



Culture Notes: Poland

The Polish people are a very culturally homogenous group. Of those living in Poland, 96.7% are ethnically Polish, and 97.8% speak Polish.

Roman Catholicism is practiced by the majority of Poles (sources vary from 90-98%), and this has a significant impact on the national identity. Religious holidays are recognized as important national holidays. During the years following World War II, when the Soviet communist regime controlled the country, the Catholic Church represented a strong separate voice.

The national identity of Poland is heavily rooted in its turbulent history. Poland's borders shifted multiple times before World War II, as neighboring countries divided the country among themselves. The Nazis took significant control during World War II, and the Soviet Union imposed communism following that until 1989, when the Solidarity movement ended in the fall of communism.



Largely because of these historical events, the Polish people are generally proud and patriotic. They can seem stubborn at times, though they do not mean this in a negative way. The Polish people generally feel a strong association with their culture.

Your student might notice the biggest differences between Poland and the U.S. at school. Past NOD students have noted that they are surprised by how much attention the teachers give each student and how willing they are to help a student after class.

Students have also noted that it is surprisingly easy to make new friends because Americans are friendly with people they just meet. Your student might be used to a slightly more guarded approach, taking some time to get to know people before opening up.

- * Capital: Warsaw
- * Population: 38.1 million
- * Area: About 120,725 sq.mi.
- * Nationality: Pole(s) (noun); Polish (adjective)
- * Language: Polish
- * Climate: Temperate continental
- * Fun Fact: The most popular name for a dog in Poland is Burek, which translates to "brownish-gray color."