

Tour
Information



Krakow- The Jewel of Central Europe





Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit.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

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 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 extra cost.

Online check-in opens 30 days prior to departure and closes 24 hours prior to departure. Please see the enclosed e-ticket for more information or visit; 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 that you stick to the baggage allowances advised. If your luggage is found to be heavier than the airlines baggage allowance the charges at the airport will be hefty.

With Easyjet your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 15kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.easyjet.com/en/help/baggage/cabin-bag-and-hold-luggage>

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 Prague, transfer by coach to the hotel for check-in for a three-night stay.

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

Mercure Krakow Old Town

Modern four-star hotel located in the heart of Kraków, next to the Galeria Krakowska Shopping Centre and 300m from St. Florian's Gate. The hotel houses a bar, restaurants, fitness room and stylish rooms with all modern facilities including TV and tea/coffee making facilities.

For more information visit their website:

<https://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-9627-mercure-krakow-stare-miasto/index.shtml#>



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

Dinner – included on two nights with wine at a local restaurant



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

Church of St. Francis of Assisi

Dating back to the 13th 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:
<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:
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:
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:

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, visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagiellonian_University

Collegium Maius

Dating back to the 14th 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:

https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/collegium-maius_17110v

St. Florian's Gate

St. Florian's Gate is one of the best-known Polish Gothic towers, and a focal point of Kraków's Old Town. It was built around the 14th century as a rectangular Gothic tower of "wild stone", part of the city fortifications against Turkish attack. Kraków's Royal Road begins at St. Florian's Gate, and the gate is a terminating vista at its north end.

Through it once entered kings and princes, foreign envoys and distinguished guests, and parades and coronation processions.

For more information about St Florian's Gate:

https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/florianska-gate_142923v

Sukiennice Museum

The Gallery holds the largest permanent exhibit of the 19th century Polish painting and sculpture. It is located in the Sukiennice Cloth Hall in the center of the Main Market Square. The museum is a division of the National Museum in Krakow, which was founded already in 1879. The Sukiennice Museum consists of four exhibition halls, the Baciarelli Room – with late Baroque, Rococo and Classicist paintings, by Polish and foreign artists, the Michalowski Room – with famous Michalowski's battle scenes, the Siemiradzki Room – with late 19th century mythological and biblical scenes, landscape and still life – featured artists include such famous painters as Matejko, Malczewski, and the Chelmonski Room – with paintings by Polish Impressionists and Symbolists.

For more information about the museum:

<https://visitkrakow.net/museums-krakow/polish-art-gallery-sukiennice/>

The Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace

Filled with age-old paintings and sculptures, this newish branch of the National Museum contains two exhibits of religious artwork. The Art of Old Poland (12th to 18th centuries) includes lots of Gothic paintings, altar pieces and a room devoted to Veit Stoss. The second exhibit focuses on Orthodox art.

For more information this branch of the museum:

<http://www.museums.krakow.travel/en/muzea/id,52,tit,e,national-museum-in-krakow.html>

Wawel Cathedral

The scene of the crowning of almost every Polish king and queen throughout history, the current Wawel Cathedral is the third to be built on the site. The first cathedral was built of wood, probably around 1020, but certainly after the founding of the Bishopric of Kraków in 1000AD. Destroyed by fire it was replaced by a second cathedral that subsequently burnt down again. The current building was consecrated in 1364 and built on the orders of Poland's first king to be crowned at

Wawel, Władysław the Short (aka. Władysław the Elbow-high, 1306-1333), who was crowned among the charred rubble of its predecessor in 1319. Considered the most important single building in Poland, Wawel's extraordinary Cathedral contains much that is original, although many glorious additions have been made over the centuries.

For more information about Wawel Cathedral:
https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/wawel-cathedral_17085v

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:
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, visit:
https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Kazimierz_70207f

Wieliczka Salt Mine

The Wieliczka Salt Mine (Polish: Kopalnia soli Wieliczka), located in the town of Wieliczka in southern Poland, lies within the Kraków metropolitan area. Opened in the 13th century, the mine produced table salt continuously until 2007, as

one of the world's oldest salt mines in operation. Throughout, the royal mine was run by the Żupy krakowskie Salt Mines company. Commercial mining was discontinued in 1996, because of salt prices going down and also mine flooding. The mine is currently one of Poland's official national Historic Monuments (Pomniki historii), whose attractions include dozens of statues and four chapels carved out of the rock salt by the miners, as well as supplemental carvings made by contemporary artists.

For more information about Wieliczka Salt Mine, visit:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wieliczka_Salt_Mine

Nowa Huta

The huge Socialist Realist suburb of Nowa Huta is the direct antithesis of everything Kraków is. Gargoyles and tourists? The Orwellian settlement of Nowa Huta is one of only two entirely pre-planned socialist realist cities ever built (the other being Magnitogorsk in Russia's Ural Mountains), and one of the finest examples of deliberate social engineering in the world. Funded by the Soviet Union, Nowa Huta swallowed up a huge swathe of ideal agricultural land, and the ancient village of Kościelniki (as well as parts of Mogiła and Krzesławice) in an attempt to create an in-your-face proletarian opponent to intellectual, artsy-fartsy, fairytale Kraków. The decision to build NH was rubber stamped on May 17, 1947 and over the next few years construction of a model city for 100,000 people sprung up at breakneck speed. Built to impress, Nowa Huta featured wide, tree-lined avenues, parks, lakes and the officially sanctioned architectural style of the time - Socialist Realism. Nowa Huta's architects strove to construct the ideal city, with ironic inspiration coming from the neighbourhood blocks built in 1920s New York (that despicable western metropolis). Careful planning was key, and the suburb was designed with 'efficient mutual control' in mind: wide streets would prevent the spread of fire and the profusion of trees would easily soak up a nuclear blast, while the layout was such that the city could easily be turned into a fortress if it came under attack

For more information about Nowa Huta, visit:
https://www.inyourpocket.com/krakow/Nowa-Huta_73840f

Your lecturer / guide – Andrew Spira

Andrew Spira has worked at the Temple Gallery, London (as a specialist in Byzantine and Russian icons), as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum (British Art and Design) and as a programme director at Christies Education. For the past 20 years he has been taking tours to cultural sites in Europe, including Italy, Poland and Russia

There will be two lectures during your trip:

Slavs of the West: the historical and cultural background of Poland

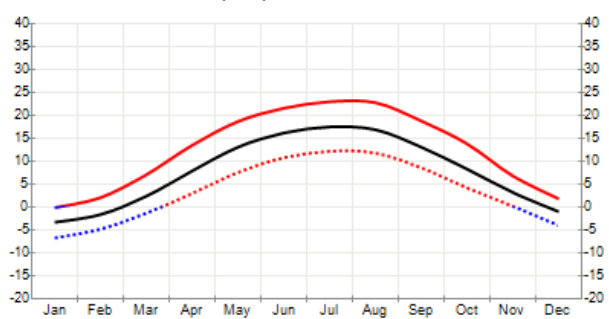
Krakow: science and art, medieval and modern

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.

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; State Holiday (01 May); Constitution day (03 May); Ascension day (10 May); Anniversary of Martyrdom of Jan Hus (06 Jul); Czech Statehood day (28 Sep); 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. £1 = approx. 4.85 zloty.

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 Czech Republic, 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

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 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

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 Prague

Thunovska 14

118 00

Prague 1

Czech Republic

Tel: +420 257 40 2111

Fax: +420 257 40 2296

Email: ukinczechrepublic@fco.gov.uk

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

Travel Editions

3 Youngs Buildings, London, EC1V 9DB

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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