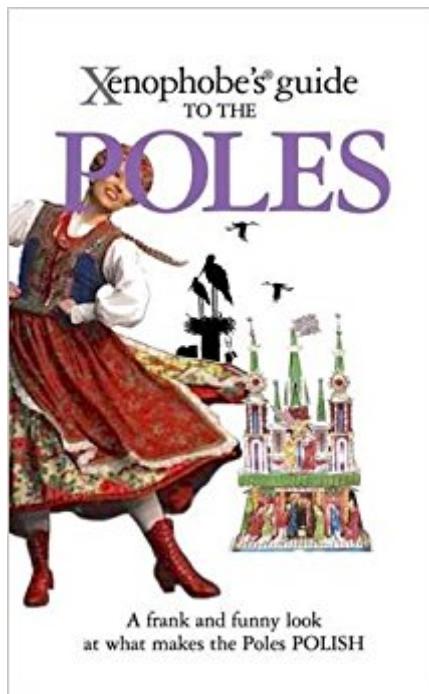


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Xenophobe's Guide To The Poles



Synopsis

A polarized peopleThe Poles are either bubbling with life, or comatose; they love or they loathe. It is this total commitment to the occupation of the moment which earns them the reputation of being mercurial. As Hemar wrote in his song: “If only Poles did systematically and economically what they do spontaneously, they would be perfect.â •Â Necessity is the mother of inventionKey national characteristics are adaptability, a knack for improvisation, and the ability to make the best of what is available. A good Polish cook is one who can make gourmet soup from a rusty nail.Â The Polish touchDevotion to style pervades all areas of life: the table might be rickety, but it is covered with a snowy tablecloth and decorated with a vase of flowers.Â Never say neverWhen the Communists rather foolishly tried to stop the Poles practicing their religion, the churches filled to overflowing. “Forbiddenâ • is a term of encouragement to a Pole.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"An enlightened new series, good natured, witty and useful. The Xenophobe's Guides to different nations deserves a real cheer." --"The European" "Each book is an entertaining essay on the failings, foibles and good points of their subjects. Their humour is relaxed and gentle and it would be a sour, churlish native of a subject country who would object seriously." --"The Northern Times "

'Polish mothers view all humanity in the same way that the residents of Strasbourg view geese - there for the fattening. If a Polish mother tells you that she has a problem child, it does not mean that little Tomek has burnt his school to the ground and is being sought by the police of five

counties. It means he hasn't eaten his dinner.'Xenophobia is an irrational fear of foreigners, probably justified, always understandable.Xenophobe's Guides - an irreverent look at the beliefs and foibles of nations, almost guaranteed to cure Xenophobia. (4 1/4 x 7, 64 pages)

The author clearly grew up and has lived most of her life outside of Poland. She doesn't know the contemporary Poland. She doesn't seem to know that most of the things she writes about perhaps were to some extent true 20-30 years ago but things have changed since then. There are some funny universal bits in the book but most of the time it seems that the book was written in the seventies by someone who visited once and declared herself an expert. The author tries to be funny but she's just uninformed. Shame, other books from the series apart from being funny are also largely accurate. Here, the ratio of informative to mocking disappoints.

This was an excellent book to read. It was recommended to me by my friend who is married to a Polish woman. He is an anthropologist and I am a sociologist. He thought I would be great for me not only because I teach sociology and cover in my classes stereotypes, culture, etc., but also because I was born and raised in Poland. He was very right. I have enjoyed this book tremendously.Poles are described in a very true, but not offensive way. Page after page I had to laugh because of what author said about Polish nature and Polish way of living and doing things - eating, drinking, taking care of places they live in, taking care of their health and talking all the time about their health issues to name the few. All those things that became so clear to me after I moved to the United States and now drive me nuts at times every time I go to Poland.I would strongly recommend it for anyone planning to go to Poland or is friends with Pole(s) and want to understand some of their behavior.

The book is amusing and mostly correct in how Poles see themselves and others see Poles. My US-born children, who don't speak Polish but otherwise consider themselves connected to the country of their grandparents, laughed and liked what they saw in this book. I only wish there was more!

Very good and really true book. Not so funny for me, but maybe because I am the Pole...I have only objection to the part about kissing - it is not true that it is common habit to kiss woman in hand. Only older, or even elderly men do this.

I liked it .Sometimes very funny.

LUV IT!!!

I have met a lot of Poles since they started flooding in the Western European job market a few years ago and grew increasingly curious about this culture that was for me one of the most enigmatic within Europe. I don't know of a better introduction to the Polish values, mindset and social practices. The book is one of the most insightful and artfully written in the Xenophobe's Guide series (along with those on the Swedes, Austrians and Irish). Every page is interesting and entertaining. I won't grant it five stars only because it is so short, like the other books in the series.

Everything you need to know about Poles is contained in this book in the nutshell: plenty of useful information but with lots of humor. It is concise in format (pocket size) yet very informative. The author is a critical but gifted observer of Polish life from the outside (British) perspective. She likes Poles with all their good and bad habits. This outside perspective and the ability of comparing Polish and British habits is definitively very helpful. I recommend it to everybody who wants to understand deeper Polish tradition and culture, who has family or friends of Polish origin or who wants to visit Poland soon. Without doubts I give it a straight "A".

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