

Facts and Information of Eastern Europe

Hungary

Facts and Statistics

Location: Central Europe, bordering Austria 366 km, Croatia 329 km, Romania 443 km, Serbia and Montenegro 151 km, Slovakia 677 km, Slovenia 102 km, Ukraine 103 km

Capital: Budapest

Climate: temperate; cold, cloudy, humid winters; warm summers

Population: 10,032,375 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Hungarian 89.9%, Roma 4%, German 2.6%, Serb 2%, Slovak 0.8%, Romanian 0.7%

Religions: Roman Catholic 67.5%, Calvinist 20%, Lutheran 5%, atheist and other 7.5%

Government: parliamentary democracy

The Hungarian Language

The official language of [Hungarian](#) is spoken by 98% of the 10.3m population. Minority languages have become more prominent in recent years, and they include German, Croatian, Romani, Slovak, Romanian, [Serbian](#) and Slovene. Attempts are being made to protect these languages, as many members of the ethnic groups actually do not speak them.

Hungarian Society & Culture

Nation of Horsemen

- . The Ancient Hungarians lived in the Euro-Asian nomadic pastoral region, where the keeping and use of horses played an important role in their lives.
- . Therefore it is not surprising that the horse and horse riding has a central place in Hungarian History, leading to Hungarians being regarded as the nation of horsemen.
- . Invitations to foreigners for horseback riding are not uncommon.

Family in Hungary

- . The family is the centre of the social structure.
- . Generations of extended family often live together.
- . The grandparents play an important role in helping raise the grandchildren.
- . The family provides both emotional and financial support to its members.

Get Personal

- . Hungarians expect friends to share private and intimate details of their personal lives.
- . If you ever feel you are being asked personal questions, this is simply meant as part of the getting-to-know-you process.
- . Hungarians will even enjoy sharing details of their romantic life with you!

Etiquette & Customs in Hungary

Meeting Etiquette

- . Both men and women greet by shaking hands, although a man should usually wait for the women to extend her hand.
- . The older generation may still bow to woman.
- . Close friends kiss one another lightly on both cheeks, starting with the left cheek.
- . In the business context is safest to address people by their titles and surnames.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- . When visiting a company it is not necessary to bring gifts.
- . If invited to a Hungarian's home for a meal, bring a box of good chocolates, flowers or Western liquor.
- . Do not bring wine as the Hungarians are proud of the wines they produce.
- . Flowers should be given in odd numbers, but not 13, which is considered an unlucky number.
- . Do not give lilies, chrysanthemums or red roses.
- . Gifts are usually opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

If in the rare case you invited to a Hungarian's house:

- . Arrive on time if invited for dinner, although a 5-minute grace period is granted.
- . If invited to a party or other large gathering, arrive no more than 30 minutes later than invited.
- . You may be asked to remove your outdoor shoes before entering the house.
- . Do not ask for a tour of the house.

Table manners are formal in Hungary.

- . Table manners are Continental -- the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- . The hostess will wish the guests a hearty appetite at the start of each course.
- . Do not begin eating until the hostess starts.
- . Do not rest your elbows on the table, although your hands should be visible at all times.
- . Hospitality is measured by the amount and variety of food served. Try everything.
- . If you have not finished eating, cross your knife and fork across your plate.
- . Indicate you have finished eating by laying your knife and fork parallel across the right side of your plate.
- . The guest of honor usually proposes the first toast which generally salutes the health of the individuals present.
- . At the end of the meal, someone toasts the hosts in appreciation of their hospitality.
- . An empty glass is immediately refilled so if you do not want more to drink, leave your glass ½ full.
- . Never clink glasses if drinking beer.

Business Etiquette and Protocol in Hungary

Relationships & Communication

- . Although Hungarians are transactional and do not require long-standing personal relationships in order to conduct business, being introduced by someone they know and trust can often help
- . Hungarians pride themselves on using proper etiquette in all situations and expect others to do the same.
- . Socializing is an important part of the relationship building process.
- . Expect many invitations to dinner or cultural events. If you have the time, reciprocate invitations.
- . Hungarians prefer face-to-face meetings rather than more impersonal vehicles of communication such as letters.
- . Hungarians are emotive speakers who say what they think and expect you to do the same.
- . They do not like euphemisms or vague statements.
- . Hungarians often use stories, anecdotes, and jokes to prove their points.
- . Hungarians are suspicious of people who are reticent and not willing to share their innermost thoughts.
- . Hungarians view eye contact as indicative of sincerity and believe that people who cannot look them in the eye while speaking have something to hide.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- . Appointments are necessary and should be made 2 in advance in writing.
- . It is often difficult to schedule meetings on Friday afternoon or from mid July to mid August. Also avoid scheduling meetings from mid December to mid January.
- . Punctuality for all social situations is taken extremely seriously. If you expect to be delayed, telephone immediately and offer an explanation. It is considered extremely rude to cancel a meeting at the last minute and could ruin your business relationship.
- . Initial meetings are scheduled to get to know each other and for your Hungarian colleagues to determine if you are trustworthy.
- . Expect some small talk and getting-to-know-you conversation before business is discussed. Do not move the conversation to business yourself.
- . Do not remove your suit jacket without asking permission.
- . If you have an agenda, it may be used as a springboard to further discussion and not followed item by item.

Business Negotiating Etiquette

- . Business is conducted slowly.
- . Deals in Hungary cannot be finalized without a lot of eating, drinking and entertaining.
- . Hungarians are very detail-oriented and want to understand everything before reaching an agreement.
- . Contracts should be clear and concise.
- . Contracts function as statements of intent. It is expected that if circumstances change, the contract will accommodate the revised conditions.
- . Hungarians are skilled negotiators.
- . Avoid confrontational behavior or high-pressure sales tactics.

Dress Etiquette

- . Business dress is formal and conservative.
- . Men should wear dark business suits with a white shirt and tie.
- . Women should wear either business suits or elegant dresses, complimented with good quality accessories.
- . Jeans are standard casual wear. Shorts are uncommon in the city.
- . Business wear is appropriate for all formal occasions.

Business Cards

- . Business cards are exchanged without formal ritual.
- . Have one side of your card translated into Hungarian.
- . The Hungarian side should list your surname before your first name, Hungarian style.
- . Include any advanced university degrees on your business card.
- . Include the founding date of your company on the card.

Poland

Facts and Statistics

Location: Central Europe

Capital: Warsaw

Climate: Temperate with cold, cloudy, moderately severe winters with frequent precipitation; mild summers with frequent showers and thundershowers

Population: 38,518,241 (July 2007 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Polish 96.7%, German 0.4%, Belarusian 0.1%, Ukrainian 0.1%, other and unspecified 2.7% (2002 census)

Religions: Roman Catholic 89.8% (about 75% practicing), Eastern Orthodox 1.3%, Protestant 0.3%, other 0.3%, unspecified 8.3% (2002)

Government: Republic

Language(s) of Poland

[Polish](#) is the official language of Poland. It is spoken by most of the 38 million inhabitants of Poland (census 2002). There are also some native speakers of Polish in western Belarus and Ukraine, as well as in eastern Lithuania.

Polish has the second largest number of speakers among Slavic languages after Russian. It is the main representative of the Lechitic branch of the West Slavic languages. The Polish language originated in the areas of present-day Poland from several local Western Slavic dialects, most notably those spoken in Greater Poland and Lesser Poland. It shares some vocabulary with the languages of the neighboring Slavic nations, most notably with Slovak, Czech, Ukrainian, and Belarusian.

Polish Culture and Society

The Polish People - Poles

Poland is pretty much ethnically homogeneous. Ukrainian, Belorussian, Slovakian, and Lithuanian minorities reside along the borders. A German minority is concentrated near the southwest city of Opole. The capital and other cities are experiencing some inward migration from foreigners.

Religion

Religion plays an important role in the Polish society and is deeply intertwined with Polish culture.

Religious holidays are considered national holidays when most businesses are closed. The most important holiday is Christmas and celebrations last two and a half days. Poles practice "dzielenie opłatkiem" which is the breaking and sharing of a thin white wafer (oplatek) with all family members. While sharing the wafer, individuals express wishes of good health and prosperity for the coming year. This is also commonly practiced at work Christmas parties and is very much a part of Polish culture.

Another religious holiday of note is All Saints' Day which takes place on November 1st. On this day Poles visit cemeteries to honor their loved ones who have passed away.

Catholicism is the most widely practiced religion. Life's milestones such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, first communion and confirmation are influenced by the religion.

The Importance of Family

The family is the centre of the social structure. One's obligation is to the family first and foremost. Extended families are still the norm and really form an individual's social network.

Poles draw a line between their inner circle and outsiders. Family members are naturally part of the inner circle along with close friends, usually "family friends". Poles will interact differently with their inner circle and outsiders. The inner circle forms the basis of a person's social and business network. The people from the inner circle can be relied upon to: offer advice, help find a job, cut through bureaucracy, or even rent an apartment. There is an elaborate etiquette of extending favors and using contacts to get things done.

Social Etiquette, Customs and Protocol

Meeting and Greeting

- . Greetings are generally reserved yet courteous.
- . When greeting someone a good handshake, direct eye contact, a smile and the appropriate greeting for that time of day will suffice.
- . Good morning/afternoon is "dzień dobry" and good evening is "dobry wieczor".
- . Address people by their honorific title, "Pan" for a man and "Pani" for a woman, and their surname.
- . Do not use first names until invited to. Moving from the use of formal to the informal names is such an important step that there is a ritual to acknowledge the changed status and your inclusion in their 'inner circle'.
- . At parties or other social gatherings, your hosts will introduce you, usually starting with the women and then moving on to the men.

Gift Giving Etiquette

The usual times for present giving are birthdays, name days (birth date of the saint after whom they are named), and Christmas.

Here are some general gift giving guidelines:

- . Do not give gifts that are overly expensive; this may embarrass the recipient.
- . Employees bring cake and champagne to the office to celebrate their name day.
- . At Christmas, it is common to give small gifts to service workers such as postal workers, refuse collectors, etc.
- . If invited to a Pole's home for dinner, bring wine, flowers, pastries or sweets for the hostess.
- . Give an odd numbers of flowers.
- . Do not give yellow chrysanthemums as they are used for funerals. Do not give red or white flowers, especially carnations and lilies.
- . Gifts are generally opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a Pole's house:

- . Be punctual.
- . You may be expected to take off your shoes. (Check to see if your host is wearing slippers)
- . Dress conservatively.
- . Offer to help the hostess with the preparation or clearing up after a meal is served. This is good manners. This will more often than not be turned down out of politeness.
- . Do not ask for a tour of the house.
- . Table manners are Continental, i.e. hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- . Wait for the hostess to invite you to start eating.

- . Most meals are served family-style.
- . Take small amounts of food initially so you can accept second helpings.
- . Try a bit of everything.
- . Expect frequent toasting throughout the meal. The host offers the first toast.
- . Toasts are only made with hard liquor (generally vodka).
- . You should reciprocate with your own toast later in the meal.
- . Alcohol is served in small glasses so you can swallow in one gulp.

Business Etiquette and Protocol

Meeting & Greeting

Polish businesspeople initially take a formal approach to business. This may come across as quite distanced but is not the intention. You may also notice differences in style between government officials who maintain formality and entrepreneurs who willingly dispense with formality. It is best to let your colleagues determine the level of formality used. General tips include:

- . Shake hands with everyone upon arriving and leaving.
- . Handshakes are quite firm and eye contact is valued.
- . Wait for a woman to extend her hand.
- . Some older businessmen may kiss a woman's hand upon meeting. Do not imitate this behavior as it may be seen as you poking fun.
- . Titles are considered prestigious. Academic or professional titles are used with the honorific titles with or without the surname.
- . Wait to be invited before moving to first names. You may do business with people for years and not be on a first name basis.
- . Business cards are exchanged without formal rituals.
- . Try and have one side of your card translated into Polish.
- . Include advanced university degrees and titles on your business card; qualifications are impressive.

Communication Styles

- . Generally speaking, Poles judge others by their personal qualities. They therefore like to spend time getting to know people as individuals. This allows them to size people up.
- . Honesty is highly valued in Poland since trust is the cornerstone of business relationships. Building personal relationships is essential for successful business dealings, especially if you are looking for a long-term business relationship.
- . Poles are known for being direct communicators, i.e. they say what they are thinking. However they are also very sensitive to other's feelings and let that determine how and what they say.
- . While direct communication is valued in Poland, there is also emphasis on finessing what is said in order to deliver information in a diplomatic way.
- . The level of the relationship mostly determines how direct someone can be.
- . For newly established and more formal relationships, a great deal of emphasis is placed on diplomacy. Once a relationship has passed through the initial phases, people feel more comfortable speaking frankly with each other and animated exchanges become more common.

Business Meetings

- . The most senior Pole generally opens the meeting and sets the groundwork for what is to be discussed.
- . He may also verbally offer a recommended agenda for the discussions.
- . Small talk is the norm at the start of meetings; do not rush proceedings as this is part of the relationship building process.
- . The first few meetings may in fact seem to be more small talk than business discussions. If this is the case it means that your Polish colleagues are still sizing you up and have not yet made up their minds.
- . You may want to consider this as an opportunity to get more personal and try and form that relationship.
- . Lunch and dinner meetings are often used to further the personal relationship.
- . Meetings tend to be relatively relaxed once the personal relationship has been established.
- . Hard facts are important so participants come well-prepared with facts and figures to back up their statements. Foreigners would be expected to do the same.

Romania

Facts and Statistics

Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering Bulgaria 608 km, Hungary 443 km, Moldova 450 km, Serbia and Montenegro 476 km, Ukraine (north) 362 km, Ukraine (east) 169 km

Capital: Bucharest

Population: 22,355,551 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 6.6%, Roma 2.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, German 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, Turkish 0.2%, other 0.4% (2002)

Religions: Eastern Orthodox (including all sub-denominations) 87%, Protestant 6.8%, Catholic 5.6%, other (mostly Muslim) 0.4%, unaffiliated 0.2% (2002)

The Romanian Language

The official language is [Romanian](#), and it is spoken by approximately 89% of the 23m population. Hungarian is spoken by around 7% of the population, mainly in Transylvania. There is also a population of German speakers who make up around 1.5% of the national population.

Romanian Society & Culture

Hierarchy

- . Romania is a hierarchical society where age and position are respected.
- . Older people are viewed as wise since they have earned life experience.
- . Romanians expect the most senior person, by age or position, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.
- . Titles are very important and denote respect.
- . It is expected that you will use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name.

The Family

- . The family is the foundation of the social structure and forms the basis of stability for most people.
- . The individual derives a social network and assistance in times of need from their family.
- . Families are patriarchal. The father is the head of the family.

Privacy

- . Romanians are formal and reserved with a strong need for privacy.
- . Most do not trust strangers readily.
- . They are generally shy and quiet when you first meet and admire modesty and humility in themselves and others.
- . Once you develop a personal relationship Romanians will open up slightly.
- . Although always polite, they seldom move to a first-name basis with people outside their extended family or very close friends.

Etiquette and Customs in Romania

Meeting and Greeting

- . Initial greetings are formal and reserved: a handshake, direct eye contact, and the appropriate greeting for the time of day.
- . Some older Romanians kiss a woman's hand when meeting them. Foreign men are not expected to kiss a Romanian woman's hand.
- . Close friends may kiss and hug each other when they meet.
- . When kissing, expect to kiss twice, once on each cheek starting with the left cheek.
- . Allow your Romanian friends to determine when your relationship has reached this level of intimacy.

Titles

- . People are addressed by their honorific title ("Domnul" for Mr. and "Doamna" for Mrs.) and their surname.
- . Friends may address each other using the honorific title and the first name.
- . Only close friends and family members use the first name without appending the honorific title.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- . If you are invited to a Romanian's home, bring flowers, chocolates, or imported liquor to the hosts.
- . Give an odd number of flowers. Even numbers are used for funerals.
- . Roses and carnations are always well received.
- . A gift for the children is always appreciated.
- . Gifts are generally opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

- . Arrive on time if invited to dinner.
- . You may arrive up to 15 minutes late for a party.
- . Dress in clothes you might wear to the office.
- . Check to see if there are shoes at the front door. If so, remove yours.
- . Expect to be treated with great honor and respect.
- . **Table manners** follow established protocols of good behavior.
- . Wait to be told where to sit. There may be a seating plan.
- . Table manners are Continental -- hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- . Leave your napkin on the table. Do not put it in your lap.
- . Wait for the host or hostess to say "pofta buna" (good appetite) before you begin eating.
- . Always keep your hands visible when eating. Keep your wrists resting on the edge of the table.
- . Expect to be offered second and even third helpings.
- . You will have to insist that you cannot eat any more, as refusals are seen as good manners and are not taken seriously.
- . It is acceptable to soak up extra sauce or gravy on your plate with your bread.
- . To indicate you have not finished eating, cross your knife and fork on your plate.
- . When you have finished eating, place your knife and fork across your plate with the prongs facing down and the handles facing to the right.

Business Etiquette and Protocol

- . Romania is still governed by a great deal of bureaucracy.
- . Personal relationships are crucial if you want to cut through the red tape.
- . Much business involves overlapping local bureaucracies, which make conducting business a time consuming process that requires perseverance.

Building Relationships

- . Romanians prefer to do business with people who are down-to-earth and do not brag about their accomplishments or financial achievements.
- . They pride themselves on using proper etiquette in all situations and expect others to do the same.
- . When in doubt, start out in a formal style and allow your business colleagues to progress the relationship to a more personal level.
- . As long as you are considered an outsider (someone who is not family or a friend), you will be treated with

utmost formality.

- . Once your Romanian colleagues get to know you, they will think of you as an insider, which lets them treat you more informally.
- . This is not a process that can be rushed.
- . Once a relationship has been developed, it is with you personally, not necessarily to the company you represent. Therefore, if you leave the company, your replacement will need to build their own relationship. If at all possible in this situation, introduce your replacement to those with whom you do business.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- . Appointments are necessary and should be scheduled 2 to 3 weeks in advance, preferably by letter.
- . It is often difficult to schedule meetings in July and August, which is a common vacation time.
- . Businesspeople are often unavailable during the two weeks before and after Christmas and the week before and after Easter.
- . Arrive on time and be prepared to wait.
- . Punctuality is common in entrepreneurial companies or those that frequently do business in the international arena.
- . When dealing with state-run companies, you will most likely be kept waiting.
- . Meetings are generally formal and follow old-world rules of courtesy.
- . Wait to be told where to sit. There is often a strict protocol to be followed.
- . Do not remove your suit jacket without permission or until the most senior ranking Romanian does.
- . Expect to spend time getting to know people before delving into the business purpose of your visit.
- . Presentations should be factual and easy to understand.
- . Include facts and figures to back up your conclusions.
- . Avoid hyperbole or making exaggerated claims.

Negotiating

- . Business is hierarchical. Decision-making power is held at the top of the company.
- . Most decisions require several layers of approval. At times it may appear that no one wants to accept responsibility for making the decision.
- . It may take several visits to accomplish a simple task.
- . Romanians can be tough negotiators.
- . Romanians are concerned about being taken advantage of by foreigners.
- . Hire your own interpreters for meetings and negotiations.
- . Base sales on confirmed, irrevocable letters of credit. Use local banks that are correspondents of western banks.
- . Romanians have a tendency to tell others what they think they want to hear.
- . Avoid confrontational behavior or high-pressure sales tactics.
- . Decisions are easily reversed.
- . Use an indirect negotiating style. Being too direct is viewed as poor manners.
- . Contracts function as statements of intent. It is expected that if circumstances change, the contract will accommodate the revised conditions.
- . Do not change members of a negotiating team before a decision is reached or the relationship-building process will have to begin anew.

Business Card Etiquette

- . Business cards are exchanged without formal ritual.
- . If your company has been in business for more than 50 years, include the founding date on your business card. Romanians are impressed by stability.
- . Include any advanced university degrees on your card.
- . Have one side of your business card translated into Romanian.