

POZNAN

From top, left to right: Poznan's cafe culture, Old Town Square; Golden Chapel in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul; the 10th-century cathedral is one of the oldest religious sites in Poland; Blow Up Hall 5050; merchants' houses; stores and restaurants, Old Brewery; Puro Hotel

From the destruction of the Second World War, Poland's historic city has transformed into a modern hub of energy and creativity, says Imogen Lepere

Why go? With all the historic charm of Krakow and the dynamism of Warsaw, the understated and stylish city of Poznan is the perfect size for a weekend away. Studded with lakes and green spaces, it comes into its own in summer and between 7-14 August the Transatlantyk Festival, transatlantyk.org, brings indie art, music and open-air film screenings to town.

What to do Stroll from the atmospheric Old Town to Jezyce, a hipster outpost with street art to rival Berlin's, making the most of the competitive exchange rate at the numerous cafes, bars and restaurants along the way. For a roving breakfast try Targowisko Wielkopolskie, a daily market with more than 200 stalls. Look out for smoky *kabanos* sausage and the famous St Martin croissant, a horseshoe of flaky pastry stuffed with white poppy seeds, orange peel and liqueur. Take the 'skywalk' to Ostrow Tumski, the lush island which houses the earliest Christian site in Poland – the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul. The nearby Interactive Heritage Centre, bramapoznania.pl, is less than a year old and combines cutting-edge technology with medieval artefacts and dazzling views from the roof terrace. Make sure you're back in the Old Market Square by noon – when the clock above the town hall strikes, two mechanical goats emerge and clash horns, a ritual of which locals are inordinately proud. The square also has a quirky croissant museum, rogalowemuzeum.pl, picturesque merchants' houses and a vibrant café and bar scene. Make the most of the weather at Malta Lake and its surrounding park which becomes a hub of activity on sunny afternoons with kayaking and a summertime toboggan run – prime people-watching fodder.

Where to stay Take advantage of the exchange rate and stay in one of the world's leading design hotels without the hefty price tag. Blow Up Hall 5050, 00 48 616 579 980, blowuphall5050.com, is an immersive work-of-art-cum-five-star-hideaway inspired by cult Sixties film *Blow-Up*. The rooms are accessed by iPhone and each has unique features, such as a sunken bathtub at the foot of the

bed. The Garden Residence, 00 48 612 222 999, gardenhotel.pl, in the Old Town, is a boutique affair with plenty of character and a sunny terrace. Puro Hotel, 00 48 613 331 000, purohotel.pl, is contemporary Poznan at its best. A carefully curated art collection adorns the walls and there is a mixture of suites and apartments.

Where to eat and drink Traditionally, Wielkopolskan food is hearty, wholesome and heavily influenced by the wealth of potato farms in the area. However, in recent years, a spate of new openings have introduced a lighter touch to traditional dishes. A stone's throw from the Old Market Square, with an outdoor seating area shaded by plane trees, Toga Restaurant, 00 48 618 530 345, toga.poznan.pl, embraces the slow-food philosophy. Mains change daily to reflect what's in season, but the cold beetroot, cucumber and dill soup with edible flowers is a regular feature due to popular demand. Vine Bridge, 00 48 618 750 934, vinebridge.pl, claims to be the smallest restaurant in Poland with just three tables (unsurprisingly, booking is a must). Dishes such as clay-roasted lamb with water pepper demonstrate a sophisticated take on traditional flavours; if you're planning a day trip and fancy a decent picnic you can buy some of their dishes from the deli adjoining the restaurant. Zagroda Bamberaska, 00 48 618 427 790, zagrodabamberska.pl, serves home-smoked meats and classic Poznanian snack *pyry z gzikiem* (new potatoes with cottage cheese, spring onions and radish) in a relaxed, Scandi-style setting. For drinks, try Brovaria, 00 48 618 586 868, brovaria.pl, a hotel-cum-brewery that produces aromatic ale using medieval methods and locally grown hops.

Time running out? Catch the steam train to Wielkopolski National Park and enjoy the shade of the pine forests and the smell of wild flowers growing by the lakes. There are several riding schools in the area which organise group hacks through the park.

Trip tip Head to Kontenerart, kontenerart.pl, the artificial beach on the banks of the Warta; it's packed with pop-up bars and galleries.

Travel information

Currency is the zloty. Time is 1 hour ahead of GMT. Flight time is about 2 hours from London. The cost to carbon offset is £2.06, visit climatecare.org

Getting there

Wizz Air flies direct from London Luton to Poznan. wizzair.com

Eurocity runs from Berlin to Poznan's Dworzec Główny station, which is well served by international trains. voyages-sncf.com

Resources

Poznan Tourism is a multimedia city guide, with English translation, packed with ideas for exploring the city and surrounding countryside. poznan.pl

Further reading

The Jews of Poznan (Valentine Mitchell & Co Ltd, £12.95) is a moving tribute to the city's Jewish community

AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min °C	-3	-3	0	2	7	11	12	12	8	5	1	-1
Max °C	1	2	7	12	18	20	22	22	18	12	6	2
mm	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

