



Excursion Guide

Poland

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Read Aloud Folktale, Legend or Myth:

“The Gingerbread Bees” in *The Dragon of Krakow and Other Polish Stories* by Richard Monte (Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, 2008): This is the story of how the city of Toruń first got its famous gingerbread. It is a tale of magic, royalty, and love, about a poor young man who does a good deed. The writing is a good balance of narration and dialogue, and the story has a sweet and endearing ending.

Remember to:

- Greet each person individually
- Use a globe or large map to show each person the starting point and destination
- Engage people in informal conversation
- Include supplemental materials such as music, souvenirs, coloring pages, or food to enhance the program



Five Facts About Poland

1. The wisent, a type of wild bison, is the largest land mammal in Europe. It is very rare, but the largest population in Europe lives in Poland's Białowieża Primeval Forest.
2. Famous Poles include astronomer Nicolas Copernicus, scientist Marie Curie, composer Frederic Chopin, and Pope John Paul II.
3. Jagiellonian University is the oldest university in Poland and one of the oldest in the world. It was founded in 1364.
4. The Błędów Desert is the largest area of sand (away from the ocean) in all of Europe. It was deposited by a glacier thousands of years ago.
5. The salt mines at Wieliczka are over 700 years old. Through the years, miners have carved statues into the salt, and over 2000 "rooms" into the underground mine, including a church!



Annotated Bibliography

Unless otherwise specified, the non-fiction books listed here have many color photographs and images (but not cartoon-style illustrations) and they do not have an intimidating or distracting amount of text on the page. Although many of the selections are children's books, they are not obviously juvenile in their layout and illustrations.

Top Selections

DK Eyewitness Travel Cracow by Teresa Czerniewicz-Umer (Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2004, 2007, or 2013), and *DK Eyewitness Travel Poland* by Malgorzata Omilanowska (Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2013). (The author of either of these may also be listed as Craig Turp.): Each of these books has multiple illustrations (photographs and maps) on every page and a full-page photograph at the beginning of each section. Like all *Eyewitness* books, the layout is engaging and well balanced. Although the text on some pages is small and dense, the high number of quality photographs makes these books very enjoyable for browsing.

National Geographic Countries of the World: Poland by Zillah Deckker (National Geographic, 2008): This book includes five full-page maps and many photographs. Since it is a National Geographic publication, all of the photos are beautiful! The familiar "yellow rectangle" of National Geographic shows up frequently, which might be a positive association for some readers. Topics include: geography, nature, history, people & culture, and government. Each chapter includes insets on specific topics, including the wisent (European bison), the salt mines of Wieliczka, and Pope John Paul II.

Poland by Jay Heale (Marshall Cavendish, 2005): This book is longer than most other selections, and includes many photographs of Polish landscape, architecture, and everyday life. In addition, each chapter begins with a full-page photograph. There are thirteen chapters, some of which touch on topics that are not covered (or covered as deeply) in other books, such as



sports, languages, and pollution. Chapters include “History,” “Poles,” “Lifestyle,” “Arts,” and more.

Poland by Jan Kądziołka and Tadeusz Wojciechowski (Oliver Press, 2011): This large book has photographs on every page. There is also more text than in other selections, but it is well balanced with the white space and photographs. The large fonts might encourage reading as well as browsing. There are twelve sections, including “History,” “People and Culture,” “Cuisine,” “Nature,” and “Democratic Poland.

Welcome to Poland by Patrick Ryan (Child’s World, 2008): This book features fourteen sections, each with an interesting selection of images. Every section starts with a full-page photograph. Most of the photographs are pictures of Poles at work, at home, or celebrating. The font is large and the sentences are short and simple. Sections include “Plants and Animals,” “Long Ago,” “Poland Today,” and “Pastimes,” among others.

Alternate Selections

Chicago’s Polish Downtown by Victoria Granacki in association with the Polish Museum of America (Arcadia Publishing, 2004): This is listed as an alternate selection because the review is based on seeing the book online, not in person. “Polish Downtown” in Chicago’s near-north side is the city’s oldest Polish neighborhood. This book details the influential work that was done there in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each of the ten chapters covers a specific aspect of the development Polish-American culture in Chicago, such as parishes, businesses, arts, and schools. Multiple black and white photographs from the PMA’s collection are included.



Supplemental Materials



Souvenirs: Polish flags; nylon bumblebees (often found on magnets or paperclips) or other small bee toy to tie in with the folktale; small bouquet of real or silk flowers such as poppies, roses, marigolds, or cornflowers

Food: honey gingerbread, poppyseed rolls, soft pretzels

Music Suggestions (to search on <http://www.youtube.com> or in your own library's collection): compositions by Frederic Chopin (pictured right); Polish folk music and dancing; <http://www.poloniamusic.com> has a large selection of videos of many kinds of Polish music and dance.



Free coloring pages are available on the Internet from helpful resources such as <http://www.coloring.ws> and <http://www.supercoloring.com>. All coloring pages are subject to their own terms of use, separate from the Tales & Travel Creative Commons License. The following links are suggested for this Excursion: "Polish Coat of Arms"

(<http://www.coloring.ws/t.asp?b=m&t=http://www.coloring.ws/countries/poland/coat-of-arms.gif>).