

EXPLORE!

Pedalling in Poland
8 days

Poland, Slovakia - Trip code CPP



Pedalling in Poland

Poland is an idyllic location for a cycle holiday and we meandering through unspoilt landscapes, medieval towns and traditional timber-framed villages. Surrounded by the Beskid Mountains, we cycle on cliff-cut paths along the picturesque Dunajec Gorge and into Slovakia, sampling some delicious local cuisine and experience a warm welcome from the locals.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Cycle the 'Pieniny Way'** - Pedal through the spectacular cliff-cut path in the Dunajec Gorge
- ★ **Krakow** - Wonderful gem of a city with magnificent medieval square
- ★ **Untouched traditional villages** - Cycle places where time has stood still
- ★ **Zakopane** - Charming wood-built mountain town in the Tatra Mountains
- ★ **Stary Sacz & Nowy Sacz** - Two of Poland's most lovely and historic towns
- ★ **Nowy Targ** - Historic centre of Gorale people

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.

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

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 - Join trip Krakow Airport; drive to Zakopane

We begin our exploration by driving from Krakow Airport straight to Zakopane in the Tatras. Zakopane has developed a very distinctive cultural character. The folk culture of the people who live in the Tatras, the Gorale is preserved in their music, their songs and their local costume. The characteristic 'Zakopane Style' of timber architecture, which developed around the turn of the twentieth century, is found nowhere else in Europe and has an unforgettable charm. 'Oscypek', a delicious smoked ewes milk cheese, is manufactured in this part of the world.



Accommodation: Hotel Bialy Potok (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cable car and cycle via Chocholow to Nowy Targ

We begin our day by visiting some interesting sites in Zakopane, such as the atmospheric Old Graveyard. We then take the cable car to the top of Gubalowka Mountain and ride down through the long village of Dziañisz as far as Chocholow, a village which is now a living open-air museum of timber architecture. We can take our lunch in the village inn. After lunch we cross the Slovak-Polish border for the first time and head to the little village Sucha Hora. A newly built cycle path on the former railway track brings us through wild forests and marshy landscapes towards Ludzmierz (with its famous Marian pilgrimage shrine), and on to the town of Nowy Targ, the main centre for the Gorale region. Not far from Nowy Targ, we cycle past the point where the White and Black Dunajec rivers meet. The route then runs for part of the way along a riverside path, to the historic villages of Waksmund and Nowy Targ. Nowy Targ is where we spend the night in a pension at the edge of the forest and Gorce National Park.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres (mostly downhill).



Accommodation: Hotel Goralski Raj (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Countryside cycling to Niedzica; explore the castle

Today we head south and follow the course of the Bialka, a third mountain river flowing into the Dunajec. Here we see its small but impressive gorge near Nowa Biala. On the way we can also have a look in the church at Debno, one of the oldest wooden churches in Poland (built around 1500) with an impressive painted interior. We are now in the Spisz region, which has rich history and a remarkable folk culture. Until 1918 this area was part of Hungary, and for many centuries it was home to several ethnic groups: Gorale and Ruthenians lived in the villages, Germans in the towns, and the Hungarian nobility in the castles. Weather permitting we can stop for a well deserved picnic by the reservoir, where you may choose to go for a swim. Following the bank of the reservoir, we reach one of these castles at Niedzica and spend the night nearby.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 38 kilometres



Accommodation: Polana Sosny (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle the Dunajec gorge to the spa town of Szczawnica

In the morning we ride to the Spisz village of Kacwin, whose unusual architecture is reminiscent of some Hungarian villages. At about midday we cross the border into Slovakia. First we ride to the village of Cerveny Klastor (Red Monastery), above which rise the three peaks of Trzy Korony (Three Crowns), the highest point in the Pieniny range. Here we can take our lunch and visit the local museum. Next is a real highlight of the trip as we cycle along the 'Pieniny Way', a cycle path carved out of the cliff running the whole length of the Dunajec Gorge. Only walkers and cyclists are allowed to use this path. The limestone cliffs and luxuriant greenery along the way are breathtaking and as we cycle we can wave to those on wooden rafts being steered down the river by Gorale. Unlike the rafters we can choose to stop at any time to take photographs. Also very beautiful is the gorge of the Lesnicki Potok, a stream which flows into the Dunajec from the Slovakian side, passing through the sleepy village of Lesnica. Here some might take the opportunity to do a little shopping before we head back into Poland and the small spa town of Szczawnica. In the late afternoon we can ride along the elegant promenade in the valley of the Grajcarek and explore the paths in the lower and upper Kurpark.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 24 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Nawigator (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Pedal through old villages and fruit gardens to Rytro

Today we follow what is known as the 'green Dunajec Gorge', where the river passes between two ranges of Beskid Mountains, the slopes of which are lined with beech woods. Leaving the main road, we turn across a suspension bridge to the right bank and make our way between the paths among the farms of the village of Tylmanowa. We can catch a glimpse through the open doors of the old barns, granaries and hen houses. One stretch of river at Wietrznice has been artificially prepared for whitewater canoeing. After lunch, we ride through Lacko, known for its Slivovitz, and then alongside more fruit gardens on the valley slopes. At Golkowice we leave the Dunajec and ride uphill to Rytro, an old feudal village at the foot of castle ruins. The night is spent in a small hotel on the shady banks of the Poprad, a tributary of the Dunajec. Tonight for something really special we have a camp fire with grilled trout fresh from the water.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Janina (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Explore historic Stary Sacz by bike; drive Krakow

After taking a ride around the Rytro area we cycle 10 km through the Poprad Valley to Stary Sacz. This historic little town is one of the most beautiful in Southern Poland and we take some time to breathe the atmosphere of past times and discover the maze of narrow streets by bike. Boarding our bus we head to the neighbouring town of Nowy Sacz, which still has something of the Habsburg Empire about it. The neo-Baroque town hall in the beautiful market square dates from that period, and the streets are lined with well-restored art nouveau houses. From Nowy Sacz we return to Krakow (about 2 hours).

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Wyspianski (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Cycling tour of Krakow Old Town and local area

Poland's former capital (until 1596) has a very distinctive character and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Its historic architecture came through the Second World War unscathed and the city has preserved its rich culture to the present day. It was the residence of Polish kings, and has nearly a hundred churches, as well as Poland's oldest university. Among its most important architectural treasures are St Mary's Church, which contains the world-famous altarpiece carved by Veit Stoss, the medieval buildings of the Jagiellonian University, and Wawel Castle with the Cathedral. Taking a cycle tour of the city we shall visit the 'Planty' (the attractive gardens laid out around the Old Town on the site of the medieval city walls), Europe's biggest medieval town square, Kazimierz (the former Jewish quarter) and the promenade along the River Vistula at the foot of Wawel Castle. Not far from the old town centre we can cycle across the Blonie, Krakow's large green open space, to reach the Kosciuszko Mound (optional), which has a fine view over Krakow and its environs. An optional evening of 'Klezmer' music is a fitting way to bring our trip to a close.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 20 kilometres



Accommodation: Hotel Wyspianski (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends Krakow

The trip ends in Krakow this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 206 km over six days (an average of 34 km per day). The terrain is mostly flat or downhill with several short uphill sections on country lanes, gravel lanes (15%) or cycle tracks. The rides are not accompanied by a vehicle (available in case of emergencies). We have graded the route as easy to moderate.

Bike included

21 gear Bird custom hybrid bike.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear Bird custom hybrid and will be the correct frame size for your height. A 40 litre pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point but cannot always access the cycle routes. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

EasyToModerate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Bicycle



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver



Accommodation

6 nights standard hotel
1 night simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Poland

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

Slovakia

Climate

Summers are short in the mountains. July to August is the hottest period, when daytime temperatures average 20-22°C, though it may be much cooler in the early morning or late evening. During the winter, snow and ice is not uncommon, with snow generally starting in December and continuing to early February. Mountain weather is notoriously changeable and it can be cold at any time of year, so be prepared.. Early July is the best time for flowers.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Slovak

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Niedzica Castle - 12 Zloty

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as gloves, cycle shirts and shorts. Remember weather is changeable in the mountains and it can be cool, especially at night, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A raincoat is essential at all times in case of rain.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

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 recognized 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. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip. Accordingly you should allow approximately £20 for tipping.

Country Information

Poland

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

Slovakia

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

£7

Dinner price

£15

Beer price

£2

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

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

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

ATM Availability

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival, but please be aware that some ATMs will charge 5% commission and outside of the main cities ATM's can sometimes be difficult to find

Credit Card Acceptance

At most shops and restaurants

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be difficult to exchange

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our 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.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Poland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Slovakia: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Poland

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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Slovakia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Tick-borne 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
