

Contents



1. Identity: the foundations of Polish culture p3

- 1.1 Geography** p5
Where, what, who? p6
- 1.1.2 Local colour:** the *województwo* of Poland p9
- 1.2 History** p17
 - 1.2.1 Enlightened beginnings:** the Piasts and medieval Poland p18
 - 1.2.2 Hero to zero:** the age of the Rzeczpospolita p21
 - 1.2.3 Sacrifice and salvation:** the modern age p25
- 1.3 Language and belonging** p33
 - 1.3.1 Speech patterns:** language in Poland p34
 - 1.3.2 Being Polish:** identity and psyche p36



2. Literature and philosophy p39

- 2.1 Literature** p41
 - 2.1.1 A very Polish story** p42
 - 2.1.2 In search of an identity:** the Middle Ages and the Renaissance p43
 - 2.1.3 Words of war:** the Baroque and the Enlightenment p46
 - 2.1.4 Born of tragedy:** Romantics, Positivists and the Young Poles p48
 - 2.1.5 Literature in a time of tyranny:** the 20th century p54
 - 2.1.6 The start of a new chapter** p60
- 2.2 Philosophy** p63
 - 2.2.1 From Witelo to Copernicus** p64
 - 2.2.2 Shaping a national philosophy:** the Enlightenment, the Messianics and the Positivists p67
 - 2.2.3 Maths and Marxism:** philosophy in the modern era p69



3. Art, architecture and design p73

- 3.1 Art and design** p75
 - 3.1.1 Sacred at heart:** art before the Romantics p76
 - 3.1.2 National pride:** Romantics, Realists and Symbolists p79
 - 3.1.3 Multiple movements:** art in the Modern era p84
- 3.2 Architecture** p93
 - 3.2.1 Set in stone:** Middle Age builds p94
 - 3.2.2 Degrees of Classicism:** Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical architecture p96
 - 3.2.3 Wood, concrete and steel:** modern Polish architecture p99



4. Music, theatre, and comedy p107

- 4.1 Music** p109
 - 4.1.1 In the shadow of Chopin:** classical music p110
 - 4.1.2 Folk stories:** traditional music p118
 - 4.1.3 A taste for 'decadence':** jazz p121
 - 4.1.4 Soundtrack to rebellion:** popular music p123
- 4.2 Theatre and comedy** p127
 - 4.2.1 Lost in translation:** early Polish drama p128
 - 4.2.2 Plays in Polish:** Enlightenment and Romantic dramas p130
 - 4.2.3 Experimental intermission:** the interwar years p132
 - 4.2.4 Searching for alternatives:** theatre since the war p135
 - 4.2.5 Jesters, cabarets and skits:** Polish comedy p140



5. Cinema and fashion p143

- 5.1 Cinema** p145
 - 5.1.1 Bugs, epics and shtetls:** the dawn of Polish cinema p146
 - 5.1.2 Wajda bends the rules** p148
 - 5.1.3 A golden age:** the Polish Film School and Cinema of Moral Concern p150
 - 5.1.4 The new auteurs:** modern Polish cinema p155
- 5.2 Fashion** p159
 - 5.2.1 Fashion sense:** traditions, costumes and designers p160



6. Media and communications p165

- 6.1 Media** p167
 - 6.1.1 Best of the press:** newspapers and magazines p168
 - 6.1.2 Viewing habits:** television p172
 - 6.1.3 Don't touch that dial:** radio p175
 - 6.1.4 New media:** Poland online p177
- 6.2 Communications** p179
 - 6.2.1 Keeping in touch:** posting letters and making calls p180
 - 6.2.2 Poland on the move:** transport p182



7. Food and drink p187

- 7.1 Food** p189
 - 7.1.1 Kuchnia Polska:** the changing culture of Polish food p190
 - 7.1.2 Dumplings, soups and cakes:** the regional menu p195
 - 7.1.3 Food rituals:** eating, feasting and shopping p198
- 7.2 Drink** p203
 - 7.2.1 Drinking habits** p204
 - 7.2.2 What do the Poles drink?** p205



8. Living culture: the state of modern Poland p211

- 8.1 Polish society:** class, race, family and women p214
- 8.2 How Poland takes its religion** p217
- 8.3 Big issues:** politics and the system of government p222
- 8.4 Money matters:** the economy, employment and social security p226
- 8.5 Keeping order:** the courts, crime and the police p228
- 8.6 Polish lessons:** education p231
- 8.7 Time out:** holidays, free time and festivals p234
- 8.8 Balls, bikes, poles and rings:** a love of sport p236