Thanks to its position on the Berlin–Warsaw rail line, **POZNAŃ** is many visitors’ first taste of Poland. It’s a city of great diversity, encompassing tranquil medieval quarters, a fine main square, dynamic business districts and an arty-bohemian subculture. The sixteenth-century **town hall** that dominates the **Old Town Square** (Stary Rynek) has a striking eastern facade, which frames a frieze of notable Polish monarchs. Inside is the **Poznań Historical Museum** (mid-June to mid-Sept: Tues–Thurs 11am–5pm, Fri noon–9pm, Sat & Sun 11am–6pm; mid-Sept to mid-June: Tues–Thurs 9am–3pm, Fri noon–9pm, Sat & Sun 11am–6pm; 7zł, Sat free), worth visiting for the Renaissance Great Hall on the first floor. East of the Old Town Square, a bridge crosses to the quiet holy island of **Ostrów Tumski**, dominated by Poland’s oldest cathedral, the **Cathedral of St John the Bapist**. Most of the structure was reconstructed after the war, and Poland’s first two monarchs are buried in the crypt. Anyone with even a passing interest in architecture should also take a look at the wonderfully renovated **Stary Browar** southwest of the centre at Półwiejska 32 (Mon–Sat 9am–9pm, Sun 10am–8pm; [starybrowar5050.com](http://www.starybrowar5050.com)), a nineteenth-century brewery impressively transformed into cultural centre and shopping mall. The city’s trade fairs, which take place throughout the year (July & Aug excepted), can cause hotel prices to double, so always book ahead.