

Chapter 20

Ten Everyday Polish Expressions

In This Chapter

- ▶ Using **no** to say yes
- ▶ Expressing appreciation for food and drink
- ▶ Emphasising your feelings

This chapter provides ten Polish expressions frequently used in everyday life.

No

(no)

No, **no** does not equal the English word *no* at all. To add to your confusion, it actually means quite the opposite! You can use this word in a variety of situations to mean a variety of things:

- ✔ It's colloquial for **tak** (*tak*) meaning yes.
- ✔ It emphasises an order: **Chodź no tutaj!** (*hoch' no too-tay*) (Come here!)
- ✔ It expresses impatience, uncertainty, amazement and warnings:
 - **No, no, i co się stało?** (*no no ee tso sh'ye sta-wo*) (Well, come on. What happened next?) – impatience.
 - **No, nie wiem** (*no n'ye vyem*) (Well, I don't know) – uncertainty.
 - [Two people speaking] **Mam pytanie. No?** (*mam pih-ta-n'ye no*) (I have a question. Well, what is it?) – uncertainty.
 - **No, to jest świetne!** (*no to yest sh'fyet-ne*) (Well, that's really good!) – amazement.
 - **No, ale bez żartów!** (*no a-le bez zhar-toof*) (Don't you dare play any jokes!) – warning.
- ✔ It expresses finality: **No, to cześć!** (*no to chesh'ch'*) (Goodbye then!)

Pa/Pa, pa

(pa/pa pa)

This expression is a very cute way of saying *bye bye* to little children. You may also hear it frequently at the end of conversations between friends or family members. As it's completely unsuitable for formal situations, don't use it in shops, banks or with your managers or clients. Go to Chapter 3 if you want to read more on formal and informal situations and other greetings and goodbyes.

Smacznego!

(sma-chne-go)

Imagine you're just about to take the first bite of your favourite Polish **pierogi** (*pye-ro-gee*) (dumplings). In order to sound like a native speaker, you can say **Smacznego!** (*sma-chne-go*), much like the English *Enjoy!* or the French *Bon appetit!* If someone has outpaced you and said it first, you can reply by simply repeating **Smacznego** or saying **Nawzajem** (*na-vza-yem*) (you too), which literally means *one another* or *mutually*.

Na zdrowie!

(na zdro-vye)

If you already go out drinking with Polish friends or have read Chapter 7 of *Polish For Dummies*, you know that **Na zdrowie!** (*na zdro-vye*) is a common toast that accompanies drinking vodka or other alcohol and is the equivalent of *cheers*. It literally means *to your health*. If used after someone's sneezed, however, it turns into *bless you*.

You may frequently hear **Sto lat** (*sto lat*) instead of **Na zdrowie** and that means *100 years*, implying that you should live to be 100 years old!

To niemożliwe!

(to n'ye-mo-zhlee-ve)

This phrase is used to express your astonishment or disbelief at something. It translates to *impossible* or *this can't be true*.

Chyba

(*hih-ba*)

You use **chyba** to express assumptions, pretty strong suppositions and guesses, as in the following sentences:

- ✓ **To chyba idzie Agata** (to *hih-ba ee-dj'ye a-ga-ta*) (That must be Agata coming.)
- ✓ **Chyba tego nie zrobisz?** (*hih-ba te-go n'ye zro-beesh*) (You surely won't do it?)
- ✓ **Chyba nie mogę** (*hih-ba n'ye mo-ge*) (I don't think I can.)
- ✓ **Chyba tak** (*hih-ba tak*) (I think so.)
- ✓ **Chyba nie** (*hih-ba n'ye*) (I don't think so.)

Chyba isn't a verb, a noun or an adjective, so you never need to change its form – a big relief, huh?

Naprawdę

(*na-pra-vde*)

One of the words that has a number of equivalents in English, **naprawdę** can mean *really, truly, indeed, honestly* and so on. You use it as a question to express surprise or in a statement to emphasise the facts.

Dokładnie

(*do-kwa-dn'ye*)

This word translates to *exactly* or *indeed* and is used to show agreement with what someone else is saying. When someone tells you that they live in Warsaw, you can say **Gdzie dokładnie?** (*gdj'ye do-kwa-dn'ye*) (Whereabouts?) to find out which part of Warsaw it is, as you may happen to be neighbours!

Masz rację

(*mash ra-tsye*)

You can use this phrase to express your agreement with someone you're on informal terms with. It means *You're right*. The formal version would be **Ma pan/pani rację** (*ma pan/pa-n'ee ra-tsye*).

Palce lizać!/Pycha!/Mniam, mniam!

(*pal-tse lee-zach'/pih-ha/mn'yam mn'yam*)

If invited to a Polish dinner at your friend's house or to visit your future mother-in-law, you can expect the meal to be prepared in your honour. In order to express your appreciation of the excellent cooking, you can stick to the simple **Bardzo smaczne** (*bar-dzo sma-chne*) (very tasty) or go a bit crazy and say that something is **Palce lizać!** (*pal-tse lee-zach'*) (finger-licking) or **Pycha!** (*pih-ha*) (good!). Children say **Mniam, mniam!** (*mn'yam mn'yam*) (Yummy!).