

Packing Guide for Poland

A comprehensive guide to help international students prepare and pack efficiently for their stay in Poland.

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packing

essentials

international students

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travel

Introduction to Packing for Poland

Preparing to study in Poland requires thoughtful planning, especially when it comes to packing. This comprehensive guide will help you determine what to bring, what to leave behind, and what you can easily purchase after arrival. Poland experiences four distinct seasons, each requiring different clothing and accessories, so we'll cover seasonal considerations as well as essential items for your academic and daily life.



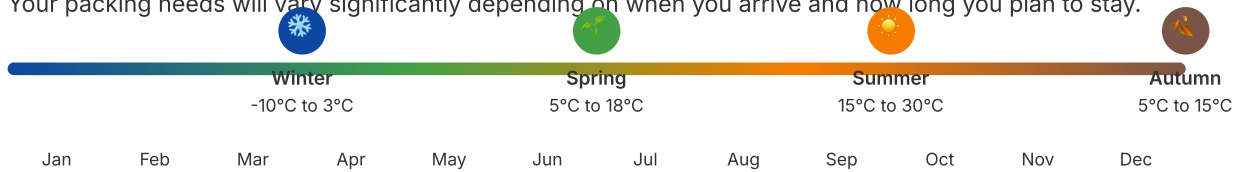
Remember that airlines have baggage restrictions. Check your airline's specific weight and size limitations before packing.

As an international student, balancing between packing light and bringing all necessities can be challenging. This guide aims to help you make informed decisions about what to include in your luggage. We've organized items by category and priority to make your packing process more efficient.

Poland has excellent shopping facilities, from large shopping malls to local markets and online stores, so many items can be purchased after arrival. This guide will indicate which items are essential to bring and which can be bought locally.

Seasonal Packing Considerations

Poland experiences four distinct seasons, each with its own temperature range and weather conditions. Your packing needs will vary significantly depending on when you arrive and how long you plan to stay.



Winter (Dec-Feb)

Temperature: -10°C to 3°C

- Heavy winter coat/parka
- Thermal underwear
- Sweaters and warm layers
- Waterproof winter boots
- Warm hat, scarf, and gloves
- Thick socks

Spring (Mar-May)

Temperature: 5°C to 18°C

- Light to medium jacket
- Waterproof shoes
- Umbrella or raincoat
- Layers for variable weather
- Light sweaters
- Comfortable walking shoes

Summer (Jun-Aug)

Temperature: 15°C to 30°C

- Light clothing
- T-shirts and shorts
- Summer dresses
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Light jacket for evenings
- Comfortable sandals

Autumn (Sep-Nov)

Temperature: 5°C to 15°C

- Medium-weight jacket
- Light sweaters and layers
- Waterproof shoes
- Umbrella
- Scarf and light gloves
- Warm socks



If you're arriving in autumn or winter, prioritize packing warm clothing. For spring or summer arrivals, you can pack lighter and purchase winter items later if needed.

Polish buildings are generally well-heated during winter, so having layers that you can add or remove is essential for comfort both indoors and outdoors. Similarly, not all student accommodations have air conditioning, so light, breathable clothing is important for summer.

Clothing Recommendations

Packing the right clothing for Poland's variable climate is essential for comfort throughout the year. Here's a comprehensive clothing packing list organized by priority and season.

Year-Round Essentials

Everyday Basics

- 7-10 pairs of underwear
- 7-10 pairs of socks
- 5-7 t-shirts/tops
- 2-3 pairs of jeans/pants
- 2-3 sweaters/hoodies
- 1-2 pairs of comfortable shoes
- 1 pair of slippers/indoor shoes
- Sleepwear

Formal/Semi-Formal

- 1-2 formal outfits for presentations
- 1 pair of formal shoes
- 1-2 business casual outfits
- 1 formal jacket or blazer
- Ties/accessories (if applicable)

Polish universities may have formal events or presentations requiring business attire.

Activewear

- 1-2 sets of workout clothes
- 1 pair of athletic shoes
- Swimwear (if you plan to use pools)
- Sports accessories as needed

Many universities have sports facilities available to students.

Seasonal Clothing

Winter Essentials	Spring/Autumn Items	Summer Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy winter coat/parka • Thermal underwear (2-3 sets) • Warm sweaters (3-4) • Thick socks (5-7 pairs) • Waterproof winter boots • Warm hat, scarf, and gloves • Fleece or wool layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-weight jacket • Light sweaters (2-3) • Long-sleeve shirts (3-4) • Waterproof shoes • Umbrella or raincoat • Light scarf and gloves • Layering pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorts (2-3 pairs) • Summer dresses/skirts • Short-sleeve shirts (5-6) • Light pants (2 pairs) • Sandals • Sunglasses and hat • Light jacket for evenings



The layering approach works best in Poland: base layer + insulating layer + outer layer. This allows you to adjust to temperature changes throughout the day.

Special Considerations

- **Quality over quantity:** Invest in a few high-quality, durable items rather than many low-quality pieces
- **Waterproofing:** Ensure your outerwear and footwear are waterproof, especially for autumn and winter
- **Cultural norms:** Polish dress style is generally smart-casual in academic settings
- **Local shopping:** Poland has many affordable clothing stores like Reserved, H&M, and Zara where you can supplement your wardrobe

Packing Strategy for Different Arrival Seasons

Arriving in Summer/Spring:

Pack mostly warm-weather clothing and just a few cold-weather essentials. Purchase winter items in Poland during autumn.

Arriving in Winter/Autumn:

Prioritize cold-weather clothing in your luggage. You can pack lighter items for the following spring/summer or purchase them later.

Toiletries and Medications

While most toiletries and over-the-counter medications are readily available in Poland, there are some considerations for what to bring and what to buy locally.

Bring from Home

- **Prescription medications** (in original packaging with doctor's note)
- **Specific brands** you prefer that might not be available in Poland
- **Special skincare products** for specific conditions
- **Contact lenses/solution** (initial supply)
- **Small travel-sized toiletries** for your first few days

Buy in Poland

- **Shampoo and conditioner**
- **Soap, shower gel, and body lotion**
- **Toothpaste and mouthwash**
- **Deodorant**
- **Razors and shaving supplies**
- **Feminine hygiene products**
- **Common over-the-counter medications**

Medications and Health Supplies

If you take prescription medications, bring enough to last until you can establish care with a local doctor. Consider these guidelines:

Medication Checklist

- **Bring a 1-3 month supply** of any prescription medications
- **Carry a doctor's note** or prescription for all medications
- **Keep medications in original packaging** with labels intact
- **Check if your medications are legal in Poland** (some controlled substances may be restricted)
- **Bring a basic first-aid kit** with band-aids, antiseptic, pain relievers, etc.
- **Consider any specific health needs** (allergy medications, inhalers, etc.)



If you need to bring a large quantity of prescription medication, check with the Polish embassy in your country about any import restrictions or required documentation.

Where to Buy Toiletries and Medications in Poland

Type of Store	What You Can Find	Price Range
Drogeria (Rossmann, Hebe, etc.)	Toiletries, cosmetics, basic health items, some over-the-counter medications	Affordable to mid-range
Apteka (Pharmacy)	Prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, medical supplies	Varies by medication
Supermarkets (Biedronka, Lidl, etc.)	Basic toiletries, hygiene products	Budget-friendly
Shopping Malls	Wide range of personal care products, specialty stores	Budget to high-end



Many pharmacies in Poland are marked with a green cross sign and are called "Apteka." Some are open 24/7 in major cities.

Health Insurance and Medical Care

International students in Poland are required to have health insurance. You have two main options:

- 1. National Health Fund (NFZ):** If you're an EU citizen with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or if you purchase NFZ insurance (approximately 60 PLN/month)
- 2. Private health insurance:** Must meet minimum coverage requirements for your visa/residence permit

For more detailed information about healthcare in Poland, visit our [Healthcare Guide for International Students](#).

Electronics and Gadgets

Modern student life requires various electronic devices for studying and staying connected. Here's what to consider bringing and what to know about electronics in Poland.

Essential Electronics

- ✔ **Laptop/Computer**
Essential for coursework, research, and online classes
- ✔ **Smartphone**
For communication, navigation, and mobile banking
- ✔ **Chargers and Cables**
For all your devices (bring extras if possible)
- ✔ **Power Adapters**
Poland uses Type C and E plugs (230V, 50Hz)
- ✔ **Headphones**
For online classes, studying, and entertainment

Optional Electronics

- + **External Hard Drive**
For backing up important documents and coursework
- + **USB Flash Drive**
For transferring files and presentations
- + **E-reader**
For textbooks and reading materials
- + **Camera**
If photography is your hobby or part of your studies
- + **Power Bank**
For charging devices on the go

Electrical Information for Poland

- **Voltage:** 230V (compared to 110-120V in North America)
- **Frequency:** 50Hz
- **Plug Types:** Type C (two round pins) and Type E (two round pins with ground)



Type C Plug



Type E Plug



If your devices are not compatible with 230V, you'll need a voltage converter in addition to a plug adapter.

Internet and Mobile Connectivity

Poland has excellent internet infrastructure and affordable mobile plans. Here's what to know:

- Most universities provide free Wi-Fi on campus
- Student dormitories typically have internet access included
- Consider purchasing a Polish SIM card upon arrival (providers include Play, Orange, T-Mobile, and Plus)
- Prepaid SIM cards are readily available and don't require a contract
- Monthly mobile plans with data typically cost 20-40 PLN (\$5-10 USD)

For more information about mobile providers and internet options in Poland, visit our [Connectivity Guide for International Students](#).

Essential Documents and Items

Before packing clothes and personal items, ensure you have all necessary documents and essentials that cannot be easily replaced or purchased in Poland.

MUST-HAVE

Critical Documents

- ✔ **Passport** (valid for at least 6 months)
- ✔ **Visa** (if applicable)
- ✔ **Acceptance letter** from university
- ✔ **Original educational documents**
- ✔ **Health insurance** documents
- ✔ **Accommodation confirmation**
- ✔ **Financial statements** or proof of funds

IMPORTANT

Personal Essentials

- ⊕ **International credit/debit cards**
- ⊕ **Some cash in PLN** (Polish Złoty)
- ⊕ **Prescription medications** (with doctor's note)
- ⊕ **Passport-sized photos** (8-10)
- ⊕ **Power adapters** (European standard)
- ⊕ **Emergency contact information**

Document Preparation Tips

- **Digital copies:** Scan all important documents and store them in cloud storage and on a USB drive
- **Physical copies:** Keep at least one photocopy of each document separate from originals
- **Document folder:** Use a waterproof document organizer to keep everything in one place
- **Translations:** Have official translations of important documents if they're not in English or Polish

⚠ Never pack important documents in checked luggage. Always keep them in your carry-on bag.

Financial Preparations

- Inform your bank about your travel to Poland to prevent card blocks
- Research banking options in Poland and consider opening a local bank account after arrival
- Bring enough cash to cover your first few weeks (approximately 1000-1500 PLN)
- Consider getting a multi-currency card or one with low international fees

For more information about banking and financial matters in Poland, check our [Financial Guide for International Students](#).

Kitchen and Household Items

What kitchen and household items you'll need depends largely on your accommodation type. Student dormitories often provide basic furniture and sometimes kitchen equipment, while private apartments may be fully furnished, partially furnished, or unfurnished.

Student Dormitories

Typically provided:

- Bed and mattress
- Desk and chair
- Wardrobe/storage
- Shared kitchen with basic equipment
- Shared bathroom facilities
- Internet connection

Consider bringing/buying:

- Bedding set (or buy locally)
- Personal dishes and utensils
- Small electric kettle
- Bathroom caddy for toiletries
- Flip-flops for shared showers

Private Accommodation

May need to purchase:

- Bedding and towels
- Kitchen utensils and cookware
- Dishes and cutlery
- Basic cleaning supplies
- Bathroom essentials
- Small appliances

Check before arrival:

- What items are included in your rental
- Condition of provided appliances
- If previous tenants left usable items

Recommended Kitchen Items

Basic Cooking

- 1-2 pots and pans
- Cooking utensils (spatula, spoon)
- Cutting board and knife
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Can opener and bottle opener

Eating Essentials

- 2-4 plates and bowls
- 2-4 sets of cutlery
- 2-4 glasses/mugs
- Food storage containers
- Dish towels

Small Appliances

- Electric kettle
- Microwave (if not provided)
- Toaster
- Coffee maker (if you drink coffee)
- Small blender

Consider buying these in Poland to avoid voltage issues.



Many student dormitories and shared apartments have communal kitchens where some equipment is already available. Check what's provided before purchasing items.

Household Essentials

Category	Items to Consider	Buy in Poland?
Bedding	Sheets, pillowcases, duvet cover, blanket	Yes - standard European sizes differ from other regions
Bathroom	Towels, shower caddy, toilet paper (initial supply)	Towels can be brought or purchased locally
Cleaning	Basic cleaning supplies, laundry detergent	Yes - readily available and affordable
Decor	Photos, small decorative items, plants	Bring personal items, buy larger items locally
Storage	Hangers, under-bed storage, desk organizers	Yes - available at IKEA, Pepco, and other stores

Where to Shop for Household Items in Poland

- **IKEA:** Affordable furniture and household goods (located in major cities)
- **Pepco, Action:** Budget-friendly household items and decor
- **Jysk:** Bedding, furniture, and home accessories
- **Empik Home & You:** Home decor and accessories
- **Carrefour, Auchan:** Hypermarkets with household sections
- **OLX, Allegro:** Online marketplaces for new and second-hand items
- **Facebook Marketplace:** Good for finding used items from departing students

Money-Saving Tips

- Look for student groups on Facebook where departing students sell their household items
- Check if your university has a "free stuff" exchange program for international students
- Consider sharing costs of kitchen items with roommates
- Visit second-hand stores ("Sklep z używanymi rzeczami") for affordable options
- Wait until arrival to assess what you actually need before making purchases

Study Materials and Academic Supplies

Preparing the right academic materials will help you start your studies smoothly. While many resources will be provided by your university, having some essentials ready will make your transition easier.

Essential Study Materials

- **Laptop/tablet** with necessary software
- **Notebooks and paper** for note-taking
- **Pens, pencils, highlighters**
- **Calculator** (if required for your program)
- **USB flash drive** for file transfers
- **Planner or calendar** for organizing your schedule
- **Backpack or laptop bag**

Program-Specific Materials

Engineering/Architecture:

- Drawing supplies
- Specialized calculators
- Drafting tools

Arts/Design:

- Art supplies
- Portfolio case
- Sketchbooks

Sciences:

- Lab notebook
- Scientific calculator
- Reference materials

Digital Resources and Software

Many academic resources are now digital. Consider these digital preparations:

- **University-specific software:** Check if your program requires specific software
- **Office suite:** Microsoft Office or alternatives (many universities provide free licenses)
- **Cloud storage:** Set up Google Drive, OneDrive, or Dropbox for backing up work
- **Reference management:** Tools like Zotero, Mendeley, or EndNote for academic citations
- **E-books and digital textbooks:** Check if your university provides access
- **VPN service:** Useful for accessing resources from your home country if needed



Many Polish universities provide free or discounted software licenses to students. Check with your university's IT department before purchasing software.

Language Resources

While many programs in Poland are taught in English, having some Polish language resources can be helpful:

- **Polish-English dictionary** (physical or app)
- **Basic Polish phrasebook** for everyday situations
- **Language learning apps** like Duolingo or Babbel
- **Translation app** on your smartphone (Google Translate works well in Poland)

Where to Buy Academic Supplies in Poland

- **Empik:** Large bookstore chain with stationery sections
- **Papierniczy:** Stationery stores found in most shopping centers
- **University bookstores:** Often have program-specific materials
- **Media Markt, RTV Euro AGD:** For electronics and tech supplies
- **Online:** Allegro.pl is Poland's largest online marketplace

Important Academic Documents

Don't forget to bring these important academic documents:

- **Original diplomas and transcripts** from previous education
- **Certified translations** of academic documents (if not in English or Polish)
- **Standardized test scores** (IELTS, TOEFL, GRE, etc.)
- **Course syllabi** from previous studies (if seeking credit transfers)
- **Letters of recommendation** (if applicable)
- **Research proposals or portfolios** (for specific programs)

For more information about academic expectations and resources in Polish universities, visit our [Academic Success Guide](#).

What Not to Bring

Knowing what to leave behind is just as important as knowing what to pack. Here are items you should avoid bringing to Poland:

Prohibited or Restricted Items

- ⊗ **Illegal drugs and narcotics**
Strictly prohibited and can result in serious legal consequences
- ⊗ **Weapons and ammunition**
Including firearms, knives, pepper spray, etc.
- ⊗ **Counterfeit goods**
Illegal under Polish and EU law
- ⊗ **Certain food items**
Meat, dairy, and plant products from outside the EU may be restricted
- ⊗ **Large amounts of alcohol or tobacco**
Exceeding EU customs allowances

Unnecessary Items

- ⊗ **Excessive clothing**
Bring only what you need for the first season; you can buy more locally
- ⊗ **Bulky appliances**
Hair dryers, irons, etc. can be purchased inexpensively in Poland
- ⊗ **Unnecessary items**
These items are not essential for daily life in Poland

Shopping in Poland

Poland offers excellent shopping options at reasonable prices. Understanding where to shop for different items can help you decide what to bring and what to buy after arrival.

Clothing & Accessories

Budget Options:

- H&M, Reserved, Cropp
- Pepco, KiK
- Second-hand shops ("Sklep z używaną odzieżą")

Mid-range Options:

- Zara, Pull & Bear, Bershka
- CCC, Deichmann (shoes)
- Local Polish brands

Shopping malls in major cities have all major international brands.

Groceries & Food

Budget Supermarkets:

- Biedronka, Lidl, Aldi
- Kaufland, Netto

Larger Hypermarkets:

- Carrefour, Auchan
- Leclerc, Tesco

Specialty Food:

- Local markets ("Targowisko")
- Ethnic food stores
- Organic shops ("Sklep ekologiczny")

Electronics & Tech

Major Retailers:

- Media Markt, RTV Euro AGD
- Media Expert, X-KOM

Online Options:

- Allegro.pl (Poland's largest marketplace)
- Morele.net, Komputronik (computers)
- Amazon.pl

Electronics prices are generally comparable to other EU countries.

Home & Furniture

Budget Options:

- IKEA (in major cities)
- Pepco, Action, KiK
- Jysk

Mid-range Options:

- Agata Meble, Black Red White
- Empik Home & You
- Leroy Merlin, Castorama (home improvement)

Second-hand:

- OLX.pl, Facebook Marketplace
- Second-hand furniture stores

Shopping Tips for International Students

Money-Saving Shopping Tips

- **Student discounts:** Always carry your student ID for discounts at many stores and services
- **Loyalty programs:** Sign up for loyalty cards at supermarkets and drugstores
- **Sales periods:** Major sales happen after Christmas and in summer (July-August)
- **Second-hand options:** Check Facebook groups for international students selling items

- **Price comparison:** Use apps like Ceneo.pl to compare prices across stores
- **Bulk buying:** Consider shopping with roommates to share costs of bulk items
- **Online marketplaces:** Allegro.pl and OLX.pl offer both new and used items

Shopping Malls in Major Polish Cities

City	Major Shopping Centers
Warsaw	Złote Tarasy, Westfield Arkadia, Galeria Mokotów, Blue City
Krakow	Galeria Krakowska, Bonarka City Center, Serenada, Galeria Kazimierz
Wrocław	Magnolia Park, Wroclavia, Galeria Dominikańska, Pasaż Grunwaldzki
Poznań	Stary Browar, Posnania, Avenida Poznań, Galeria Malta
Gdańsk	Forum Gdańsk, Galeria Bałtycka, Galeria Madison, Galeria Metropolia



Most shops in Poland are closed on Sundays, with some exceptions (like the first and last Sunday of each month). Plan your shopping accordingly!

Online Shopping in Poland

Online shopping is very popular and convenient in Poland. Here are the main platforms:

- **Allegro.pl:** Poland's largest online marketplace (similar to eBay/Amazon)
- **OLX.pl:** Classified ads platform, great for second-hand items
- **Amazon.pl:** Recently launched in Poland
- **Zalando:** Popular for clothing and accessories
- **AliExpress:** For budget items with longer delivery times
- **Empik.com:** Books, music, games, and more

Most online stores offer cash on delivery, bank transfer, or card payment options. Delivery is usually through courier services or to "Paczkomat" automated parcel lockers, which are very common throughout Poland.

Packing Tips and Strategies

Efficient packing can save you stress, money, and potential baggage fees. Here are some practical tips to help you pack smartly for your move to Poland.

1

Research Before Packing

Check your airline's baggage allowance, weather forecast for your arrival, and accommodation facilities. Understand what's provided and what you'll need to bring or buy.

2

Create a Packing List

Divide your list into categories: documents, clothing, electronics, toiletries, etc. Mark items as "must-bring," "can buy later," or "optional" to prioritize.

3

Pack Strategically

Use packing cubes or compression bags for clothing. Roll clothes instead of folding. Place heavy items at the bottom of your suitcase. Utilize all available space, including inside shoes.

4

Organize Your Carry-On

Pack all essential documents, valuables, medications, and a change of clothes in your carry-on. Include items you'll need immediately upon arrival.

5

Weigh and Adjust

Weigh your luggage before heading to the airport. If overweight, reassess what's essential and what can be purchased after arrival.

Space-Saving Packing Techniques

Rolling vs. Folding

Roll:

- T-shirts, casual pants, jeans
- Underwear and socks
- Lightweight jackets

Fold:

- Dress shirts and blouses
- Formal pants and skirts
- Sweaters and heavy items

Packing Accessories

- **Packing cubes:** Organize and compress clothing
- **Compression bags:** Reduce volume of bulky items
- **Shoe bags:** Keep clothes clean
- **Toiletry bag:** Prevent leaks
- **Cable organizer:** Keep electronics tidy



Consider shipping some items to Poland if you have a lot to bring. International shipping services or postal services can be more economical than paying for extra baggage.

Luggage Recommendations

- **Check airline restrictions** for size, weight, and number of bags allowed
- **Invest in quality luggage** with wheels that can handle cobblestone streets

- **Use distinctive luggage tags** to easily identify your bags
- **Consider a backpack** as one of your bags for easier mobility
- **Pack a foldable duffel bag** inside your luggage for bringing back souvenirs

Final Checklist Before Departure

- Confirm all essential documents are in your carry-on
- Ensure electronics are charged and accessible
- Double-check baggage weight and size restrictions
- Have some Polish currency (PLN) for immediate expenses
- Pack snacks and water for the journey
- Prepare a small first-aid kit with essentials
- Save important contacts and addresses offline
- Download offline maps of your destination city
- Inform your bank about your travel plans
- Make copies of important documents (physical and digital)

Conclusion

Preparing to study in Poland is an exciting time, and proper packing will help ensure a smooth transition to your new life. Remember that you don't need to bring everything with you – Poland has excellent shopping options where you can purchase most items you'll need.

Focus on bringing essential documents, appropriate clothing for your arrival season, and personal items that have sentimental value or are difficult to replace. For everything else, consider whether it's more practical to purchase it after arrival.

As you prepare for this new chapter in your life, remember that MSinPoland is here to support you throughout