



Route: Warsaw – Kiermusy – Białowieża – Kazimierz Dolny – Łańcut – Tarnów – Kraków – Koniaków – Chochołów – Zakopane – Kraków



Manor house in Kiermusy

Day 1. Warsaw

Arrival. Check-in. Meeting with a guide.

Afternoon: sightseeing of Warsaw: the Old Town with the Royal Castle, the Market Square and the Barbican, the Royal Route and park and palace complex in Royal Łazienki. Transfer to Łowicz for dinner.

In Łowicz, you will be hosted by a young married couple living in a wooden cottage, at the foot of the Łowicz castle ruins. Traditional Polish welcome with a loaf of bread and salt.

Respect and friendly treatment of guests may be observed in many Polish customs. That is why we invite you to experience the Christmas Eve Dinner. The Polish *Wigilia* feast consists of twelve traditional dishes representing twelve apostles. According to the tradition, meat is never served on Christmas Eve.

A sample menu includes:

- *barszcz czerwony z uszkami* – clear beetroot soup served with small ravioli stuffed with wild mushrooms
- *karp w galarecie* – aromatic carp in aspic, decorated with boiled vegetables
- *śledź w śmietanie* – tasty herring in sour cream
- *kutia* – poppy seed roll served with honey and dainties

Day 2. Warsaw – Kiermusy – Białowieża

After breakfast, departure to Kiermusy.

In Kiermusy manor, whose owners long to preserve Old Polish hospitality traditions, we will have a talk with a restaurant chef about cuisine rooted in this region observe the process of making *pierogi* (dumplings), and taste two

kinds of them:

- *pierogi ruskie* – stuffed with cottage cheese, potatoes and fried onion
- *knedle* – stuffed with fruit, a popular dessert in Poland

Continue to Białowieża, an area of dense woods, marshes and peatland, included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Walk along the Royal Oak Route with trees that reach spectacular sizes, some of them more than 500 years old. Visit to the bison reserve.

For dinner, meeting at a camp, tasting worldwide known Polish specialties:

- *żurek* – delicious, fermented rye soup with mushrooms
- *chłodnik* – soup served cold and made of soured milk, young beet leaves, beets, radishes, cucumbers, chopped fresh dill, served with egg
- *kielbasa* – excellent smoked sausage
- *bigos* – stew of sauerkraut, a variety of meat and mushrooms
- *ogórek kwaszony* – pickled cucumber preserved in brine
- *smalec* – dripping with aromatic herbs

- *źubrówka* – bison grass vodka
- *śękacz* – pyramid cake made of 60 eggs

Day 3. Białowieża – Kazimierz Dolny

After breakfast, drive to Kazimierz Dolny, a small town with charming atmosphere and a pleasantly bohemian flavour, commonly called a “Mecca for artists”. This Renaissance town is known for its Jewish background. We will visit the Museum of Goldsmithery which boasts a large collection of gold and silverwork including Judaic cult silverware and jewellery, mostly from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Dinner at “U Fryzjera” restaurant.

We will taste good Jewish cuisine, try former specialties of the town and enjoy a nostalgic Klezmer music concert.

Day 4. Kazimierz Dolny – Łańcut – Tarnów

We travel south, remaining still in the area which boasts pristine nature. It is time to taste Polish vodka. Poland is one of world’s largest producers of quality vodka.

Visit to the local distillery, founded by Duchess Lubomirska in Łańcut.

The Distillery Museum has an original document attesting to the distillery’s existence in 1784. Inside the museum, we can trace the distillery’s development. There are photographs, old documents, diplomas, labels from the past, bottles of different shapes, price lists, measurement glassware, etc. At present, Łańcut Distillery is one of the leading Polish producers of alcoholic beverages, mainly vodkas, most famous being *Biała Dama* and *Polonaise*, but also herbal and fruit liqueurs based on vodka. Vodka tasting. Continue to Łańcut Castle, a magnificent aristocratic residence, with one of the most extensive collections of art. Among the most interesting interiors are the Ballroom, the Library furnished in late Victorian style and the Theatre. Of particular value is the Carriage Museum with horse-drawn vehicles representing every type. Another gem is the collection of Orthodox church art, the largest in Poland.

Transfer to Tarnów.



Dinner at "Ke-Moro" restaurant; we will discover flavours of gipsy cuisine and music.

Day 5. Tarnów and environs – Krakow

After breakfast: drive to Krakow via Zalipie, a famous "painted village", unparalleled in Poland, perhaps even in Europe. The cottages, farm buildings, but also coffee pots, plates, aprons, and tablecloths, everything in this village is painted by local women in colourful floral patterns. The tradition of adorning the cottages in the region, dates back to 1948. Since then, every year after the Corpus Christi Festival, Zalipie holds its "Painted Cottage" competition. We will pay a visit to a workshop of painters and learn about this tradition.

Open-air lunch with simple, rural, ecological food.

Visit to the vineyard of Jan Michałowski. Wine tasting.

Arrival in Krakow, the former capital of Poland, a cradle of Polish culture, famous for its priceless historical monuments of art and architecture, being also a tourist horn of plenty, a place where history and modernity live together.

Day 6. Krakow

We will get acquainted with Krakow, which boasts Poland's largest concentration of historical monuments and cultural treasures. Visit to the Wawel Hill, featured on the UNESCO List, with its Castle and Cathedral where Polish kings were once crowned. The most valuable items are the magnificent 16th-century Flemish tapestries, probably the largest collection of its kind in Europe.

Time free to explore Krakow on your own. The highlight of the day: the vegetable market of Stary Kleparz, a lively, colourful market where you can buy farm-fresh food, one of the oldest markets in Poland, dating back to the 14th century.

- Dinner at the legendary "Wierzynek" Restaurant.

In 14th century, Mikołaj Wierzynek, the city councillor, held an unforgettable feast for the rulers of Europe on the occasion of the wedding of King Kazimierz Wielki's granddaughter. Treating his guests to rustic Polish cuisine, Wierzynek carries on the traditions of the royal feast.



Zalipie



Feasts with Wierzynek have been a synonym of splendour of the former ages.

Day 7. Krakow – Koniaków – Chochołów – Zakopane

Take a fascinating trip through the Podhale region.

We start from a visit to Koniaków, famous worldwide for its laces. Tablecloths, made with cotton twine with tremendous patience and skills using motives brought from fields and forest, reached the tables of kings, aristocrats, bishops. Lace exhibition (tablecloth, gloves, and a

folk culture, and the centre of a proud Polish highlander tradition. Apart from all the thigh-slapping dancers, the tradition is most clearly manifested in the colourful and highly decorative folk costumes, the ever-present highland music and the distinctive Zakopane mountain architectural style, pioneered by Stanisław Witkiewicz, and often referred to as the "Zakopane" style. Visit to *bacówka* (mountain hut). Tasting of Polish cheese specialties. Dinner at the famous Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec. Possibility



wedding dress) may be seen at the house of Maria Gwarek. Drive to Chochołów village, most distinctive in the Podhale region, being a natural, live open-air museum of fine wooden architecture. En-route stop on the way to Zakopane to see the wooden chapel in Jaszczurówka. Arrival to Zakopane, picturesquely situated at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. Free time. We recommend a walk along Krupówki Street and shopping on a local bazaar which gathers hundreds of local craftsmen and folk ensembles. Dinner with highlander delicacies and traditional music at a regional inn.

Day 8. Zakopane – Tyniec – Krakow

After breakfast: a guided tour of Zakopane, home to a rich

to purchase tincture, jams, herbage prepared by the monks. Return to Krakow

Day 9. Krakow

We have started our trip from the Christmas Eve Dinner. We will finish by the most solemn breakfast in the whole year, the Easter Breakfast, eaten on the Easter Sunday. Try some of the traditional Easter Breakfast delicacies:

- biały barszcz – white borsch,
- mazurek – poppy-seed cakes
- ćwikła – horseradish mixed with beets
- jajka faszerowane – eggs stuffed with mushrooms

After breakfast: end of Orbis Travel services.