

National Independence Day (*Polish: Narodowe Święto Niepodległości*) is a [national day](#) in [Poland](#) celebrated on 11 November to commemorate the anniversary of the restoration of Poland's sovereignty as the [Second Polish Republic](#) in 1918 from the [German](#), [Austro-Hungarian](#) and [Russian](#) Empires. Following the [partitions](#) in the late 18th century, Poland ceased to exist for 123 years until the end of [World War I](#), when the destruction of the neighbouring powers allowed the country to reemerge. It is a [non-working day](#) and a flag flying day in Poland.

Significance of the date^{[[edit](#)]}

The restoration of Poland's independence was gradual. The date of 11 November is the one on which [Marshal Józef Piłsudski](#) assumed control of Poland.^{[[112](#)]} It was a day of military ceremony since 1920.^{[[3](#)]} The holiday was constituted in 1937 and was celebrated only twice before World War II. After the war, the communist authorities of the People's Republic removed Independence Day from the calendar,^{[[4](#)]} though reclamation of independence continued to be celebrated informally on 11 November. The holiday was officially replaced by the [National Day of Poland's Revival](#) as Poland's [National Day](#), celebrated on 22 July anniversary of the communist [PKWN Manifesto](#) under [Joseph Stalin](#). In particular, during the 1980s, in many cities, including Warsaw, informal marches and celebrations were held, with the outlawed [Solidarity Movement](#) supporters participating. Typically these marches were brutally dispersed by the communist militarized police forces, with many participants arrested by the security police. During this time 11 November Independence Day marches, alongside [the Constitution Day on 3 May](#) celebration gatherings, also banned by the communist authorities, were the customary dates of demonstrations by the opponents of the communist regime. As Poland emerged from communism in 1989, the original holiday—on its original 11 November date—was restored.^{[[5](#)]}

The date coincides with the celebration of the [Armistice](#) in other countries.^{[[6](#)]} All of these holidays and Polish Independence Day are indirectly related because they all emerged from the circumstances at the end of World War I. In other countries, holidays were established in the spirit of grief and horror at the enormous human cost of the war, and they mark the sacrifices of those who fought. For Poland, however, the tragedy of the war was tempered by what had been accomplished at its end: the restoration of a sovereign Polish state that had been lost entirely in the [partitions of Poland](#), after 123 years of struggle.^{[[7](#)]} The Polish holiday is therefore simultaneously a celebration of the reemergence of a Polish state and a commemoration of those who fought for it.

Historical meaning^{[[edit](#)]}

Crucial to restoring independence was the defeat in the war of all three of the occupying powers.^{[[8](#)]} Russia was plunged into the confusion of [revolution and civil war](#), [Austria-Hungary](#) disintegrated and went into decline, and the [German Empire](#) bowed to

pressure from the forces of the [Entente](#).^[9] For Poles, this was a unique opportunity to reclaim their independence.

Following the defeat of the occupying forces, the Poles seized military and civil power, building the foundations of their future state. On 28 October 1918 the [Polish Liquidation Committee](#) was formed in [Kraków](#). The Committee seized power from the Austrians in [Galicia](#) and Cieszyn [Silesia](#).^[10] A few days later they succeeded in disarming the Austrian forces using members of the secret Polish Military Organisation as well as legionnaires and young people. On the nights of 6 and 7 November the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Poland was formed in [Lublin](#) under the supervision of [Ignacy Daszyński](#).^[11] The government was made up of representatives from the [Polish Socialist Party](#) (PPS), the [Polish Social Democratic Party](#) (PPSD) and the [Polish People's Party](#) "Wyzwolenie" (Liberation). At the same time the Government troops disarmed the occupying forces around the city of [Kielce](#) and Lublin. It was at this point that the country's future head of state, [Józef Piłsudski](#), returned to Poland after incarceration by the Germans. His 10 November arrival in Warsaw was enthusiastically met by the population of the capital and saw the mass disarmament of the occupying forces across the whole of Poland. Piłsudski assumed authority on 11 November,^[11] forming a new centralized government and soon calling parliamentary elections.