



What you have to know about Poland and Łódź particularly

Weather

Typically, daytime highs in September range mostly well above 15 C (60 F), with the average high at the beginning of the month a gorgeous 21 C (71 F), which slowly falls to an average high of 16 C (62 F) by month's end. In other words, sweater weather. Night time temperatures range downward from 7-11 C (45-52 F) over the course of September. There is still plenty of warm sunshine and daylight, and it is one of drier months, precipitation-wise, with chances for rain falling as the month progresses.

However, this year summer has been particularly hot like in the rest of European countries. So, we may expect that the weather in September may be also different from average.

Local time

CET: Central European Time. Central European Summer Time = GMT+2 (the same time as in the majority of EU countries).

Electricity

In Poland the power sockets are of type E (This socket also works with plug C and with plug F if it has an additional pinhole). The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Money:

Currency: Polish Zloty (PLN / zł)

ATMs widely available.

ATMs

ATMs are ubiquitous in cities and towns, and even the smallest hamlet is likely to have at least one. The majority accepts Visa and MasterCard.

Polish ATMs require a four-digit PIN code.

Inform your bank before travelling abroad to avoid having your card blocked by bank security when overseas transactions start appearing on your account.

You'll often be given the choice to convert your ATM transaction to your home currency on the spot, but you'll get a better rate if you decline the option and choose 'Polish zloty'.

Changing Money

Change money at banks or kantors (private currency-exchange offices). Find these in town centres as well as travel agencies, train stations, post offices and department stores. Rates vary, so it's best to shop around.

Kantors are usually open between 9am and 6pm on weekdays and to 2pm on Saturday, but some open longer and a few stay open 24 hours.

Kantors usually exchange cash only against major world currencies and neighbouring countries' currencies. The most common and easily changed are US dollars, euros and UK pounds.

There's usually no commission on transactions – the rate you get is what is written on the board (every kantor has a board displaying its exchange rates).

Credit Cards

Debit and credit cards are accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shops. The only time you may experience a problem is at small establishments or for a very small transaction. Payments with NFC or proximity cards are widely available and you can pay almost everywhere like this. For transactions below 50zł you don't even have to use your PIN code.

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express cards are typically accepted at larger hotels and restaurants, though they are not as widely recognised as other cards.

Credit cards can also be used to get cash advances.

Cash

The Polish currency is the złoty, abbreviated to zł and pronounced zwo-ti. It is divided into 100 groszy, which are abbreviated to gr. Banknotes come in denominations of 10zł, 20zł, 50zł, 100zł, 200zł and 500zł, and coins in 1gr, 2gr, 5gr, 10gr, 20gr and 50gr, and 1zł, 2zł and 5zł. It's a stable currency that has held its own with respect to the euro and US dollar in recent years.

Keep some small-denomination notes and coins for shops, cafes and restaurants – getting change for the 100zł notes that ATMs often spit out can be a problem.

Entry and Exit Formalities

Customs Regulations

Travellers arriving from non-EU countries can bring in up to 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g of pipe tobacco, up to 2L of non-sparkling wine, and up to 1L of spirits.

Travellers arriving from an EU member state can import up to 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars or 1kg of pipe tobacco, and up to 110L of beer, 90L of wine and 10L of spirits. This is seldom checked.

The export of items manufactured before 9 May 1945 is prohibited without an export permit (pozwolenie eksportowe). Official antique dealers may offer to help you out with the paperwork, but the procedure is bureaucratic and time-consuming.

Visas

Generally, not required for stays up to 90 days.

Further Information

EU citizens do not need visas and can stay indefinitely. Citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Japan and many other countries can stay in Poland for up to 90 days without a visa.

Other nationalities should check with their local Polish embassy or at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/msz_en/).

Shifting Borders

Poland is a member of the EU's common border area, the Schengen zone, and frontier crossings to neighbouring EU countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania, no longer involve passports or visas.

This situation does not apply for visiting Belarus, Ukraine or Russia's Kaliningrad enclave.

Passports

EU citizens need only a valid ID to travel in Poland. For everyone else, a passport is required.

Note that some airlines may deny travel to passengers whose passports are within six months of expiration from date of departure.

Etiquette

There's a polite formality built into the Polish language that governs most interactions between people, though the rules are normally suspended for foreigners who don't speak Polish.

- Greetings It's customary to greet people, including shopkeepers, on entering with a friendly dzień dobry (jyen do-bri; good day). On leaving, part with a hearty do widzenia (do vee-dze-nya; goodbye).
- Religion. Treat churches and monasteries with respect and keep conversation to a minimum. It's always best to wear proper attire, including trousers for men and covered shoulders and longer skirts (no short shorts) for women. Refrain from flash photography and remember to leave a small donation in the box by the door.
- Eating & Drinking. When raising a glass, greet your Polish friends with *na zdrowie* (nah zdroh-vee-ya; cheers)! Before tucking into your food, wish everyone *smacznego* (smach-neh-go; bon appetit)! End the meal by saying *dziękuję* (jyen-koo-ye; thank you)!
- Remember that Polish people are always extremely excited when foreigners are trying to say something in Polish! That's a lot of fun for everybody!

Getting Around

Airlines in Poland

LOT operates a comprehensive network of domestic routes. There are regular flights between Warsaw and Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin and Wrocław. Many flights between regional cities travel via Warsaw and connections aren't always convenient.

The airport in Łódź is rather small and won't offer many destinations, but you can fly directly to: Antalya (Turkey), Athens(Greece), Burgas (Bulgaria), Dublin (Ireland), East Midlands, London Stansted (UK), Munich (Germany). For more info, visit this link: <http://www.airport.lodz.pl/en/index.html>

Bus

Poland has a comprehensive bus network (far greater than the rail network) covering nearly every town and village accessible by road. Buses are often more convenient than trains over short distances, and occasionally over longer ones, when, for instance, the train route involves a long detour.

The frequency of service varies greatly: on the main routes there may be a bus leaving every quarter of an hour or so, whereas some small remote villages may get only one bus a day. Ticket prices also vary due to fierce competition between bus companies, so shop around.

There is a lot of bus companies that secure direct international travels (i.e. FlixBus - <https://www.flixbus.pl>, Sindbad - <https://www.sindbad.pl/en>, Eurobus - <https://www.eurobus.pl>)

Train

Poland's train network is extensive, easy to use and reasonably priced. It's likely to be your main means of transport for covering long distances.

That said, service to many smaller cities has been cut back in recent years, which means you may find yourself relying more on buses or a combination of bus and train.

For planning your journey with Polish railways, buying a ticket or checking the prices and connections, visit this website: <http://rozklad-pkp.pl/en>

Local Transport

Bicycle

Poland has great potential as a place to tour by bicycle – most of the country is flat and you can throw your bike on a train to cover long distances quickly.

In many cities public bikes are available. Łódź has an extensive network of rental stations across the city. To learn more about how it works check this link: <https://lodzkirowerpubliczny.pl/en/>

This is by far the fastest and cheapest way to go around town, as rental's first 20 minutes is for free!

Since some time the City has been investing in regular bike lanes which you would find quite a lot in many places, but where you won't there probably will be an extra pseudo-lane marked on the street itself. Just follow the signs!

Bus & Tram

Polish cities offer excellent public transport. Every large and medium-sized city have a comprehensive autobus (bus) network, while some cities also have tramwaj (tram) and trolejbus (trolleybus) systems. Warsaw is the only city with a metro. In Łódź you will find buses and trams.

- Public transport normally operates daily from around 5am to 10pm. After 10pm there are night buses available. Service is less frequent on weekends.
- Trams and buses are likely to be crowded during rush hours (7am to 9am and 4.00pm to 6.00pm Monday to Friday).
- Timetables are usually posted at stops.

Tickets and fares

Ticketing and fares system in Łódź may seem a bit overdone, but there are some ground rules you would like to stick to in order to move around town successfully and with no stress using public transportation.

The fare system is based generally on the duration of the ride and in its basic form is divided into three intervals:

- 20min ticket – 2,80 zł
- 40min ticket – 3,60 zł
- 60min ticket – 4,40 zł

You can also purchase a one-day ticket which costs 11,00zł.

When using buses and trams it's smart to remember the following:

- There are no conductors on board buses and trams. Buy tickets beforehand and punch or stamp them in one of the little machines installed near the doors once you enter the bus or tram.
- Buy several tickets at once since you may find yourself at a far-flung stop with no chance to buy tickets locally.
- Plain-clothed ticket inspectors are always on the prowl and foreigners are not exempt.
- Timetables are available at every bus/tram stop but you can always plan your journey with Google Maps which is well connected with local transportation system and will always show you at least couple of possibilities how to get where you want. There is an online journey planner and timetable available also at the official website of local public transport provider: <http://www.mpk.lodz.pl/rozkłady/linie.jsp>

How to buy a ticket

There are several ways to buy tickets for public transport in Łódź:

- Buy tickets from newspaper kiosks like Ruch or Relay or from street stalls around central stops.
- Buy tickets on-board in vending machines (no cash accepted - pay with a credit card ONLY)
- Buy tickets in stationary vending machines located on some bus/tram stops
- Buy tickets with your mobile phone using one of these apps: zbiletem.pl - <https://zbiletem.pl/>, gopay - <https://gopay24.pl/blog/>, jakdojade - <https://jakdojade.pl/lodz/trasa/>, mobilet - http://www.mobilet.pl/?page_id=10/lodz, mpay - <https://www.mpay.pl/uslugi/bilety-komunikacji-miejskiej/bilety-lodz/?url=/pl/bilety-komunikacji-miejskiej-lodz> , SkyCash - <https://www.skycash.com/bilety-komunikacji-miejskiej-w-telefonie/>

To learn more about public transport, ticketing, fares, timetables or even the history of this establishment visit the official website: <http://www.mpk.lodz.pl/lang.action?lang=en>

Taxi

Taxis are easily available and not too expensive. As a rough guide, a 5km taxi trip will cost around 15zł, and a 10km ride shouldn't cost more than 35zł. Taxi fares are higher at night (10pm to 6am), on Sunday and outside the city limits. The number of passengers (usually up to four) and the amount of luggage do not affect the fare. The fare has to be

- Avoid unmarked pirate taxis (called 'mafia' taxis by Poles), which usually have just a small 'taxi' sign on the roof with no name or phone number. This may happen at airports or busy railway stations, so it is better to order taxi by phone or to use airport-licensed company (usually clearly indicated at the exit from the arrivals hall).
- The tariff must be displayed in the taxi window. Check it before you get in the cab!
- You can flag down cabs on the street, order them by phone or by using one of many apps. We recommend ordering by phone or app if possible, as it cuts down the chance you'll get a rogue driver. The Taxi company we can recommend is GreenCab - <http://www.greencab.pl/index.php>, as it offers great comfort and prices. Here is the link for their app: <http://www.greencabtaxi.rt3000.pl/>
- Remember to carry small bills, so you'll be able to pay the exact fare.
- In most taxis you can now pay with card, but it's always good to ask before the drive. You may also notice the colourful stickers on the side windows with pictograms of accepted cards or ways of payment.

For further information about Poland you may reach out for Lonely Planet guide (though the newest edition is from 2016, and some information may be a bit outdated): <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/poland>