

# EXPLORING UNDERGROUND POLAND

8 days



**Route:** Warsaw – Chełm – Zamość – Sandomierz – Kraków – Wieliczka – Tarnowskie Góry – Opole – Złoty Stok – Walim – Wrocław – Międzyrzecz – Poznań

## Day 1. Warsaw

Arrival. Meeting with an Orbis Travel guide at the hotel lobby, check-in. Sightseeing of Warsaw, the capital of Poland, an extraordinary city where influences of Western and Eastern cultures cross. Welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

## Day 2. Warsaw – Chełm – Zamość

After breakfast: drive to Chełm.

Afternoon: sightseeing of Chełm underground route.

The city of Chełm lies on a chalk hill where chalk was mined for centuries. The mines were sunk in the cellars of houses below today's Old Town. The mines form real underground labyrinths. Almost 2 kilometres of passages have been made accessible since 1972.

Drive to Zamość. Overnight.

## Day 3. Zamość – Sandomierz

After breakfast: sightseeing of Zamość.

The history of Zamość dates back to 1580, when Hetman Jan Zamoyski, one of the greatest Polish magnates, decided to put the Renaissance idea of the perfect town into practice. Zamość, recognised as a monument of history and a world-class historic site, is included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Afternoon: drive to Sandomierz, sightseeing of Sandomierz, including Sandomierz Underground Route.

In the Middle Ages, there were legends about underground vaults in the town that were allegedly used as hiding-places for the local people during the Tatar invasion and merchant warehouses in times of peace. Today, the corridors and chambers below the Old Town lead along a 400-metre long tourist route.

Overnight in Sandomierz.

## Day 4. Sandomierz – Kraków

After breakfast: drive to Kraków.

Afternoon: sightseeing of Kraków, Poland's cultural capi-



Walim – Der Riese (The Giant), a former Nazi underground facility

tal, with about a quarter of all the country's museum holdings. Overnight in Kraków.

## Day 5. Kraków – Wieliczka – Tarnowskie Góry – Opole

After breakfast: sightseeing of Wieliczka Salt Mine.

Wieliczka Salt Mine has been in use since the 13th century and today it has around 300 kilometres of galleries in the salt layers, at depths of between 64 and 135 metres. The most representative hall is the St. Kinga's Chapel from the late 19th century. The salt mine has been featured on the UNESCO List since 1978.

Afternoon: drive to Tarnowskie Góry, sightseeing of the Underground Route.

Drifts were constructed in the Tarnowskie Mountains silver ore mines as early as in the 12th century to remove water from the extracting areas. One of them, sunk in the first half of the 19th century, owes its name to the trout which can sometimes be seen in it. This mine drift is 9 kilometres long and 70 metres deep at its lowest point. It can be visited by boat.

Overnight in Opole.

## Day 6. Opole – Złoty Stok – Walim – Wrocław

After breakfast: drive to Złoty Stok (Gold Slope), sightseeing of the Underground Tourist Route.

The old gold mine has a tourist route leading between

two historical drifts: the Gertruda and Top Black. 500 meters of galleries are open to visitors, with part of the route by boat. Side tunnels contain exhibitions of mine maps and plans, tools and an alchemist's laboratory.

There is also an underground waterfall 8 metres high.

Afternoon: drive to Walim, sightseeing of an underground tourist trail.

Between 1943 and 1945, Germans started work on a huge structure in the Sowie Mountains. The system of underground corridors and halls was probably destined to become Hitler's headquarters.

Overnight in Wrocław.

## Day 7. Wrocław – Międzyrzecz – Poznań

After breakfast: sightseeing of Wrocław, with its turbulent history and plenty of churches, museums and rich cultural life. Afternoon: drive for Międzyrzecz, sightseeing of Międzyrzecz Fortified Region.

This is one of Poland's and Europe's most interesting fortifications, often compared with the Maginot Line. It was constructed between 1939 and 1944 as the principal defence line in the German fortifications on the eastern front. Overnight in Poznań.

## Day 8. Poznań

After breakfast: end of Orbis Travel services.



Forts in Zamość



Wieliczka – salt mine



Międzyrzecz Fortified Region