

# Ja a Polska...



- *Tato, mam, teściowie, przyjaciele, koledzy,  
Muszę wam coś powiedzieć.*  
- *Jesteś w ciąży?*  
- *Nie, odchodzę, żeby żyć w Krakowie*  
- ...

Leaving my French life even though I have all I could hope for in France: my family, my friends, a job, a flat, a perfect life...

Miło mi! Nazywam się Layla Ninot i jestem z Francji (mieszkam na północnym zachodzie okolicach Paryżu). Mam 26 lat (ale w mojej głowie, mam jeszcze 22 lata) i jestem fizjoterapeutką. Uwielbiam moją pracę i jestem oddana oddziałowi intensywnej opieki medycznej w Pontoise, gdzie pracuję.

The 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, I am at my green Clio car's steering wheel, with all my life in it (well... almost!) and my partner by my side, ready to go. Google Maps estimates a ride of 13 hours to arrive to the border between German and Poland where we'll spend the night. Here we go!

## **But why Poland?!**

This "Polish life" project sets in my head slowly but surely for now 9 years since my partner shares my life: Krystian (Christian in French).

He was born in France but his parents are Polish and they live in France for 30 years. So, I don't understand a word what they say during family lunches and dinners... Ok, I exaggerate a little because her sister and mother speak French, though. I discovered Polish food and culture through my parents in law and the rest of my family in law (Krystian's cousins, aunts...) lives in Poland (in Kraków, Rzeszów and Dębica), and they don't speak French.

Today, I want to be able to speak Polish with all my family in law, discover the Polish culture by myself and more than all, to be involved in the Polish education of my future children.

That's why I'm here, at the border between German and Poland the Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 at 22:00.

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Our installation in Kraków could be summed up basically as a lot of administrative procedures during approximately 3 months to get a temporary PESEL number, Polish phone numbers and Polish bank accounts, find a flat where to live, be registered in the *województwo Małopolski*, officially register our car in Poland (paying the foreign tax, doing vehicle safety inspection etc.), find a job, join a Polish school, get transport cards... After all, wouldn't it be better if I stayed in France?

But the ton of procedures and all the return-trips we did to the different *Urząd*, that's nothing compared to what I found here, because here, things aren't like I thought they would be, they are better than expected!

How is it possible? How can I like a country where I don't understand 99% of what is said around me?

In Kraków, I found out the Glossa school: an awesome school with a family and warm atmosphere. Lessons are great, teachers and school's employees are fantastic and welcoming. I met people who come from all over the world: USA, Sweden and even from Japan!



Pod Baranami - Glossa

Among all these new people, there are two which will leave mark on my life: Ashley, an American student from New York who spent 3 weeks of intensive Polish lessons with me; and Minami, a Japanese student who was in another class. We laughed so much together, we liked being and going out together even though we knew each other since only a few days. Ashley went back to the USA at the end of January and Minami just left at the end of March (leaving us more time to share a lot of others memories: ski week-end, birthday's parties, dinners...) We promised ourselves to meet again together in the next autumn, when the two of them will finish their studies and when they will come to Poland to temporary live there (6 months? 1 year? It doesn't matter as long as we are together again).

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- I can't memorize the order of the Polish flag's colors  
- That's simple: white on the top and red on the bottom  
- That's not helping. I found something! It's: „whipped cream on strawberries!”  
- What?!  
- Yes: WHITE whipped cream on RED strawberries



„Smaki Gruzji” – Layla, Ashley i Minami

3 weeks of happiness at Glossa school are over at the end of January. Well, the reason I was here is no longer, so... should I go back to France?

Not at all! Following advices from people at Glossa, I studied by myself (like I did in France before coming to Poland) in the library in Rajska street with my books. I spent all my days studying and learning Polish.

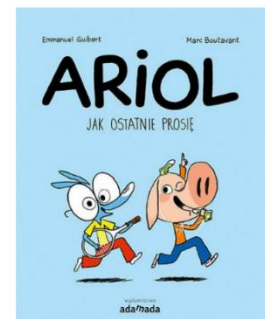
I'm passionate. Time was flying. I learned, learned and learned. Every day I looked forward to speak in Polish with my partner when I came back to our home. I was tearing my hair out when I was trying to remember „obuwniczy”, „spozywcy” or also „odziedowy” (by the way, that's the 6<sup>th</sup> times I try to remember theses 3 words and even so, I had to verify in my notebook how to write them). I jumped for joy when I put the right ending on a miejscownik or on biernik-singular-words-with-mascular-gender-not-alive-but-still-which-end-like-singular-words-with-mascular-gender-which-are-alive (yes that's how I picture it in my head).

For lunch, I often eat in the *Mleczny Bar*, near to the library. I try a new dish every day and it's not without taking risks! As I try things, sometimes, I don't know what it is exactly, I don't know if the dish on the counter is for me or not... Help! Whatever it is, every lunch is delicious. Placki ziemniaczane, łazanki, pierogi, bigos... I love Polish cuisine and I'm not getting tired of it.

In the morning, I wake up with pleasure because I like reading *Ariol* or *Mickey Mouse* books in Polish in the tramway.

I love going to the cinema, to concerts or going out just to drink or eat something like, for example, śledzie in *Ambasada Śledzia*.

I like to be tempted by a zapiekanka at Endzior - Plac Nowy and cook Polish dishes (done: placki ziemniaczane, gulasz, kotlet schabowy and mielony!)



Moja pierwsza książka  
po polsku

I also like every Saturday mornings when we go to *Borek Fałęcki* market and when I ask for „6 jabłka” instead of „6 jabłek” and when I understand why I was wrong by myself.

I enjoy spending time with Krystian's family because Polish people are incredibly welcoming! I also like when Krystian's cousin wonders how I can learn his mother tongue because even for him, Polish is not very logical.

I love knowing that I we'll be here for a while. Like that I know that I have plenty of time to visit again Wawel, the National Museum, Jordana Park...

I like writing down advices from all people about what to visit in Poland (Warsaw, Gdańsk, Zakopane, Mazury region...)

I enjoy calling my parents and my friends to tell them how much I love Poland.

I also like to tell them the things that make me think: „What is wrong with you, Poland?”. What if we open a YouTube channel to describe all the weird stuff of Poland?

- For example, we had to **estimate by ourselves our car's value** by checking on OLX in order to pay the foreign tax.
- Or also when I go to the cinema and the man who checks my ticket tells me to take right on the „**Kinder Bueno**” room.
- When Krystian's cousins suggest us to eat a dinner together at... **17:00!** (Isn't it tea time?! Restaurants are closed at 17:00! Ah... someone is telling me that... they aren't!).
- When I go to *Poczta Polska* to send a letter and, in the shop, I can buy a **doll**, a **board game** or even **food**.
- Also when I ask for *pierogi z serem i śmietaną* and I find **sugar** in my dish (yes sugar in the cream! But: why?!).

On the other side, I like less when I cry in the evening at home because I don't understand what people are saying in Polish, when I don't see any progress or because I can't do a correct sentence in front of Krystian's cousins even though I know I can do it. I don't really like neither when I burst into tears when I hang up the phone after have a visio-call with my parents and sister because I miss them so much.

Anyway, since now approximately 1 month, my real Polish life goes on and I love it! Krystian found a job at Schibsted Tech Polska for 6 months, I started new Polish lessons at Glossa (semestrial lessons every Mondays and Wednesdays evening with 7 others students: so great!) and I found voluntary work. I'm a volunteer helping a group of old people 3 times a week in Caritas in the Ludwinów district, I'm also a volunteer in the Emaus shop in Nowa Huta 2 times a week and I keep learning Polish by myself at the library when I have free time. It's so hard speaking with people and understanding what people are saying in Polish all day without a break and every evening I have a headache but... I LOVE IT! And Polish people are so welcoming and lovely!



Sklep Emaus - Z Marią

For me, Poland rhymes with fulfilment.

- *Tato, mamó, teściowie, przyjaciele, koledzy.*

*Muszę wam coś powiedzieć.*

- *Jesteś w ciąży?*

- *Nie, kocham Kraków...*

- ...



...Ja a Polska