

Taiwan (2022-ongoing)

Jess Gosling: Married with one child

Poland, in the centre of Europe, offers a range of activities for those wishing to travel within country and further afield. Cities such as Posnan, Gdansk, Warsaw, and Krakow are known for their amenities, old towns and European architecture. There are beautiful palaces and castles to visit.

Warsaw itself has over 50 museums, as well as theatres and an arena. Big name acts come to play and a trip to see a theatre show will cost around 10-20 gbp. Poland is bordered by Germany, Czechia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus.

The country is safe, with low crime. People are helpful and within the cities at least, the younger generation speak English very well.

In terms of travel, public transport is great and cheap. You could buy a car but for journeys in the city it is better and easier (in terms of parking), to jump on a tram or metro. You can hire a car easily and quite cheaply for further afield trips. The express train is also cheap, so works out well for trips.

Health Service is ok, especially if you pay for private care. Appointments are covered including dental check ups. However, for major work you need to use the public health service. You pay into the public health service automatically through your salary.

There is a special card available in Poland whereby exercise classes, gyms, and pools are free. Often companies subsidize the costs of this so it works out very affordable.

The choice of restaurants in Warsaw is fantastic, with options for all tastes and pockets. International food is not that much more expensive

than local. A meal costs around 5gbp to 10gbp. Beer comes in a little less than 2 gbp for a 0.5 l. There is little impact from Covid here, as masks are currently no longer worn. For school staff, they remain out of school until they test negative, the same with children.

Shopping is very reasonable. For a 'big' shop for a family of three for one week, the cost is around 50gbp, including beer and wine.

Phone contracts and the internet are easy to get. Most shops selling phone contracts can speak English. Internet is cheap, I have 30gb for 5 gbp per month. You can set up high-speed internet online as there are dedicated English lines, or ask your school to help.

Zakopane mountains offer a winter wonderland and excellent hiking experiences in the summer. There are numerous national parks and forests. Poland also has lakes and is great skiing option in winter.

Warsaw: Wilanow district

Housing is very good. Water is safe to drink from the taps and the apartments have all the modern conveniences you would expect. The further away from the city/international schools, the cheaper the rent is. The area Wilanow, around several international schools, is quite expensive for a property. However, it is a very modern suburban environment with everything you could wish for on your doorstep: parks, restaurants, shopping, gyms and exercise classes.

Teachers usually live in apartments, as houses are more expensive. Apartments prices vary, but the more rooms the higher the cost. When you sign a deal on your apartment an agency they can charge one- or two months' rent, so check their fee. Also, your deposit will usually be one or more recently, two months' rent.

The ex-pat community is quite reasonable in Warsaw, with people from a range of countries doing varied jobs.

Work

As a teacher and middle leader, I have a very good work/life balance. The children I teach are of primary age and international. Like all children, they need routines to support them and they respond well to praise and positive encouragement. The expectations at my place of work are very reasonable and I work my hours, with any extra time for fun things I want to do to improve my work.