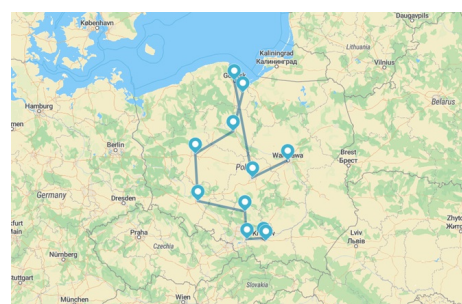




Poland, 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

Polska Route from Warsaw to Krakow

Join us on this fascinating self-drive tour through the main cities of Poland, a major highlight of the Eastern Europe. Learn about the architectural rivalry between the current and the former capital of the country, both which rose up from the ashes after World War II. Elegant and historical, both of them also have been declared UNESCO World Heritage sites: the vast Warsaw and the monument-rich Krakow. An itinerary complemented by the canals and bridges of the 'Polish Venice' in Wroclaw; the Gates of Gdansk, with the prominence of its trade union past; and the wonderful Poznan, origin of the Polish state. Poland delivers surprises wherever you go. It oozes cultural and historical richness, marked by the influences of Eastern and Western Europe, and holds borders with six countries, which also translates into a diverse and original cuisine. Its legacy is far-reaching and worth its weight in gold, with a total of 15 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Our proposal includes historical elements that reflect the shame of the Nazi holocaust, but also restore our faith in humanity with visits to places where Schindler and the Zabiskis saved many Jews from death, as famously depicted in movies. Their memory is used by Poland to stir people's conscience.



CULTURAL

URBAN

Departure date: Departures from June 2026 till May 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Travel details _____

● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - WARSAW

Flight departure from the city of origin to Warsaw. Arrival, rental car pick-up and departure to the city of Warsaw. Day at your leisure to enjoy this magnificent city, which is the largest in the country and its capital since 1596, the year when King Sigismund III Vasa moved it from Krakow. It's fascinating to stroll through the city that saw the birth of Marie Curie, one of the most recognised women in history and twice Nobel Prize winner for her discoveries in the field of radioactivity. The famous composer and pianist Chopin also grew up here. Thanks to the freedom of your rental car you can head over to Zelazowa Wola, the village where this music genius was born, just 50 kilometres from Warsaw. Here you can see his birthplace and visit a Chopin-related museum, where in summer there are concerts showcasing his work. (Note: From the second half of May until the end of September, you can attend a Chopin piano concert on Sundays at 12.00 midday and at 4.00 pm in the Royal Park of Lazienki). More ideas? Enjoy a magnificent light and sound show at the Multimedia Fountain, on the banks of the River Vistula, near the Royal Castle. (Note: Entrance to the Royal Castle is free on Sundays. We recommend arriving early to make sure you get a ticket). One particularly interesting option in this city is the zoo, but not just for its animals, as the site is especially symbolic. In 1939, this zoo, one of the most famous in Europe, was bombarded by the Nazis. The most fascinating aspect of its history, which showcases the faith in humanity in contrast to Hitler's heinous actions, took place in the early 1940s. The married couple Jan and Antonina Zabinski were running the zoo and took advantage of their position to hide around 300 Jews and members of the Polish Resistance on the site. Their remarkable feat, putting their own lives in danger, is narrated in the recently-released film "The Zookeeper's Wife". We recommend rounding off the day with a very typical and particularly wallet-friendly dinner, which also gives you a glimpse of Polish life before the fall of communism: savouring a hearty soup accompanied by a glass of milk at the traditional 'milk bars' created in the 1960s. Many are closed now, but there are some left and it's definitely worth soaking up the atmosphere you'll find there. (Note: They're called milk bars because of the prevalence of traditional dishes based on flour, cheese, milk and eggs). If you prefer a more select setting, there are an array of options serving exquisite dishes in the Old Town. Polish cuisine is influenced by that of its neighbouring countries (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Lithuania and Slovenia), so this is another incentive to enjoy the trip. Coffee houses known as 'kawiarnias' are famous for their coffee, tea, soups and desserts. Try a borscht or a wild mushroom soup! Throughout the trip, you'll discover the delicious Polish gastronomy, influenced by Oriental and French cuisine. The result: mouthwatering dishes that will truly surprise you. Overnight stay in Warsaw.

DAY 2 · WARSAW - LODZ - GDANSK

We recommend a leisurely morning in Warsaw. (Note: From mid-May to mid-September, there are attractions for tourists held every weekend in Warsaw. What's more, all major museums in the city offer multilingual audio guides). A unique atmosphere reigns in the Old Town (Stare Miasto), completely rebuilt after World War II and declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980. The streets are lined with buildings from between the 15th and 18th centuries and surrounded by relics of the city walls with moats and barbicans. The Market Square is of great beauty. The buildings that line the streets of the Royal Route are mostly historic constructions. Don't miss the Royal Castle and the bustling triangular plaza in front of it, known as Castle Square. There you can see Sigismund's Column, built in 1644 on the orders of his son, Władysław IV, and have a smooch around the market stalls. Another must-see is the Palace of Culture and Science, a huge Soviet-style building towering 240 metres high, which was a gift from Stalin to the Polish people. Łazienki Park is particularly enchanting, with a palace on an island in the middle of a lake. Here you can see a monument to Chopin. We also recommend a visit to Wilanow Palace, known as the 'Polish Versailles' because of its resemblance to the Parisian building, and which was the summer residence of Polish royalty in the 17th century. Inside is the Church of St. Anna and countless works of art. (Note: The Palace is open to visitors from 9.30 am to 3.00 pm. Closed on Tuesdays. The Royal Garden can be visited all year round, with opening hours depending on the season).

After the visit, we'll set off for Gdansk, located about four hours' away by motorway.

If you have time, you can make a stop in Łódź, located an hour and a half away.

This is a city that grew thanks to the textile industry, which employed Poles, Orthodox Christians, Jews and Germans, and features the 19th-century architecture of factories and mansions, as well as the original "Dialogue of Four Cultures Festival". Its most famous landmark is the Manufaktura, a visually-striking open space that has transformed a former factory complex into a huge shopping centre with an array of eateries and beer gardens. You can also visit the Museum of the Factory and the Museum of Modern Art on the site.

As well as fashion and design culture, Lodz is a UNESCO City of Film, so you'll find a host of places related to Polish cinema.

On Piotrkowska Street is the 'Avenue of Fame', dedicated to celebrities linked to the city and its film school. It's also worth visiting the Film Museum. (Note: closed on Mondays; free admission on Tuesdays).

If you arrive in time, we recommend an underground tour of the city, with mysterious galleries that reflect the curious layout of the city in the past.

Overnight stay in Gdansk.

DAY 3 · GDANSK

Visit the largest port city in Poland and its attractions such as Długa Street, which is accessed through the huge Golden Gate (Złota Brama), while the junction with Bogusławskiego Street signals the start of the Royal Route. Here you'll find the High Gate (Brama Wyzsza), with its facade adorned with inscriptions and emblems of the ancient Free City of Danzig. Długa Street is lined with tall narrow buildings once inhabited by the city's elite and leads to the 14th-century Town Hall, which has a tower crowned by a statue of King Sigismund II. Also here is Neptune's Fountain, the symbol of the city. At the end of the street, you can pass through the Green Gate (Zielona Brama) and set off on a walk that stretches along the River Motława to the Green Bridge, which will then take you to Granary Island. St. Mary's Gate, with two towers at each end, leads through to Mariacka Street, where you can pick up some amber jewellery as a souvenir. At the end of this street is the majestic St. Mary's Basilica, a huge brick building. You can enjoy spectacular views from its 80-metre-high spire. We also recommend a visit to the famous Old Crane building, the largest in Europe in medieval times and which was used by the ship-building industry. Also interesting are the shipyards, because of their historic importance as the origin of the trade union movement and the focal point for the strikes and protests that would trigger the fall of communism in Poland. Three huge iron crosses stand in memory of the workers killed at the shipyards. Another must-visit for understanding the city is Museum of the Second World War. Round the day off at Oliwa Cathedral and take an evening stroll around Market Square before dinner at one of the bustling cafes and restaurants. (Note: Gdansk is a short hop to the beaches of Sobieszewo Island (18 kilometres) or Sopot (20 kilometres), home to the Grand, one of the most emblematic hotels in this seaside resort). Overnight stay in Gdansk.

● DAY 4 · GDANSK - MALBORK - TORUŃ - POZNAN

Bid farewell to this vibrant city and continue onwards to Poznan. (Note: We recommend setting out early today, as there are many things to see and from Toruń to Poznan there's no motorway). Stop off at the Teutonic fortress of Malbork, an hour's drive from Gdansk. This is the largest medieval castle in Europe, dating from the fourteenth century, and was built by the Order of the Teutonic Knights, founded in Palestine in 1190 during the Third Crusade, consisting mainly of German nobles. The red-brick fortress stands on the banks of the River Nogat and features three castles and several outbuildings.

(Note: Bear in mind that the visit will last about 3 hours. In high season, book in advance to avoid the queues).

Onward journey to Toruń, an hour and 45 minutes away. Make sure you visit its Old Town, still intact after 700 years, which earned the accolade of UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. This is the hometown of Copernicus, whose house is open to visitors. (Note: The House of Nicolas Copernicus is located in the Old Town and will be closed until June 2018 for restoration works. Once reopened, you can reach it on foot. We recommend parking your car in the car parks located outside the Old Town). Other Gothic-style houses, with beautiful rooftop frescoes, complete the city's fascinating architecture. Our next recommendation will take you to the Muzeum Piernika, aka the Museum of Gingerbread. Admission costs less than €4.00. You have to book online for tours in English. Then back on the road for 2¼ hours to Poznan, the pulsating metropolis of western Poland where the country's first cathedral was built: the Ostrów Tumski, located on a small island in the river and a very symbolic place, as this is where the State of Poland was born. Visit the Baroque-style Church of St. Stanislaus, built by the Jesuits and where free concerts are held in the summer. Take a stroll around Market Square, surrounded by Baroque, Gothic and Renaissance houses with multicoloured facades.

Here you can admire the Town Hall, rebuilt in the 16th century in Renaissance style, and witness two mechanical goats emerging from a door above the clock tower at precisely 12.00 noon each day.

Poznan has a very lively nightlife thanks to the university students living here. For dinner, we recommend anywhere around Kuchnia Chrisa, where you'll come across a host of options.

Overnight stay in Poznan.

● DAY 5 · POZNAN - WROCLAW (OPTIONAL VISIT TO SWIDNICA AND KSIAZ CASTLE)

Departure to the beautiful city of Wroclaw, where more than 100 bridges and footbridges cross the River Odra and its tributaries: The journey will take about 3 hours away as there's no motorway and the road tends to be quite congested.

This city straddles 12 islands. The river and bridges have earned it the nickname of the 'Venice of Poland'. The architecture contains traces of Czech, Polish, Austrian, Hungarian and German culture. A must-see is the Gothic-style Market Square, surrounded by colourful houses and the thirteenth-century Town Hall, one of the largest in Europe and a true jewel of the profane architecture of Silesia with its pinnacles and astronomical clock. Don't miss the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which was rebuilt after World War II and only retains its original medieval portico, and the University of Wroclaw, the alma mater of many Nobel prize winners. From here to Swidnica, an hour's drive away, where you can visit the wood-built Church of Peace, and the extraordinarily beautiful Castle of Ksiaz, just fifteen minutes outside the town and nestled amid lush forests scoured for decades in search of a Nazi convoy full of gold. The Castle is open to the public every day of the week and the timetable varies according to the day, but it's always open between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm. You can visit the entire castle or just certain areas (the standard price for all areas is 8.50 euros). In this Castle, converted into a general headquarters by the Nazis, there's a mysterious underground complex known as the 'Riese' (giant), composed of a brutal network of enormous tunnels at a depth of 50 metres. The underground network can be visited only with a guide (in Polish). (Note: Tickets can be booked online or purchased at the ticket office at a specific time, as long as there are places available. The terraces and the Prince's Garden can only be visited from April to September. There are also night visits, with available dates being announced at the end of each month. You can use the car park 900 metres from the Castle. It costs around 2 euros. From April to October, parking is available 24 hours a day, while in winter it is available up to one hour after the last admission to the Castle. You can access the castle and the car park from National Road 35). Back on the road now to Wroclaw, an hour away, where we suggest the fun task of spotting the 200-plus metal dwarfs (krasnale in Polish) scattered around the city. Legend has it that if you see more than seven, you'll be blessed by good luck, so make sure you hunt out these cute little figurines.

Have a dinner of potatoes with cottage cheese and roasted ribs and then take a stroll through the lively Old Town to round off a fascinating day.

Overnight stay in Wroclaw.

● DAY 6 · WROCLAW - CZĘSTOCHOWA (JASNA GÓRA MONASTERY/BLACK MADONNA OF CZĘSTOCHOWA) - AUSCHWITZ - WADOWICE - KRAKOW

Departure to Krakow. Stop off after 2½ hours at the Monastery of Jasna Góra, home to the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, icon of the Virgin Mary and national symbol of Poland. The exact age of this ancient painting is unknown and it is shrouded in legends. (Note: All the museums at the Monastery of Jasna Góra are open every day from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm, and until 5.00 pm in summer. The most valuable piece is the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, visible at certain times of the day. It is covered between 12.00 noon and 1.30 pm on weekdays, and between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm on Sundays and holidays. There's a tourist office on site where you can pick up brochures and maps in various languages. You can book guided tours in various languages at a price of €25 per person for a maximum group of 5 people, according to 2017 rates. The nearest car park to the monastery is in Ulica Klasztorna, but it usually fills up fast. We recommend parking in town). After this visit, if you're interested in history and want to witness the terrible reality of the past, stop off at Oswiecim (Auschwitz), an hour and a quarter away, to visit the Nazi concentration camp and recall the disgrace of a genocide. (Note: Especially in high season, the visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum will take up most of the day. You can choose between a free visit or a guided tour. There are guided tours in Spanish, English, German, Italian, French and Polish. Only guided tours are allowed from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm (10 euros, with discounted tickets for students under 26). Admission is free before and after the guided tours ('visit without educator' ticket). It's best not to head to the Museum without a confirmed booking on the www.visit.auschwitz.org website with the specific date and time. Also make sure that you arrive with plenty of time, as security checks at the entrance often lead to big queues. Bags over 30 x 20 x 10 cm cannot be brought into the Museum). One of the advantages of self-drive touring is that you can combine this visit with other nearby stops of interest. If you have time, head back on the DK-44. It's not a motorway but is pretty breathtaking, and you'll also be able to visit the birthplace of Pope John Paul II in Wadowice, a typical small town in the Lesser Poland region. Very close to the town square is the birthplace of Karol Wojtyła (there are usually queues to enter). Also in the square, make sure you try the millefeuille, which was the Pope's favourite dessert. Onward to the fascinating city of Krakow, recognised as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Former capital of the country, Krakow is considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Stroll through its Old Town, divided into three areas each with amazing tourist attractions: Wawel Hill (with its castle and its cathedral); the medieval town of Krakow; and the medieval quarter of Kazimierz. Visit Market Square (Rynek Główny), which is the largest medieval square in Europe, flanked by old houses and churches, such as St. Mary's Basilica, with its two unequal towers, and the tenth-century Church of St. Wojciech. Also fascinating is the Sukiennice complex, home to a cloth hall and the National Museum of Art. A great place also for dinner at one of its many restaurants. Overnight stay in Krakow.

DAY 7 · KRAKOW - WIELICZKA - KRAKOW

Take advantage of the morning to visit Wawel Castle and the hill, which is the most important historical and cultural place in Poland. The castle is a Renaissance-style fort almost a thousand years old and was the seat of the Polish monarchy from the Middle Ages to the 17th century. It is currently a highly-renowned art gallery. (Note: If you plan to visit the Castle, keep in mind that it's closed on Mondays. From April to October, there are limits on admission. There are audio guides in different languages, but they're not included in the ticket. They cost 5 euros. Forbidden to enter with suitcases). Also worth a visit is the Cathedral, the traditional coronation site for Polish monarchs.

We recommend a trip out to the nearby Wieliczka Salt Mine, a 20-minute drive away, which has been in operation ever since the 13th century. Its rooms and sculptures carved directly out of salt are fascinating. It reaches a depth of 327 metres underground and there's a 3.5-kilometre tourist trail. Its interior is amazing, with chapels carved out of salt and an underground lake. (Note: It's an underground tour which can be booked up to the afternoon before your visit. The salt mine can be visited every day - except 1 January, Easter Sunday, 1 November, and 24/25 December - from 7.30 am to 7.00 pm in summer, and from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm in winter. It can only be visited at certain times and with guides. There are guided tours in Spanish, Italian, French, English, German, Polish and Russian. The price of a foreign-language visit is 21 euros. It's best to book tickets online so you can choose the date and time of the guided tour. The tour lasts around 3 hours. Wrap up well, as the temperature ranges between 14 and 16°C). After this fascinating experience, return trip to Krakow. If you have time, about 11 kilometres from the Wieliczka mine is the Hotel Mansion Dwór Sieraków, a great option for a walk or a wonderful lunch. Back in Krakow, you can stroll around the Jewish quarter and visit the factory of Oskar Schindler, who inspired Steven Spielberg's famous film. Another must-see is Ghetto Heroes Square, with its chair-statues (each representing a thousand deceased) in homage to the Jews deported and murdered by the Nazis during World War II. A tasty beer in the city's oldest brewery, located in the basement of the Town Hall, is the best way to end off the day.

Overnight stay in Krakow.

DAY 8 · KRAKOW - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Warsaw.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Warsaw.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Gdansk.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Gdansk.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Poznan.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Wroclaw.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Wroclaw.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Krakow.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Krakow.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.
- ✓ Amount of the supplement for collection and return of the vehicle in a different office.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.

Destinations Visited

Warsaw



Lodz



Gdansk



Malbork



Torun



Poznan



Wroclaw



Czestochowa



Oswiecim



Krakow



Wieliczka



Important remarks

- Driving through Poland: 1. When driving in Poland, you must keep your vehicle's lights switched on throughout the entire day. And take care in the cities, where the tram is still a widely-used means of public transport and always has the right of way. 2. The state of the roads has vastly improved in recent years. 3. Drink driving in Poland is severely punished. The permitted blood alcohol limit is 0.2 mg/l. 4. If you plan to visit the Tatra National Park or other mountainous area in winter, make sure you have the right tyres on your car. 5. Border crossings between Poland and Slovakia are located in: Chocholów, Chyżne, Jurgów and Łysa Polana. 6. Speed limits: 6.1. Built-up areas 50 km/h (60 km/h after 11.00 pm). 6.2. Non-built-up areas 90 km/h. 6.3. Town/city centres 20 km/h. 6.4. Dual carriageway expressways 110 km/h. 6.5. Single carriageway expressways 100 km/h. 6.6 Dual carriageways with at least two lanes in each direction 100 km/h. 6.7. Motorways 130 km/h. 7. Drivers of motorhomes must register in the electronic toll system (Via Toll). 8. Parking in the centre of Krakow. The Old Town is closed off to traffic (except for taxis, police cars and ambulances, and delivery trucks at certain times of the day). There are very few underground car parks. The park-and-display area is marked with a P, with the compulsory payment hours shown underneath.

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far

the possible.

- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.