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When Poland is mentioned in conversation, thoughts tend to turn to history, but that is all about to change as the country sets out its stall to position itself as the new kid on the block of golf's tourism market.

The game of golf is still very much in its infancy in Poland but, with Wizz Air operating regular direct flights to Gdansk from Glasgow, golfers now have a whole new option for a golf break opened up to them.

Spend just over two hours on a plane and you'll land in fantastic surroundings that boast warm summers with average temperatures ranging between 20 and 25 degrees.

I was invited to experience the golfing delights of two of Poland's most northerly regions and to see that flying into Gdansk offers a number of options for the golf lover, with the stunning areas of Warminsko-Mazurskie and Pomorskie just 100km from the city's airport.

The Pomorskie region sits on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea in the north of Poland and its major urban centre is made up of three main cities, Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. It is also home to four golf courses - Sierra, Postolowo, Tokary and Zajaczkowo - that can be combined to create a great golf holiday.

For me, Sierra is the pick of the bunch. It's a sophisticated resort with everything from on-site accommodation to fantastic practice facilities, a lavish clubhouse and, of course, a brilliant golf layout.

The course was immaculately presented and it would be a tough ask to find a layout that has been more expertly looked after. Designed by Cameron Sinclair, it becomes increasingly challenging as the round goes on and the holes make their way through the natural undulations of the land. It is when you get into the teeth

Pole Position

Poland is awash with great golfing experiences for you to enjoy



■ Sand Valley Golf & Country Club



TRAVEL

■ Mazury Golf Club



■ Sierra Golf Club



■ Land of a Thousand Lakes

of the back nine that the impressive, but daunting, water hazards come into play. It truly is a fantastic course and the on-site accommodation is great for groups of all sizes.

For those wanting to experience as much as they can in the area, you have two options for staying away from Sierra. The famed city of Gdansk is a popular tourist location and combines everything through its modern, cosmopolitan feel and centuries-old history, which is dotted around the bustling city centre. It is home to the European Solidarity Centre, a real eye-opener to Poland's history and the bloodless revolution in Gdansk's

shipyards that brought an end to Communist rule in the country.

If you'd rather go somewhere to enjoy great food, a few drinks and some lively nightlife, the seaside town of Sopot may be just what you're looking for. Less than 40km from Sierra Golf Club, you'll be amazed how this attractive town, famed for its beaches, transforms at night into a hot-spot for young revellers.

Warminsko-Mazurskie was the second region we visited and it is home to two excellent golf courses. The first thing that will strike you about this region is its beauty. Known as 'the land of a thousand lakes', it is Poland's answer to the

Lake District and you'll find stunning views everywhere.

The combination of the Hotel Marina Club and Mazury Golf & Country Club makes for a fantastic weekend getaway for couples. The Hotel Marina Club is a unique five-star hotel in Mazuria that sits on the edge of a lake and is the perfect place to escape to for a relaxing break.

Just a short drive from the hotel, the course at Mazury Golf & Country Club was created by Martin Hawtree, the brains behind Trump International Golf Links Scotland and changes to Muirfield and Royal Aberdeen. Mazury is a beautiful set-up that has been created over naturally

undulating land and presents a number of challenges. Hawtree's design influence is clear to see on the back nine, in particular, with good course management key to keeping your ball in play throughout.

The second course in the area, Sand Valley Golf & Country Club, is more suited to those looking for an enjoyable golf weekend away with their mates.

It opened in 2009 and is an 18-hole inland links championship design that has taken clear influence from some of the world's top courses, including Pine Valley. Host to both the 2013 and 2014 Polish Open, it combines wide fairways, undulating greens and sandy waste areas to create a great

golfing experience that can be enjoyed by players of all standards.

Its high quality on-site villas and apartments are the perfect place to unwind after your round, with swimming pools and saunas on offer, as well as free WiFi, satellite television and fully-equipped modern kitchens. What's more, it's just a short walk from the clubhouse and the first tee.

If you want to combine golf with some culture, the city of Elblag is a prime candidate. Just 20 minutes' drive from Sand Valley, it is full of history, charm and comfort.

I stayed in the Hotel Elblag in the centre of the Old Town, and it was a great base for spending some time looking

around the town and enjoying the local cuisine.

For someone who had never been to Poland before, my pre-conceptions were blown out of the water. These two northerly regions have plenty to offer to both the golfing group looking to play great courses and have fun in the local bars at night, as well as couples who are looking for a relaxing break with some golf thrown in. With something for everyone, it really is about to take the golf tourism industry by storm.

For more information on golf in Poland, log-on to poland.travel. Direct low-cost flights are available through Wizzair from London Luton to Gdansk (flight time approx. 2hrs 10mins). For prices and dates, visit wizzair.com

USEFUL LINKS FOR YOUR NEXT GOLF TRIP

Warmia & Masuria Region
www.mazury.travel

Marina Club Hotel
www.hotelmarinaclub.pl/en/

Mazury Golf & Country Club
www.mazurygolf.pl

Elblag Hotel
www.hotelelblog.eu/en

Sand Valley Golf & Country Club
www.sandvalley.pl/en/

Pomorskie Region
www.pomorskie.travel

Sierra Golf Club
www.sierragolf.pl/en/