

..... MEDIEVAL TREASURES OF EASTERN EUROPE

DETAILED ITINERARY

CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND POLAND

May 01/25



Krakow

Eastern Europe is a captivating region filled with rich history, vibrant culture, charming medieval towns, stunning landscapes, and warm, hospitable people. On this adventure, we explore the best of three historic countries: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland. Along the way, we will discover eight prominent UNESCO World Heritage Sites, showcasing remarkable cultural heritage and immaculately preserved architectural treasures, as well as hidden gems that remain relatively untouched. What truly sets this tour apart is the amazing diversity, as each day is completely different, allowing for a deeper exploration of cultural, historical, and natural experiences.

In the Czech Republic, immerse yourself in the enchanting beauty of Prague, widely regarded as one of the world's most stunning cities. Marvel at the striking rock formations of Bohemian Paradise, and ascend the romantic ruins of Trosky Castle, perched dramatically atop twin volcanic peaks. Admire the exquisite Baroque statues at the historic Kuks

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 15 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start in Prague, Czech Republic and finish in Krakow, Poland • All meals included • Explore the captivating countries of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland • Discover 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites • Visit the enchanting cities of PRAGUE and KRAKOW • 9 breathtaking nature hikes including Bohemian Paradise, High Tatras, crown of the Carpathian Mountains • Explore grand castles, quaint timber folk homes, serene churches, aristocratic palaces and charming towns

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

May 24 - Jun 07, 2025 - **\$6995 USD**

May 23 - Jun 06, 2026 - **\$6995 USD**

Activity Level: 2

Comfort Level: There are 9 hikes, some inclines but no significant elevation gain. Trail surfaces can be uneven and rocky

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels with private bathroom facilities.

ELDERTREKS



**SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS**



Hospital, and uncover the vast military fortifications of Dobrosov, with its kilometers of underground tunnels—an enduring symbol of Czech resilience against Nazi oppression. Step into the opulent world of aristocracy with a guided tour of the renowned Renaissance palace in Litomysl, and take in the elegant fountains and towering Trinity Column in Olomouc, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Stroll through the quaint timber folk homes at the open-air museum in Roznov, then hike along a scenic mountain ridge to the serene chapel perched atop the legendary Radhost Mountain.

In Slovakia, immerse yourself in the majesty of breathtaking mountain landscapes with scenic hikes that showcase the country's natural splendor. Begin in the picturesque Orava Mountains, home to a UNESCO-listed wooden Protestant church built under strict limitations, and marvel at the stunning medieval Orava Castle perched dramatically on a cliff. Continue your adventure with a hike connecting two serene, dreamy lakes in the majestic High Tatras, the crown of the Carpathians. Explore the historic town of Levoca, where the famed St. James Church houses the world's tallest wooden Gothic altar. In nearby Zehra, uncover the captivating story behind the multiple layers of murals in a centuries-old church, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. And finally, embark on an exhilarating rafting trip through the rocky gorge of Pieniny National Park, a truly unforgettable



Prague's Charles Bridge





experience.

In Poland, explore the enchanting city of Krakow, a UNESCO-listed historical capital. Wander through the atmospheric Old Town, home to the globally acclaimed Cloth Hall and the majestic Royal Wawel Castle, which served as the seat of Polish kings for centuries. Delight in a visit to the Wieliczka Salt Mines, featuring chapels and a cathedral nave intricately carved from salt by local pious miners. Finally, experience the solemn and profound history of nearby Auschwitz Memorial Site, a visit that leaves a lasting impression. Our active adventure concludes, leaving you with unforgettable memories of Eastern Europe's diverse beauty and rich heritage.

DAY 1 ARRIVE IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Upon your arrival at Prague Airport, you will be transferred to our hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore the vibrant city at your own pace. In the evening, join the group for dinner and an orientation briefing at a charming downtown restaurant.

Overnight in Prague.

DAY 2 PRAGUE - THE CITY OF A HUNDRED SPIRES

After breakfast, embark on a guided walking tour starting at the iconic Prague Castle, a symbol of Czech statehood and the largest castle complex in the world. Marvel at the majestic Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral and explore the quaint Golden Lane, famous for its charming, colorful houses.

Continue to the Lesser Quarter for lunch, then cross the Vltava River and explore the historic Jewish Quarter, where you will gain insight into Prague's deeply rooted Jewish heritage. Wander through the winding streets of the Old Town and arrive at the world-famous Astronomical Clock. Dating back to 1410, this masterpiece of medieval craftsmanship delights visitors with the hourly Procession of the Twelve Apostles. The day's tour concludes with a walk across the renowned Charles Bridge, soaking in its rich history and stunning views.

Town walk including long downhill - 5 km / 3 miles – Easy

Overnight in Prague.

DAY 3 LESSER QUARTER OF PRAGUE - BAROQUE SPLENDOR UNLEASHED

We begin the day with a walking tour of the Lesser Quarter, a charming district renowned for its exquisite aristocratic palaces, grand churches, and lush Baroque gardens. Discover the acclaimed St. Nicholas Church, celebrated as arguably the finest example of Baroque architecture north of the Alps. Visit the monumental Wallenstein Garden, which once rivaled Prague Castle in grandeur, and wander through its expansive and beautifully landscaped garden. Ascend the terraces of the picturesque Vrtba Garden, where breathtaking views await, and listen to the captivating story of the iconic Lennon Wall, a vibrant testament to living street art since the communist era.

After lunch, depart for Jicin, a picturesque town nestled in the heart of the “Bohemian Paradise.” Founded in the 13th century, Jicin boasts rare

examples of early Baroque architecture, providing a glimpse into its rich historical and cultural heritage.

Town walk - 3 km / 2 miles – Easy

Overnight in Jicin

DAY 4 BOHEMIAN PARADISE - NATURAL WONDERLAND OF ROCK FORMATIONS

After breakfast, embark on a hike through the enchanting Bohemian Paradise, a region that truly lives up to its name with its breathtaking natural beauty, stunning vistas, and an overall fairytale atmosphere. Begin at the Prachov Rock Formations, a nature preserve featuring hundreds of sandstone towers sculpted over centuries by nature itself. As you take in the incredible views from the lookout points, discover formations known as the Needle, Hat, Mary and Child, and the Prayer of Rocks. Next, descend into a narrow gorge on the popular Caesar Trail, widely regarded as the best in the area for



Trosky Castle

its captivating scenery and has often served as a backdrop for fairy tale films.

After a picnic lunch by a serene lake with views of the picturesque Parez Castle, continue to the most famous landmark of the Bohemian Paradise: the iconic ruins of Trosky Castle. This highlight of the tour features two towering structures perched atop basalt rocks, offering panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Finally, transfer back to Jicin to enjoy some rest before dinner at a local restaurant.

Walks on well maintained walking paths - 7 km / 4 miles - Moderate

Overnight in Jicin

DAY 5 KUKS HOSPITAL - MASTERPIECE OF BAROQUE SCULPTURE

Today we visit Kuks, the most significant Baroque complex in the Czech Republic. Nestled in the foothills of the Giant Mountains, enjoy a tranquil walk through lush woods to discover a unique collection of sculptures. Carved from natural sandstone by Matthias Bernard Braun, the most celebrated sculptor in Czech history, these works include the Nativity Scene and solitary statues of Penitent Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, Onuphrius the Hermit, and Juan Garin the Hermit. Next we visit: Kuks Hospital, renowned

for its stunning Baroque architecture and intricate sculptures. Designed by architect Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel in the early 18th century, the hospital stands as a remarkable testament to Baroque artistry. Take a guided tour to admire a stunning collection of allegorical statues representing virtues and vices, visit the Church of the Holy Spirit, and explore the beautifully decorated Baroque pharmacy.

In the afternoon, we will transfer to our hotel in Rychnov, where you can relax and savor a delicious dinner.

Walks on walking paths - 6 km / 4 miles – Easy

Overnight in Rychnov

DAY 6 EAGLE MOUNTAINS - DOBROSOV STRONGHOLD - PINNACLE OF FORTIFICATION ARTISTRY

Today we have a day trip to the Eagle Mountains, located along the present-day Polish border. Follow an educational trail lined with military structures, leading to the remarkable Dobrosov Artillery Stronghold. This is the most fascinating part of the Czechoslovak Wall, the largest and most expensive fortification project of the 1930s. Far from an ordinary stronghold, it consists of a sophisticated



network of interconnected blockhouses linked by kilometers of underground tunnels, with facilities hidden from enemy view.

After a picnic lunch, take a scenic downhill walk into the Metuje River valley, arriving in Nove Mesto, one of the best-preserved Renaissance towns. Explore its historic buildings, arcades, and a grand palace blending Italian Renaissance with early 20th-century Art Nouveau elements. The day concludes with a short transfer back to the hotel, where we'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Walks on well maintained walking paths 8 km / 5 miles - Easy/Moderate

Overnight in Rychnov.

DAY 7 UNESCO TOWNS OF LITOMYSL AND OLOMOUC

We start the day with a visit to the Vamberk Museum, showcasing the region's rich tradition of lace making, some of which has been elevated to an artistic level and exhibited at prestigious events like EXPO in Montreal and Brussels. Continue to the city of Litomyšl, home to a monumental Renaissance château. Explore the château's beautifully preserved interiors, including grand ceremonial rooms, historic theatre, fancy salons, and the palace chapel, all adorned with original artwork and period furniture. Discover the lavish lifestyle of the noble families who once lived here, the architectural evolution of the palace, and the significance of its iconic sgraffito facade.



After lunch at a local restaurant, take a short drive to Olomouc, a city whose historical importance rivals that of Prague. Olomouc is a treasure trove of architectural styles, from a Romanesque palace to Gothic and Baroque churches, Renaissance palaces, and Art Nouveau homes. The city's highlights include the Holy Trinity Column, one of the finest examples of Baroque monumental sculpture in Central Europe, along with a unique ensemble of seven Baroque fountains, inspired primarily by ancient Greek and Roman mythology. Wrap up the day with dinner at a centrally located restaurant

Town walk - 3 km / 2 miles - Easy

Overnight in Olomouc.

DAY 8 WALLACHIAN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM - TRADITIONAL FOLK ARCHITECTURE

Embark on a morning transfer to the Open-Air Museum in Roznov, one of the largest and most renowned open-air museums in Central Europe, dedicated to preserving and showcasing traditional Wallachian architecture and culture. Established in 1925, the museum boasts a diverse collection of over 100 meticulously relocated and restored wooden buildings, including farmhouses, cottages, and churches, all reflecting the region's rich rural heritage. It offers a glimpse into the lifestyle of common people over the past three centuries. Enjoy traditional local



specialties at the mountain chalet in Pustevny, an architectural gem that beautifully blends traditional folk style with modern Art Nouveau elements.

Afterward, take a scenic hike along the mountain ridge of the Beskids, the westernmost part of the Carpathians, to the legendary summit of Radhost. At the top, visit the chapel dedicated to Saints Cyril and Methodius, celebrated Byzantine missionaries who introduced the first alphabet to the local people in the 9th century. After the hike, we will cross the border into Slovakia, where a brief scenic drive will lead us to our hotel in Terchova.

Walks on well maintained walking paths - 8 km / 5 miles - Easy/Moderate

Overnight in Terchova

DAY 9 ORAVA CASTLE - ICONIC FILM SET FOR DRACULA

After breakfast, visit the beautifully preserved Church of All Saints in Lestiny, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built in the late 17th century, this Baroque-style church is celebrated for its intricate frescoes and exceptional wooden architecture, crafted entirely without nails or foundations. Its very existence is remarkable, as it was constructed despite the strict limitations imposed by authorities who were hostile to Protestantism at the time. Next, embark on a hike through the gently rolling Orava Mountains, where the landscape is dotted with quaint shepherds' huts and charming wooden cottages.

The highlight of the day is Orava Castle, one of Slovakia's



Orava Castle





Strbske Pleso Lake



High Tatras



Dunajec Gorge



Spissky Castle

most impressive medieval fortresses, which showcases a captivating blend of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque architectural styles, reflecting its centuries of evolution. It is no wonder that this grand stronghold, perched majestically on a cliff above the Orava River, was chosen as the film set for the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu*. After a guided tour, transfer back to our hotel and conclude the day with a feast of local specialties at a traditional Slovak restaurant.

Walks on walking paths - 8 km / 5 miles - Moderate

Overnight in Terchova.

DAY 10 THE HIGH TATRAS - MAJESTIC CROWN OF THE CARPATHIANS

The morning drive takes us to the High Tatras, a breathtaking mountain range straddling the border between Slovakia and Poland, renowned for its dramatic peaks, crystal-clear lakes, and diverse wildlife. Begin a scenic hike between two tranquil alpine lakes: Strbske Pleso and Popradske Pleso. Our trail winds through lush forests and along serene landscapes, offering stunning views of the surrounding peaks. Along the way, enjoy lunch at a mountain chalet, where you can savor traditional Slovak dishes while soaking in the majestic surroundings.

Afterward, visit the nearby symbolic cemetery, a tribute to the mountaineers who have enriched the region's mountaineering heritage. Continue to the historic town of Levoca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here, immerse yourself in the stunning Gothic Church of St. James, which proudly houses the city's treasure: the High Altar. Crafted by the renowned artist Master Paul of Levoca in the early 16th century, this masterpiece is celebrated as the tallest wooden Gothic altar in the world, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship and intricate details that exemplify the town's rich artistic legacy. Conclude the day with dinner at a restaurant situated in the historic square.

Walks on walking paths - 8 km / 5 miles - Moderate

Overnight in Levoca.

DAY 11 SPIS CASTLE - A SHINING JEWEL OF THE SPIS REGION

In the morning, enjoy a leisurely walk through the Branisko foothills, offering stunning panoramic views of the surrounding rolling landscape. Visit the 13th-century Gothic Church in Zehra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and hear the fascinating story of its priceless murals—discovered by accident after being concealed beneath lime plaster for centuries. Delve into the sophisticated symbolism of the artwork, offering a glimpse into the mindset of our pious ancestors.

For lunch, savor *halusky*, a traditional Slovak dish of small potato dumplings served with sheep cheese and topped with crispy bacon, at a rustic local restaurant. Continue with a tour of Spis Castle, a UNESCO-listed fortress and one of the largest castle complexes in Central Europe. Perched majestically on a hilltop, this 12th-century stronghold is a symbol of Slovakia's rich medieval history. Return to Levoca for a relaxed afternoon before gathering for dinner.

Walks on walking paths - 5 km / 3 miles - easy

Overnight in Levoca.

DAY 12 PIENINY NATIONAL PARK - RAFTING THROUGH A ROCKY GORGE

Embark on a scenic journey to the Polish border for an exhilarating adventure in the heart of Pieniny National Park: rafting along the meandering Dunajec River, surrounded by breathtaking views of towering cliffs and lush forests. The rafting trip typically lasts 2 to 3 hours and covers approximately 15 kilometers (9 miles), where traditional wooden rafts are expertly guided by local raftsmen dressed in folk costumes. As we glide down the river, the raftsmen share fascinating insights into the region's folklore and the history of rafting, which originally developed for transporting timber to the Baltic Sea. Highlights of the route include stunning vistas of the Three Crowns mountain, the Seven Monks, and the impressive peak of

Sokolica towering above.

After enjoying a picnic lunch at a picturesque lookout spot, we cross the border and, hours later, arrive in the UNESCO-listed royal city of Krakow. Conclude the day by savoring delicious Polish specialties at a stylish restaurant.

Easy walks - 2 km / 1 mile - Easy

Overnight in Krakow.

DAY 13 AUSCHWITZ

Embark on a poignant all-day trip to Auschwitz, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the harrowing history of the Holocaust unfolds. The drive takes approximately one and a half hours, allowing for reflection as we travel to one of the most significant historical sites in the world. Upon arrival, join a guided tour that provides insights into the camp's tragic past, exploring the preserved barracks, memorials, and exhibitions that pay tribute to the victims. As we walk through the haunting grounds, take a moment

to reflect on the lessons learned and the importance of remembrance. After the visit, return to Krakow, carrying with you a deeper understanding of history and a commitment to honor those who suffered. For those who do not wish to visit Auschwitz, the day is free to explore Krakow independently.

Easy walks - 3 km / 2 miles - Easy

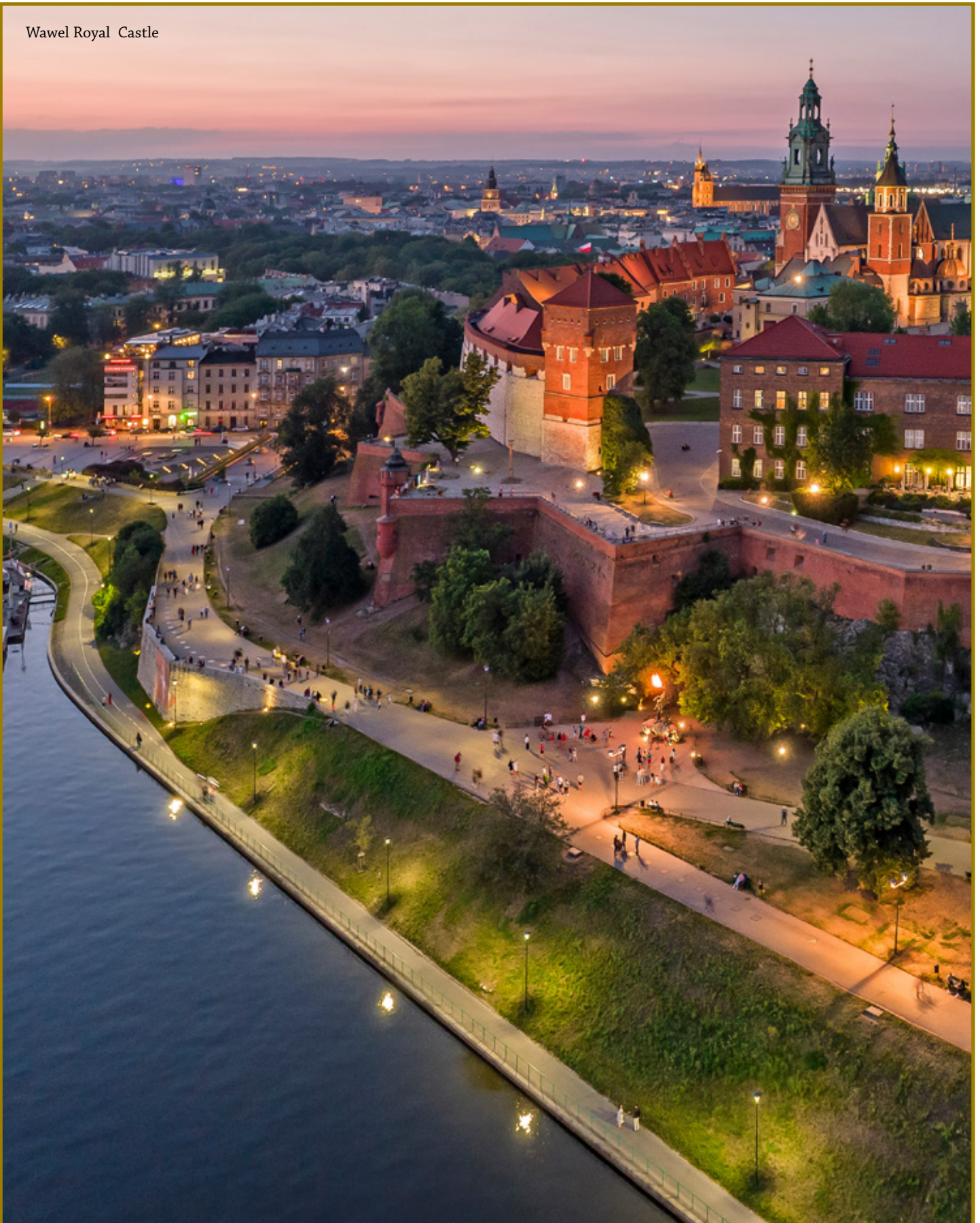
Overnight in Krakow.

DAY 14 WIELICZKA SALT MINE AND KRAKOW SIGHTSEEING, ROYAL WAWEL CASTLE

This morning, you have the opportunity to enjoy an optional excursion where you will travel to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, renowned for its expansive underground chambers and intricate salt carvings. This extraordinary mine has been in operation since the 13th century, featuring over 180 miles (300 km)



Wawel Royal Castle



of tunnels and breathtaking subterranean caverns adorned with remarkable sculptures and chapels, all masterfully carved from salt by dedicated local miners after hours.

Please note that there are several hundred stairs to go down into the mine and this visit is not for people who suffer from claustrophobia. Should you wish to not participate with the salt mine visit, spend the morning at your leisure.

After lunch we will enjoy a city tour of Krakow, often nicknamed “the New Prague” because of its architectural splendor, cultural significance and historical importance. Krakow, the royal capital of Poland for over 500 years, is without a doubt the most picturesque town in Poland. Our city tour begins at the vibrant Main Square, home to the

magnificent St. Mary’s Basilica, the iconic Cloth Hall, and an array of architectural gems spanning from the 11th to the 18th century. The journey continues through the historic Jewish Quarter, offering a glimpse into its rich cultural heritage, followed by a visit to the majestic Royal Wawel Castle and the prestigious Jagiellonian University.

We will enjoy our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Easy town walks - 5 km / 3 miles + 1 mile in salt mines

Overnight in Krakow.

DAY 15 DEPART KRAKOW

Today we transfer to Krakow Airport for our departure flights.







Wieliczka Salt Mines



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, and bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, bus driver, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, national parks and reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are wandering through the streets of a small town.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by bus, by boat, raft and by foot.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

Comfortable, well-located hotels with private bathrooms.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Our adventure takes place during the pleasant summer months. Temperatures can vary between the low 70's °F to the high 80's °F (20°C – 27°C). In the mountains expect cooler temperatures. Sudden showers and thunderstorms are common.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. **Please note:** all visitors to the Czech Republic must give proof of health insurance to immigration officers at the point of entry to cover 30,000 EUROS of emergency treatment. Lack of documents or inability to give the proof of health insurance can result in refusal of entry into the Czech Republic.

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the adventure, please call our office for more details. A Trip Specialist will be happy to answer your questions. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

