



# Tour Information



## Krakow – The Jewel of Central Europe





## Travel

### Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Poland.

### Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Polish Embassy: 47 Portland Place, Marylebone, London W1B 1JH.

Visa section: Tel: 020 78228 900 Mon-Fri – 08.00 - 1600. Email: [london.visa@msz.gov.pl](mailto:london.visa@msz.gov.pl)

Regarding visas matters, it is required to make appointments online at the following address: <http://www.e-konsulat.gov.pl>

### Tickets

Included with this documentation is an e-ticket, which shows the reference number for your flight. EasyJet have now replaced all of their airport check-in desks with EasyJet Baggage Drop desks. **Therefore you must check-in online and print out your boarding passes before travelling.** Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an additional cost.

Online check-in is available 30 days prior to travel using the reference number provided. Please see the enclosed e-ticket for more information or visit; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



## Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With Easyjet your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 15kg plus **one** cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25 cm. Please note that personal bags (such as handbag or computer case) must be stored within you single piece of hand luggage and that on some busy flights you bag may have to go into the hold, at no extra cost. If you bring **one** piece of cabin baggage no bigger than 50 x 40 x 20 cm, it is guaranteed to always travel with you in the cabin, in the overhead lockers or under the seat in front of you.

Please contact the airline for further information <http://www.easyjet.com/en/planning/baggage>

### Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

### Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

### Transfers

On arrival in Krakow, transfer by coach to the Grand Ascot Hotel for a three-night stay (approx. 30 minutes drive).

### Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



## Accommodation

### Grand Ascot Hotel

Modern four-star “boutique” hotel located in the heart of Kraków, on a quiet street within walking distance of the main sights. The hotel, ranked 14 of 268 hotels in Krakow on TripAdvisor with a 4.5 star rating, houses a lobby bar, stylish restaurant, fitness room, sauna and stylish rooms with all modern facilities including TV, safe, free wifi and hairdryer.

For more information visit their website:

<https://grandascot.pl/?lang=en>



## Food

Polish cuisine is a style of cooking and food preparation originating in or widely popular in Poland. Polish cuisine has evolved over the centuries to become very eclectic due to Poland's history. The Polish national dishes are *bigos* (meat and sauerkraut stew), *pierogi* (a kind of dumpling that can be sweet or savoury), *kiełbasa* (a type of sausage), *kotlet schabowy* (pork loin breaded cutlet), *gołąbki* (type of cabbage roll), *zrazy* (type of roulade), *pieczeń* (polish roast), sour cucumber soup, mushroom soup (quite different from the North American cream of mushroom); tomato soup, *rosół* (variety of meat broth), *żurek* (sour rye soup), *flaki* (variety of tripe soup); and *barszcz* (a sour beetroot soup) among others.

If you're looking for something on the sweeter side there is a huge variety. Here are just some: *Babka* (a sweet yeast cake), *Ciepłe lody* (waffle cone filled with mousse), *faworki* (angel wings), *kisiel* (a viscous fruit dish), *toruń gingerbread* (a traditional polish gingerbread), *Krakow gingerbread*, *Drożdówka* (sweet roll) and *kremówka* (a polish cream pie made with two layers of puff pastry).

## Drink

Polish vodka remains the traditional booze, yet beer has recently become even more popular. Beer has been brewed in Krakow for the last thousand years and now it is the most popular alcoholic beverage again. Present-day Polish beers mostly resemble German lager.

The most common spirit is, without a doubt, vodka. Polish vodkas come in great variety such as juniper, nut, pepper, plum, cherry, caraway seed and more. Like wines, they can be dry, half-dry, half-sweet and sweet. Most should be served straight, chilled but no ice, and swallowed at one gulp.

### Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

**Breakfast** – daily

**Two dinners** – Two dinners with wine at either a local restaurant or the hotel



## Destination

Kraków is the second largest and one of the oldest cities in Poland. Situated on the Vistula River in the Lesser Poland region, the city dates to the 7th century. Kraków has traditionally been one of the leading centres of Polish academic, cultural and artistic life and is one of Poland's most important economic hubs. It was the capital of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland from 1038 to 1569. The city has grown from a Stone Age settlement to Poland's second most important city. It began as a hamlet on Wawel Hill and was already being reported as a busy trading centre of Slavonic Europe in 965. With the establishment of new universities and cultural venues at the emergence of the Second Polish Republic in 1918 and throughout the 20th century, Kraków reaffirmed its role as a major national academic and artistic centre.

### Details of places of interest included in your tour:

#### The National Museum

The main branch of Poland's National Museum was established in 1879 and has several independent branches with permanent collections around the country. The Museum consists of 21 departments which are divided by art period; 11 galleries, 2 libraries, and 12 conservation workshops. It holds some 780,000 art objects, spanning from classical archaeology to modern art, with special focus on Polish painting.

For more information about The National Museum, please visit:

<http://museu.ms/museum/details/9475/national-museum-in-krakow>

#### Church of St. Francis of Assisi

Dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this church is the residence of Pope John Paul II during his stays in the city. Historians are not entirely sure of the founder, but it was most likely Duke Henry II the Pious (1196–1241), son of Prince Henry the Bearded (1165–1238).

For more information about this church, please visit:

<https://www.spottinghistory.com/view/4721/church-of-st-francis-of-assisi/>

#### Church of St. Anne

A leading example of Baroque ecclesiastical architecture in Poland, St. Anne's is the collegiate church attached to Jagiellonian University, as it has been since the early 15th century; masses held here officially open and close the university's academic year. Originally dating back to the late 14th century, the church was demolished and rebuilt in grand Baroque style in the late 17th century when the former Gothic edifice proved too small for the growing cult of St. John Cantius - patron saint of the university, who is buried in a tomb to the right of the transept. The largest Baroque church in Kraków, airy dome frescoes and soft angels everywhere offer a sense of light and redemption, and the fine stucco decoration by the Italian artist Baldassare Fontana is especially noteworthy.

For more information about this church, please visit:

[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/st-annes-church\\_17092v](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/st-annes-church_17092v)

#### Basilica of the Holy Trinity

Basilica of Holy Trinity is a large gothic church and monastery of the Dominican order with its history dating back to the year 1223. In 1850 the church suffered badly in the great fire that destroyed ten percent of the historic city of Krakow. And, unfortunately, the subsequent reconstruction hasn't been quite accurate though it's certainly unnoticeable to the untrained eye.

For more information about this church, please visit:

[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/holy-trinity-basilica\\_17086v](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/holy-trinity-basilica_17086v)

#### St Mary's Basilica

After Tartar raids in the 13th century left the original church in a heap of ruins, St. Mary's was rebuilt in Gothic style on the existing foundations and consecrated in 1320. In the early 15th century the towers took the iconic form they have today, when the northern tower was raised to 80m high and made into a watchtower for the city. It is from here that the hejnał mariacki - the city's famous bugle call - is played every hour on the hour. One of the city's most enduring traditions, the tune ironically breaks off mid-melody in honour of the mythical trumpeter who was shot in the neck while

belatedly warning the city of Mongol invaders; don't miss it.

For more information about this church, please visit:  
[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/st-marys-basilica\\_17091v](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/st-marys-basilica_17091v)

## Jagiellonian University

Founded in 1364 by Casimir III the Great, the Jagiellonian University is the oldest university in Poland, the second oldest university in Central Europe, and one of the oldest surviving universities in the world. Notable alumni include, among others, mathematician and astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, poet Jan Kochanowski, Polish king John III Sobieski, constitutional reformer Hugo Kołłątaj, chemist Karol Olszewski, anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, writer Stanisław Lem and the President of Poland Andrzej Duda. Among its students who did not earn a diploma were also Karol Wojtyła, future Pope John Paul II (studying Polish philology for one year), and Nobel laureates Ivo Andrić and Wisława Szymborska.

For more information about Jagiellonian University, please visit:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagiellonian\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagiellonian_University)

## Collegium Maius

Dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this is the Jagiellonian University's oldest building. The then 36-year-old first university in Poland, known at the time as Akademia krakowska (the Krakow Academy), moved into the building in the 14th century after King Władysław II Jagiełło had purchased it as an educational grant with funds bequeathed by his late wife, Queen Jadwiga. The Collegium Maius Museum features lecture rooms, communal halls, professors' quarters, a library and a treasury containing rectors' Gothic maces and the Jagiellonian globe. Exhibits also include medieval scientific instruments, globes, paintings, collectibles, furniture, coins and medals.

For more information about Collegium Maius, please visit:  
[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/collegium-maius\\_17110v](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/collegium-maius_17110v)

## Wieliczka Salt Mine

The "Wieliczka" Salt Mine is one of the most valuable monuments of material and spiritual culture in Poland. It is also a world class monument, featuring among twelve objects on the UNESCO's World Cultural and Natural Heritage List.

Today, the "Wieliczka" Salt Mine combines many centuries of tradition and modernity, the history of several hundred years and an underground metropolis with extensive infrastructure.

The mine is a product of work of tens of generations of miners, a monument to the history of Poland and to the Polish nation – a brand, present in Polish consciousness for centuries.

For more information about the Wieliczka Salt Mine, please visit:  
<https://www.wieliczka-saltmine.com/>

## Wawel Royal Castle

Built at the behest of King Casimir III the Great, it consists of a number of structures situated around the Italian-styled main courtyard. The castle, being one of the largest in Poland, represents nearly all European architectural styles of medieval, renaissance and baroque periods. The Wawel Royal Castle and the Wawel Hill constitute the most historically and culturally significant site in the country. In 1978 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the Historic Centre of Kraków.

For more information about the Wawel Royal Castle, please visit:  
[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Wawel\\_73574f](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Wawel_73574f)

## Kazimierz – The Old Jewish Quarter

Kazimierz – the district south of the Old Town between the Wisła River and ul. Dietla (where a tributary of the Wisła once flowed) was the centre of Jewish life in Kraków for over 500 years, before it was systematically destroyed during World War II. Well-known for its associations with Schindler and Spielberg, traces of Kazimierz's Jewish history have not only survived, but literally abound in the form of the district's numerous synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. In fact, no other place in Europe conveys a sense of pre-war Jewish culture on the continent better than Kazimierz. As a result, the district has become a major tourist draw and pilgrimage site for Jews, which has led to the return of contemporary Jewish culture in the area.

For more information about Kazimierz, please visit:  
[https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Kazimierz\\_70207f](https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Kazimierz_70207f)

## Nowa Huta Suburb

As Soviet occupying forces rolled into Poland toward the end of World War II, they found a country devastated by the ferocious fighting on the Eastern Front. Rebuilding was in order and Moscow, in notably Communist fashion, saw the opportunity not only to remake Poland's cities, but also to dramatically reshape Polish society while they were at it. To achieve this, the Soviets set to work planning and building Nowa Huta, which was to be an ideal city representing a vision of a glorious Communist future. The project was approved in 1947, and construction of the urban experiment in social engineering began in 1949.

One of only two fully-planned Socialist Realist cities ever built (the other being Magnitogorsk, Russia), Nowa Huta was built near Kraków to create a bustling working class enclave that would overshadow the older bourgeois city with its rich history, cultural institutions, and distaste for communism.

For more information about Nowa Huta, please visit: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/nowa-huta>

## Your lecturer / guide

Andrew Spira - graduated from the Courtauld Institute of Art before completing a MA degree in Museum and Gallery Management at City University, London. He worked at the Temple Gallery, London (specialist in Byzantine and Russian icons), and as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum where he specialised in 18th century British Art and Design, and Metalwork. He also specialises in Russian art, publishing 'The Avant-Garde Icon: Russian Avant-Garde Art and the Icon Painting Tradition' in 2008 (Lund Humphries). For 20 years he has been taking tours to cultural sites in western Europe, Russia, Armenia and Georgia. He was Programme Director at Christie's Education for 10 years before going part-time to focus on his current research project - on personal identity and the way it is reflected in the material culture of western Europe from the Middle Ages to the present day.

### Enjoy two lectures during your tour:

*Slavs of the West*

*Krakow: Science and Art, Medieval and Modern*

## Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

## Recommended reading

### **Eyewitness Travel Guide, Krakow.**

The ideal travel companion, full of insider advice on what to see and do, plus detailed itineraries and comprehensive maps for exploring this historic and unique city.

### **Thomas Keneally, *Schindler's List*.**

In the shadow of Auschwitz, a flamboyant German industrialist grew into a living legend to the Jews of Krakow. He was a womaniser, a heavy drinker and a bon viveur, but to them he became a saviour. This is the extraordinary story of Oskar Schindler, who risked his life to protect Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland and who was transformed by the war into a man with a mission, a compassionate angel of mercy.

## The Basics

**Climate** – The weather in Krakow at this time of year is likely to be similar to the UK. It can get chilly and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

**Time** – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

**Language** – Polish.

**Religion** – mostly Roman Catholic.

**National holidays** – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday (22 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Constitution day (03 May); Whit Sunday (09 Jun); Corpus Christi (20 Jun); Assumption Day (15 Aug); All Saints day (01 Nov); Independence day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

**Currency** – Zloty; symbol zł) = 100 groszy. Notes are in denominations of 200, 100, 50, 20 and 10zł. Coins are in denominations of 5,2 and 1 zł and 50,20,10,5,2 and 1 groszy.

**Banks** – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

**Credit cards** – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

**Electricity** – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

**Drinking water** – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

**Shops and museums** – Shops generally open Mon-Sat 0900-1800. Some stores, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, close at 1200 on Saturdays and are closed on Sundays, while others in larger towns and cities will be open 1000-1600 on Sundays. Supermarkets and food shops in large

towns and cities are open from 0700 and stay open until late.

Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

**Clothes & shoes** –You may like to bring medium weight clothing and a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

**Camera** – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

**Bath plugs** – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

**Telephones/mobiles** – You should be able to use your mobile phone in the Poland, depending on your operator and contract.

**Tipping** –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



## Health

### Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**



### Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**

### General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

### Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



## Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

### European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



## Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

**PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.**

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy K  
Kawalerii 12,  
00-468 Warsaw  
Poland  
Tel: 0048 22 311 0000

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1500.

Travel Editions  
3 Youngs Buildings, London, EC1V 9DB  
Tel: 020 7251 0045  
Email: [tours@travelections.co.uk](mailto:tours@travelections.co.uk) [www.travelections.co.uk](http://www.travelections.co.uk)

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