



Treasures of Art and Architecture

DURATION

9 days

AVAILABILITY

every day

This amazingly varied tour itinerary will introduce you to the **outstanding artists and iconic structures that exemplify Poland's national identity**.

Capture the essence of Poland's rich cultural heritage on an itinerary that takes you to some of its most remarkable destinations. Explore the **UNESCO-listed cities of Krakow and Zamosc**, each showcasing centuries of history and architectural splendor. Discover the **vibrant city of Lodz**, known for its mesmerizing blend of industrial heritage and artistic expression. Finally, immerse yourself in the **charm of Warsaw, where you can experience magical moments accompanied by the romantic melodies of Chopin's music**.

Unmissable delights of art and architecture include **internationally renowned works by da Vinci and Rembrandt**. There is plenty to uncover.

PRICING

Contact us for pricing: travel@staypoland.com

ITINERARY

Day 1

Get Lost in the Annals of History

The capital of Poland for 500 years and a cradle of Polish culture, **Krakow ranks among Europe's most artistically rich cities**. Stand-out architectural gems, a labyrinth of museums, charming restaurants, coffee shops, first-rate clubs, and street performers contribute to maintaining the magic of the place. From the regal **Wawel Castle** to the bohemian spirit of **Kazimierz**, every corner resonates with the essence of Poland's heritage.

Upon your arrival at Krakow Airport, a private car transfer to your hotel will be arranged. The remainder of the day is on your own.

Day 2

Veit Stoss, Michiel van Coxcie - the "Flemish Raphael"

Begin your day by diving into the captivating atmosphere of Krakow, the first European city to be honored as a UNESCO World Heritage site. As you explore, you'll uncover the stories of artists who shaped the way we view art and beauty. The journey starts in the heart of the **Old Town**, where Europe's largest medieval square has stood unchanged for over 700 years. Highlights include the **Renaissance Cloth Hall**, shimmering in the sunlight, and the iconic **St. Mary's Basilica**, home to Veit Stoss's awe-inspiring wooden altarpiece, a masterpiece of Gothic art.

From the square, we'll make our way to **Wawel Castle and Cathedral**, perched majestically above the Vistula River. This iconic ensemble, a symbol of Poland's rich history and pride, offers a glimpse into the golden age of Krakow as the "City of Kings." Inside the Royal Castle, marvel at its unrivaled collection of tapestries, including works by **Michiel van Coxcie**, celebrated as the "Flemish Raphael." The Cathedral's stunning interior showcases Italian craftsmanship at its finest, a true testament to artistic brilliance.

Day 3

Krakow's Treasures: Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Wyspianski, and Matejko

Krakow is one of just a few places in the world that prides itself on a painting by Leonardo da Vinci. While in Krakow, you'll have the chance to admire one of the most captivating faces in art history. The **Czartoryski Museum** houses **Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, *The Lady with an Ermine***, one of only four portraits of women painted by the Renaissance genius. Art experts consider this piece the first modern portrait, celebrated for its emotional depth and anatomical precision—a true testament to Leonardo's skill.

Rembrandt's *The Landscape with the Good Samaritan* can also be seen at the museum. Both are among the top artworks in Krakow and Poland.

Next, we'll tour the **Basilica of St. Francis**, a treasure trove of Art Nouveau brilliance. The vibrant stained-glass windows, designed by Polish master **Stanislaw Wyspianski**, fill the space with color and light.

The Cloth Hall's upper level contains the 19th-century Polish Art Gallery, showcasing the **most outstanding Polish painters, among them Jan Matejko**, awarded the gold medal at the 1865 Paris Salon. Also featured are paintings and sculptures by other remarkable figures in Polish art: **Piotr Michalowski, Jozef Chełmonski, and Jacek Malczewski** – a leading figure of Polish Symbolism and Art Nouveau.

In the afternoon, enjoy a guided walk through the **Kazimierz district**. Once the ancient heart of Jewish life in Krakow, it now thrives as a lively, bohemian neighborhood.

Day 4

Wieliczka & Lipnica: Heritage in Salt and Wood

Take an excursion to the **Wieliczka Salt Mine**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where centuries of salt extraction have left behind an underground wonderland. Marvel at intricate sculptures, carvings, and statues created by miners, celebrating mythic, historical, and

religious figures. Among the highlights is the breathtaking **Chapel of St. Kinga**, the crown jewel of this subterranean masterpiece.

On our way back to Krakow, we'll stop at **Lipnica Murowana** to visit the valuable **wooden St. Leonard's Church**, protected by UNESCO.

Day 5

The Polish Gaudí & Silesia's Architectural Gems

The Glorious Restoration

The grand residence of the Dukes of Pszczyna was granted an honorary diploma for the meticulous restoration of its interiors by the Europa Nostra organization. The Hochbergs, who owned Pszczyna Castle, were among the richest families in Europe and furnished their home according to their status. The Royal Apartments have been fully recreated, and the highlights of this magnificent castle include the eclectic Chamber of Mirrors and the walnut-paneled library.

Stanisław Niemczyk - The Polish Gaudi, Jerzy Nowosielski

Architect Stanislaw Niemczyk gained fame both in Poland and abroad for his original church designs, leading to comparisons with Antoni Gaudí. We will visit the **unusually shaped Church of the Holy Spirit in Tychy** - a sacred masterpiece. The church is decorated with polychromes in the Byzantine style by Jerzy Nowosielski, one of Poland's most distinguished artists, whose works combine the tradition of Orthodox icon painting with Western avant-garde.

The **Nikiszowiec settlement**, a gem of social housing architecture, is an essential stop for those seeking a complete portrait of Poland. This charming coal miners' district in Katowice feels like a step back in time to the industrial heyday of Upper Silesia. It provides a unique perspective on social architecture and an intriguing look at how remnants of the past have been transformed into contemporary galleries and cultural spaces.

Return to Krakow. Free time.

Day 6

Zamosc: a Pearl of Renaissance

We will head to **UNESCO-listed Zamosc**, in southeastern Poland, established in the 16th century by Chancellor Jan Zamojski. Zamosc, modeled after the Italian concept of an “ideal city” and designed by the Padua-born architect Bernardo Morando, stands as a **pinnacle of Renaissance urban planning**.

Situated on a key trade route connecting Western and Northern Europe to the Black Sea, the town quickly attracted Jewish, Italian, Armenian, Hungarian, and Greek merchants, forming a vibrant, multicultural community of up to twelve nationalities. The Old City of Zamosc today preserves this unique blend of Italian and Central European architectural traditions. We'll explore **the town's architectural gems** during a guided tour.

After the tour, you will have some free time.

Day 7

Street Art, Mansions & the Legacy of Strzeminski

Departure for **Lodz**. We will look more closely at the city's **spectacular street art and ornately decorated palaces** of its former Jewish and German industrialists. Lavishly built, they testify to their owners' status and wealth and showcase many architectural styles: Neo-Renaissance, Neoclassicism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco.

Wladyslaw Strzeminski

Wladyslaw Strzeminski, regarded as a **pioneer of the Constructivist avant-garde** of the 1920s and 1930s, is best known for the modernist theory of "**Unism**." Its principal objective was the materialization of organic forms parallel to those of nature, which he developed together with his wife and fellow artist, Katarzyna Kobro. The **M S1 Museum**, an intriguing spot in Lodz, is home to an interesting collection of modern art. Of particular note is the **Neoplastic Room**, which was designed by Strzeminski. It was a key part of the exhibitions of the International Collection of Modern Art of the "a.r" group.

Day 8

Chopin - The Piano Mind and the Piano Soul

Transfer to Warsaw. The source of the city's pride is its impressive history, which is why it has been called an invincible city. Rising like a phoenix from the ashes after World War II, modern-day Warsaw has been brilliantly rebuilt.

The Blend of Baroque

With the vast majority of pre-war Warsaw destroyed, there are few places where one can better experience the city's former magnificence than at the **Wilanow Palace**. It survived the war almost completely intact and represents the height of Polish Baroque. The 'Polish Versailles' is just one of the many fitting monikers applied to this, one of Poland's most precious monuments.

We will stroll through **Lazienki Park**, admiring its charming Palace on the Island and watching dozens of colorful peacocks strutting around. We will also see the **Statue of Frederic Chopin** before continuing to the **Old Town**, the symbol of Warsaw's rebirth, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Afterward, you'll have some free time.

"Hats Off, Gentlemen! A Genius" (R. Schumann)

Every piece Chopin composed is a gem. Warsaw is where he developed his talent for almost twenty years. *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* reads the biblical passage inscribed on a pillar in the **Church of the Holy Cross**. There, inside an urn, lies Chopin's heart, brought home in 1849 by his sister.

We will say goodbye to Warsaw during a **memorable music concert of some of Chopin's grand compositions**, which have earned him the title of Poet of the Piano. Listening to young artists performing Chopin's études, you will feel the true spirit of Warsaw.

Day 9

Departure

Transfer to Warsaw Airport for your departure flight.

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