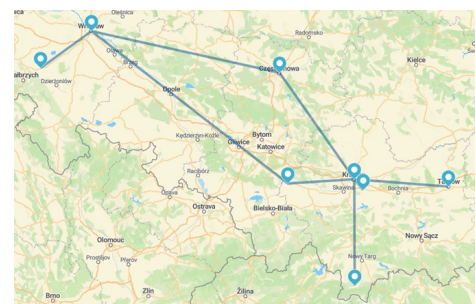




Poland, 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

## Route of Southern Poland

Poland is a country rich in heritage, history and nature. Its past has left important cultural footprints, as well as indelible memories on the collective consciousness. Located between the influences of Eastern and Western Europe, it boasts a rich heritage that includes countless monuments and 15 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Its cultural wealth is also influenced by its border with six countries: Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. Poland is admirable because it has successfully made opportunities out of the possible damages of a past that have transformed its political map throughout history: a territory divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria; its independence after the First World War; its occupation by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in the Second World War; its status as a Russian satellite country; and its current democracy, which has rewarded its inhabitants with a great standard of living. Poland is proud to have one of the best educational systems in Europe. Discover this fascinating country on a self-drive tour around the south, taking you to amazing locations. They include major cities such as Krakow, with its rich architecture, and Wroclaw, with its 12 islands and more than 100 bridges, making this trip truly unforgettable. Marvel at the Wooden Architecture Trail and go hiking in Zakopane and the magical landscapes of the Tatra Mountains. History and culture are also key to this journey, visiting areas where the past is disturbing, such as Auschwitz, or surprising, such as Ksiaz Castle. A tour that delves deep into the idiosyncrasy of a country where you can savour Oscypek, a cheese protected by the European Union, both in its form and in its production process.



CULTURAL

URBAN

**Departure date:** Departures from May 2026 till May 2027

**From:** Dublin, Shannon, Cork

## Travel details

## DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - KRAKOW

Flight departure from the city of origin to Krakow. Arrival, rental car pick-up and departure to Krakow, a fascinating city 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. (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). 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 charming restaurants. ((Note: Park 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 below. In Krakow, you have to pay from Monday to Friday between 10.00 am and 8.00 pm. It's free at all other times)). Overnight stay in Krakow.

## DAY 2 · 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 multilingual audio guides, 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 3 · KRAKOW - ZAKOPANE - TATRA NATIONAL PARK - KRAKOW

Today's itinerary will take you to one of the most charming and picturesque cities in the country. Zakopane, a couple of hours from Krakow, is nestled in the foothills of the Tatra Mountains, the only Alpine mountains in Poland. (Note: set out early, as it's a 2-hour drive to Zakopane and further 2 hours back to Krakow). The town's quaint wooden architecture is fascinating, with houses that seem to be plucked from a nativity scene. When the snow falls in winter, you can see true picture-postcard scenes. And even more so with the local highlanders (known as Gorals), dressed in traditional costumes and playing their special music. If you go in summer, the International Festival of Mountain Folklore takes place in the second half of August. The natural environment is majestic, with landscapes akin to a fairy tale. Don't miss the Jaszczurówka Chapel and the Stanislaw Witkiewicz Museum, named after the artist who created this unique architectural style. (Note: Take the DW-95 8 road to get to Villa Koliba - Zakopane Style Museum. The museum doesn't offer guided tours. It's open from Tuesday to Sunday, and closed on Monday. There's a small car park opposite the museum). But, without a doubt, the most popular attraction in this town is the Tatras National Park, with Lake "Morskie Oko" (Eye of the Sea) taking centre stage. Zakopane is the ideal starting point for day trips in the stunning natural landscapes of the Tatras, a natural border with Slovakia. There's a tourist information office in town where you can pick up a map. (Note: Opening hours 10.00 am to 5.00 pm). Within the National Park, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, there are 275 kilometres of trails of different levels where you can admire the fascinating peaks of these mountains, the highest in the Carpathians. There are cable cars and funicular trains that head up to vantage points on the peaks of the Gubalowka or Kasprowy Wierch mountains, where there are breathtaking views. You can admire a huge amount of tree species in the park, as well as hanging peaks and rocks, hollows from the glacial period, ravines, lakes, waterfalls, caves and valleys. If you're in luck, you'll even be able to spot marmots, bears and chamois. We recommend entering via Palenica Białczańska, where you'll pay a symbolic one euro to access the Park. ((Note: Bear in mind that although the Tatra National Park is open all year round, some trails may be closed due to weather conditions. You have to park your car at the entrance of the park. The price ranges between 25 and 30 PLN (between 6 and 7 euros/day) and you also have to pay an entrance fee to the park (1 euro according to 2017 rates). In high season, it's a good idea to arrive early (before 9.00 am) to avoid any parking issues. If the car parks and overflow zones are full, you'll be denied access to the park. We recommend wearing sensible footwear. You can request a guide, but in high season you'll have to do so in advance. You can either walk up to the Eye of the Sea or take a horse-drawn carriage)). After a day of mountain life, head back to Krakow, two hours away by car. Overnight stay in Krakow.

### DAY 4 · KRAKOW - TRAIL OF THE WOODEN CHURCHES (TARNÓW - IWKOWA - SOBOLÓW - RAJBROT) - KRAKOW

Early departure to follow the Wooden Churches route. The first stop we propose is Tarnów, 75 kilometres from Krakow, and its surroundings, where many of the most fascinating examples of wooden architecture in the country are found. Among the most famous are St. Leonard's Church in Lipnica Murowana, and St. Michael Archangel's Church in Binarowa, both part of the UNESCO Wooden Churches of Southern Lesser Poland. (Note: St. Leonard's Church in Lipnica Murowana, is 48 kilometres away, while St. Michael Archangel's Church in Binarowa is 45 kilometres away). Capital of the region, Tarnów is known as the 'Pearl of the Renaissance' for its beautiful old quarter with the Gothic and Renaissance town hall, with its fascinating museum, and the 14th-century Neo-Gothic Cathedral. Make sure you also see the stunning Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings in the town. The old town of Tarnów has surprisingly survived since the city was founded in 1330. Also take a stroll through its Jewish neighbourhood. At the start of World War II, 45% of the population of this city was Jewish and thousands of them were killed. A commemorative plaque remembers them, as well as the villagers who left from here to the extermination camp of Auschwitz. In the vicinity of Tarnów, there are around 40 historical monuments included in the Wooden Architecture Trail. Between Raba and Wisloka are many temples that you can visit. We recommend the churches located in Gosprzydowa, Iwkowa, Rajbrot and Sobolów. Bear in mind that the churches are only open in high season (spring and summer). Visiting all these villages is a great way to discover southern Poland and the ways of life in these regions. Another option is to visit Zalipie, a village located 30 kilometres from Tarnów, famous for its picturesque houses painted with flowers. The full route will take you about two hours, but you can shorten it if you prefer. If you end up in Zawada, you'll have an hour's journey to Krakow. Have a grilled goose for dinner, a typical Polish dish, and bid farewell to this intense day. Overnight stay in Krakow.

## ● DAY 5 · KRAKOW - AUSCHWITZ - WROCLAW

Departure to the beautiful Wroclaw with a stop, one hour en route, at one of the most poignant places in the country. 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. The best way to get to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp from Krakow is on road No. 44 in the direction of Oświęcim. The museum is located outside the village of Oświęcim on road No. 933. Entrance to the museum is through the car park at the address: ul.Leszczynskiej 16 (paid parking). There's a free bus between the two camps. (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](http://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). The site is simply outstanding because of its sheer size and the testimonies it conserves of 20th-century history. Built in 1940, it was the largest Nazi extermination camp. The visit is extremely moving and will probably leave you speechless. One of the advantages of a self-drive tour is that you can combine this visit with other nearby stops, such as the Kalwaria Zebrzydowska Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most frequented pilgrimage sites in Poland. The religious complex, which is part of one of the most interesting architectural projects in Europe, welcomes more than one million pilgrims each year. (Note: Guided tours take place from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Guided tours (in English, Italian, German, French and Spanish) can be booked four days in advance. A shorter visit of approximately 45 minutes is possible). Another alternative stop is Wadowice, a typical small town in the Lesser Poland region and birthplace of Pope John Paul II. Very close to the town square is the birthplace of Karol Wojtyla (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 Wroclaw, about 2½ hours away, where more than 100 bridges cross the Oder River and its tributaries. This town straddles 12 islands, lapped by up to four tributaries. The river and its 112 bridges have earned it the nickname of the 'Venice of Poland'. The architecture contains traces of Czech, Polish, Austrian, Hungarian and German culture. Strolling around the streets and squares at sunset and dining at one of the enchanting restaurants in the Old Town is a true pleasure. Overnight stay in Wroclaw.

## DAY 6 · WROCLAW - SWIDNICA - CHURCH OF PEACE - KSIĄZ CASTLE - OSÓWKA - WROCLAW

Day at your leisure to enjoy the third most important city in Poland with a history linked to four different countries. Because now you're in Poland, but before World War II you would have been in Germany, and further back in time in the Czech Republic and Austria. 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 Wrocław, the alma mater of many Nobel prize winners. There's more than enough to keep you entertained for a whole day in Wrocław, but we recommend a trip out to Swidnica, an hour's drive away, where you can visit the wood-built Church of Peace, and the extraordinarily beautiful Castle of Książ, 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). Relatively close by is the underground city of Osówka (from Hitler's times). Back on the road now to Wrocław, 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 Wrocław.

## DAY 7 · WROCLAW - CZĘSTOCHOWA (JASNA GÓRA MONASTERY/BLACK MADONNA OF CZĘSTOCHOWA) - KRAKOW

Today's itinerary will take you to Częstochowa, the most religious place in the country, and two and a half hours from Wrocław. This important centre of Central European pilgrimage is home to the Monastery of Jasna Góra, a 13th-century building that houses 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). The tour then continues to Krakow, a little less than two hours away, where you'll spend the last night of the trip. You already had the chance to see the highlights of this city, but make sure you delve even deeper into Krakow, which Feldman said is the soul of Poland. Stroll around the majestic Rynek Główny Square and its adjacent streets, full of amazing buskers. To round the day off, we suggest dinner at Europe's oldest restaurant, the Wierzynek, where royalty often dined. It dates back to 1364, when it hosted the wedding banquet of the granddaughter of King Casimir the Great. An amazing experience. 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

#### Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Krakow.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Krakow.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Wroclaw.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Wroclaw.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

#### Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.

## Destinations Visited

Krakow



Wieliczka



Zakopane



Tarnow



Oswiecim



Wroclaw



Swidnica



Czestochowa



## 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 as 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.