

GRAND PRIX KRAKOW 2015

T R A V E L G U I D E



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INTRODUCING KRAKOW

Krakow, officially *Royal Capital City of Kraków*, is located in the southern part of Poland, in a region called Małopolska. It is a former capital and the second biggest city of Poland, as well as a prominent economic, academic and cultural centre.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Telephone country code: +48

Time zone: Central European Summer Time (CEST) – UTC+2 (the same as most of Western Europe)

Emergency number: 112

Time and date format: 24-hour clock (0:00 – 23:59), dd/mm/yy (or yyyy).



MONEY

The currency in Poland is the **złoty** (pronounced *zwoh-tee*), abbreviated **zł**. Its ISO code is PLN. Złoty is divided into 100 units called the **grosz** (abbreviated **gr**).

Available coin values: 1gr, 2gr, 5gr, 10gr, 20gr, 50gr, 1zł, 2zł, 5zł.



Available banknote values: 10zł, 20zł, 50zł, 100zł, 200zł.

Be aware that in 2014 the design of Polish banknotes was slightly refreshed, and therefore it's perfectly natural that you will encounter two notes of the same value, but with different look and feel.

Acquiring Złotys

Exchanging money is extremely easy, as there are many exchange offices (**kantor**) around the city (especially in the historic centre, but you'll find some everywhere – from shopping centres to suburban

districts). The most important points to keep in mind:

1. "No commission" is just cheap airport-style marketing; we never pay it for exchanging money in Poland, so if the office asks for commission - run away. If it doesn't - it still doesn't mean it's a good deal.
2. Watch the spread, i.e. the difference between the "buy" and the "sell" price. It's the best indicator as to whether the office is good or tries to rip you off. For the most common currencies – USD, EUR, GBP, CZK, CHF – the spread shouldn't be more than 0,05zł per unit (ten in case of CZK). Depending on the office (whether they deal with given currency frequently), spreads might be slightly less favourable

for people from other countries, but then again, checking USD, EUR and GBP rates will usually be a good indicator for you. Beware places which only have the “sell” price displayed; they will buy your €/\$/£ for ridiculously low price.

3. Do not exchange money at the airport (except for a small amount for bus or snack, if you must) and in banks – they will rip you off. Best rates are often found either in small offices randomly appearing where you don’t even expect them, or in the most touristy places (although the latter are spiked with “traps” - offices that, instead of competing with others, have ridiculous spreads aimed at this one tourist in ten who doesn’t bother to check). Again: just check spreads.



Paying with Euros

In some places it’s also possible to pay with Euro and, less frequently, with USD or GBP. This is mostly true for big supermarkets, some

As of February 2015, fair exchange rates are approximately as follows:

- 1 EUR = 4,17 PLN
- 1 USD = 3,66 PLN
- 1 GBP = 5,62 PLN
- 1 CHF = 3,95 PLN
- 10 CZK = 1,5 PLN

By the time of the GP they might be slightly different, but this should give you a general idea.

restaurants and petrol stations. However, you shouldn't count on such possibility and be aware that their exchange rates are really, really terrible. Also, in each case they will give you the change in złoty.

A lot of places accept card payments, so unless your bank has terrible fees for international transactions or currency conversion, you should be good with a Visa or a MasterCard (American Express will be a bit trickier, although some places accept it too). Visitors from certain countries might be shocked that in many places card

terminals are operated exclusively by cashiers (except for introducing your PIN), so don't be surprised when they reach out for your card only to swipe it or enter it to the slot for you. This behaviour

slowly disappears in favour of clients doing it on their own, but don't be worried if you encounter an "old school" place.

Remember that if you wish to use your card abroad, you might need to call your bank in advance and inform them about your trip.



LANGUAGE

The official language of Poland is **Polish**. It resembles other Slavic languages and can be particularly easy to understand by people who speak Czech, Slovak or Russian. It also has its share of “international words”, such as *hotel*, *restauracja* (restaurant), *taxi*, *supermarket*, *autobus*, *pub* and words that are understandable to at least some Europeans, like *apteka* (pharmacy) or *bilet* (ticket), so in some circumstances you might even find your way without a guide nor asking for help.

Majority of people from the young generation (up to ~30 years old) is able to communicate in decent English, and often at least one other language (German, French and Spanish being the most popular ones). With people older than that, you never know – some will speak English, some only speak Russian or German (English wasn't always the first foreign language taught at schools), and unfortunately some will not speak any foreign language at all. Don't be discouraged, though – we're no Scandinavia, but finding an English speaker shouldn't be difficult.

Polish has very straightforward rules of pronunciation, similar to those of Spanish or German – so in most cases a letter will be always pronounced in the same way, and most often it's the usual European way. Just watch out for these most commonly mispronounced letters:

- **c** – like *ts*
- **j** – like *y* in yellow
- **ł** – like *w* in war
- **u, ó** – like English *oo* (both written forms represent the same sound)
- **w** – like English *v*

More letters might surprise you (Polish has quite a lot letters with diacritic signs), but most foreigners pronounce them in a way that doesn't make the word unrecognisable by a native speaker, so don't worry too much.

And now time for a few simple phrases and important words:

- **Dzień dobry** – lit. “good day” (used since morning until evening)
- **Dobry wieczór** – good evening/night
- **Przepraszam** – sorry, excuse me (when you apologise or want to ask about something)
- **Sorry** – less formal, but also acceptable for apologising
- **Tramwaj** – tram
- **Autobus** – bus
- **Dworzec Główny** – Central Railway Station
- **Dworzec Autobusowy** – Central Bus Station (also Regionalny/Małopolski

Dworzec Autobusowy, abbreviated RDA or MDA)

- **Lotnisko** – airport
- **Nie rozumiem** – lit. “I don’t understand”, but it’s much simpler than “I don’t speak Polish” and does pretty much the same job
- **Piwo** - beer

Finally, it’s important for you to understand that Polish grammar has a rich inflection, and therefore nouns and adjectives might have many different forms (even a dozen). If you’re trying to decipher a Polish text, you need to look not only for names (locations, ingredients, etc.) that you

already know, but also for ones that are very similar, and only have a different ending. Even plural is tricky, as there are usually two possible plural forms, depending on the exact number, for example: **piwo** (beer), **dwa piwa** (two beers), but **pięć piw** (five beers).



Dużo piw (dooj-oh peev): a lot of beers

WEATHER

April is the most random month when it comes to weather in Poland – to the point it has its own proverb that ends in „a bit of winter, a bit of summer“. The daily mean is approx. 10°C with the average low of 5,5 and the average high of 13,7, but you never really know – it is not unseen (although not too frequent either) to experience a random two-day snow in April, but it can also be summer-like, short-sleeve warm, especially at midday. It is therefore highly

recommended to check the forecast shortly before leaving, and to bring versatile clothing if possible. The latter is especially important for sightseeing days, as the daily amplitude will be noticeable – April mornings can be still quite cool, even if the day is later very sunny and warm.

April is also the month with lowest number of average precipitation days (9), but it's still recommended to bring an umbrella or a water-proof hooded jacket.

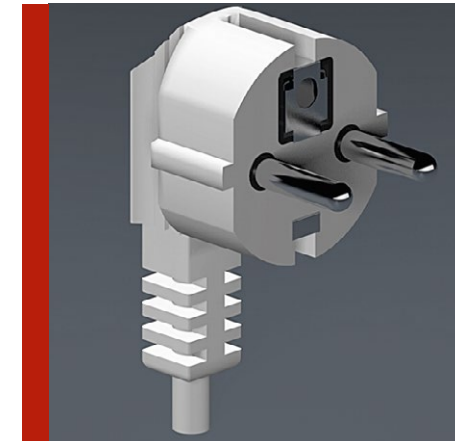


ELECTRICITY

Polish sockets provide electricity in 230V, 50Hz standard, which should be OK for most of your appliances – note that even if your country uses a different standard (for example 110V, 60Hz), manufacturers often take the differences into account and make their devices work in many different standards – just check the specifications in advance.

There are two types of sockets used in Poland – C (for a flat „europlug”) and E („French”). This is different from most

European countries, which use a similar, but incompatible F type. E type sockets have a male grounding pin that can prevent an F plug from being inserted. Fortunately, most devices sold in Europe have the CEE 7/7 plug that is compatible with both E and F sockets, so it’s very likely that you will avoid buying converter plugs, if you come from continental Europe.



ARRIVING IN KRAKOW

BY PLANE

John Paul II International Airport Kraków-Balice (KRK)

Website: krakowairport.pl

The only airport in Krakow, and definitely your best option if you happen to have a convenient flight, as it's very close to the city and there are many options to reach the city centre from there.

Since the airport is currently undergoing a significant expansion and the works



change the airport logistics on a regular basis, it's impossible to give you an accurate picture of what it looks like and which way to go, but the

good news is that the airport is very small anyway, so you will surely find your way. At the moment there are only two terminals - "international" and "domestic" (although they're used interchangeably for both types

of flights during the works), approximately 5-7 minutes of walk from each other, and there's a free shuttle between them, so it doesn't matter where do you arrive to/depart from.

As said before, there are several ways of reaching the city centre from KRK:

CITY BUS

There are two regular bus lines going from the airport (stop Kraków Airport T1) to the Central Station (stop Dworzec Główny Wschód – literally Central Station East): 208

and 292. There's also a night bus 902 if you need to leave the airport between 11 PM and 4 AM. The day lines take approximately 35-40 minutes to reach the Central Station terminus.

A single journey ticket costs 4zł, and a 90-minute ticket costs 6zł. You can buy them in Relay stores in the terminals, ticket machine at the bus stop, ticket machine inside the bus (but not all buses have them and usually they only accept coins) or the driver (limited selection of tickets and exact



change only). Note that the above prices are for suburban (zone 1+2) tickets, regular fare. For most of your journeys around the city, a zone 1 ticket will be sufficient, and if you're a student, you might be entitled to half-rate tickets. For more information about tickets and fares see section 3.

TAXI

The airport has its own official taxi service (Krakow Airport Taxi), with flat rates determined for five zones, regardless of hour, day of week and chosen route. The rates are: up to 5km – 29zł, up to 10km –

49zł, up to 15km – 69zł, up to 20km – 89zł and up to 25km – 109zł. They should be waiting just outside the terminal (or anywhere else due to the works – ask the information if you can't find them) and are very clearly labelled with the Krakow Airport Taxi name.

It's possible to save approx. 25% by calling a more competitive city-based company (one of the cheapest one is iCar - +48 126535555, they also have an Android app and an online "calling" form at <http://icarauto.pl/>), so if you don't mind extra hassle and waiting for the cab – go for it.

Disclaimer: not all of Krakow's taxi drivers are handsome models in suits.



On the other hand, some companies might actually end up more expensive than the KAT, so even if a legitimate taxi driver asks if you'd like a ride, be sure to check the price beforehand. For more information about taxi services in Krakow, see section 3.

TRAIN (CURRENTLY OUT OF ORDER)

There used to be a train between the airport and the Central Station, but it's currently out of order due to the terminal expansion. There is a small chance it will be operational again by the time of GP, so you might check the airport's website or ask at the information desk when you arrive. It was more convenient than city buses and much faster (15 minutes). It's unknown what the ticket price will be when the service is back.

Katowice International Airport (KTW)

Website: katowice-airport.com

The airport located approximately 30km from Katowice and 100km from Krakow is another popular choice for travellers in southern Poland; it's convenient enough to consider flying there even when Krakow is the final destination, especially if the price is much lower or the flight would be much more comfortable (better schedule, no layovers, etc.).



There are two primary ways of reaching Krakow from KTW:

BUS

Several companies cover the route KTW ↔ Krakow Central Station, the most popular two being:

- **Pyrzowice Ekspres** (pyrzowiceekspres.pl) – they are the “official WizzAir carrier”, which means you can buy tickets at the same time you book your flight (sometimes even with a discount), but passengers from other airlines are welcome too.
- **Matuszek** (matuszek.com.pl) – they try to accommodate all flights in their schedule, so if you're not flying WizzAir, this might be a better option – but both are worth checking.

Both carriers have similar prices (approx. 45zł/11€ one-way) and can be booked online. Both also do their best to accommodate events such as delayed flights (so the bus might wait for you, or you will get onto the next one even if you booked for specific hour). The buses take approximately 2h to reach their destination. It's definitely the recommended way.

CITY BUS TO KATOWICE + BUS/TRAIN

The operator of Katowice city buses runs a special Airport Line to Katowice Central Station. It costs 27zł one-way or 46zł for return ticket (valid 30 days). It takes 50 minutes to get from the airport to the railway station/city centre.

From there, you can take a train (from 1:20h to 2h for 15-20zł, depending on the train type and carrier; poor schedule), or a bus from the nearby main bus station (1:20h, 14zł, departing every half

an hour in the worst case). The bus wouldn't be a bad option, if only getting to Katowice in the first place wasn't such a rip-off.

BY TRAIN/BUS

Several companies offer international bus and train routes to Krakow. In each case, they should arrive either to the Central Railway Station (**Dworzec Główny** locally, **Kraków Główny** on national timetables) or to the Central Bus Station (**MDA Dworzec Autobusowy/Kraków MDA**, sometimes known by its previous name: **Kraków RDA**), located right next to the railway station. They're right in the heart of Krakow, so we can assume that once you're out of your train/bus, you've reached your destination.



For information about moving around the city, see section 3 and for information specifically about getting to the venue, section 4.

BY CAR

Poland is not exactly famous for its speedways (neither the size of existing network nor the quality nor the pricing), but if you really must arrive by car, it is possible. What you need to know in advance is that you don't need to bother about a pre-paid sticker like in many countries, but instead you pay for specific segments in designated payment points – sometimes only at the exit (you might get a ticket at the entry), sometimes at both entry and exit, sometimes only at the entry. Fees are inconsistent,

because different segments are operated by different companies (or by the State). Yes, it's messy.

When you arrive to Krakow, be aware that there's a fee for

parking in the city centre and nearby (only during working days between 10 AM and 8 PM). Parking metres are usually within sight and many of them accept card payments (but it's always better to have spare change).



GETTING AROUND THE CITY

Krakow doesn't have metro, but there's a decent network of bus and tram lines. Also, taxis are quite cheap (especially for visitors from Western and Northern Europe), so you shouldn't have much trouble reaching any point of the city.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – TICKETS AND FARES

Tickets for public transport are quite easy to acquire – they are sold in all newspaper kiosks around the city (but they



might not have some less popular ones, like multiple day tickets), in ticket machines located at important stops (two generations – not all of the older ones allow card

payments), in ticket machines located in trams (always first carriage) and buses (old generation – only coins, new generation – card payments, including contact-less technologies) and from drivers (only 60-minute tickets, exact change).

There are two zones and therefore two primary types of tickets: 1 and 1+2 (called agglomeration tickets). Except for going to/from the airport, most tourists will never need 1+2, so you don't need to concern yourself too much with those.

There are the following basic fares:

Type	Zone 1	Zone 1+2
Single journey (unlimited time, no changes) OR 40 minutes (any number of changes)	3,80 zł	4,00 zł (only single)
Two single journeys (rarely available in kiosks)	7,20 zł	7,60 zł
20 minutes	2,80 zł	---
60 minutes (always 1+2)	5,00 zł	5,00 zł
90 minutes (always 1+2)	6,00 zł	6,00 zł
24 hours	15,00 zł	20,00 zł
48 hours	24,00 zł	---
72 hours	36,00 zł	---
7 days	48,00 zł	62,00 zł

Short-period timed tickets can be tricky, but a rule of thumb is that several stops = 20 minutes, journey across the entire city = 60 minutes, something in between = 40 minutes. If you're in doubt, use a travel planner (see below) or ask locals.

Good news for students: if you have an **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** or a **Euro26 Student** card (or you study in Poland and have a student ID issued by Polish university), you're entitled to **half-rate** (also called discount) tickets. Half-rate versions exist for all the tickets listed

in the table above (including agglomeration tickets). As the name indicates, they are exactly 50% cheaper.

Hint: when buying half-rate tickets from people (in kiosks or from drivers), the best keyword to use is "student ticket".

1 40min Strefa I Miasto Kraków Normalny 1-przejazdowy lub 40-minutowy 3,80 zł N U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie	1 40min Strefa I Miasto Kraków Ulgowy 1-przejazdowy lub 40-minutowy 1,90 zł U U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie
20min Strefa I Miasto Kraków Normalny 20-minutowy 2,80 zł N U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie	20min Strefa I Miasto Kraków Ulgowy 20-minutowy 1,40 zł U U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie
60min Strefa I+II Aglomeracja Normalny 60-minutowy 5,00 zł N U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie	60min Strefa I+II Aglomeracja Ulgowy 60-minutowy 2,50 zł U U A Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie

The **U** stands for **Ulgowy** (discounted). If you can't confirm you're a student, you should look to buy **N** tickets (**N** stands for **Normal**).

PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

The best journey planner for public transport in Krakow is called **Jak Dojade** (literally *how do I reach...*), to be found at krakow.jakdojade.pl and also available in English for Android, iOS and Windows Phone users. Even if you don't have a data package in roaming, it's worth installing, as it makes it incredibly easy to find the best route from anywhere to anywhere, and you can often count on finding an open WiFi

while in distress. The app/website supports searching route by addresses and landmarks in addition to bus/tram stop names, so it should cover all your needs.

TAXI

Polish people use taxis much less than people in Western Europe, so there's no custom of catching one on the street. You can try the nearest taxi stop – there are designated areas throughout the entire city, but it's not something you should expect at every corner; of course, they are more frequent in the city centre, near important landmarks, some hotels and railway/bus stations. The most typical way, however, is just ordering one via phone – and many companies actually have a discount between 20% and 40% if you order by phone and not take one from the stop.

What you need to know is that while the taxi market in Poland is slightly regulated, there is no uniformity so typical elsewhere – cars

have different colours, and prices differ from company to company (although licensed taxis are bound by maximum prices imposed by law, so they are always within acceptable price range). Licensed taxis have these distinguishing features: on the front doors, yellow rectangular stickers with city coat of arms and licence number (except Krakow Airport Taxis, they only have blue logo); a roof-light labelled “taxi”; inside, on passengers’ windows, yellow stickers with prices for all tariffs; taxi driver’s licence in a visible spot; a taximeter; a device (nowadays often



a smartphone, but previously they were radio-based) that allows the driver to accept requests from the dispatcher. While it’s easy to fake a licence or a sticker, fake “taxis” will often miss taximeters and the

other device – because they don’t use them anyway – so this might be a good indicator when in doubt.

Taxis in Krakow have four tariffs: **I.** working days 6:00 – 22:00, within the city (zone 1); **II.** nights and weekends (zone 1); **III.** working days (suburbs); **IV.** nights and weekends

(suburbs). Prices are per km and there should be no extra fee for being stuck in traffic jam. Tariffs 3 and 4 jump in when you cross zones - there are special road signs for taxi drivers and they should switch the taximeter to the right tariff then; you don't pay premium for the distance you covered within the first zone. Remember that all taxis have a starting fee in addition to price per km, and they will cover you extra if you want the driver to wait for you somewhere.

Summary of some generally reliable taxi companies:

Name	Phone	Prices
iCar	+48 12 653 55 55	6,00 zł + I, II: 1,98zł/km, III, IV: 2,98zł/km
Mega	+48 12 400 00 00	6,00 zł + I: 1,80zł/km, II: 2,00zł/km, III: 2,90zł/km, IV: 3,00zł/km
Barbakan	+48 196 61	7,00zł + I: 2,30zł/km, II: 3,5zł/km, III: 4,60zł/km, IV: 7,00zł/km (ordered by phone: -20% in I and II, -40% in III and IV)
Eco	+48 12 644 22 22	7,00zł + I: 1,60zł/km, II: 1,90zł/km, III: 2,60zł/km, IV: 2,90zł/km
Lajkonik	+48 12 267 35 35	7,00zł + I: 2,30zł/km, II: 3,50zł/km, III: 3,5zł/km, IV: 4,60zł/km (ordered by phone: -10% in I and III, -20% in II and IV)
MPT	+48 12 644 55 55	7,00zł + I: 2,30zł/km, II: 3,50zł/km, III: 4,60zł/km, IV: 7,00zł/km (ordered by phone: -20% in I and II, -30% in III and IV)

It's sometimes possible to make a special request (like car for up to 8 people, car with significantly increased luggage capacity, etc.), but ask in advance if this is extra paid.

VENUE & ACCOMMODATION

LOCATION & SURROUNDINGS

The Grand Prix will be held in **Expo Krakow** (Galicyska 9, 31-586 Krakow), an exhibition and congress centre located approx. 7km from the city centre (about 18 minutes by tram from the Dworzec Główny/Central Railway Station stop). While it might not sound like a bad location, the Expo itself was actually built in the middle of a relatively empty piece of ground, so it may take you 10-15 minutes of walking

to reach the nearest bus or tram stop and there aren't many places of interest (stores, restaurants, etc.) around.

There is a **M1** shopping centre nearby (10 minutes' walk, the same direction as bus/tram stops), but it's too far for a quick food break in the middle of the event. Fortunately, there's a restaurant in the venue.



GETTING THERE

The public transportation stops closest to the venue are: **M1 Nowohucka** (bus lines 174 and 178, about 10 minutes' walk from the venue) and **Nowohucka** (tram lines 1, 14, 22, night line 62 and the same two bus lines as above – but it's a bit further away, approx. 15 minutes from the venue). All of these tram lines go through city centre (although different parts of it), so they're particularly interesting for most visitors.

Another good option is to just take a taxi every time you go to/from the venue – if your hotel is in the city centre, the taxi should cost approximately 20zł (that's less than 5€!), and it can get even cheaper if the

hotel is located in the Eastern side of the city centre. Fun fact: it will be faster to take a taxi from the Old Town directly to the venue entrance than to reach the entrance by foot from the tram stop.

The venue also has a lot of parking places for people who want to come by car.



ACCOMMODATION

The Expo cooperates with several hotels located within a few kilometres from both venue and city centre. Most of them are really convenient for accessing the venue by either tram or taxi, and they cover a range of different standards and prices, so most people will find a satisfactory accommodation on this list: expokrakow.com/for-visitors/recommended-hotels.html. According to the Expo website, those hotels even offer special prices to people who attend events in the venue. For more hotel options, feel free to check booking.com. There are almost no hotels in the neighbourhood of the venue, so just pick anything near city centre (and check the map for the nearby stops of lines 1, 14 or 22, if you want to use trams).

Krakow's Old Town is also densely packed with cheap hostels, and since each year it's a more and more popular destination, many new places appear – modern and stylish; no ancient bunks or disgusting showers. There's no point in listing here just few of them, if you can browse them all at hostelworld.com and choose your preferred style, standard and location.



TOURIST INFORMATION

PLACES TO VISIT

Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum

Website: [auschwitz.org](https://www.auschwitz.org)

Located just about an hour away from Krakow, for many it's one of the most important places to visit during a stay in southern Poland. This former Nazi concentration camp offers a depressing, but unforgettable and eye-opening experience.

It's strongly recommended to take the 3,5h tour with an educator – available in many

languages (tours in the most popular ones, like English, German, Spanish, Italian and French, offered daily, up to a few times a day). It costs 35zł and usually requires a booking

up to a few days in advance. The most convenient way to get there is a direct bus from the Central Bus Station – it takes 1,5h and costs 28zł (open return ticket).



Main Square

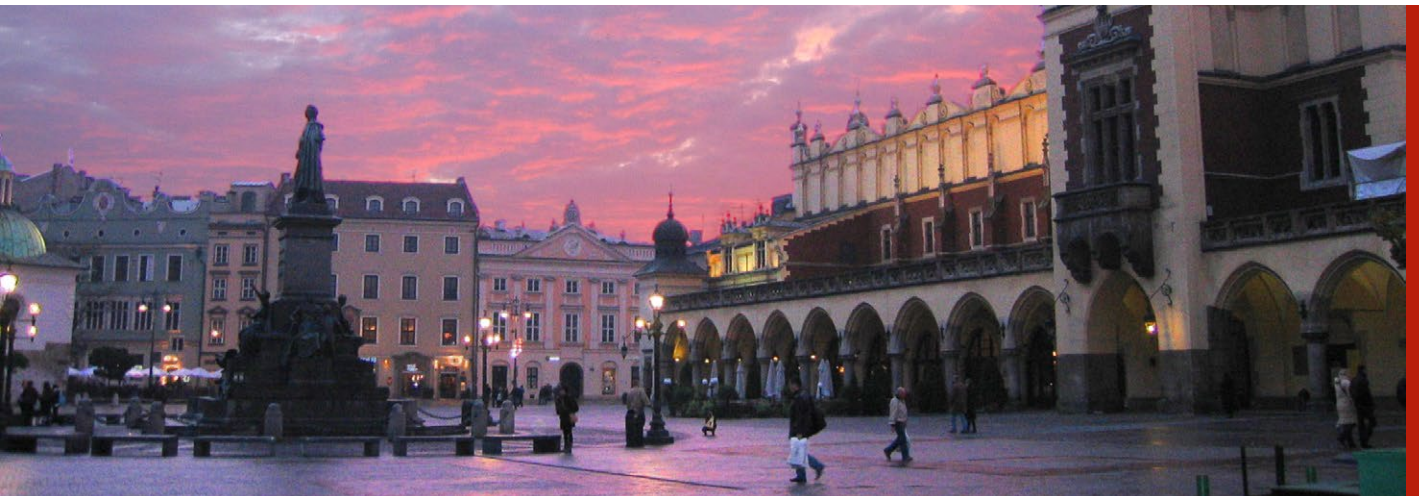
This is the very heart of Krakow and the starting point for most sightseeing tours, but it's also interesting on its own. As the largest medieval town square in Europe, it's home to many

historic places, but nowadays it's also the centre of Krakow's nightlife, with countless clubs and pubs located right there and on the adjacent streets.

While there, pay attention to **St. Mary's Basilica**, a beautiful

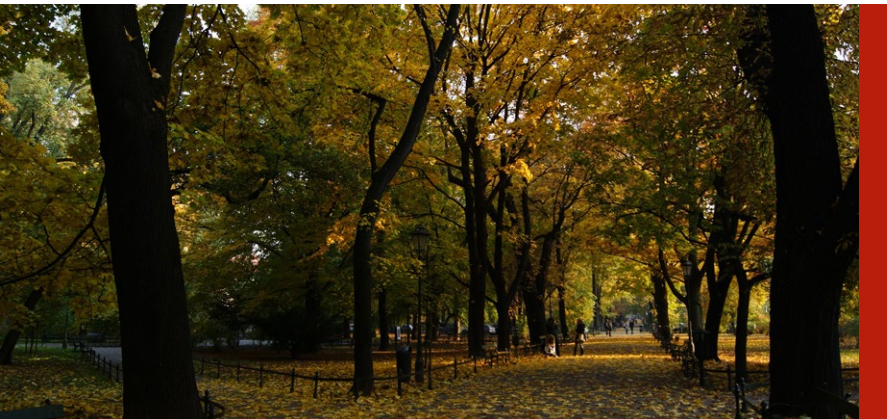
Gothic church famous for its spectacular altarpiece and the trumpet signal played from its tower every hour (to commemorate a 13th century trumpeter, who warned the city about a Mongol attack, but was shot in the middle of the tune).

Not far from the basilica there's a much less eye-catching temple, the **St. Adalbert's Church**, the history of which dates back to 10th century (it was rebuilt fully in stone in the 11th century). Then, in the centre of the Square, there's a building known as "Cloth Hall" - originally a place where cloth merchants were doing their business, and now home to souvenir shops, an art gallery belonging to the National Museum in Krakow, and the entrance to **Main Square Underground** - a unique subterranean museum dedicated to the city's history.



Old Town

Pretty much an extension to the Main Square, the Old Town is so densely packed with churches and other interesting, few-hundred-years-old buildings, that wherever you go from the Square, you will find something interesting –



especially in the area between the Main Square and the **Planty** park surrounding the strict city centre. There are the remnants of the city walls with **St. Florian's Gate** and a nearby **Barbican**, the **Juliusz Slowacki Theatre**, the **Church of Saints Peter and Paul** – home to the longest Foucault pendulum in Poland (with demonstrations each Thursday), multiple departments of the **National Museum in Krakow** and the **Historical Museum of Krakow** (including art galleries, Archaeological Museum, Pharmacy Museum, History of



Theatre Museum and many others) etc.

There are multiple ways of visiting these places: one can, of course, just take a walk around the city, buy a guided tour in one of the many places offering such services, use a hop-on-hop-off bus, take a tour in a small, white, electric car (Melex) with an audio guide, or – perhaps the most Cracovian experience of all – pick one of the “magical horse carriages” waiting at the Main Square.

Wawel Hill

Located within a short walk from the Main Square (cities used to be so small in Middle Ages!), it's one of the most important places in Polish history – for centuries it was the residence of kings, the



place of coronations, royal weddings and funerals. While the most important places are the **Castle** and the **Cathedral**, the hill is also home to the cave known as **Dragon's Den**, which is guarded by a real dragon – beware, it breathes fire! Most likely it's a descendant of the legendary dragon that threatened the city in the early Middle Ages.

Kazimierz, the Jewish District

The district, now located within Krakow's Old Town, was an autonomous city



for five centuries, and during most of that time it was inhabited by a significant Jewish population, resulting in a unique atmosphere. One can find there seven synagogues (the oldest one dating back to 15th century), two Jewish cemeteries, a mikhav (ritual bath) and a former main square. The district also serves as the location of many festivals and celebrations related to Judaism and Jewish culture, and is a popular night-life destination.

Salt mines

Websites: wieliczka-saltmine.com, kopalnia-bochnia.pl

Right outside Krakow, there are two cities famous for their salt mines – **Wieliczka** and **Bochnia**. Built in 13th century, both are among world's oldest salt mines that are still open (although recently sightseeing took precedence over salt production). Both offer spectacular underground tours and overnight underground stays. Wieliczka is said to offer overall more interesting tours, while in Bochnia it's possible to experience a bit

more adventurous things like "world's only ferry crossing of an undergrounds chamber flooded with brine", ride on an underground train and underground slide. Be sure to check the mines' websites for visiting conditions; in Wieliczka it's usually OK to just show up and buy a ticket (although it's worth checking the timetable in advance for a group with guide in your language), but for most Bochnia attractions you will need a special booking and/or a minimum group of people, which might make things more difficult.

Since Wieliczka lies within the Krakow agglomeration, you can go there with a city bus (line 304, originating near the Central Station – remember to buy zone I+II ticket). Bochnia is slightly further away and the best option is to take a bus at the Central Bus Station.



Less typical places to visit

If you're tired of visiting churches and all European old towns look too similar for you, first of all I strongly recommend you to read again the sections about Auschwitz and the salt mines. If you're still looking for ideas, there are a few more.

POLISH AVIATION MUSEUM

The museum (*Muzeum Lotnictwa Polskiego*) is located 15 minutes by tram from the city centre, is home to over 200 aircraft models from throughout the history of aviation. Aeroplanes, helicopters, gliders, motor gliders and engines – there's a bit of everything.

NOWA HUTA DISTRICT

The district (literally “the new steel mill”) was built in 1950s, originally as an autonomous town for workers of the **Lenin Steel Mill**, it's a prime example of the *socialist realism* style in architecture (especially the oldest part, surrounding the Central Plaza (*Plac Centralny*)). While there, be sure to visit the **Lord's Ark** (*Arka Pana*)

church, built collectively by the citizens, after a long struggle with the authorities. There are even travel agencies that offer guided tours around Nowa Huta, often including rides in old cars and visits to typical apartments from the period of People's Republic of Poland (e.g.. [Crazy Guides](#)).

CUISINE

Polish cuisine is closely related to the cuisines of its long-time neighbours (especially when they ruled part of Poland in the past), so many dishes and ingredients are also known in Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Russia, Lithuania or Ukraine. It's generally quite greasy and rich in meat (pork, chicken and beef); dishes are usually accompanied by potatoes (mashed or boiled), buckwheat or noodle-y things in various shapes. Soups are the most typical starter (also called "first course" as opposed

to the "second" – main – course) and there's a huge variety of them. Popular foods and ingredients are: sausage (again – many varieties), cabbage and sauerkraut, pickles and gherkins (much more than fresh cucumbers, although there's a place for those too), beetroots, mushrooms and more.

Pierogi

Our pride and national dish, **pierogi** (never "pierogis/ pierogies" – it's already plural of *pieróg*!) are semicircular dumplings filled with all sorts

of delicious fillings and often garnished with fried onions or fried pieces of bacon fat (unless the filling is sweet, in which case it's sweet cream).

The most popular fillings/varieties are:

Pierogi ruskie ("Russian pierogi") – filled with mashed potatoes, cottage cheese and onion.



Pierogi z mięsem (“pierogi with meat”) – filled with ground meat.

Pierogi z kapustą (lit. “pierogi with cabbage”) – filled with sauerkraut (don’t be surprised; the word “cabbage” is often used for sauerkraut, as this used to be the basic form of storing it).

Pierogi z kapustą i grzybami – like above, but with mushrooms (should be wild, but white mushrooms might be used in cheap/bad places).

Pierogi ze szpinakiem (“pierogi with spinach”) – filled with spinach and usually some

sort of cheese like feta or cottage cheese.

Pierogi z truskawkami – “pierogi with strawberries”.

Pierogi z jagodami/ borówkami – “pierogi with blueberries”.

Of course, there are infinite possibilities, and many places offer pierogi with pizza-like ingredient lists (i.e. they have a mix of four-five ingredients and a totally unrelated name).

Soups

As said before, soups are important and frequent in Polish cuisine; the primary Polish meal (for European standards that’s roughly “dinner eaten at lunch time”) usually consists of a soup and a main course. Most popular ones are:

Rosół – chicken or beef broth with noodles.

Pomidorowa – tomato soup.

Barszcz – beetroot soup (borscht).

Żurek – sour rye soup. Beware: żurek or a similar soup are sometimes called “white borscht” (“barszcz biały”); in contrast, real borscht is often called “red borscht” (“barszcz czerwony”).

Kapuśniak – sauerkraut soup.

Grochówka – pea soup.

Ogórkowa – gherkin soup.

Grzybowa – mushroom soup. Should be made with wild mushrooms, as opposed to **pieczarkowa** – “white mushroom soup”.



Some places offer soup inside a hollowed-out loaf of bread. In this case, it's **żurek**. Yum!

Bigos

Traditional dish made of sauerkraut, cooked for many hours with meat (ideally venison, but others are acceptable too), bacon, sausage and wild mushrooms. Due to long cooking process it is not frequently prepared in Polish houses, but is therefore probably the most longed-for dish. When it's finally prepared, a gigantic pot is used for that – not only because everyone will want to eat as much as possible, but also because this one dish gets better every time it's re-heated.



Zapiekanka

Typical Polish street food, consisting of a half-baguette, topped with cheese and mushrooms, usually with ketchup. A relatively popular variety is **zapiekanka z szynką** (with ham), and frequent condiments are chive, fried onions, garlic sauce and mayonnaise. Less orthodox places serve **zapiekanki** (plural) with all sorts of pizza-like toppings, e.g.. “chicken, bell pepper, beans, maize” (this one would be most likely advertised as “Mexican”).

The best zapiekanki are **zapiekanki z pieca**, that

is oven-baked. If the place doesn't indicate they use oven, you might end up eating a frozen one, re-heated with microwaves. When in doubt, peek inside the booth; ovens are great, electric ovens or grills are acceptable, microwaves – nope!

Note: the word “zapiekanka” literally means “roasted thing” and it’s actually used for two dishes. When you see “zapiekanka” in a restaurant (as opposed to a food truck, street booth or something like that), you can be sure it’s not the heavenly baguette, but a casserole.



Other popular dishes

KOTLET SCHABOWY

Often shortened to just “schabowy”, a piece of meat very similar to Wiener schnitzel and a lunch-time staple.

GOŁĄBKI

Cabbage leaves stuffed with ground meat and rice.

GOLONKA

Sometimes spelled **golonko** – pork knuckle.

ŻEBERKA

Ribs. Nomnomnommm ribs.

KOTLET MIELONY

Often shortened to just “mielony”, a traditional burger-like piece of spiced, ground pork meat.

Drinks

If you want to get drunk quickly, go for vodka (**wódka**). Otherwise, Poland has really decent beer (**piwo**) – maybe not as famous as Belgian, German or Czech, but still worth a try, especially if you ask for a product of small, independent brewery (sometimes called “artisan beer”). Such breweries are

getting more and more popular in Poland and people are getting more aware of what is and what isn’t quality product, so if a pub only offers beers you’ve seen in the nearest convenience store, it’s most likely a poor choice for spending an evening. Note that in restaurants and pubs you will most often get half-litre beer unless you specifically ask for a small one, so don’t be surprised.



LOCAL GAME STORES

Krakow doesn't have a huge tournament scene, but there are several places where you can play card and board games. Remember to check the [event locator](#).

DRAGONUS

ADVANCED+

Lubomirskiego 49/2, 31-509
Krakow (close to city centre)

They organize tournaments on various days and in various formats – exact schedule might change till April, so just check

event locator or ask locals shortly before your arrival.

BARD

ADVANCED+

Batorego 20/17, 31-135
Krakow (close to city centre)

Just like Dragonus, they have several tournaments a week, in various formats – exact schedule might change till April, so again, just check event locator or ask locals shortly before your arrival.



CUBE

CORE

Przemiarki 23a/2l, 30-001
Krakow

Relatively new and in quite
a remote location.

their [facebook page](#) for
a reservation app (in Polish,
but straightforward) or drop
them a message. Definitely
worth the extra hassle with
booking.

HEX

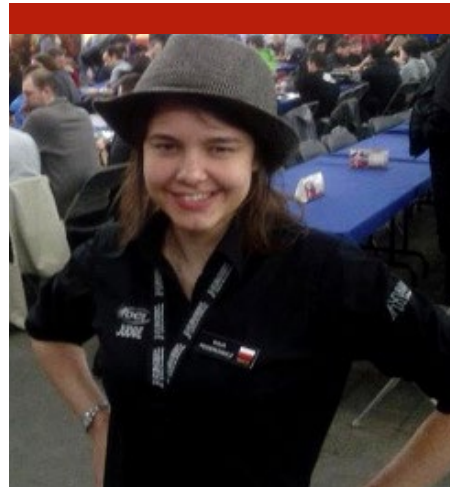
Dwernickiego 5, 31-530 Kraków

Krakow's beloved gamer pub;
they sometimes organise
Magic tournaments, but
more importantly, are just
the best place to play board
games, created by gamers
and for gamers. It's so popular
tables must be reserved
few days in advance – check

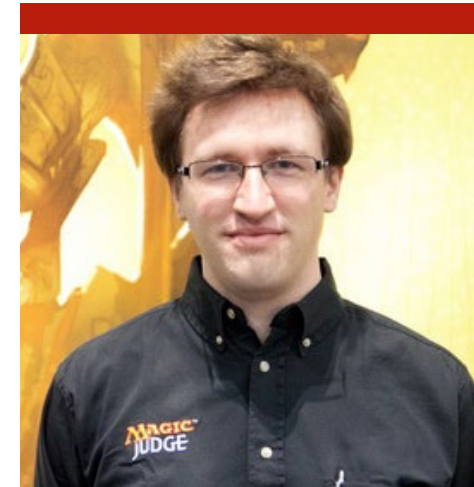
CHAPTER 6

CONTACTING LOCAL JUDGES

If you have any questions about your stay in Krakow, don't hesitate to contact us using [JudgeApps](#), phone or e-mail!



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SEE YOU ALL IN KRAKOW
APRIL 17TH—19TH

