

Wilson adventure's topic map

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Site organization

Everything you need to know to use this site.

This site was created to inform you about Ann and Don's European adventure. To navigate this site, you'll need to know the layout of the homepage and the three subpages.

The homepage has a table with a snapshot of where Ann and Don will be when and a link to their hotel information. If you want to learn more about what they'll be doing in each country, you can click on the country image or button and it'll bring you to the desired subpage.

The subpages contain more detailed information about what Ann and Don will be doing in each city and it will also show when they'll be there. The subpages contain more detailed information.

Country background information

Poland background information

Some important information about Poland that could impact travel arrangements.

Figure 1: Map of Poland

Capital: Warsaw

Time: Poland is seven hours ahead of Minnesota. For example, if it's 1:00 p.m. in Minnesota, it will be 8:00 p.m. in Poland.

Weather: Poland climate is typically cold during the winter and warm during the summer, and greatly influenced by oceanic air currents from the west, cold polar air from Scandinavia and Russia, as well as warmer, subtropical air from the south.

Languages: Polish is the main language with English being the most common second language studied and spoken.

Currency: Poland's currency is the Polish Zloty (PLN). Currently, the conversion rate is 1 U.S. dollar to 4.178 PLN.

Transportation: Travel by means of rail, road, marine shipping, and air travel. Since 2004, Poland has invested a lot in modernizing their transportation networks.

Traditional foods: Polish cuisine shares similarities with Germany and Austria especially, but also Jewish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian, French and Italian culinary traditions. It's rich in meat (pork, chicken, and beef) and winter vegetables (cabbage), and spices. The Polish national dishes are bigos, pierogi, kielbasa, kotlet schabowy, breaded cutlet, sour cucumber soup, and tripe soup among others.

Traditional drinks: Traditional alcohol beverages include honey mead, beer, wine, and vodka. Popular non-alcoholic drinks include tea, juices, soft drinks, buttermilk, soured milk, and kefir.

Population: Roughly 38,544,513 inhabitants, which is the 8th largest population in Europe. There are roughly 328 people per square mile.

Political leader(s): Poland is a representative democracy and Andrzej Duda is the President and Beata Szydlo is the Prime Minister.

Religions: There was a large Jewish population prior to World War II; however, now the overwhelming majority of people are Roman Catholic. Freedom of religion is guaranteed.

Healthcare system: Based on an all-inclusive insurance system. All medical service providers and hospitals are subordinate to the Polish Ministry of Health. The Hospitals are organized according to the regional administrative structure, so most towns have their own hospital. Most hospitals are modern and have been recently updated.

Major industries and imports/exports: Poland's industrial base suffered greatly because of World War II. Today, their main concentrations are on fertilizers, petrochemicals, machine tools, electrical machinery, electronics, car manufacturing, and shipbuilding. Their main imports are capital goods needed for industrial retooling and for manufacturing inputs. The most successful exports are furniture, foods, motor boats, light planes, hardwood products, casual clothing, shoes, and cosmetics.

Germany background information

Some important information about Germany that could impact travel arrangements.

Figure 2: Map of Germany

Capital: Berlin

Time: Germany is seven hours ahead of Minnesota. For example, if it's 1:00 p.m. in Minnesota, it will be 8:00 p.m. in Germany.

Weather: Germany's weather is moderate and has generally no longer periods of cold or hot weather. Northwestern and coastal Germany has warm summers and mild cloudy winters. Farther inland, the climate has greater seasonal variations with warm summers and cold winters.

Language: German is the primary language spoken, but Low German, Dutch, Frisian, and English are also commonly spoken.

Currency: Germany's currency is the Euro. Currently, 1 U.S. dollar equals 0.94 Euro.

Transportation: Germany is a transportation hub for Europe due to its central position. Germany's road network is among the densest in the world. The Autobahn is known for its lack of a speed limit and is a tourist experience. Germany also has a network of high-speed trains and has two large airports in Frankfurt and Munich.

Traditional foods: German cuisine varies from region to region and international varieties are also widely popular and available. Bread is a significant part of the German diet and German cheese accounts for a third of the cheese produced in Europe. Most meals contain pork, beef, or chicken. Bratwursts, Weisswursts, and Currywursts are largely popular.

Traditional drinks: The national alcoholic drink is beer. German's consume the most beer in the world. Wine is gaining popularity in many parts of Germany.

Population: Germany has a population of roughly 81.5 million with 588 people per square mile.

Political leader(s): Germany is a federal, parliamentary, representative democratic republic. Joachim Gauck is the President and Angela Merkel is the Chancellor.

Religions: Germany is two-third Christian and one-third Protestant.

Healthcare system: Germany has the world's oldest universal healthcare system and currently the population is covered by a health insurance plan provided by statute with criteria allowing some groups to opt for a private health insurance contract.

Major industries and imports/exports: Germany's main industries include iron and steel, coal, cement, mineral fuels, chemicals, plastics, production machinery, vehicles, trains, shipbuilding, space and aircraft, machine tools, electronics, information technology, optical and medical apparatus, pharmaceuticals, food and beverages, and textiles. Germany is a top location for trade fairs with around two-thirds of the world's leading trade fairs taking place in Germany.

France background information

Some important information about France that could impact travel arrangements.

Figure 3: Map of France

Capital: Paris

Time: France is seven hours ahead of Minnesota. For example, if it's 1:00 p.m. in Minnesota, it will be 8:00 p.m. in France.

Weather: France's weather greatly depends on where you are in France. Since Ann and Don will be in Paris, the climate there is variable. There's a chance of downpour in the spring or a thunderstorm in the summer. In the spring and fall, Paris is mild and relatively dry. July and August are the warmest months. The wettest month is usually October.

Languages: French is the official language and many are taught English as a second language.

Currency: France's currency is the Euro. Currently, 1 U.S. dollar equals 0.94 Euro.

Transportation: The railway network of France is the second most extensive in Western Europe (after Germany). It has high-speed trains including the Thalys, the Eurostar, and TGV. The Eurostar connects the United Kingdom through the Channel Tunnel. France has the most extensive roadway on the continent and the roads and highways connect virtually all parts of the country.

Traditional foods: French cuisine is renowned for being one of the finest in the world. Traditional recipes are different based on region and each region has iconic traditional specialties. France is known for their cheeses, such as Camembert, Roquefort, and Brie. A meal consists of three courses: hors d'oeuvre or entree, plat principal (main course), fromage (cheese course) and/or dessert. Macarons are a common dessert.

Traditional drinks: Wine is the drink of choice in France, but beer is also highly produced.

Population: There are roughly 66.6 million people in France and 64.5 million of them are located in metropolitan France. France has a fairly high rate of natural population growth.

Political leader(s): France is a unitary semi-presidential republic with strong democratic traditions. Francois Hollande is the President.

Religions: France is a secular country and the freedom of religion is a constitutional right. Catholicism is the predominant religion in France and most of the religious buildings are Roman Catholic.

Healthcare system: The French healthcare system is one of universal healthcare largely financed by government national health insurance. France's healthcare system was ranked first worldwide by the World Health Organization. Care is generally free for people affected by chronic diseases.

Major industries and imports/exports: Major industries in France include automobile manufacturing, aircraft production, chemicals, electronics, machinery manufacturing, metallurgy, and tourism. France's main exports include valuable commodities such as steel, machinery, pharmaceutical products, consumer products, petroleum, chemicals, iron, and transportation equipment. France's imports include crude oil, chemicals, aircraft, machinery, plastics, and vehicles.