



TRAVEL

Land of Thousand Lakes

# FALL IN LOVE WITH POLAND

Like a pretty dame overlooked in a crowd, Poland is an unspoiled destination waiting to be discovered. Charmed by its ethereal beauty, **Purva Bhatia** lists reasons why northern Poland may be the perfect honeymoon destination for you.

With its stunning lakes, picturesque landscape, and magnificent castles, Northern Poland's beauty besots you in no time. It's like getting instantaneously fascinated by someone you just met.

Before you know, you're already curious for more and eager to uncover its veiled charms. Like an eye-catching adolescent, unaware of her prettiness, it appears a little naïve. But then you soon discover its non-vulnerability. It is cheerful and serene despite its tormenting past. You'd imagine a country invaded so frequently by its neighbours to be cold and unwelcoming. Poles, however, are some of the most cordial Europeans you'd meet.

It is the presence of these contrasts that makes Poland so beguilingly attractive. It has suffered several times but always survived gracefully – everything from invasions to economic crisis. Not a victim but a valiant survivor, Poland is the land of eternal optimism. Be

prepared, its sanguinity is infectious!

With such innumerable charms, a mini romance with the country is guaranteed but don't be surprised if you leave a piece of your heart here and remain in love with it forever.

Now, imagine exploring such a destination with the love of your life. No matter what your travel style is, there is something loveable about Poland for everyone.

## The Romantics:

Nominated as one of the 28 'New 7 wonders of Nature', the Mazury district in northeast Poland is an absolute fit in your itinerary for honeymoon or a romantic vacation. Famous for its gorgeous lakes and forests, it offers a wide range of outdoor activities like kayaking, fishing, sailing, windsurfing, biking, wildlife watching, to name a few. Ideal for a couple that enjoys walking around, cycling, watching the sunset, and conversing with a backdrop truly blessed by nature.

Kayaking is a peaceful experience





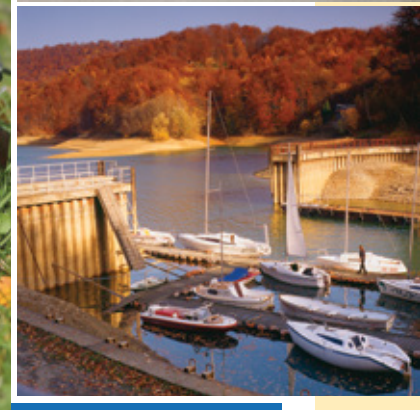
Beautiful view from the kayak



Mushroom hunting



Malbork Castle reconstructed after nearly total destruction



View of the Malbork Castle



#### Bollywood in Poland:

Salman Khan-starrer 'Kick' was extensively shot in Warsaw. But long before that, 'Fanaa' starring Amir Khan and Kajol showed the picturesque landscape of Zakopane in Poland as Kashmir in the movie.

#### Nature Lovers:

Spending quality time with nature is a part of Polish way of life. I met several people who had left Poland for better economic prospects but came back because they prefer a work-life balance. They work through the week and reserve the weekends for admiring nature – through cycling or skiing, kayaking or just lazing around at a resort in a district like Mazury.

Need we say more? If you're a couple in love with nature, Poland is a place you might not want to leave! There are a plenty of places to admire the natural world. One of the ways of doing so is by kayaking or canoeing. If you haven't tried it before, it is an experience that has power to change your life!

We recommend taking the Krutynia trail. The silence you hear while kayaking down the Krutynia river is musical. The picturesque landscape of the route leaves you in awe but it is the sound of silence that catches your attention.

The picturesque solitary routes, with wild vegetation and chirping birds for company, are soothing beyond belief. The experience can be best described as meditation on flowing water. However, if you are seeking adventure, there are thrilling routes as well. Whitewater kayaking attracts tourists from all over Europe because it is only here that some tracks are right in the city centre.

#### The Spa-ctacular Couple:

"Poland's proximity to the Baltic Sea gives its spa centres direct access to clean waters of a sea that has one of the lowest salt contents in the world. Plus we are blessed with abundant natural springs, wells, and geothermal waters that work wonderfully well to make it a health & wellness destination," informs Mlotkowski to informs Wojtek Mlotkowski, the tour guide.

Poland puts its natural resources like mineral water and mud to good use with increasing number of spa hotels and resorts, catering to the growing domestic demand for healing therapies. The country has over 200 spa resorts in 40 health centers. You can pick a luxury resort or even a small spa centre, located near big cities or up close with nature away from all the hustle and bustle. Whichever location you choose, stunning views are guaranteed. Most of the hotels offer a wide range of therapies including Ayurveda, a Finnish sauna, swimming pools among various luxurious facilities.

#### Recommended spa hotels:

Dr Irena Eris Dylewskie Wzgórza Hotel and Grand Hotel Tiffi in Ilawa

#### The Foodies:

If you and your partner fall into this category, we recommend that you throw away your weighing scale

after you come back from Poland! Not only is Polish cuisine rich but there's also so much variety to try and experiment. From zupa (soup) to desserts, there is much to be relished.

Some of the local dishes you must try include Pyzy and Pierogi. The former is a delicacy is essentially boiled balls made from grated potatoes and flour prepared without any filling as well as with meat or mushrooms. Pierogi is Polish dumpling but nothing like the ones you have in India, China or Belarus; it can be sweet or spicy. There are several restaurants specialising solely in Pierogi. Warszawa Wschodnia restaurant in Minska, Warszawa is one of the many restaurants that can even give you cooking lessons. We attended a splendid workshop here before our meal.

Your trip to Poland cannot be complete without tasting the famous Polish vodka. There are many kinds of clear as well as flavoured vodkas to keep you in high spirits.

For sweet cravings, there are appetizing options but we highly recommend Wedel's chocolate. E Wedel is the oldest brand of chocolate in Poland that started over 160 years ago. The owner, Karol Wedel, opened his first chocolate café in 1851 in Warsaw. A special treat is the hand decorated wafer





Kayaking in Krutyn River



Getting ready for kayaking

cake, layered with nut cream and covered in Wedel Chocolate.

To get an authentic Polish experience, befriend a local and go mushroom hunting! A dying tradition, this has been a favourite weekend activity for local families for years. Speak to the locals and you might hear of fights between neighbours and friends for not revealing the spots for mushroom hunting! A tradition that serious at one time is slowly dying although it is still carried on for commercial purposes.

#### **Recommended romantic restaurants:**

Kafe Zielony  
Niedzwiedz; Warszawa Wschodnia  
and Gothic restaurant in Malbork Castle

**Note:** While we recommend sampling Polish cuisine on your trip, there are good Indian restaurants too. Like Tandoor House in Sopot, Bollywood Lounge, Amrit Kebab, Namaste India in Warsaw.

#### **Historically Speaking...**

Are you the couple that loves history and museums? The country

is probably already on your bucket list. Fate hasn't been very kind to the country. Yet the repeated bruises and wounds are barely visible on its monuments and infrastructure. Take for instance the Malbork Castle – the castle of the Teutonic order. The largest castle in the world was almost destroyed but meticulously restored in the early 20th century using techniques which are now followed world over for conservation of historical buildings. Severely damaged again during the Second World War, the castle was restored all over again. Architecturally brilliant, the castle symbolizes power and culture.



streets of Poland

#### **HANDY INFO**

##### **Recommended Hotels:**

- Mikolajki Hotel in Masuria
- Hotel Przystan in Olsztyn
- Hotel Rezydent in Sopot
- Hotel Intercontinental in Warsaw

##### **Useful Websites:**

- 1) Holiday Travel:  
<http://holidaytravel.pl/>
- 2) [www.poland.travel](http://www.poland.travel)

##### **Recommended Tour Guide:**

Wojtek Mlotkowski;

##### **Contact:**

[mlozkowski@tlen.pl](mailto:mlozkowski@tlen.pl);

##### **website:**

<http://polonia.pro/>





At peace, near the Baltic Sea

Open air museum in Olsztynek is likely to captivate you with its fascinating display of history. An ethnographic park more than a mere museum, it gives insights about the lives of earlier inhabitants of the region in an intriguing manner. Over ten thousand 19th and 20th century exhibits of popular culture material are displayed in replicas of houses, religious, industrial and farm architecture.

Another remarkable structure in Poland is the Palace of Science and Culture. Although a reminder of troubled past, the building has now become a symbol of Warsaw. A "gift" by the Soviet before leaving the country, it now buzzes with cultural and entertainment activities. There are musical concerts, film festivals, dance workshops et al.

To soak in history and observe the past up close, include Gdansk in your itinerary. The Old Town Square market and European Solidarity centre will surely enchant you. One of the oldest cities in Poland, it is most "fought-over city". Gdansk is also a visually attractive city with myriad colours and buzz around it. A walk on its cobbled streets and a cup of coffee in one of the many beautiful cafes will certainly be one of your favourite honeymoon memory!

### We Like to Party

While Warsaw has several vibrant bars and clubs, Sopot (a seaside city) has the most happening night bars and strip clubs. Young Poland loves to drink and dance the night away. And how! In fact, getting sloshed together is a sort of a clause for true friendship for Poles. Party hard together and they'll trust you more.

*Unexplored as a honeymoon destination, Poland can stun you with its beauty, tranquility, history and culture. Plan a trip before tourists start coming in large numbers and the prices soar! ●*



Kids at leisure in Old Town



Poland is the biggest manufacturer of mushrooms



Up close with birds while kayaking

### FACTSHEET

**Best Time to Visit:** March to October

**Cost:** Round trip from India to Warsaw starts at Rs 45000 approx.

**Currency:** Zloty (1 Zl = Rs 18) Euros are not accepted everywhere. You will have to convert USD or Euro into local currency.