

Polish Christmas Markets & Traditions

7 days



What makes a Polish Christmas so special and charming are the old rituals and customs carried over for centuries and passed from one generation to another making Christmas much more of a spiritual experience rather than just a shopping extravaganza. Here are some of the typical Polish Christmas traditions you will experience on this magical tour:

- * *Kulig (open sleigh ride with horses) including mulled wine or special highlander "tea"*
- * *Highlander Folklore show*
- * *Christmas Cribs exhibit in Krakow*
- * *Home -hosted "typical Christmas Eve dinner" in Lowicz*

Starting in Krakow: Dec 15, 2012

DAY 1 SAT DEC 15 KRAKOW (arrival) – ZAKOPANE

(Welcome Special Highlander's Dinner incl. Highlander's Folklore Show)

Upon arrival in Krakow we will be met by our tour escort and transferred from the airport to Zakopane, one of the most picturesque towns in Poland located in the Tatra Mountains. Here you can see how the "White Polish Christmas" really looks like, with mountains peaks beautifully covered by snow and the sleighs slowly passing through the streets. Zakopane is inhabited by Polish Highlanders. They have managed to keep their culture alive and distinct from mainstream culture for centuries. They are proud of their original dialect, traditions, architecture and cuisine. Their wooden architecture blends with the natural landscapes and it is copied in other parts of Poland (Zakopianski Style). Enjoy the Special Highlanders' Dinner including typical Highlanders' dishes as well as hot mulled wine. You will be welcomed and will have possibility to see and hear Highlander's Folklore Show. Overnight in Zakopane

DAY 2 SUN DEC 16 ZAKOPANE (B & D)

Morning city tour of Zakopane. See the typical wooden architecture and if you are lucky enough, perhaps, you will meet the carollers. Most of them are children dressed up as shepherds singing carols and performing at the doorsteps. This tradition still popular in the countryside may remind you of the Halloween "trick or treating". The children expect you to pay for their efforts in sweets, cookies or just few coins. Leisure time for shopping at Krupowki Street. Late afternoon enjoy your open sleigh ride with horses to one of the local restaurants. Dinner will be a nice ending to your day. Overnight in Zakopane.

DAY 3 MON DEC 17 ZAKOPANE – KRAKOW (B & D)

Morning transfer to Krakow. Afternoon walk to the Old Town to enjoy your time in one of the most beautiful Market Squares in Europe. From the beginning of December it becomes a special place, with a fairy-tale atmosphere. For many years this historical part of town has been the venue of the most romantic Christmas Market in Poland. With many stands



located in the heart of Krakow, next to the St. Mary's Church and the famous Cloth Hall becomes one of the biggest attractions of Christmas. Among the most popular articles are Christmas decorations made locally, like the beautifully painted glass-balls and ceramics. You will have also possibility to visit the exhibition of famous cribs, best ones chosen during the cribs competition. This is a local Christmas Krakow tradition that is held in the beginning of December. After the best ones are chosen, visitors may admire them in Krzysztofory Palace on Krakow's Market Square. Krakow cribs look like palaces or Gothic cathedrals glittering with gold, ornaments and bright colors. Dinner at one of the local restaurants located in the Old Town so that you can still feel the Christmas atmosphere. Overnight in Krakow.

DAY 4 TUE DEC 18 KRAKOW – WIELICZKA – KRAKOW (B & L)

After breakfast we will visit the Wawel Castle that was the royal residence and the seat of Polish kings. Right now it is the most popular and the richest museum in Poland having seventy one magnificent rooms, several thousand works of art of greatest value; among them the greatest Wawel collection of the Arras tapestries. The Wawel Cathedral used to be the scene of coronations and is the eternal resting place of the kings of Poland. Lunch at the local restaurant and drive to Wieliczka Salt Mine to see the unforgettable tourist attraction with underground chambers, grottoes, and chapels carved from salt. Dinner and evening on own. Overnight in Krakow

DAY 5 WED DEC 19 KRAKOW – LOWICZ – WARSAW (B & D)

In the morning we drive to Lowicz, a typical Mazovian town famous for folk art and craft. See the small market square with the magnificent Basilica. Then we take you for a home hosted lunch. You will be welcomed in a typical Polish traditional way: with bread and salt. Afterwards, you will taste typical Polish dishes that are served for the Christmas Eve Dinner. But before the dinner we will invite you to join in a typical Polish Christmas tradition: you will get a Christmas Eve holy wafer. It is baked of flour and water and its shared eating is a sign of friendship and the readiness to share the last piece of bread and to forgive wrongs and wish all the very best to all. Afterwards, enjoy your meal: clear beetroot soup with small ravioli stuffed with wild mushrooms, aromatic carp in jelly decorated with boiled vegetables, tasty herring with sour cream or oil, home-made apple cake. Listen to Polish carols, sit by the fire-place and enjoy the Polish hospitality and Polish Christmas. We continue to Warsaw for evening on own and overnight.

DAY 6 THU DEC 20 WARSAW (B & D)

In the morning we start with a city tour of Warsaw with its most famous monuments and sites. Tour will finish at the Old Town where you may spend time at the Christmas Market. It is opened in December with many stands located next to the Royal Castle in the Old Town. You can find there many beautiful Christmas decorations: all kinds of gifts, crib figurines, toys, wood carvings, marionettes, candles, angels and above all the most colorful glass balls. You can buy sweets, ceramics and other Christmas tree ornaments. Lunch on your own. Late afternoon we will drive to one of Warsaw's shopping malls – Arkadia or Golden Terraces where you may find over 200 shops and restaurants as well as cinemas. All shops are beautifully decorated, colorful and offer many Christmas gifts and souvenirs. You can sit in one of the coffee shops and have a hot chocolate and listen to typical Polish carols.

Farewell dinner at one of the local restaurants where you will taste typical Polish dishes and will be welcomed with Polish Vodka Zubrowka. Restaurant beautifully decorated with Christmas ornaments and the Christmas tree, under which each one of you will find a small gift. Overnight in Warsaw

DAY 7 FRI DEC 21 WARSAW (B) END OF TOUR

After breakfast transfer to airport for flight home.

LAND ONLY PRICE : \$ 1699 P/P IN DBL ROOM, SGL ROOM \$ 2099

INCLUDED SERVICES :

- Airport arrival and departure transfers
- English-speaking tour escort assistance
- English speaking local guides
- Private air-conditioned motor coach/minibus (depending on the group size)
- Meals as per itinerary:
B = breakfast , L = lunch , D = dinner
- Sightseeing & entrance fees as per itinerary
- Luggage handling at hotels (one piece per person)
- Hotel charges and taxes

YOUR HOTELS :

- 2 nights at 4 * Litwor Hotel in Zakopane
- 2 nights at 5 * Radisson Blu in Krakow
- 2 nights at 5 * Le Meridien Bristol in Warsaw