



Xenophobe's Guide to the Poles

By Ewa Lipniacka

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Xenophobe's Guide to the Poles By Ewa Lipniacka

A polarized people

The 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."

Necessity is the mother of invention

Key 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.

The Polish touch

Devotion 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.

Never say never

When the Communists rather foolishly tried to stop the Poles practicing their religion, the churches filled to overflowing. "Forbidden" is a term of encouragement to a Pole.

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Editorial Review

Review

"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 "

From the Back Cover

'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)

About the Author

The **Lipniackis** arrived in Britain (via Siberia and Palestine) when Ewa was three. She was educated in a Polish convent boarding-school in Northamptonshire, and progressed to London University where she took a degree in Polish.

In her late teens she was one of the first English Poles to set out to rediscover the real Poland, and found a vast family stretching from the Wol'omin Poles to the Poles of Cze?stochowa. She has been extending this network ever since. A naturalised Willesden Pole, she maintains close links with the Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Rugby and Galashiels Poles. Her home has become a central node on the Polish world trade routes linking the Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań and Gdańsk Poles with the New York, New Jersey, Toronto, Melbourne, Venezuela, South Africa and Patagonia Poles. Like bindweed, Polish roots are long and indestructible.

A librarian by profession, she can be found most Saturdays at the Polish Library in Hammersmith. She has written several rarefied works on librarianship and a clutch of children's picture books - most of which are illustrated by her cousin, a Balham Pole

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