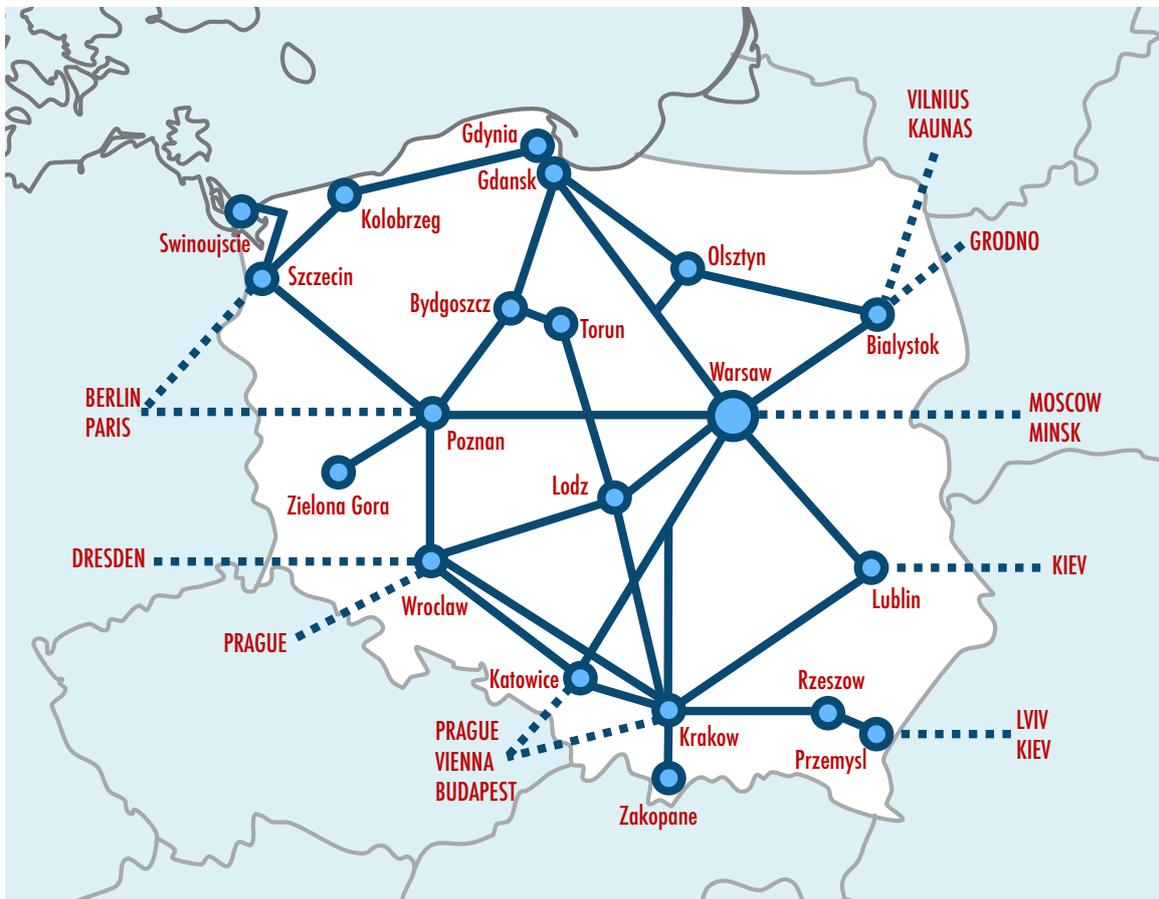




The Poland Rail Travel Guide

Rail travel in Poland and beyond





Hello!

You are reading this because you decided to travel through Poland by train or you are planning your trip in the near future.

This is your free copy of the Poland Rail Travel Guide, which will help you become familiar with rail travel in Poland.

Feel free to share this guide with your friend who want to visit Poland by train.

Hope you enjoy!

The Polrail Service Team

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Introduction

We started as the “Polish Train Page” on the Internet in the autumn of 1995. We frequently received messages from readers who have questions about travelling by train in Poland, and this guide to travelling by rail in Poland was created to help answer those questions and provide general information.

Having travelled **tens of thousands of kilometers by rail in Poland and Central Europe since 1990**, we have gained some insight into travelling by rail in Poland and hope that we can share some of the things we have learned with others. This guide is targeted at the first-time rail traveller and assumes no prior experience in travelling on European trains. Experienced travellers may also find items of interest, and are encouraged to keep reading!

The goal is to furnish an introduction to the Polish railways. We hope to provide some background information on the system, a general guide to planning and carrying out a railway journey, and details on types of equipment and services that the leisure or business traveller may find useful.



Getting around Poland by train

For the traveller to Poland, rail travel is one of the best ways to get around the country. There is a domestic airline service, and the road system is better than 10 years ago, but the traffic and parking problems that many cities now experience, **travel by rail is still the most comfortable and convenient.**

The railway station is usually located near a city's center, and is always **well-connected** to the local transportation system. Most parts of the country can be reached by train.

So, assuming you make the decision to see Poland by rail, just how do you go about it? Well, follow this guide, and you should be well on your way!



Tickets, Reservations and Passes

Polrail Service offers a pre-booking service for travellers living outside of Poland. Tickets and reservations can be booked in advance for trips inside Poland (up to 30 days in advance for domestic trains), and to/from other countries in the region (up to 60 day in advance).

Unless you have a rail pass, you are going to need a ticket. All major stations have ticket offices, and you can make your purchase there. You can also purchase a ticket from the conductor on the train (except on EIP-category trains). There is a surcharge for this if the station you left from had an open ticket office. Make certain that you find the conductor (his workplace is in the first carriage) and purchase your ticket before he comes to you, or you may be fined!



At most larger stations you can purchase rail tickets using a credit card. However, make sure you line up at a ticket window displaying a credit card logo, as not every cashier can process these transactions.

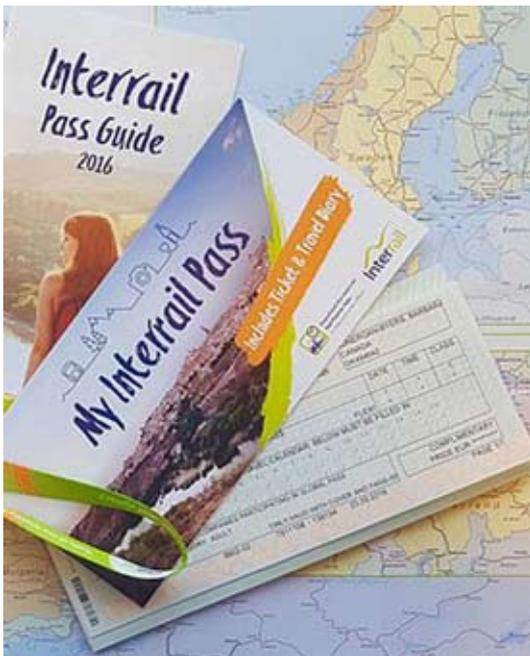
Tickets, Reservations and Passes

There are several train operating companies in Poland, and you will want to know which type of train and you are travelling on, and who is the operator, so that you may purchase the appropriate ticket (and pay the applicable fare!). Tickets from one operator are not accepted on the trains of another operator (even if you've paid a higher fare!)

If you are a **European resident, you can also buy an InterRail pass for just Poland, or for all of Europe, including Poland.** However, in almost every case we've found, buying individual tickets works out to be less expensive than any pass product, if you do decide on a pass, however, the InterRail Poland Pass can be ordered in our online store.

InterRail Poland Pass

The InterRail Poland Pass is your ticket to explore all Poland has to offer. With this pass, you are entitled to unlimited travel on the Polish railway network for 3, 4, 6 or 8 days of your choice within a 1-month period. It is the perfect way to visit Poland's major cities and see the countryside along the way!



The Pass is valid over the entire network on all trains operated by PKP InterCity and Przewozy Regionalne. TLK, IC, EIC and EIP-category trains (operated by PKP InterCity) require a seat reservation; you can obtain TLK, IC and EIC reservations at no extra charge at any station with a reservations window; travel on an EIP train requires payment of a reservation supplement of 43PLN. (Sleeping car accommodations are not included in the Pass, but can be booked at additional charge). Passes are available for 1st Class and 2nd Class.

Tickets, Reservations and Passes

Types of trains in Poland

Regio or Local train—Pociąg Regio (osobowy). These are local trains that usually make a stop in each town as you travel down the line. This is definitely the slow way to travel, but a good way to meet the local population. Such trains will have only second class cars.

TLK train—Pociąg TLK. This class of train serves as a faster way to travel between regions. It will still stop at most moderate-size stations, but does not stop at every station. All of these trains have first class carriages, and there may be a refreshment trolley. Seat reservations are mandatory in both classes.

IC train—Pociąg IC. This class of train is the same as the TLK category, but with newer, recently-refurbished equipment. Most carriages will be air-conditioned, and many IC services now carry a buffet car. Some trains now have free Wi-Fi internet.

Express Inter-City train—Pociąg EIC. EIC trains feature comfortable equipment (newer, air-conditioned cars are found on these trains), few stops, and high speeds. The train will have first and second class cars. Often there will be a full-service restaurant car, and there is always at least a buffet car. Passengers in all classes receive a complimentary drink, and first class passengers also receive a snack. Seat reservations are mandatory in both classes. Some trains now have free Wi-Fi internet.

Express InterCity Premium train—Pociąg EIP. This new class of high-speed "Pendolino" trains serve are found on the main routes linking Warsaw with Krakow, Katowice, Wroclaw and Gdansk/Gdynia. All seats are reserved in both classes, and all trains are fully air-conditioned and carry a buffet car. Passengers in all classes receive a complimentary drink, and first class passengers also receive a cold meal.



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Taking a trip

Assuming you have bought your ticket, you are ready to travel! Since there are so many trains coming and going from stations all the time, you want to make sure you're in the correct place to board your train.

At the station

Most large stations now have electronic signage to assist you. Other stations will have posters prominently posted with train times. Look for white posters for arrival times (marked arrivals [przyjazdy]) and yellow posters for departure times (marked departures [odjazdy]).

The departure posters have columns with times, a list of stations the train is going to, and a platform number. Find the time of your train, and then read across to the right to find the platform number in the column marked "Peron".



At the platform

Follow the signs in the station to the proper platform (peron). Many platforms have two tracks (tor), **so don't get on the first train you see.** Look for an overhead sign showing the destination and departure time of the train. If you don't see one, look for signboards on the side of the coach showing the destination. If all else fails, ask the train conductor or a railroad worker (point to the train and ask "do [name of your destination]?") Sometimes a train will be split along the way,



with some of the coaches going to one place, and the rest to somewhere else. **Trains of this type will have signs on the side of each section showing the destination of that part of the train.**

Classes

First class cars also have a yellow stripe above the window. All cars should have a large number "1" or "2" by the entry door indicating the class of the car.

Taking a trip

Reservations

If you have a reservation, look at the reservation slip. It will show the car number (wagon) and the seat number (miejsca). The car number will be found in red on a little white sign on the side of the car, or on newer trains on an electronic display board. Once inside, the seat numbers are posted above each seat. If someone is sitting in your seat, show them the reservation slip, and politely ask them to move. If they don't, ask for help from the train conductor.

Ticket checking and ride

Once you find your seat, sit down, and enjoy the ride. The conductor will be around to check your ticket (he will ask "Tickets please" ["Proszę bilety do kontroli"]). On many carriages you can open the window for ventilation. (Be considerate of others in the compartment.) There are restrooms at the end of each car. If you're in a first class compartment, your seat will probably recline a bit if you want to sleep. Many refurbished carriages also offer outlets to plug in your laptop or phone charger.



E-ticket

Number of passengers on ticket

Departing date and time / Arriving date and time



"PKP Intercity"
Spółka Akcyjna
Przewoźnik: PKP IC

BILET INTERNETOWY

OF: 1

NORMAL. : 4
 ULG. : X : X

E-Wcześniej: 4xNormal

1	🕒	Od/From		→	Do/To	1	🕒	KL./CL.
08.12	14:45	Warszawa Centr.	*	→	Kraków Gł.	08.12	17:33	2
*	*		*		*	*	*	*

PRZEZ: Warszawa Zach. * Opoczno Błd.

Connection

SUMA PLN: 192,00 zł

514740891260 Nr transakcji: eIC52132580 (ES) 1527

Informacje o podróży:

Stacja	Data	Godzina	🚆 / Km	🚪 /	Miejsce	o-okno	ś-środek	k-korytarz	Suma PLN
Warszawa Centr.	08.12	14:45	TLK 83100	8	4 m. do siedzenia;				192,00 zł
Kraków Gł.	08.12	17:33	Km 293		36o, 35o, 34ś, 33ś				

Train number Carriage number Seat number

Standard ticket

Number of passengers on ticket

Departing date and time / Arriving date and time

"PKP Intercity" Spółka Akcyjna

BILET RODZINNY

POC: EIC OF: 4

NORMAL. : 0 (0)
 ULG. 30%: 4
 65 RODZINA

1-Cena bazo

30 maj	🕒	OD / VON / DE		DO / NACH / A	30 maj	🕒	KL
29.10	08:22	Kraków Gł.	*	→	Warszawa Centr.	29.10	10:50
*	*		*		*	*	1

PRZEZ:

KRAKOW GŁ 08:22 -> WARSZAWA CEN 10:50 Przewoźnik: PKP IC

POC. 3126 WAGON 10 004 M. DO SIEDZENIA 53 BROS. KM: 293

55 OKNO 54 SROD. 56 OKNO CENA PREIS **529,20

Miejsce przy stoliku PRX KARTA

513633251493 NIP 5262544258 PTU 8% PLN **39,20

IC042644298 0015#018382006/001 AED 07160263

Bydgoszcz Gł. 447395 29.09.16 10:23

IC 426442984

Train number Carriage number Connection Seat numbers

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Taking a trip

Food & drinks

If the train has a buffet or restaurant car (indicated in the timetable), you can also make a purchase there. Keep in mind the safety of your belongings should you leave them in the compartment to go to the buffet car. On other trains you may see travelling vendors coming around selling food and drink, but it is often a good idea to bring along your own refreshments. Most stations have kiosks from which you can buy food and drink before boarding. You can read more info about food and drink on the next page.

Getting off the train

On intercity trains there are usually announcements of each approaching station on the public address system of the train (and sometimes on electronic displays), but on local trains generally you're on your own to know when to get off the train. It's often a good idea to make a note of the scheduled arrival time at your destination, so that you will know when you're getting near. You can usually see the name of the station on a sign as you are pulling into the station.

Once the train has stopped, and you are ready to get off, you may have to open the door yourself. Just push down on the latch and push outward on the door, or push the button located near the door. Watch your step, as it may be a long way down!



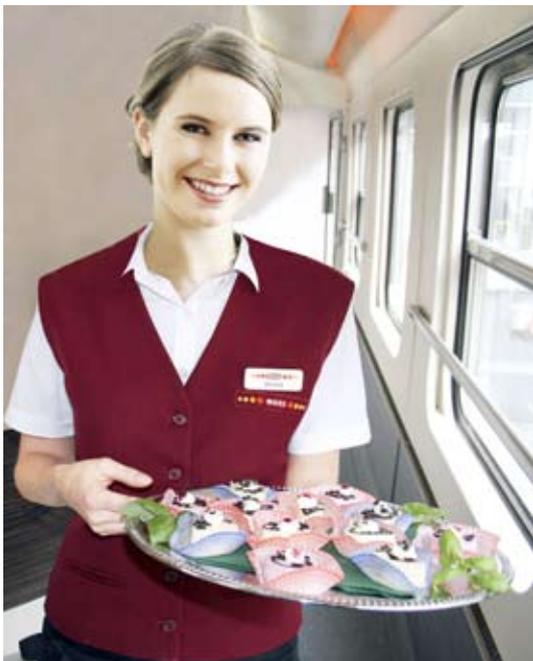
Eating and sleeping on board a Polish train

Some Polish trains feature sleeping cars or food service cars. These cars are run by a division of PKP InterCity called Wars.

Food service

Food service is usually in the form of a bar car (wagon barowy). These cars feature a menu of snacks and sandwiches, as well as several hot dishes. There are tables where you can stand and eat (although some cars are now being refurbished with sit-down tables), or you can take your purchase to your seat.

Trains that carry a bar car are indicated in the timetable.



On routes with no bar car, there may be a refreshment trolley that passes through the train selling hot and cold drinks and snacks at some point during the trip.

On domestic EIP-category train (Pendolino), a 1st class ticket includes:

- 2 drinks (coffee, tea, bottled water, juice, soda)
- sweet snack
- cold meal (from menu)

Some long-distance and international trains feature a full Wars restaurant car (wagon restauracyjny). These feature sit-down table service, with a number of hot and cold meals available from the kitchen. Wars restaurant and bar cars are usually located in the middle of the train.

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Sleeping on board a Polish train

Sleeping car service is featured on a number of overnight trains. There are two types of railway cars, and three classes of accommodation available for domestic travel:

Overnight accommodation

Couchettes (Wagon z miejscami do leżenia or "kuszетка")

– Couchettes are a form of second-class overnight accommodations. You travel in a compartment with bunk beds. You will be sharing the compartment with other travellers. The compartments are quite narrow and confined once the beds are folded down and everyone's luggage is stowed.



On a limited number of Polish domestic night trains, and on all international night trains, you can book a standard couchette. These couchettes offer a choice of 4- or 6-person compartments (Polish domestic services carry only 3- or 4-person compartments). You will be provided with a pillow, blanket and clean sheets, and you need to make up your own bunk. Couchettes are an economical way to travel, but if you want more privacy or quiet, you might want to consider a sleeping car (below).



Sleeping cars (wagon sypialny) – Sleeping cars are a more comfortable way to travel through the night. The compartments are identical, but there can be 1, 2 or 3 berths to a compartment. As with a couchette, you are only buying a place, so you may find yourself sharing the room with a stranger if you buy a single berth in a 2- or 3-person compartment (when compartments are shared, they are designated as single-sex only—you must choose male or female). You can travel on a 2nd class rail ticket in 2- and 3-person compartments, but travel in a 1-person compartment requires a 1st class rail ticket.

(Some international services features additional deluxe sleeping car options, including showers.)

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Sleeping on board a Polish train

The sleeping cars are a step up from the couchettes. In the compartments you will find more room for luggage, along with a mirror and a sink. The beds are more comfortable and there is less noise. There will be a sink with running water in the compartment. Many sleeping cars have been through a rebuilding process recently, with interiors being completely renewed and air conditioning installed.

Sleeping car passengers get a complimentary cup of coffee or tea in the morning, a breakfast snack, and a little kit with a washcloth and soap.

Sleeping cars and couchettes will usually be located at either the front or the back of the train. When you board, **show your railway ticket and your sleeping car ticket to the attendant, and he will show you to your place.** He will keep the tickets until the morning, when he comes to wake you up. The doors between the sleeping cars and the rest of the train will be locked, so you cannot pass through to the coaches.

Sleeping car tickets can be booked through Polrail Service. You should try to book sleeping car space **as early as possible, in order to assure that you will be able to find a place.** During the busy winter and summer travel seasons, sleeping cars can often **sell out 30 days in advance!** If you wish to book before coming to Poland, visit our online store to make your booking.

If you should decide at the last minute that you want to travel in a sleeper, you can always try to buy a space from the Warsaw car attendant on the train, if any beds are available. You may have to pay a surcharge for this.



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Traveling safely

From time to time, there are questions popping up on the internet or in guidebooks about the safety of train travel in Central Europe. However, **on board crimes are a very rare exception rather than the rule.**

Train stations are monitored by the railway police (SOK-Straz Ochrony Kolei). and SOK officers can also be found on board some trains. If you need any assistance, you can ask these officers, or your train conductor.

Still, when travelling, the use of common sense is always wise. If you are alert to what is going on around you, you will be one step ahead of the potential criminal, who may look for a more unsuspecting victim.

You may also want to keep the following safety tips in mind:

- When moving through stations or boarding trains, always try to keep on arm free. Don't get weighted down with baggage. A favorite trick of pickpockets is to create a "crush" as people struggle to enter or exit the train.
- Keep your luggage in your line of sight at all times. Do not leave it unattended or where you cannot see it.
- When looking for a place to sit, it might be better to sit with other passengers rather than try to find an empty compartment to sit in by yourself.
- When travelling in a sleeping car or couchette, keep the door to your room locked while you're asleep.
- Use a money belt or neck pouch to safeguard your money and passport.

About Polrail Service

Polrail Service offers personal attention

Polrail Service is staffed by knowledgeable professionals who know rail travel. All e-mails are answered, and we offer telephone and Skype support as well. Why wait on hold to talk to a call centre when you can personally talk with a rail travel professional?

Polish and European Rail tickets and reservations

Polrail Service is an authorized DB Bahn, Trenitalia and Voyages-SNCF agent with full access to train tickets and reservations in Poland and across Europe. We have access to many special offers and can handle your most difficult requirements.

European rail tickets

- Do you want to book a simple trip, from Berlin to Munich, or from Paris to Marseilles?
- Or do you have a complex trip in mind, such as from Amsterdam to Budapest?

Whatever the case, with our in-house experts can put together your travel plan and issue your tickets and reservations.

Trip planning services

Are you new to rail travel? Do you need personalized advice? Our travel experts can hold your hand and guide you through the planning process. We can answer your questions about timetables and on-board services, and help make your European trip hassle-free and memorable.

European train reservations

Have you purchased a rail pass (such as Eurail or InterRail), and are need of reservations for seats or sleeping cars? Do you have a pass which covers only part of your journey? We can issue reservations for all rail passes, and also issue country-only tickets to help you complete your trip.

Group tickets

If you have a group of 6-10 or more traveling in Poland, or anywhere in Europe, you can book your tickets through Polrail Service and receive a group discount! You can save considerably on standard ticket prices.

For the best prices, group bookings should be made between 30 and 90 days before travel! (Some group travel requests require approval by the rail carrier, and on some popular trains group space is limited.)

Group travel is on a group ticket (held by the group leader), so all members of the group must travel together on the same trains and in the same type/class of accommodation.



Thank you for your time!

If you have any questions feel free to contact us!

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Have a nice travel in Poland!

You can find us on Facebook @polrail

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