

Polish National Parks

Our national parks





Slovinski National Park
photo by Artur Kulwas

Polish National Parks

National park is a brand recognisable all over the world. The signboard of a national park is a magnet attracting tourists, because everyone around the world knows that national parks are created in extremely valuable places.

In Poland, the first national parks were established before World War II (in 1932, two parks were created: Białowieża and Pieniny). However, due to the changes which took place after the war, these areas did not correspond to today's definition of a national park. Currently, we have 23 national parks. They are treasures of nature, and as treasures, they are very delicate and sensitive. In order for them not to die, they must be protected. Just as caskets and museums protect our family treasures and national cultural monuments, national parks care about nature – very valuable but very delicate.

We protect them to keep them as long as possible. For ourselves and for future generations. By protecting them, we can use them at the same time, but we must do it responsibly. To this end, national parks employ competent and professional services which – knowing the needs of nature and people – try to reconcile them. So that our children and grandchildren could enjoy what we also enjoy











**Polish
National
Parks**



Where we are



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Babia Góra National Park | 7 Gorce National Park | 13 Ojców National Park | |
| 2 Białowieża National Park | 8 Góry Stołowe National Park | 14 Pieniny National Park | 19 Tatra National Park |
| 3 Biebrza National Park | 9 Kampinos National Park | 15 Polesie National Park | 20 „Ujście Warty” National Park |
| 4 Bieszczady National Park | 10 Karkonosze National Park | 16 Roztocze National Park | 21 Wielkopolska National Park |
| 5 “Bory Tucholskie” National Park | 11 Magura National Park | 17 Słowiński National Park | 22 Wigierski Park Narodowy |
| 6 Drawa National Park | 12 Narew National Park | 18 Świętokrzyski National Park | 23 Wolin National Park |


Our routes for you


	Babia Góra National Park	Białowieża National Park	Biebrza National Park	Bieszczady National Park	"Bory Tucholskie" National Park	Drawa National Park	Gorce National Park	Góry Stołowe National Park	Kampinos National Park	Karkonosze National Park	Magura National Park
	49	29	145	147	46	80	106	110	357	132	95
	11	16	104	60	26	17	62	60	206	22	52
		16	21	97	6	38	67			13	16
	6	29	145	20	D			D	D	84	
										18	
			214			41					
	30	3	31	132	18	30	53	14	28	80	44
	6	1	3	4			2			2	


 - hiking, walking and running
  - biking
  - horse riding
  - cross-country skiing and ski touring
 - routes adapted to the needs of disabled people
 D - depending on conditions

The approximate length of the routes in kilometres. Detailed information is available in the folders of individual parks and on their websites.

Narew National Park												
Ojców National Park	55	30	40	30	131	35	275	1	80	160	61	
Pieniny National Park	33	D	9	12	131	18	38	17	100	116	60	
Polesie National Park			29			2						
Roztocze National Park		D		D		35			D	15		
Slovinski National Park							22					
Świętokrzyski National Park	58				10					20		
Tatra National Park	2	24	1	49	20	44	13	36	15	22	16	
"Ujście Warty" National Park	1	1	2	10			23	3		83	5	
Wielkopolska National Park												
Wigry National Park												
Wolin National Park												

 - downhill skiing and snowboarding

 - water

 - educational trails

Why...

One of the basic functions of a national park is to share it. This is our common heritage and we want everyone to be able to experience such a special place. But with such a shared privilege comes shared responsibility. This is why special rules apply in national parks. We present the answers to the most frequently asked questions below. Why...

...you can't leave the marked trails?

Marked trails and paths with appropriate signs are led in such a way so as to not only ensure safety of the hiking tourists, but also show them the most interesting places in a given area. And all this with respect for the world around you. Each of us wants to feel safe in our home, and animals are no different. The majority of mammals avoid human paths and ways. Often, hidden from our sight, they are nearby and we do not notice their presence. Our departure from the path may scare away animals which also need time and space for a nap, a meal or peaceful care of children, and even for joyful play. Our presence outside the trail will definitely disturb this, regardless of whether it is one person or a whole group. In addition, we leave our own smell which can also scare them away. Nature in our parks includes not only animals, as there is an abundance of plants and mushrooms. By going off the trails, we trample over them, and we may unknowingly destroy or damage rare and endangered species. In our parks, we do not pick mushrooms or blueberries, unless a director of the park indicates places where it is allowed. But even then it is better to leave them for the animals – and there are many amateurs of such forest meals!

...are hiking trails sometimes closed?

The trails leading through the areas important for the protection of valuable species of animals or plants (e.g. those covering the breeding sites of the blackgame in the Karkonosze National Park) are often closed. In border parks, trails are sometimes closed due to restrictions in crossing the state border (e.g. in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic). Due to threats to people visiting the park – it may be, for example, an avalanche threat or fire hazard.

...are there no litter bins on most trails?

There are two main reasons for this: Firstly, waste left in bins attracts wild animals, which is not safe either for them or for people visiting the park. Secondly, bins are placed only where it is technically possible to empty them regularly and for the competent services to dispose of waste. That is why we should take our waste with us – at home or in our place of accommodation, we can sort it and throw it into the appropriate waste bins.

...you can't throw away food scraps, including apple cores and other fruit?

Not so long ago, we found... a tomato growing on one of the Tatra peaks. This is the result of tourists throwing food "into the bushes". Such scraps thrown away by tourists are also a breeding ground for pathogenic microorganisms. They can contribute to their development and spread, posing a serious threat to plants and animals living in the national park. Food scraps thrown away by the trail can also attract wild animals, as described in more details in other parts of this publication.

...is it dangerous to feed wild animals?

Feeding wild animals, unfortunately quite common among tourists, is an extreme irresponsibility. It can change the natural behaviour of animals, habituate them to easily obtained food. Animals stop looking for natural food. They lose their inborn fear of human and learn quickly that man equals food. This process, called synanthropisation, is practically irreversible and always ends badly for animals, and sometimes even for tourists. This applies to all animals, from birds and fish to predators, such as foxes and bears.



Gorczański Park Narodowy
fot. Paweł Armatys

...you aren't allowed to come with a dog (or other animals)?

We often meet with opposition from dog owners who are surprised by the ban on taking dogs on the trails and nature paths of national parks. Tourists are not aware that dogs, even those on a leash, leave a foreign smell which can disturb the natural rhythm of activity of many wild animals. The same holds true for dog excrements, often containing dangerous viruses, bacteria or parasites. Contrary to domestic dogs, wild animals are not vaccinated or dewormed. What is harmless to our pet may cause disease and even death of native predators. Apart from that, barking and howling can disturb the reproduction and taking out the young by the wild inhabitants of the park. We should also bear in mind that some tourists, especially those hiking with children, are afraid of meeting dogs on narrow paths and hiking trails. There are also situations when dogs running after a deer or other animal get lost in an unknown area. It is not always possible to find them.

The ban on bringing dogs applies to the entire park, with the exception of places and trails indicated in the ordinances of park directors. The only exception are assistance dogs, i.e. properly trained and specially marked dogs, in particular guide dogs for a blind or visually impaired person and assistance dogs for persons with reduced mobility.

...is it worth having a map with you?

It is the 21st century and the use of mobile phones and tablets is in our blood. We also use them to determine the location of destinations and routes to reach them. Unfortunately, in national parks, areas far from civilisation, these devices often fail. There are areas where they will not find range or a power source when the battery "dies". That is why it is really worth getting a paper map with marked trails, places to rest and huts before setting off on the trail. Such maps can be bought, e.g., at the tourist information centres of the parks.

Responsibility for the common heritage is also expressed in respect for the use of common space. Thanks to the simple rules of national parks, we can reconcile our presence with the undisturbed peace of nature. After all, that is why we come to our National Parks.



Świętokrzyski National Park
photo by Sławomir Rakowski



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