



## USEFUL INFORMATION

What you should  
know about  
Poland and  
Białystok

# GENERAL INFO:

- ◉ Republic of Poland is a country in Central Europe bordered by Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) and Lithuania
- ◉ The total area of Poland is 312,679 square kilometers
- ◉ Population of over 38,5 mln people
- ◉ The capitol of Poland is Warsaw
- ◉ The big part of the north borderline is Baltic Sea
- ◉ There is a democracy in Poland with a president as a head of state
- ◉ Most common religion in Poland is Roman Catholic. Religious minorities include: Christian Orthodox, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews and Muslims

# CLIMATE:

- The climate is mostly temperate throughout the country
- Summers are warm, usually between 18 and 30° C, with some rain along with dry and hot days
- Winters are cold, snowy and the temperature often drop below zero and sometimes may reach -20° C
- Spring and autumn are lasting about 2 months each and usually are cool and moist

# TIME:

- ◉ The time zone is GMT +1 h
- ◉ The time is changed twice a year
- ◉ In the fall, last Saturday of October we turn our clocks 1 hour backward and in the spring, last Saturday of March we turn our clock 1 hour forward
- ◉ We use 24-hour time format
- ◉ Most of the people will refer to time as a 14:00 or 20:00 instead 2 pm or 8 pm

# HOLIDAYS:

- ◉ Religion plays an important role in the Polish society and is deeply connected to the culture
- ◉ Religious holidays are considered national holidays and most of businesses are closed
- ◉ The most important holiday is Christmas and celebrations last two and a half days and Easter Day is celebrated on Sunday (the date depends on Catholic Church calendar) followed by Monday holiday
- ◉ Another religious holiday of note is All Saints' Day which takes place on November 1st. On this day Poles visit cemeteries to honor their loved ones who have passed away

# IMPORTANT HOLIDAYS:

## Catholic and national holiday:

- ◉ January 1<sup>st</sup> -New Year
- ◉ January 6<sup>th</sup> -Three Kings Day
- ◉ Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday-last three days of Lent, on Holy Saturday we are bringing a small baskets with food to the Church for blessing

- ◉ Corpus Christi- always a 9<sup>th</sup> Thursday after Easter
- ◉ May 1<sup>st</sup>- Labor Day
- ◉ May 3<sup>rd</sup>- Constitution Day
- ◉ November 1<sup>st</sup>-All Saints Day
- ◉ November 11<sup>th</sup>- Independence Day
- ◉ December 24<sup>th</sup>- Christmas Eve
- ◉ December 25<sup>th</sup>- Christmas Day

# INTERESTING FACTS:

- ◉ Fat Thursday- is the last Thursday of carnival, where the custom is to eat donuts and other delicious stuff-it is widely celebrated all over the country

# CUSTOMS:

Please respect our customs. It will take time to learn it but you will know how to react in certain situations and it will help you to adjust to our culture.

- ◉ Poles are seen as a nation of fun lovers who enjoy festivities, traditions and centuries-old customs
- ◉ When enter the room, is polite to say “Dzien Dobry”- for a Good Morning/Good Afternoon and “Do widzenia” -for a Goodbye. “Cześć” is informal greeting and is appropriate to use only within friends or close colleagues
- ◉ Address people by their honorific title, “Pan” for a man and “Pani” for a woman, and their surname

- ◉ Do not use first names until invited to unless with your companionship
- ◉ Moving from the use of formal to the informal names is such an important step and it is usually happen after you know the person for a long time and with the permission only
- ◉ When greeting, in formal occasions, men and woman will usually shake hands, sometimes, older men would kiss woman in the hand
- ◉ In less formal, man will shake a hand with another man, kiss the woman on the cheek (sometimes three times) and woman will kiss each other on the cheeks

- ◉ If you are invited to a Pole's house you may be expected to take off your shoes
- ◉ **You are expected to dress formal for all exams and official ceremonies (dress shirt, dress jacket, formal pants, skirt or dress, dress shoes etc.)**
- ◉ Titles are considered prestigious
- ◉ Academic or professional titles are used with or without a surname

# MONEY AND BANKING:

- ⦿ Money currency is Polish zloty (PLN, zł)
- ⦿ 1 PLN ~ 0.24 Euro
- ⦿ Money exchanges places are called KANTOR and they are almost in every city. You can also exchange money at the bank but usually the exchange rate is lower than at the Kantor

- ◉ There are also a variety of internet Kantor's available for polish bank account holders where you can exchange money online
- ◉ You can open a bank account at the polish bank
- ◉ Usually all you need is a passport
- ◉ Some of the banks are offering free accounts for students.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

- ◉ Each city has own public transport
- ◉ The buses, trams or trains are running often from very early in the morning (around 6am) till late at night (around 10pm)
- ◉ Depending on the city, some will also have a night public transport
- ◉ A student with valid student ID (under 26 years old) is eligible for a reduced ticket price
- ◉ The best way to get a Taxi is call for it
- ◉ The one you pick up from the Taxi stand usually will be more expensive

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BIALYSTOK



# GENERAL INFO:

- ◉ Białystok is the largest city in northeastern Poland and the capitol of Podlaskie Voivodeship
- ◉ The city area covers 102.12 km<sup>2</sup>
- ◉ Population is around 350.000 people
- ◉ Białystok is the largest cultural center in northeast Poland
- ◉ The attractions include performing arts groups, art museums and galleries, historical museums, Opera, Theater, cinemas, Puppet Theater and many shopping centers and restaurants
- ◉ Around 32% of the city is occupied by parks, squares and forest preserves which create a unique and healthy climate

# TRANSPORTATION:

- ◉ Bialystok has an extensive **bus** network that it covers the entire city and surrounding area
- ◉ Tickets are sold in many places, including stores, newsagents, convenience stores, supermarkets and designated ticket retail points
- ◉ The single ticket can be also purchased at the bus with the driver but is a double price and you have to have an exact change.
- ◉ For a student with valid student ID (under 26 years old) tickets are sold on at reduced price
- ◉ You can buy a single ticket, 24-hour passes, 3-days weekend passes or a monthly passes

- ◉ Before you purchase a monthly pass you have to apply for a City Card (Karta Miejska)
- ◉ The application has to be filled out and delivered to the designated office with a picture and valid student ID (if applicable)
- ◉ Bialystok has an extensive city biking system BIKeR that features 300 bikes at 30 stations all over the city. It is available 24/7 all year round. All you have to do is to register on [BIKeR website](#) and follow the steps at the bike stand

- The **main railway station** is located in the city center. There are many direct trains going to Warsaw and to other big cities. The tickets are sold online or direct at the station
- Tickets can be also bought at the train
- To buy a ticket you have to contact the train crew(conductor) as soon as you board the train
- PKP time tables and info.
- Many companies are **operating coaches** to most major cities in Poland. The main is PKS Białystok, and also Podlasie Express and Voyager

# SHOPPING:

- ◉ There are couple of big and several smaller shopping centers in Białystok with variety of popular brand name stores and many others

- ◉ Alfa Centrum  
Świętojańska Str. 15  
Białystok 15-277
- ◉ Atrium Biała  
Czesława Miłosza Str.2  
Białystok 15-265
- ◉ Galeria Zielone Wzgórza  
Wrocławska Str. 20  
Białystok 15-660
- ◉ Centrum Handlowe Auchan  
Hetmańska  
Hetmańska Str. 16  
Białystok 15-66
- ◉ Decathlon  
Aleja Jana Pawła II 51  
Białystok 15-704
- ◉ LeroyMerlin  
Hetmańska Str. 18  
Białystok 15-727

# HOTELS/HOSTELS:

- ◉ There are many places to stay while you are in Białystok
  - ◉ The price as usually depends on the place standards and city centre distance
- ◉ Hotel Gołębiowski  
Pałacowa Str. 7  
Białystok 15-064
  - ◉ Best Western Hotel Cristal  
Lipowa Str. 3/5  
Białystok 15-424
  - ◉ Hotel Branicki  
Zamenhofa Str. 25  
Białystok 15-435
  - ◉ Hostel Podlasie  
Aleja Piłsudskiego 7B  
Białystok 15-443
  - ◉ Hostel Lider  
Żwirki I Wigury Str. 26  
Białystok 15-244

# REAL ESTATE

Białystok real estate market is growing fast. The location in the environmentally clean area, considerably cheaper cost of living, tourist attractions and rich infrastructure makes Białystok a great place to live.

There are many broker agencies renting new or used flats to the students:

- ◉ Eastern Real Estate Agency

Suraska 1 room no. 100  
15-093 Białystok phone no.85 742 17 56,  
601 889 290, 695 550 095

- ◉ Emmerson Realty

Świętojańska 15, (Centrum Alfa)  
15-227 Białystok, phone no. 85 717 01 10

# SPORTS, INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- ◉ There is the Department of Physical Education and Sport at The Medical University of Bialystok that helps students stay fit, keep their bodies healthy, teach mental toughness and shape personality
- ◉ The Department holds different practices like volleyball, basketball, football, athletics sports and swimming for men and woman students at every day of the week
- ◉ In addition, Bialystok has many indoor and outdoor activities to offer including, swimming pools, ice skating ring, athletic fields, miles long biking track all over the city

# CUISINE:

- ◉ Polish cuisine has a mild and rich flavor
- ◉ Because of the polish history our cuisine had a wide range of sources and it was influenced by the cuisine of many other countries including Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy and Jewish nation
- ◉ The traditional polish dishes are pierogi, kielbasa, bigos, pork chops or gołąbki
- ◉ **The time of eating meals is slightly different than in many other countries**
- ◉ Breakfast is eaten early, usually containing cereals, eggs, coffee or tea, sweet pastry or a sandwich
- ◉ People eat second breakfast/lunch containing small sandwich or pastry

- The main meal is usually eaten around 4-5pm and it will contain a soup, second course (meat, side dish and salad) and the dessert. At the evening (7-8pm) people will eat small dinner (a sandwich, pancakes or sometimes eggs)
- Bialystok is the place with many interesting restaurants. From cheap, buffet style places with variety of polish food trough many fast food spots to more sophisticated cuisine and and international dishes.
- There are small grocery stores on almost every corner where you can buy basic goods like milk,bread, butter, juice,water etc.
- There are many fruit and veagatable stands

# SECURITY INFO:

**YOUR SECURITY IS THE MOST  
IMPORTANT FOR US**

**997**

**112**

**or**

**(85) 7489903**

**(85) 7145555**

**800 422 322**

**If you become a victim of crime...**

**Call as soon as possible!**

# WHEN YOU ARE A VICTIM...

Or you have information on committed  
crime...

Every person regardless of age, sex,  
race, nationality can report a crime...

[More info.](#)

[Racism-say it to fight it-program.](#)

# IMPORTANT:

- ◉ **DRINKING ALCOHOL IN PUBLIC place like park, school, dormitory, street, bus or train is illegal**
- ◉ If caught there is a 100 PLN fine
- ◉ If caught drunk in public you can be taken to the **detoxification detention centre** and hold there for your safety for a 24 h period
- ◉ You would also have to pay 250 PLN for your stay

**POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS  
INCLUDING MARIJUANA ARE  
ILLEGAL IN POLAND  
EVEN THE SMALLEST AMOUNT  
IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO  
ARREST YOU**

**POLICE and STRAŻ MIEJSKA  
(MUNICIPAL GUARD) can enforce  
all public laws**

# ADDITIONAL LAWS:

## **JAY-WALKING:**

In Poland jay-walking is an offense. You may only cross the street at recognized street crosspoints if there is one within 100 m

If caught there is a 50 PLN fine.

If caught crossing on the red lights - 100 PLN fine.

The **QUIET HOURS** are respected in Poland. They last between 10:00PM and 6:00AM

**Hours violation may result in a fine**

# SAFETY TIPS:

- ◉ Beware of pick pockets
- ◉ Watch out in crowded places
- ◉ Do not leave your valuable things unattended
- ◉ Walk in groups or call a taxi after dark

**Just be careful like you  
would be in any other place  
in the world!**



**OUR EXPERIENCE  
YOUR FUTURE  
TRUST US**