



American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay, Inc. Publication

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Welcome to our newsletter in which we hope to showcase Poland of today and allow you to experience diverse traditions both here and in Poland.

Some information might be familiar to you. To those new on our mailing list we hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter and by [sending us a note](#), you will become a regular recipient.

Our aim is to advance Polish Culture through education. Our children are our legacy. We want them to be well equipped for the challenges ahead. Cultural education consists of the capacity for reflection. Children and young people in cultural education learn to reflect upon their own culture, culture of others and culture in general.

Our goal is to assist educational institutions in promoting Polish culture, folklore and customs so that our children will succeed in their own right and so that they will continue to promote richness and importance of Polish culture in today's world. At the same time, we aim to maintain and foster the spirit of loyalty and commitment to American ideals which are characteristic of the people of Polish origin. The American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay, Inc. was founded on February 20, 1982.

October is a Polish American Heritage Month



Poland's population totals approximately 37 million people. Additionally, there are roughly 20 million more people of Polish ancestry living outside Poland, making the Polish diaspora (aka Polonia) one of the largest in the world and one of the most widely dispersed. There are an estimated 8.81 million self-identified Polish

Americans, representing about 2.67% of the U.S. population, according to the 2021 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. For the past 400 years, Polish people have been an integral part of America's history and

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culture. Millions of our Polish ancestors immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, bringing with them a love for independence, their culture, their new country, and values that are shared by Poles and Americans alike. Reasons for the displacement included border shifts, forced expulsions, resettlement by voluntary and forced exiles, and political or economic emigration.

The first Polish American Heritage month event took place in Philadelphia, PA in 1981, and became a national celebration of Polish history, culture and pride. The idea soon gained national interest, and in 1984 a House Joint Resolution 577 was passed, officially naming the month of August as Polish American Heritage Month. In 1986, the observation was moved to October, in part to honor the arrival of the first Polish settlers in Jamestown, Virginia in 1608, and to commemorate the deaths of General Kazimierz Pułaski (October 11, 1779) and Tadeusz Kościuszko (October 15, 1817), two renowned military leaders who fought for our independence during the American Revolution.

Celebrate Your Polish Heritage Every Day

Ways to learn about Polish Culture.

- To understand us: study Polish history, read Polish literature.
- To appreciate us: read about Polish and Polish Americans and their contributions to the world.
- Explore your ancestry. Research your genealogical roots.
- Visit Poland: So many treasures, so many [UNESCO](#) wonders.
- Learn more about Polish customs and share them with others.
- It's not your Babcia's cooking anymore—Poland has 108 restaurants mentioned in the [Michelin Guide](#).
- Be part of our Polish American Community—join and support a Polish organization — support AIPC.
- Watch Polish films and documentaries available on Netflix and other media.

November 11 – Poland's Independence Day



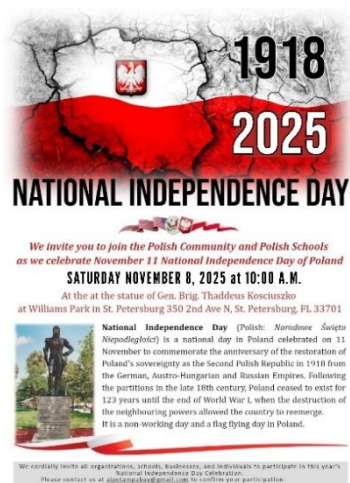
Every year on November 11, Poles around the world celebrate their nation's most important holiday: National Independence Day (Narodowe Święto Niepodległości). The date marks the moment in 1918 when Poland regained its sovereignty after 123 years of partitions, a period during which the country disappeared from the map of Europe, divided among the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, and the Habsburg Monarchy. For generations, Poles lived under foreign rule, maintaining their identity through culture, language, and underground resistance. The turning point came in November 1918, at the end of World War I, when the collapse of the occupying

empires created an opportunity for Poland to reemerge. On November 11, 1918, Józef Piłsudski, a military leader and statesman, took command of the Polish forces and was entrusted with forming a new, independent state. That day came to symbolize the rebirth of the Polish Republic.

Independence Day in Poland is more than a commemoration of history. It is a reminder of the resilience of a nation that refused to vanish despite over a century of oppression. It highlights values of freedom, unity, and perseverance, while also encouraging reflection on the challenges Poland has faced in modern history. For Poles both at home and abroad, November 11 is a day of pride—a celebration of the hard-won right to self-determination.

Upcoming Events in Florida – Sarasota and Clearwater

Send your email to aiptcampabay@gmail.com to be added to the list of announcements about upcoming events.



Join [American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay](#) as they, local Polish Saturday schools and 20 other Polish American organizations celebrate Poland's Independence Day on November 8, 2025 r. at 10:00am at the statue of Gen. Brig. Tadeusz Kosciuszko at Williams Park, 350 2nd Ave N., St. Petersburg, FL

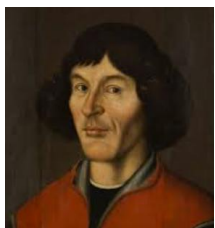
[Polish Center of John Paul II, Inc.](#) in Clearwater will be celebrating its 30th anniversary on October 18, 2025

[The Polish-American Association of Sarasota, Inc.](#) will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on November 16, 2025.

The Kosciuszko Foundation is celebrating its Centennial. Contact floridachapter@thekf.org to receive detailed information.

Our impact on the world – then and today

Throughout history, many developments in fields ranging from technology, medicine and science to religion and the arts can be attributed to the brilliant minds of Polish nationals and those with Polish roots. Let's name a few.



Mikolaj Kopernik / Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), born in Torun, was a Renaissance astronomer and mathematician best known for formulating the heliocentric theory, which placed the Sun, rather than Earth, at the center of the universe. His groundbreaking work transformed science and began the Scientific Revolution. His revolutionary work, published in *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), challenged centuries of geocentric belief and laid the foundation for modern astronomy, influencing later scientists like Galileo and Kepler.



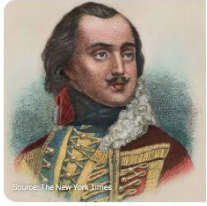
Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko (1746–1817) was a Polish military engineer, statesman, and national hero of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and the United States. Trained in military engineering in Europe, he gained prominence in the American Revolutionary War, where he designed key fortifications, including those at West Point. Returning to Poland, he became a leader of efforts to reform and defend the Polish Commonwealth. In 1794, he led the Kościuszko Uprising against Russian and Prussian domination, symbolizing the struggle for national independence and social justice. Known for his egalitarian ideals, he advocated freedom and equality for peasants and enslaved people. Kościuszko died in Switzerland in 1817, remembered as a champion of liberty on two continents.



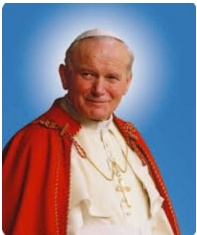
Marie Skłodowska Curie (1867–1934) was a pioneering physicist and chemist, born in Warsaw. She is best known for her groundbreaking research on radioactivity, a term she coined. Alongside her husband Pierre Curie, she discovered the elements polonium (named after Poland) and radium. Marie Curie became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, and the only person to win Nobel Prizes in two different sciences: Physics (1903) and Chemistry (1911). Her work laid the foundation for modern nuclear science and medical treatments using radiation. Curie's dedication transformed the scientific world. She died from aplastic anemia, likely caused by long-term exposure to radiation.



Frederyk Chopin / Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849), born in Żelazowa Wola, was a Polish composer and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic era, celebrated for his poetic, technically innovative piano music. He wrote primarily for solo piano, creating timeless works such as nocturnes, waltzes, études, and ballades. Known for his delicate touch and expressive depth, Chopin blended Polish folk elements with refined lyricism, earning a reputation as one of the greatest masters of piano music in the world.



Kazimierz Pułaski aka Casimir Pulaski was a Polish nobleman and soldier who became a Brigadier General in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War and earned the title "The Father of the American Cavalry". Pulaski was a prominent Polish aristocrat and military leader before coming to the United States. Pulaski is honored for organizing and training American cavalry forces, making significant contributions to the war effort. He died from wounds he sustained during the Siege of Savannah in 1779.



John Paul II (born **Karol Józef Wojtyła**, (18 May 1920 – 2 April 2005) was the 264th pope of the Roman Catholic Church, serving from 1978 until his death in 2005. He was the first non-Italian pope in over 450 years and one of the most influential religious leaders of the 20th century. His pontificate lasted nearly 27 years, making it one of the longest in history. He was known for his strong stance against communism, playing a key role in inspiring movements that contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union. He was canonized as a saint by Pope Francis in 2014.



Lech Wałęsa (1943 -) is a Polish politician, trade union organizer, and human rights activist who played a central role in ending communist rule in Poland. He co-founded *Solidarity* (*Solidarność*), the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc, in 1980 at the Gdańsk Shipyard. In 1983, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent struggle for workers' rights and political freedom. He served as the first democratically elected President of Poland from 1990 to 1995.

And those who are proud Polish Americans and many more whose contributions to academia, culture, art, and business have shaped the modern world.

- Darius Adamczyk - former chairman & CEO at Honeywell, currently partner and co-head of the Global Portfolio Operations Group at Goldman Sachs
- Nathan Blecharczyk - co-founder and chief strategy officer of Airbnb
- Leonard X. Bosack - co-founder of Cisco Systems
- Brian Joseph Chesky - co-founder and CEO of Airbnb
- Agnieszka Holland – Film Director
- Christopher Kempczinski - Chairman and CEO of McDonald's Corporation.
- Czesław Miłosz – Nobel Prize–winning poet and essayist
- Łukasz Nosek - co-founder of PayPal
- Ignacy Jan Paderewski – Polish pianist, composer and statesman
- Józef Piłsudski – statesman, helped restore Polish independence in 1918
- Martha Helen Stewart (née Kostyra) - founder of Martha Stewart Living, Omnimedia
- John Studzinski - Managing Director and Vice Chairman of investment firm PIMCO
- Ben S. Stefanski - founder of Third Federal S&L
- Wisława Szymborska – Nobel Prize–winning poet
- Anne E. Wojcicki - co-founded and CEO of the personal genomics company 23andMe

- Susan Diane Wojcicki (died August 9, 2024) was the CEO YouTube from 2014 to 2023
- Stephen Gary Wozniak “Woz” - co-founded Apple Computer with business partner Steve Jobs
- Wojciech Zaremba - computer scientist, and founding team member of OpenAI
- And there are so many more... and in our own community. Again, we just named a few.

Did you know 42.5% of Polish Americans hold a bachelor's degree or higher — compared to just 32% nationally?*



American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay supports Polish American students with scholarships. Check the www.aipctampabay.org for scholarship application deadlines. We solely depend on your donations to award scholarships. Please help by donating.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2017

Explore your ancestry



As our families embraced life in the U.S., many of us are challenged with how to keep the Polish culture in our families. We're often asked, "Where do I come from?" To many that came here empty-handed, family records were lost. Creating a family tree is certainly a way to spark interest. Today, searching for your Polish ancestors and building your family tree can be a great adventure as millions of records are digitized. Most Polish websites are available in Polish and English.

Finding your Roots Szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl and www.agad.gov.pl are online services which offer scans and descriptions of materials collected in the Polish archives. Currently more than 55 million scans of materials are available, and the number is still growing. Records and scans are derived from the collections of the Polish state archives and other cultural institutions. We found some dating back to 15th century! These often include scanned copies of vital records such as birth, marriage, death records as well as archives & libraries, cemeteries, church records, etc. These Polish genealogy websites (most of them free) can save you loads of legwork in locating ancestral hometowns and figuring out where to look for records. Just as important, most are in Polish and English. Of course, let's not forget www.ancestry.com, www.familysearch.org, and www.myheritage.com. To find a grave: www.billiongraves.com, www.nieobecni.com.pl, www.grobonet.com. For those with blue blood in their veins, search for "Herbarz". "Herbarz" is a general term for a book of coats of arms or a genealogical register, most famously referring to a monumental work on Polish heraldry and nobility titled **Herbarz polski** (Polish Heraldry), with the original work by Kasper Niesiecki and expanded by Jan Nepomucew Bobrowicz. These works are culturally significant, documenting Polish and Lithuanian royalty, noble families, their lineages, and coat of arms.

Sharing with family members, especially at holiday time, is a wonderful custom to build on the family tradition and Polish culture.

We also recommend The Polish Genealogical Society of America (PGSA) pgsa.org and series of webinars offered by the Kosciuszko Foundation at thekf.org — Genealogy Webinar Series (for members only)



The latest selection of the Michelin Poland Guide 2025 was announced on June 10, 2025. It is joined by a new city – Wrocław, which increases the number of regions covered by the guide to five. This year, two restaurants in Poland maintained their status as the best restaurant, and a new Michelin-starred restaurant joined the group.

Key information about the [Michelin Poland Guide 2025](#)

- **New City:** Wrocław joins the selection of the guide.
- **Two Michelin stars:** The Bottiglieria 1881 restaurant in Krakow has maintained two Michelin stars for the third time.
- **One Michelin star:** A new restaurant, hub.praga in Warsaw, has joined the list of awardees.
- **Total number of awards:** The Michelin Poland 2025 guide includes a total of [108 distinguished restaurants](#).
- **New Bib Gourmand Awards:** 21 restaurants have been awarded the Bib Gourmand Award, which is awarded for the high quality of cuisine and excellent price-performance ratio.
- **Extended selection:** This year, 22 new venues were selected, including many from Wrocław.
- **Wrocław:** The city of Wrocław joins the selection, which previously included Warsaw, Krakow, Poznań and the Pomeranian region.



More references for foodies— <https://foodandfriends.pl/> including favorite restaurants and selected recipes. <https://foodandfriends.pl/przepisy/>



What is culture?

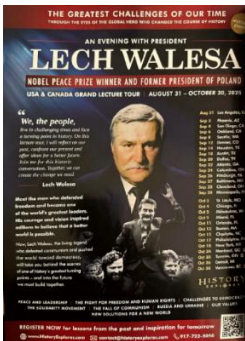
Culture is how we do “our thing.” It matters because it defines us. Culture is our way of life. It includes our values, beliefs, customs, languages, traditions, social institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group. Culture is reflected in our history, in our heritage and in how we express ideas and creativity. Cultural education allows members of our society to continue social values. Experts suggest that a person's culture and upbringing impact how he or she views the world. It also has a large effect on how he or she processes information and learns. Education shapes the way students see the world by providing information and knowledge. Through our culture we develop a sense of belonging, personal and cognitive growth and the ability to empathize and relate to each other. Our children and grandchildren are our legacy. We want them to be well equipped for the challenges ahead. Cultural education consists of the capacity for reflection. Children learn to reflect upon their own culture which will help them in understanding other cultures and help them succeed in their own right. Cultural traditions also function to strengthen sense of the community. Cultural traditions, along with other factors, help to reinforce and maintain what it means to be an American.

Cognitive benefits to raising bilingual children



Parents normally use one of two strategies to make sure the minority language sticks: either “one parent, one language,” or “one language at home, the other outside.” However, maybe “flipping” between two languages has its advantages. Today, the prevailing wisdom has been flipped on its head: researchers now propose a “bilingual advantage.” It shows cognitive strengths relative to monolinguals. Such benefits are thought to be the result of the constant mental exercise of switching languages regularly and always having to inhibit one. It has been proposed that bilinguals seem to have better executive function – the ability to plan and carry out complicated tasks. The bottom line, it does not matter what method is used, there is an advantage to speaking more than one language.

An evening with Lech Walesa



Florida dates:

Oct 9 - Miami, FL Oct 11 Orlando, FL

Details on: <https://historyexplorer.com/>

As organized by History Explorer

Meet the man who defended freedom and became one of the world’s greatest leaders. His courage and vision inspired millions to believe that a better world is possible.

Now, Lech Walesa, the living legend who defeated communism and pushed the world toward democracy, is coming to the U.S. and Canada on his first-ever Grand Lecture Tour. Listen as he takes you behind the scenes of one of history’s greatest turning points – and into the future we must build together.

Join the Nobel Peace Prize winner and trailblazing leader of Poland’s Solidarity movement for an unforgettable evening of insight and inspiration. His story of standing up for the people and his lasting impact on democracy will shine a light on the possibilities that lie ahead.

Worth watching

Rick Steves’ Poland

Rick Steves’ Europe is public television's most-watched, longest-running travel series who is showcased on PBS. Written and hosted by best-selling guidebook author Rick Steves. His 2025 one-hour "Best of Poland" special begins in Kraków, with a stunning square, historic castle, and nearby, communist-era Nowa Huta and Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp memorial. The journey continues to bustling Warsaw for skyscrapers and Chopin, sample gingerbread in Toruń, and ogle red-brick Malbork Castle. The adventure concludes in Gdańsk with handsome Hanseatic townhouses and stirring Solidarity history.

<https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show/poland>

or on youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70GXfWe3CyA> .

Chopin International Piano Competition

The 19th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition is a prestigious event held in Warsaw, Poland, from October 2 to 23, 2025, organized by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute. This competition, which discovers and promotes young pianistic talents, featured a preliminary round in April 2025, followed by three main stages of competition and a final in October, with winners receiving significant cash prizes and opportunities for international careers. The event will be live streamed in 4K quality online and on www.youtube.com, marking the 100th anniversary of the competition. Main Competition: Round One: October 3–7, 2025 Round Two: October 9–12, 2025 Final: October 17–20, 2025

The Met-opera live transmissions in theaters



The Metropolitan Opera's award-winning series of live movie theater transmissions brings world-class opera productions direct from the Met stage in New York to cinemas around the globe.

This season's live movie theater transmission schedule with Polish stars:



Saturday, November 22, 2025 1:00pm ET
Richard Strauss
Arabella
Tomasz Konieczny - as Mandryka



Saturday, December 13, 2025 1:00pm ET
Umberto Giordano's **Andrea Chenier**
Piotr Beczala – as Andrea Chenier



Saturday, March 21, 2026 12:00pm ET
Richard Wagner's **Tristan und Isolde**
Tomasz Konieczny – as Kurwenal



Saturday, January 10, 2025 1:00pm ET
Vincenzo Bellini's – **I Puritani**
Artur Rucinski as Riccardo Forth

Met Opera on Demand

From old-school legends to today's great stars, experience more than 900 full-length Met performances with their online streaming service. Free apps are available for Amazon Fire TV and Tablet, iPad, iPhone, Apple TV, Android, Roku, and Samsung Smart TV.

Flavor of Poland

Flavor of Poland was a culinary travel television series featured on PBS. The Flavor of Poland team met with locals, historic, cultural and culinary experts, capturing beautiful aspects of Poland on film to share them with PBS viewers. It was filmed in 2000 but is still available on www.flavorofpoland.com and on www.youtube.com

Sports



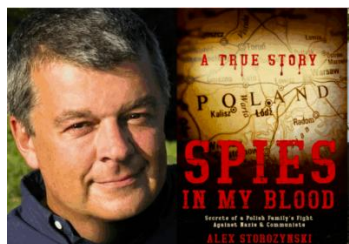
Iga Natalia Świątek^[a] (born 31 May 2001) is a Polish professional tennis player. Currently ranked No. 2 in women's singles by the [WTA](#), she has held the world No. 1 ranking for a total of 125 weeks. Świątek has won 24 [WTA Tour](#)-level singles titles, including six major titles: four at the [French Open](#), one at [Wimbledon](#), and one at the [US Open](#). She has also won the [2023 WTA Finals](#) and eleven [WTA 1000](#) titles. Świątek is the first Pole to win a major singles title.



Polish climber skis down Everest without supplemental oxygen

Andrzej Bargiel, braving heavy snowfall, glided down the world's highest mountain on his third attempt.

Reading Room



Spies in My Blood: Secrets of a Polish Family's Fight Against Nazis & Communists by Alex Storozyński.

In short, *Spies in My Blood* is an enthralling, deeply personal chronicle that unveils decades of resistance, espionage, and the tenacity of the human spirit, all through the lens of one family's unbreakable bond—and their fight for freedom.

“Spies in My Blood” is a gripping true memoir blending personal history with dramatic espionage, following three generations of Storozyńskis who opposed totalitarian regimes in Poland across WWII and the Cold War.

His brother carried out a secret mission for the CIA in 1981 to exfiltrate Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski from Poland. His father was a spy for the Polish government in exile in Poland during WWII, and his grandfather was a spy for the second Polish Department in Lwów in the 1930s. Alex Storożyński literally has spies in his blood!

Storożyński is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, award-winning author, and filmmaker. In 1987, his journalistic work caused him to be declared an enemy of the state and banned from Communist Poland. How much of this fight against oppression was innate? To explore this question, Storożyński turned his investigative talents towards his own family. He found three generations of intelligence operatives and uncovered untold stories of the atrocities of WWII and the Cold War.

Beyond chronicling personal and family history, the memoir serves as a warning: those who fail to learn from history risk repeating its tragedy—especially relevant amid ongoing global tensions.

This extraordinary story is detailed in the memoir, “Spies In My Blood: Secrets of a Polish Family’s Fight Against Nazis and Communists,” available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



I Heard the Light: A Mother's Story of Her Son's Journey Through Autism to Self-Expression (English) and *Przez labirynt autyzmu* (Polish). Bozena Gasior is a TEDx speaker, author, educator, and passionate advocate for individuals with disabilities. Her powerful book shares the inspiring story of her son, Milosz, who, despite the challenges of autism, discovered his voice through music.

Milosz has shown all of us that we can succeed beyond our own abilities. Truly inspirational book. Milosz as a pianist continues to overcome challenges of his disability and serves not only as an ambassador for Polish culture but also as an ambassador for persons with disabilities. www.bozenagasier.com

Warszawo moja Warszawo!



AIPC's 2025 Polonaise Ball



We celebrated Polish culture at this year's Polonaise Ball—a truly memorable fundraising gala dedicated to supporting scholarships for Polish American students in the U.S. and Polish Saturday Schools in the Tampa Bay Area.

This year's celebration was especially meaningful as we marked two major milestones: (1) The 43rd Anniversary of the American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay and (2) The 100th Anniversary of the Kosciuszko Foundation.



More photos available at
www.Aipctampabay.org

**We are dedicated to Preserving and Promoting Our Polish Heritage and Culture
and Advancing Polish Culture Through Education**

Spread the word! Success of our efforts depends on you

Join us

Help us promote our Polish Culture by sharing our website and newsletters with your family and friends.

www.aipctampabay.org

2025/2026 American Institute of Polish Culture Membership @ \$30 each \$ _____

Please consider donating to further support our scholarship fund \$ _____

Make checks payable to

American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay, Inc.

P.O. Box 4512, Clearwater FL 33758

or pay online at www.aipctampabay.org

AIPC Board of Directors: President – Eva Skibicki. Directors – Bozena Gasior, Yola Jakubiec, Alexandra Stobnicki.

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