum), sliwowica

(prune) and pieprzowka (vodka with ground white pepper). Western drinks, such as whisky, gin or brandy, can be obtained in most bars but are expensive. Wine is available but, again, is imported and expensive. The best bottled beer is Zywiec, a fairly strong lager-type beer.

### Tipping

In restaurants, service is normally included in the price so you just pay what is on the bill. Tipping is up to you and there don't seem to be any hard and fast rules about it. In lowpriced eateries customers rarely leave a tip; they might, at most, round up the total up to the nearest whole figure. In up-market establishments it's customary to tip 10% of the bill

### Weather and climate

Poland's climate is influenced by a continental climate from the east and a maritime climate from the west. As the result the weather is changeable, with significant differences from day to day. Winter one year can be almost without snow, whereas another year heavy snows can paralyse transport for days. Summer is usually warm and sunny but occasionally it can be cold, wet and disappointing. The latter, however, does not refer to Wroclaw as there is always plenty to do regardless the weather.

The seasons are clearly differentiated. Spring starts in March and is initially cold and windy, later becoming pleasantly warm and often very sunny. Summer, which begins in June, is predominantly warm but hot at times (with temperature reaching as high as 35-40C at least once per year), with plenty of sunshine interlaced with heavy rains. July and August are the hottest months. Autumn comes in

September and is at first warm and usually sunny, turning cold, damp and foggy in November. Winter lasts from December to March and includes shorter or longer period of snow. January and February are the coldest months with the temperature sometimes dropping as low as -15C.

The average annual rainfall in Wroclaw is around 600mm, with the greatest falls in the summer months (especially July).

## Polish your Polish

Polish language is awfully difficult to master, however, learning a few key phrases will definitely smooth your time in Wroclaw. Crucial to achieve this will be learning how to pronounce each letter or combination of letters, especiall those which don't exist in your alphabet. Many letters represent the same sounds as they do in English. Listed below are those particular to Polish.

Polish letter/combination of letters	Pronunciation similar to
"ą"	"on" in the French "bon"
"ę"	"en" in the French "bien"
"ó"	"oo" in "boot"
"c"	"ts" in "bits"
"j"	"y" in "yeah"
"w"	the English "v"
"ł"	"w" in "win"
"ń"	"ny" in "canyon"
"cz", "ć"	"ch" in "beach"
"dz"	"ds" in "beds"
"rz", "ż"	"su" in "treasure"
"sz", "ś"	"sh" in "ship"
"drz"	"g" in "George"

English	Polish	(pronunciation)
Good day/Good morning/Good afternoon	Dzień dobry	(jen do-bri)
Good evening	Dobry wieczór	(do-bri vye-h-choor)
Good night	Dobranoc	(do-bra-nots)
Hi/bye	Cześć	(cheshch)
Yes	Tak	(tahk)
No	Nie	(nyeh)
Please/You're welcome	Proszę	(prosheh)
Cheers!	Na zdrowie	(nah zdrove-yeh)
Thank you	Dziękuję	(jen-koo-ye)
Excuse me/Sorry	Przepraszam	(pshe-prasham)
See you	Na razie	(nah rah-zse)