

Krakow, Zakopane & the High Tatras

8 days **from £749** June & September



Two of Poland's most spectacular sites, Krakow and Zakopane, are brought together in this holiday of contrasts. The medieval university city of Krakow, for centuries Poland's capital, is combined with Zakopane, Poland's highest city, set amidst the spectacular Tatra Mountains.

• 3 nights bb in Krakow, 4 nights bb in Zakopane • Walking tours of both cities • Spectacular raft journey through the Dunajec gorge, in the Pieninski National Park

PROGRAMME

DAY ONE: Flight to Krakow, short transfer to your hotel in Krakow for three nights bed and breakfast accommodation.

DAYS TWO AND THREE: Free in Krakow with an included half-day walking tour. Krakow is a very special place to visit. With over a thousand years of history, it is Poland's cultural capital and is, of course, on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In the Middle Ages, Krakow's walls had 55 defensive towers. The 14th-century main gate survives and is the starting point of the 'Royal Road', which ends at Wawel Castle, and passes by the Town Square, St. Mary's Basilica and the Czartoryski Museum. They claim the museum contains fragments from the grave of Romeo and Juliet, as well as the chair Shakespeare sat on to write about them!

Krakow is also a university city – the Jagiellonian, one of Europe's oldest, dates from 1364 and boasts many illustrious alumni including Karol Józef Wojtyła – better known to us as Pope John Paul II.

You can also join an optional excursion to nearby Wieliczka Salt Mine and Auschwitz. Salt has been mined at Wieliczka since the 13th century. The result of centuries of mining is a huge network of underground passages,

corridors and chambers whose crowning jewel is King's Chapel, 600ft underground and carved entirely out of rock salt – even the chandeliers are made of salt! From 14th June 1940 until January 1945, Auschwitz Concentration Camp was the site of some of the worst atrocities of WWII. The visit includes a film showing the liberation of the camp and the chance to see the infamous Death wall, the national memorials and the cells where the inmates were held. Over 1.1 million people are thought to have died at Auschwitz and the visit is both moving and thought-provoking.

DAY FOUR: Today you travel to Zakopane. It may only be 63 miles from Krakow by road, but you spend 2-3 hours rafting gently through the stunning scenery of the Dunajec River Gorge, in the Pieninski National Park. Two hours from Krakow lies the village of Sromowce, on the Slovakian border, where you embark your rafts, which are operated by experienced raftsmen wearing traditional local costume. The gentle Dunajec River offers sightseeing as you go – you will see the 13th century Red Monastery and the gorge itself, with its spectacular limestone cliffs and rock formations. You disembark in the spa town of Szczawnica, and after

some free time, continue to Zakopane (35 miles), arriving late afternoon for four nights bed and breakfast accommodation.

DAYS FIVE TO SEVEN: Free in Zakopane, with an included walking tour. Zakopane lies in the heart of the Tatra Mountains, a mountain range that many people believe to be among the most beautiful in the world. The scenery is spectacular and the mountains impressive – they were shaped by glacial erosion, which helps to explain the magnificent peaks, lakes and valleys. The Tatra National Park was created in 1955 and hosts abundant flora and fauna, including bears and golden eagles.

You can also join an optional excursion across the border into Slovakia, Poland's southern neighbour. You go to Stary Smokovec, from where a funicular train leaves for the mountain town of Hrebienok, 4000ft up and site of several waterfalls.

DAY EIGHT: Morning departure to Krakow for your return flight. Those travelling on later flights will be able to store luggage and have free time in Krakow before travelling to the airport. Please note: throughout the tour you are on a bed and breakfast basis. There is a wide variety of lunch and dinner options available in all price ranges in Krakow and Zakopane and the other places you visit.

YOUR HOTELS

HOTEL WYSPIANSKI ★★★,
Krakow (three nights)

The hotel is named after the famous Polish artist, poet and playwright, Stanislaw Wyspianski, who once lived in a house at the site of the hotel. It is located right in the centre of Krakow, the proverbial stone's throw from the main square. Rooms are fully equipped with bath/shower, wc, hairdryer, satellite tv, telephone and radio. There is also a restaurant and a bar. (www.hotel-wyspianski.pl)

HOTEL WERSAL ★★★,
Zakopane (four nights)

The hotel is located in a quiet, yet central, area of Zakopane. It has 42 rooms with bath/shower, wc, hairdryer, satellite tv, radio and telephone. There is a restaurant offering both traditional Polish and international cuisine and a bar serving hot and cold drinks. (www.hotelwersal.pl)

A WALKING HOLIDAY is also available from this hotel. Please ask for a copy of our Walking Holidays brochure or visit preferredts.com.