ODYSSEY TRAVELLER

Exploring Poland | Small Group Tour

Recommended reading for your journey

01

Poland: A history

Adam Zamoyski

Adam Zamoyski first wrote his history of Poland two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. This substantially revised and updated edition sets the Soviet era in the context of the rise, fall and remarkable rebirth of an indomitable nation. In 1797, Russia, Prussia and Austria divided Poland among themselves, rewriting Polish history to show that they had brought much-needed civilisation to a primitive backwater. But the country they wiped off the map had been one of Europe s largest and most richly varied, born of diverse cultural traditions and one of the boldest constitutional experiments ever attempted. Its destruction ultimately led to two world wars and the Cold War. Zamoyski s fully revised history of Poland looks back over a thousand years of turmoil and triumph, chronicling how Poland has been restored at last to its rightful place in Europe.

02

Pocket History of Poland

Dariusz Sirko (Author),? Malgorzata Starszak (Illustrator),? Josef Butler (Editor),? Anita Prazmov

From its mythic origins through to its medieval period, and more well-known struggles against its own neighbours, The Pocket History of Poland tells Poland’s history in its entirety. While this may seem daunting, Sirko imbues the text with his own humour and keen eye for metaphor and euphemism, making it an utterly compelling read. Such is the author’s deep appreciation for Poland’s national story that moments of levity and wonder are presented appropriately, while the darker elements of Polish history are treated with the gravitas that they deserve. Regardless of your own personal situation, if you are seeking a light read that will both amuse and inform, The Pocket History of Poland makes a perfect read.

03

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin

Timothy Snyder

Americans call the Second World War @The Good War." But before it even began, America’s wartime ally Josef Stalin had killed millions of his own citizens,and kept killing them during and after the war. Before Hitler was finally defeated, he had murdered six million Jews and nearly as many other Europeans. At war’s end, both the German and the Soviet killing

sites fell behind the iron curtain, leaving the history of mass killing in darkness. Bloodlands is a new kind of European history, presenting the mass murders committed by the Nazi and Stalinist regimes as two aspects of a single history, in the time and place where they occurred: between Germany and Russia, when Hitler and Stalin both held power. Assiduously researched, deeply humane, and utterly definitive, Bloodlands will be required reading for anyone seeking to understand the central tragedy of modern history.

04

Last Years of the Teutonic Knights: Lithuania, Poland and the Teutonic Order

William Urban

The Battle of Grunwald was one of the largest battles in Medieval Europe and was the most important in the histories of Poland and Lithuania. It was fought on 15 July 1410 during the Polish-Lithuania-Teutonic War between the alliance of the Kingdom of Poland (led by King Jagiello) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (led by Grand Duke Vytautas) against the German-Prussian Teutonic Knights (led by Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen) and with the assistance of Sigismund, then King of Hungary and Croatia. The Teutonic Knights, a crusading military order, were defeated and most of their leaders were killed or taken prisoner. This defeat would mark the beginning of their decline and they would never again regain their former power. Following the battle, the balance of power shifted in Central and Eastern Europe and so came the rise of the Polish-Lithuanian union as the dominant political and military force. In this compelling account the action takes place in Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia and Germany. There are bloody battles; fascinating characters; intrigue; betrayals; sex; unexpected twists of fate; religious heresy and a smattering of saints. There is also the monumental end of one era making way for the beginning of another. AUTHOR: William L Urban is an internationally recognised authority on the history of European warfare. He served as L Morgan Professor of History and International Studies at Monmouth College (Illinois). For several years he was editor of the Journal of Baltic Studies. He has written some two dozen scholarly books including The Teutonic Knights (2003) and Small Wars, and their Influence on the Nation State (2016). 60 colour and b/w images

05

A Concise History of Poland

Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki

Poland is a tenacious survivor-state: it was wiped off the map in 1795, resurrected after the First World War, apparently annihilated again in the Second World War, and reduced to satellite status of the Soviet Union after 1945. Yet it emerged in the vanguard of resistance to the USSR in the 1980s, albeit as a much more homogeneous entity than it had been in its multi-ethnic past. This book outlines Poland’s turbulent and complex history, from its medieval Christian origins to the reassertion of that Christian and European heritage after forty-five years of communism. It

describes Poland’s transformation since 1989, and explains how Poland navigated its way into a new Commonwealth of Nations in the European Union. Recent years have witnessed significant changes within Poland, Eastern Europe and the wider world. This new edition reflects on these changes, and examines the current issues facing a Poland which some would accuse of being out of touch with ’European values’.

Explore the online Journey Journal:

https://www.odysseytraveller.com/tours-small-groups/poland-small-group-tour-for-seniors/resources/