

The Tatra Mountains

The Tatra Mountains the highest mountains in Poland are the part of Carpathians located in southern part of country. Our town Brzesko is situated about 150 km from them, so we visit this stunning place quite often. The Tatras are the youngest in this part of Europe and were formed at the same time as the Alps- as evidenced by their severe rocky shapes.

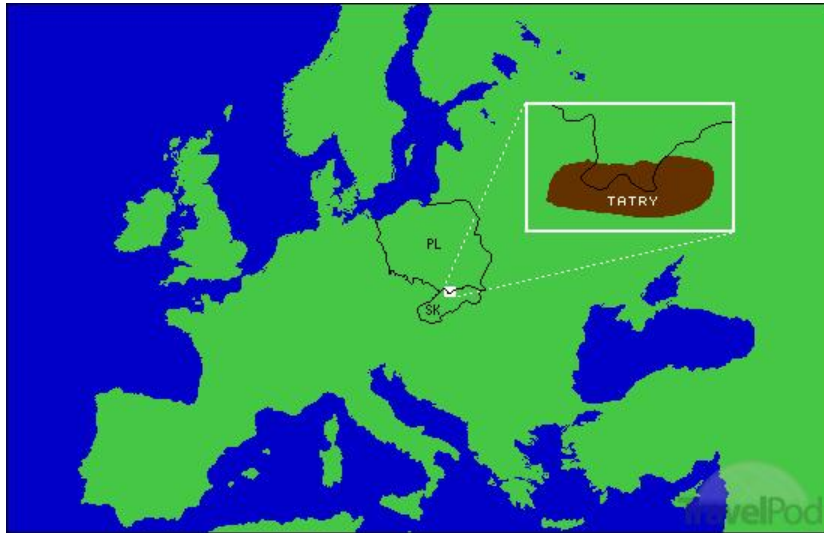


Rocky shapes in the Tatras, photo by Marta Kosala

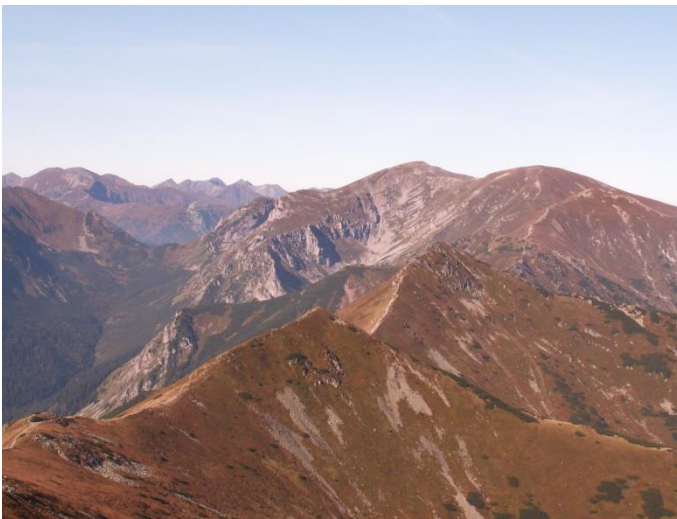
The Tatra Mountains are alpine- type mountains but differ from the Alps. The mountain range is very short and narrow (the length is about 57 km and the width is about 19 km).

The Tatras form part of state border between Poland and Slovakia that leaves just one- fifth on the Polish side with the highest summit Rysy (2499 m a.s.l.). The highest peak in whole mountain range- Gerlach (2654 m a.s.l.) is situated on the Slovakian side.

With the Slovakian- Polish frontier running along the summits the area embraces two national parks: Tatra National Park – TPN (Poland) occupying 212 square km and Tatra National Park- TANAP (Slovakia) occupying 741 square km.



Tatra mountains on the border of Poland and Slovakia (<http://musicofpoland.wikia.com/wiki>)



The Tatra Mountains along the Slovakia- Poland border, photos by Marta Kosala

Both national parks were listed as UNESCO biosphere reserves in 1993. Biosphere reserves are environment protected institutions of international status.

The park is natural habitat of many animal species, such as the Tatra chamois, marmot, brown bear, wildcat and wolf.



A flock of the Tatra chamoises, photo by Marta Kosala

The Tatra Mountains have a diverse variety of plant life. There are five climatic- vegetation belts in the Tatras.



Spring and autumn in the Tatras, photos by Marta Kosala

In the 18 th and 19 th centuries, the mountains were used for sheep grazing and mining. Many trees were cut down to make way for humans. These activities were stopped, and now there is so- called cultural sheep grazing in the Tatras.



Cultural sheep grazing in the Tatras, photo by Marta Kosala

The Tatras have many high- lying lakes, hanging valleys, waterfalls and caves (especially in the Western Tatras, which are mostly composed of limestons and dolomites with underground streams and about 500 caves).



Buczynowa Valley (1900 m a.s.l.), *photo by Marta Kosala*



Siklawa waterfall, the biggest waterfall in Poland (height about 70 m), photo by Marta Kosala



Wielki Staw Polski high-lying lake (1665 m a.s.l.), *photo by Marta Kosala*

One of the main tourist attractions in the Tatras is the cable railway on Kasprowy Wierch that was constructed in 1936. It is the oldest such construction in Poland. On the top of Kasprowy Wierch (1987m a.s.l.) is the highest situated meteorological observatory in Poland.

Hello everyone!

We are Marta i Małgorzata from Poland. We live in Brzesko which is a small town, situated on the Uzwica River, about 50 kilometres from Cracow. Our background is science. We both have been teaching biology and chemistry at the junior high school in Brzesko for 16 years. This is our first course with Chain and we expect that it will be a really great week. We can not wait to see the Azores with our own eyes. We hope for watching whales and dolphins in the open Atlantic Ocean- it is amazing! We are looking forward to meeting you all as well.

See you soon!

