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The Essential Guide to Being Polish

By Anna Spysz, Marta Turek



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Being Polish is no joke. For ten million people of Polish ancestry in the United States, as well as many who have settled in the UK since the fall of communism, it is a heartfelt matter -- and amid all the travel guides and guides to Polish language, folklore, and customs, there is no single, comprehensive, reader-friendly and yet ever-informative reference on what it means to be Polish. Enter *The Essential Guide to Being Polish* -- the go-to concise resource for anyone looking to reconnect with their culture or, indeed, hoping that their friends, children, or colleagues learn something about their heritage.

Divided into three sections to make for an easy-to-follow format -- Poland in Context, Poles in Poland, and Poles Abroad -- this guide covers just about everything and does so in a style that is at once entertaining and informative: the country's history and geography, wars, Jews in Poland, the communist past, the post-communist past and present, language, kings and queens, religion/Catholicism (with special focus on Pope John Paul II), holidays, food, and drink. What is a real Polish wedding all about? That, too, is addressed succinctly and with flair in this guide. Other chapters cover literature, music, art, famous scientists, Polish men and Polish women, Poles in America, Poles in the UK, Poles and the EU, and last but not least, Polish pride.



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Editorial Review

Review

"[A] carefully researched but reader-friendly peregrination through the story of Poland—a thrilling if sometimes depressing ride you wouldn't believe if you read it in a novel. . . . I can say honestly . . . that *The Essential Guide to Being Polish* will not disappoint." — **Krakow Post**

"Do you plan to visit Poland for the first time? Are you contemplating a return trip? Do you enjoy reading about other countries and their cultures? If you answered 'yes' to any of the above then you must read *The Essential Guide to Being Polish*. . . . Once you start reading, you'll want to read it all." — **Am-Pol Eagle**

"I invite you on this journey into the depths of the Polish soul." — **from the Foreword by Lech Walesa**

"*The Essential Guide to Being Polish* recounts the political and cultural history of Poland—and, if you will, of Polishness—with a reader-friendly, streamlined clarity that is leavened with wit and timely, amusing turns, but that for all its playfulness never loses sight of the essential complexity of its subject." —**Stuart Dybek, award-winning author of *The Coast of Chicago* and *I Sailed with Magellan***

About the Author

Anna Spysz, who is both the coauthor and the book's editor, is the former editor-in-chief of the *Krakow Post* (May 2008–December 2010), Poland's only English-language newspaper. A Polish-born American, she graduated in 2004 from the University of Texas at Austin with a BA in English and subsequently moved to Krakow, Poland, where she earned an MA in Central and Eastern European Studies from Jagiellonian University. She currently lives in Krakow (except for the winters), where in addition to working as a freelance writer and translator, she dabbles in photography, graphic design, and plays keyboards in a local band. Her website is www.annaspysz.com.

Marta Turek moved from Poland to the United States as child with her parents, settling first in Chicago and, later, in Seattle. In 1993 she moved back to Poland, where she has been ever since. She has edited English-language texts and taught English as a second language for the past decade on both sides of the Atlantic. Her employers have ranged from ELS Language Centers in Seattle to schools, international companies, and universities in Poland. The holder of an MA in English linguistics from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, she lives in Rokietnica, Poland.

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