

**CUSTOM TOURING**

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*Dare to Dream*



## POLISH GOLDEN AUTUMN

### EXCLUSIVE SMALL GROUP ESCORTED TOUR

24 Sept - 07 October 2019

*Welcome to Poland - "Witamy w Polsce"*

***History reflecting human endurance ~ Scenic Countryside ~ Varied Architecture ~ Delicious Cuisine***

*Our customized escorted tour introduces beautiful and historic Poland, taking you to some of its most famous places. Poland is a country often overlooked as a travel destination, but visitors are discovering what the locals have long known: Poland is rich in fine culture, scenic landscapes, European charm and beautiful cities with UNESCO world heritage status.*

*Poland offers delicious traditional cuisine, world famous composers & musicians, a rich and fascinating history, as well as extraordinary, and sometimes moving, historical sites.*

*Two & three night hotel stays and leisure time during our tour ensure a relaxed holiday, free from worrying about luggage and tipping, all of which is taken care of by your tour leader.*

*September is one of the most beautiful months in Poland, being the beginning of autumn. Golden leaves start to fall from trees, apples are in season, heathers are more amazing than ever.*

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 – Tue 24 Sep: ARRIVAL IN KRAKOW

#### Dinner

On arrival at the Balice International Airport in Krakow, you will be met in the airport arrival hall and transferred to **ANDEL'S HOTEL**. <https://www.viennahouse.com/en/andels-cracow/the-hotel/overview.html>

Spend three nights here.

Time to settle in, relax and maybe take your first walk around Krakow. The beautiful Market Square is within walking distance from your hotel.

*Krakow, a royal city with a long and rich tradition, is majestically situated on the Vistula River. Here, history becomes intertwined with the present day. Under the reign of King Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great) during what was known as "The Golden Age", trade, crafts, art and science underwent their most intensive development. Many eminent Poles such as Nicolaus Copernicus, John Paul II and Wisława Szymborska graduated from the Academy of Krakow founded in 1364.*

*The structure of this city of culture was largely left unscathed by World War II and it is a living museum of magnificent palaces and historical treasures, many found along the Royal Route starting from the Barbican and finishing at the Wawel Hill, known as the "Polish Acropolis", with its Castle and Cathedral.*

*In 1978, in appreciation of the exceptional historic and artistic value of Krakow, it was included on UNESCO's first list of the World's Cultural Heritage. The city which is Poland's cultural capital and one of the most splendid towns in Europe, is a gem of historic architecture.*

Welcome Dinner this evening to meet your tour leader and fellow travellers.  
Overnight at Andel's Hotel.

### Day 2 – Wed 25 Sep: KRAKOW

#### Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, we meet our local English speaking guide and depart for a half day city tour. Discover the stunning, historic and culture packed city of Krakow. Visit the picturesque Main Market Square with the impressive Cloth Hall which has been the local market place for centuries. Good for shopping during leisure time! Visit the St. Mary's Church with the extraordinary Wit Stwosz wooden altarpiece, with more than 200 carved figures, and hear the famous silver trumpet of the bugler from the Tower of the Church. On to the charming Gothic courtyard of Collegium Maius (Great College), the oldest building of the Academia Cracoviensis. Stroll along Kanonicza and Grodzka streets to reach the Royal Castle situated on Wawel Hill. Visit the Wawel Cathedral which was the sight of royal coronations and burial site for Polish kings.

We end our city tour with lunch at a delightful local restaurant located near Market Square.



Afternoon at leisure to relax or further explore this fascinating city on your own.  
Free for dinner this evening. Overnight at Andel's Hotel.

### Day 3 – Thu 26 Sep: KRAKOW

Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine (UNESCO World Heritage Site) - one of the wonders of Poland.

*Wieliczka is the oldest European salt mine, situated 13km from Krakow. Wieliczka is an impressive underground world of salt chambers, halls, galleries, fabulous salt lakes and beautiful sculptures carved from the rock salt. It offers a fascinating journey through airy chambers carved from the rock salt on three levels between 64 and 135 metres below the ground. Due to its pure clean air, Wieliczka, apart from its role as a most attractive underground site, has been granted the status of a health resort. In 1978, Wieliczka was acknowledged as a monument of national culture and registered in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list.*



Lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon we will stop for a private tour of Oskar Schindler's Museum.

**Exhibition Kraków under Nazi Occupation 1939–1945** is located in the former administrative building of Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory at 4 Lipowa Street. The exhibition is primarily a story about Kraków and its inhabitants, both Polish and Jewish, during World War Two. It is also a story about the Nazi occupiers who brutally disrupted Kraków's centuries-long history of Polish-Jewish relations.

The wartime history of Deutsche Emailwarenfabrik – DEF – and its owner Oskar Schindler was brought into the limelight in 1993 by Steven Spielberg's film **Schindler's List**, depicting how Schindler saved the lives of over a thousand people. The character of Oskar Schindler and the life stories of the Kraków Jews he saved are presented in the exhibition as part of the city's complex wartime history.

Oskar Schindler's heroic attitude is presented in close-up in his former office – luckily, the historic room located in the factory's administrative building has been preserved intact throughout the years. The dominant feature here is the symbolic "Survivors' Ark" made of thousands of enamelled pots, similar to those manufactured by Schindler's employees during the war.



Return to our hotel for overnight. Free for dinner this evening.

## Day 4 – Fri 27 Sep: KRAKOW to ZAKOPANE

*Breakfast, Lunch*

After a leisurely breakfast, we will drive to the beautiful Polish Tatra Mountains.

Lunch at a local restaurant before checking in to the **CROCUS HOTEL** in Zakopane.

<http://www.hotelcrocus.pl/en/> Spend two nights here.

Free time this afternoon. Perhaps book a massage or enjoy the heated indoor swimming pool.

Free for dinner this evening. Overnight at Crocus Hotel.

## Day 5 – Sat 28 Sep: ZAKOPANE

*Breakfast, Dinner*

Depart for half day sightseeing tour of Zakopane.

Today we will discover the beauty of the Tatra Mountains. Get to know the rich culture of the Tatra highlanders and enjoy the fabulous mountain landscapes. Explore the Wielka Krokiew ski jump, the Krzeptówki sanctuary, famous colourful Krupowki street and funicular railway ride up the Gubalowka Hill. A visit to Zakopane is a great opportunity to indulge in a culinary experience and taste famous Polish regional dishes such as oscypek (smoked sheep's milk cheese) or kwasnica (sauerkraut soup).

Free time in the afternoon – make the most of the wonderful shopping.

Dinner at a local restaurant this evening, including live folk music.

Overnight at Crocus Hotel.



## Day 6 – Sun 29 Sep: ZAKOPANE – AUSCHWITZ / BIRKENAU – WROCLAW

*Breakfast, Lunch*

After breakfast we drive to Wroclaw - the capital city of Lower Silesia, often called the Venice of the North. On the way we will stop in Oswiecim where we will visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau former Concentration Camp – one of the most terrifying and touching places in the world (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST)

*Auschwitz was a concentration camp established by the Nazis in 1940 in the suburbs of the town of Oswiecim, which was occupied by the Germans during the Second World War. The name of the town was changed to Auschwitz, which also became the name of the camp and is a symbol of martyrdom. Originally the camp was to be a place for the extermination of Poles. In 1942 it became the site for the greatest mass murder ever committed against citizens of many countries. European Jews were especially targeted as part of the Nazi plan for the complete destruction of that nation. Some 1.5 million people of 28 nationalities died there as a result of starvation, forced labour, executions, torture and criminal medical experiments. Twenty-eight single storey brick blocks, surrounded by a barbed wire fence, comprise the oldest part of the encampment. It is entered through a gate topped with the inscription “Arbeit Macht Frei”, meaning “Work Brings Freedom”.*



*In some of the blocks there are exhibitions of piles of artificial limbs, spectacles, shoes and suitcases once the property of the victims. In the second part of the camp, which is called Birkenau (Brzezinka), are situated the ruins of gas chambers and crematoria. It is the largest “cemetery” in the world. The National Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau is one of the most important research sources for the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century humanity.*

After this very sobering visit we continue our drive to Wroclaw, with a stop along the way for a light lunch. Check in at the **MERCURE WROCLAW CENTRUM HOTEL, WROCLAW**. Spend two nights here.

<https://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-3374-hotel-mercure-wroclaw-centrum/index.shtml>

Free for dinner this evening. Overnight in Wroclaw.

## **Day 7 – Mon 30 Sep: WROCLAW & SURROUNDS**

*Breakfast, Lunch*

Today we meet with our local English speaking guide for full day tour of Wroclaw and charming surroundings.

- City tour of Wroclaw (driving & walking) including main attractions: Grunwaldzki Bridge, Centennial Hall - Cathedral Island - Tumski Bridge (Love Bridge) - Market Hall - Wroclaw University – St. Elizabeth's Church - Market Square - Salt Square - Swidnika Street - Opera House
- Lunch at a traditional Polish restaurant
- Church of Peace in Swidnica (World Heritage Site)
- Ksiaz Castle tour and walk through the terraces and gardens
- Szczawno-Zdroj - health resort where we can partake of the healing mineral waters

Return to Wroclaw for overnight. Free for dinner this evening.



## **Day 8 – Tue 01 Oct: TRAIN TO GDANSK**

*Breakfast*

Transfer to the railway station to catch a train to Gdansk – our next destination.

*Gdansk, (previously known as Danzig) is situated on the Bay of Gdansk on the Baltic Sea and close to the delta of Poland's longest river, the Vistula. It is a city-symbol connected with important events in Polish history. The Second World War began here with the Nazi assault on the Westerplatte Peninsula. Gdansk is also a city of Hevelius, Fahrenheit, Solidarity Movement and Lech Walesa – a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Poland's former President. It was here that the strikes of 1970, 1980 and 1988 began, ultimately leading to the demise of communism. The Gdansk Shipyard became a symbol of defying communism in Europe. It is the largest city in northern Poland and also one of the most important cultural Polish centres. With its thousand-year-old history it is called the “Aurea Porta” meaning the “Golden Gate” of the Polish Republic. There are a number of monuments and buildings from different epochs and styles. Old churches, palaces, city gates and fortifications from the period when Gdańsk was the greatest port on the Baltic Sea and a member of the Hanseatic League. (An organization founded by north German towns and German merchant communities abroad to protect their mutual trading interests.) The Golden Gate opens onto the Royal Route, which leads along Długa Street where the Main Town Hall is situated. It is one of the most important historic buildings of Gdańsk built between 1379 and 1382. The Main Town Hall houses the Historical Museum of the City of Gdansk. Worth visiting is the Long Market, where the most elegant Gothic building known as the Artus Court is located. There is also the Green Gate, built as a residence for Polish kings, dominated by the figure of Neptune on the fountain, a symbol of maritime Gdansk. The most picturesque of all streets is the Mariacka Street with its monumental St. Mary's Basilica.*

On arrival at Gdansk station, we will meet our driver for transfer to **HANZA HOTEL** in the heart of historical Gdansk. <http://www.hotelhanza.pl/en/> Spend three nights here.

Free time to catch a first glimpse of the city. Free for dinner this evening.

## Day 9 – Wed 02 Oct: GDANSK & SURROUNDS

### *Breakfast, Lunch*

Meet with our local English speaking guide to explore and discover the Tri-city region of Poland. Start with Oliwa, a district of Gdansk, to visit a beautiful 13<sup>th</sup> century Cathedral famous for its impressive baroque pipe organ. Enjoy an organ concert in this stunning Gothic Cathedral.

After the concert enjoy an orientation tour of Gdansk.

**Highlights include:** The Upland Gate – a fragment of the city's former fortifications and one of its main gates, The Golden Gate which opens onto Long Market – a magnificent street, with grand mansions decorated with late Renaissance and Baroque facades, Main Town and the Artus Court – a building used for Hanseatic League meetings. It is renowned as the most beautiful court among all of Europe's Hanseatic cities. Just behind it stands the tower of St. Mary's Basilica, a part of the most precious and largest red brick Gothic church in Gdansk. Stroll along the famous Mariacka Street, with its gabled terraced houses and elegant amber boutiques.

Lunch at a delightful local restaurant.

In the afternoon we drive to Sopot, a resort town where we can enjoy the Baltic Sea breeze along the longest wooden pier in Europe.

Return to Gdansk for overnight. Free for dinner this evening.



## Day 10 – Thu 03 Oct: GDANSK

### *Breakfast*

Day at leisure to explore this fascinating city on your own. Browse the beautiful shops in the historic centre and perhaps treat yourself to a small amber trinket. Find a local restaurant and watch the passing parade.

## Day 11 – Fri 04 Oct: GDANSK – MALBORG – WARSAW

### *Breakfast, Lunch*

After breakfast we head towards Warsaw, the capital city of Poland, with a stop at the stunning Teutonic Knights Castle in Malbork (UNESCO World Heritage Site). Enjoy a tour of this complex with an English speaking guide.

*The Malbork Castle is a magnificent mediaeval fortress built on the River Nogat. It is the largest brick Castle in Poland and probably in the world. The initial Castle was built in 1274 when the Teutonic Knights founded their new home in Poland. Malbork became the capital city of the Teutonic Order and the seat of its Grand Master, who came to launch the campaign against the Prussians. The Castle in Malbork, systematically extended and fortified over centuries, quickly gained the name of an invincible bastion. Its oldest part is called the High Castle, then came the Forecastle, later converted into the Middle Castle, which was the residence of the Grand Master, and the Lower Castle, the last to be built. From 1457 until the Partitions of Poland this masterpiece of art of the Pomerania region, combining charm with the functional aspects, served as one of the official royal residences of Polish kings. Nowadays the Castle is still in excellent condition and, thanks to Polish conservators, the historical halls, chapels, chambers and courtyards retain their impressive splendour.*



Lunch at the Gothic Café in the Castle.

Continue on to Warsaw where we check in at the **POLONIA PALACE HOTEL** . Spend three nights here.

<http://www.poloniapalace.com>

Free for dinner this evening.

Overnight in Warsaw.

*Warsaw - the capital city of Poland since 1596, is beautifully sited on the major Polish river, the Vistula. It was founded in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and soon became one of the most important towns. In the course of time, it gradually gained political and social importance and King Zygmunt III Waza transferred the Polish capital there from Krakow. Because of its capital status Warsaw had to defend itself many times, especially during the two World Wars.*

*The reconstruction of Warsaw, which was raised to the ground during World War Two, became for all Poles a matter of honour and was conducted with unprecedented determination. Up to this day Warsaw symbolizes the hard fight for survival. The Warsaw Mermaid on the coat of arms, holding her sword and raised shield, is a personification of this. Today Warsaw is the capital of a country known to have played a leading role in the breakdown of the Iron Curtain and has subsequently become one of the most successful and advanced of post-communist countries. With its modern appearance it is to some extent a new city, but at the same time an old one with a rich and beautiful tradition formed over the last 700 years. Warsaw is on the UNESCO's heritage list of cultural treasures.*



## **Day 12 – Sat 05 Oct: WARSAW**

*Breakfast, Lunch*

Morning at leisure. Light lunch at a traditional local restaurant.

Afternoon city tour which will include:

**Old Town:** the Old Town Market Square, the Barbican, the Castle Square with the Royal Castle and statue of King Zygmunt III Vasa – the king who transferred the capital of the country from Krakow to Warsaw over 400 years ago, the house of Madame Curie.

**Royal Route:** the Holy Cross Church – where Chopin's heart is kept, Nicolaus Copernicus monument, the Parliament, Presidential Palace, the Chopin Monument and the Palace on the Water in the Lazienki Royal Park – the former summer residence of Poland's last king

**Other places of interest:** the Palace of Culture and Science, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, area of the former Jewish Ghetto with monument of Ghetto Heroes, historical squares like Bank Square, Theatre Square with Grand Opera Building



Free for dinner this evening.

### **Day 13 – Sun 06 Oct: WARSAW**

*Breakfast, Dinner*

After a leisurely breakfast, we meet our guide to visit the multimedia Museum of the Warsaw Uprising which brings to life the most tragic chapter of Warsaw's history. It is not possible to understand Warsaw without looking at this city and remembering it was here where 63 days of heroic struggle against the occupying German forces took place during WWII. The museum is a monument to the sacrifice of the people of Warsaw who fought and died for the freedom of Poland.

Free for lunch. Afternoon at leisure to browse the shops or sit at an open air café to people watch, or perhaps return to places we visited yesterday to explore further.

As a special treat on our last evening, we attend a private Chopin piano recital, with a glass of sparkling wine served during intermission. The recital will be performed by pianists from the Warsaw Music Academy.

Farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

### **Day 14 – Mon 07 Oct : DEPARTURE**

*Breakfast*

Time to say goodbye to Poland. **“Do widzenia!”** - a nostalgic **“Until we meet again!”** but also a promise to return. Your driver will be ready to take you to the airport in time for your flight home.



**PRICE PER PERSON SHARING**

**EURO 3,455**

**PRICE PER SINGLE**

**EURO 4,245**

*Price is based on a minimum of 10 passengers. A supplement may be charged for lower numbers.*

**INCLUDED**

- 3 nights at Andel's by Vienna House in Krakow
- 2 nights at Crocus Hotel in Zakopane
- 2 nights at Qubus Hotel in Wroclaw
- 3 nights at Hanza Hotel in Gdansk
- 3 nights at Polonia Palace Hotel in Warsaw
- Breakfast daily, 8 lunches & 3 dinners
- Services of Custom Touring's experienced tour leader
- Services of licenced, friendly and experienced English speaking tour guide for the duration of the tour
- Local English speaking guides at ceratin sites
- Porterage service at hotels (in and out)
- Tips at included restaurants
- Tips & gratuities for tour guide, driver and local guides

**City tours, excursions and entrance fees:**

- Half day city tour of Krakow with local English speaking guide including entrance to St. Mary's Church
- Entrance and tour of the Wieliczka Salt Mine with local English speaking guide (private group tour)
- Entrance & tour of Schindler's Museum with local guide
- Half day tour of Zakopane with local guide; funicular ride up Gubalowka Mount
- Entrance and private tour of Auschwitz – Birkenau Memorial Museum (with local English speaking guide)
- Full day tour of Wroclaw and surroundings with local English speaking guide, including entrance to Ksiaz Castle and Church of Peace in Swidnica
- Full day tour of Gdansk and Sopot including organ concert at Oliwa Cathedral, entrance to pier in Sopot
- Entrance and tour of Malbork Castle with English speaking castle guide
- Full day tour of Warsaw with local English speaking guide including entrance to Warsaw Uprising Museum
- Private Chopin concert in Warsaw

**Transport services: air conditioned bus with friendly and experienced driver**

- Private Krakow airport – Andel's hotel transfer
- Group transport for city tour of Krakow + visit to Wieliczka Salt Mine
- Group transport for 2 days in Zakopane and drive to Wroclaw with en route visit Auschwitz – Birkenau Museum
- Group transport for full day excursion around Wroclaw
- Group transfer Qubus Hotel, Wroclaw – Wroclaw Railway station
- 1st class train tickets to Gdansk from Wroclaw (including delivery fee)
- Group transfer Gdansk railway station – Hotel Hanza
- Group transport for full day tour of Oliwa Cathedral, Gdansk and Sopot
- Group transport for Gdansk – Warsaw journey with en route stop at the Malbork Castle
- Group transport for city tour of Warsaw
- Private Polonia Palace – Warsaw airport transfer

**EXCLUDED**

- International flights
- Visa costs
- Drinks and meals not mentioned
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses



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