

EXPLORE!

NEW

Hiking in the Polish Carpathians
8 days

Poland - Trip code WPS



Hiking in the Polish Carpathians

Poland's southern border with Slovakia is defined by the Carpathian Mountains. The dramatic peaks and valleys, stunning waterfalls and lakes are home to a unique highlander culture with its own folk history and traditions which have stood still in time, follow the Pieniny Way along the spectacular UNESCO listed Dunajec Gorge. Walk through the Tatras Mountains to glacial lakes, explore the pretty medieval city of Krakow, steeped in a rich history.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Tatras Mountains** - Discover the turquoise lakes and alpine meadows of this majestic mountain range
- ★ **Babia Gora National Park** - Enjoy panoramic views across the Carpathian Mountains
- ★ **Explore Krakow on foot** - Home to Europe's largest Medieval market square, the hub of the city
- ★ **UNESCO Dunajec Gorge** - Walk the Pieniny Way, a spectacular cliff-cut path through the gorge
- ★ **Zakopane** - Experience Polish highlander culture in this mountainside town

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Arrive in Krakow

Our trip starts in Krakow, about twenty five minute drive from Krakow International Airport. Krakow is a beautiful city which dates back to the 13th Century; it has a wonderfully rich and varied architecture; a well preserved vast medieval square and a fascinating old Jewish quarter. Depending on arrival time, the rest of the day is free to relax and explore on your own, why not try some traditional Polish dumplings 'Pierogi'. Found throughout the city and filled with anything from sweet sauces to cottage cheese, mushrooms or meat they are delicious!



Accommodation: Hotel Kazimierz III (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore old Krakow on foot: head to the Carpathian Mountains

After breakfast we take a guided walking tour of Krakow beginning with Rynek Glowny, Europe's largest medieval square and the focal point of the city. We discover the distinctive character of the UNESCO World Heritage Old Town with its narrow cobbled streets and majestic architecture. Heading away from the centre we walk to Wawel Castle and Cathedral perched on a hill overlooking the old town. Our final stop today is the Kazimierz, the former Jewish Quarter, once the Ghetto area during World War II, now a busy neighborhood crammed with art galleries, traditional restaurants and atmospheric cafes. In the afternoon we depart towards Babia Gora National Park in the Outer Carpathian Mountains, the drive to our hotel in Zawoja will take approximately one and a half hours. The Babia Gora massif lies within the Western Beskidy Mountains and is the second highest in range in Poland. Depending on travel time, for those who wish to stretch your legs this afternoon there is an optional walk in the Babia Gora range to be rewarded with your first view over the Carpathian Mountains. Optional 2km walk will take approximately 1 hour with ascent and decent of 200m. The walk is graded Easy.



Accommodation: Hotel Jawor (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Hike across alpine meadows and through forest to 'Witches Mountain'

A short drive this morning brings us to the edge of Babia Gora National Park and the start of today's hike to the peak of Babia Gora (1,725 meters). Babia Gora which translates to Witches Mountain is named so after a folk legend describing the area as a meeting place for witches and black magicians. The path takes us through alpine meadows, ancient spruce and dwarf pine forests. From the peak stretches one of the best panoramas of several Carpathian ranges and across to the Tatras mountains. The Polish-Slovakian border runs over the top of Babia Gora and along the shoulders of the mountain from east to west. We descend via a different route back to our hotel in Zawoja. Our walk today is approximately 14 km and will take 6 hrs with 700m of ascent and 1050m descent.



Accommodation: Hotel Jawor (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Walk over the Tatras Mountains to Slovakia, return by bus

This morning we drive for one hour to Zakopane, a town lying at the foothills of the Tatras Mountains. Zakopane is a popular Polish ski resort and an excellent base for hiking, the town is characterized by traditional 'Zakopane Style' of timber architecture inspired by the surrounding mountains. After passing by our hotel we drive to Siwa Polanda from where we head into the Chocholowska valley. Accompanied by an English speaking mountain guide we walk along a wide path climbing gently through the spruce forest to the Polana Chocholowska, a clearing with a number of mountain huts for livestock. We walk over Bobrovec pass and into Slovakia, from this ridge there are fantastic views across forested peaks of the western Tatras. We walk down the valley to Oravice where the bus will be waiting to take us back to Zakopane. The Tatras region has its own home-grown culinary traditions, tuck into a hearty meat or vegetable stew followed by a small glass of slivowica lacka (plum brandy). The walk today is approximately 11 km and will take 3 hrs with 450m of ascent and descent. As we pass into Slovakia



Accommodation: Hotel Bel Ami (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Waterfalls and lakes of the Tatras Mountains

In the morning we drive for 40 minutes to Palencia Bialczanska the starting point for today's walk to Wielki Staw lake and refuge (1,665m). We walk through the beautiful valley of the Five Polish Lakes past the highest waterfall in the Tatras, Siklawa (a 70m drop). Wielki Staw (known as The Great Polish Lake) is a post-glacial natural lake; you can get a mug of tea in the Dolina Pieciu Stawow refuge and walk around the lake admiring the landscape. Here you have the choice of either walking back to Palencia Bialczanska with your leader and taking a public bus to Zakopane or join your mountain guide to make the steep and challenging ascent of Kozi Wierch (2,291m) the highest peak lying entirely within Poland. Towards the top there is a small section of scrambling to reach the summit to be rewarded with magnificent views. Today's walk is approximately 18 km and will take 6 hrs with 900m of ascent and descent. The optional extension to Kozi Wierch is graded as Challenging and is an additional 4kms taking approximately 3 hrs with an extra 300m of ascent and descent.



Accommodation: Hotel Bel Ami (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Dunajec Gorge and The Pieniny Way

This morning we drive to Dunajec Gorge, listed by UNESCO as a World Natural Heritage Site and one the most stunning gorges in Europe. We follow the Pieniny Way along the gorge with limestone cliffs blanketed in lush forests of fir, beech, larch and spruce rising high above us. The Way runs the entire length of the Dunajec Gorge snaking in and out of Poland through sections of Slovakia. The end point of today's walk and accommodation for the evening is in the spa town of Szczawnica, back on Polish side of the border. For those who prefer to take a break from walking today it is possible to travel the same route down Dunajec River by traditional wooded raft. This leisurely form of transportation has been used for centuries in this area to move both goods and people between villages. The walk today is approximately 14 km and will take 3 and a half hrs along a flat route.



Accommodation: Hotel Smile (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Hike up Trzy Korony peak with views of Dunajec Gorge

After a good night's rest we start our last ascent of the trip, the peak of Trzy Korony. Departing from the hotel we take a small wooden boat across the Dunajec River to reach the start of the today's walk. The traditional boats seat approximately eight people at one time and the ferrymen are dressed in local folk attire. Once across the river we begin our gradual ascent starting at 500 meters through the forest to reach our first peak of the day, Sokolica (747m). After taking in the fabulous views we continue to a green meadow before the final ascent to the peak of Trzy Korony (982m), the summit of the Three Crowns massif. There is an observation deck on top of the peak with views of the Dunajec River, Gorge and Pieniny National Park. We take a different trail down from the peak looping the massif, enjoying the spectacular views of the limestone peaks, before descending to the bottom of the valley. Today's walk ends in Kroscienko town where our driver will be waiting to take us on to Krakow (two hours). Today's walk is approximately 14km and will take 4 hrs with 480m of ascent and 550m of descent.



Accommodation: Hotel Kazimierz III (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Krakow

Your trip ends this morning after breakfast, in Krakow. If you have booked a late afternoon or evening flight it is possible to take an optional morning excursion to Oswiecim, the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp.

Walking and Trekking information

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks on 5 days for between 3 to 6 hours on well-marked and maintained mountain trails. The walk on day 5 to Kozi Wierch is graded as challenging; it is steep and rocky in places.

Max walking altitude (m)

2291

Why book this trip

This new trip in Poland is extremely good value offering a week walking in the mountains of Poland. Visiting both the Tatras mountain range in the south and the outer Carpathian Mountains in Babia Gora National Park. Explore the dramatic peaks and valleys, lakes and highlander folk culture of this stunning country.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Poland Holidays & Tours

Climate

Poland has a temperate, changeable climate. September and October are cooler and gradually become damper until late November when temperatures fall below freezing with snowfall, particularly in mountainous areas. Cold temperatures last through to March, but are tolerable. Snow can lie for up to three months in the mountains.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Polish

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Excursion to Auschwitz Memorial Museum by bus including entrance and guiding in English PLN 155.00 (€38.00 per person)
Rafting in the Dunajec Gorge on day 6 costs €14 Euros per person.

Clothing

Weather is changeable in the mountains and it can get cold, especially at night, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece and a waterproof jacket. Bring layers to enable you to be comfortable no matter what the temperature as this could easily fluctuate throughout the day. If you choose the rafting option on day six, that day you'll need to take a change of clothes, shoes that you don't mind getting wet and a towel with you.

Footwear

We recommend you bring well-worn in walking boots - leather or fabric are both fine. In addition please take comfortable trainers/shoes or sandals for evenings and walking around Krakow. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of luggage and a 20-30 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, picnic lunch etc. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water.

Equipment

We recommend taking sunglasses, a sun hat, sunscreen and a small torch. You may also find walking poles useful. Also, don't forget your camera. Please note that in many of the museums in Poland larger bags will need to be placed in a locker and there may be an additional charge for taking photographs whilst inside.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly please allow £15.00 for tipping. In order to make

things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Local fees

Picnic lunches 6-7 Euros

Country Information

Poland Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8

Dinner price

£18.00 - 22.00

Beer price

£1.50 - 3.00

Water price

£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Polish Zloty2

Recommended Currency For Exchange

British Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are all accepted at exchange offices and banks2

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

ATM Availability

Available in all major cities

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are widely accepted in all major cities

Travellers Cheques

Easily exchanged

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Poland: Visas not required by citizens of the UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel

dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

2291

Poland Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Tickborne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Europe, at specific times of the year. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
