

## Poland's East & Lithuania

This tour brings you up close to the realm the **Zubr (European bison)**, in an area of pristine nature where the forest is thickest. Even for the Poles, the northeastern frontier is a fairytale-like melting pot because it is a unique patchwork consisting of Polish, Belarus, Lithuanian, Jewish and Tartar cultures. It represents Poland from a distant past when it was governed under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Though it is off-the-beaten track, the tour is relaxing and serene. The journey passes through some of the most photogenic rural landscapes in Eastern Europe.

**The Best Of Lithuania & Eastern Poland** is our only tour that crosses state borders. However, the borders are almost invisible because Poland and Lithuania are now in the EU. You will visit another exciting country and its capital, **Vilnius**, which has biggest old town in Eastern Europe. This will enable you to compare another old European city with Krakow.

You can be assured that you will be exploring a very unspoiled and safe area under the professional guidance of a StayPoland tour leader.

**Duration:** 7 days

**Availability:** every day

**Departures from:** Warsaw

Price per person

### PRICING

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**No. of people**

**PRICE**

### ITINERARY

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Day 1: Treblinka memorial and orthodox Hajnowka

Morning: After breakfast we set off from Warsaw to the east of Poland. The first stop is **Treblinka**, where we will visit the poignant remains of the second biggest Nazi German extermination camp.

Afternoon: Lunch break in Ciechanowiec, a small town that was inhabited mostly by Jews before World Word II. We then continue our journey to **Hajnowka**, one of the key centres of Orthodox Christian faith in Poland. The town's Holy Trinity Orthodox Church is an excellent example of the contemporary architecture. Evening: We reach **Bialowieza**, a picturesque village located in the middle of **Bialowieza**

**Forest** and famous for its regional wooden architecture.

#### Day 2: Bialowieza National Park and european bison reserve

Early Morning: A walk in the Strictly Protected Area to explore the beauty of untouched nature in a multi-species forest with trees that are more than 400-years old. It is one of the **last primeval forests in Europe**. Afternoon: We continue our walking tour in the Palace Park and see a 19th century Orthodox Church. This is followed by a visit to the famous **European Bison Show Reserve**, where the restituted bison (saved from near extinction) live in semi-wild conditions. Evening: Overnight stay in **Białowieża** and dinner at a fine local restaurant.

#### Day 3: Feast in the Tatar house

Morning: After breakfast, we drive to **Kruszyniany**, a village famous for a minor Tatar community and an agritourism cottage run by the Bogdanowicz family. This village was a highlight in Prince Charles' 2010 trip to Poland. We visit an original wooden mosque and learn about the history of the Tatars in the area. We then participate in a regional cuisine cooking workshop (dishes include pierekaczewnik – pasta layered with beef), followed by a Tatar-Polish lunch. Afternoon: We start our drive to **Lithuania**, passing through the scenic landscapes of Suwalki Region and Dzukija. Evening: On reaching **Vilnius**, the capital of Lithuania, we check into a comfortable centrally located hotel where we will stay for three nights.

#### Day 4: Magnificent Vilnius

Morning: After breakfast, we begin our tour of **Vilnius**, the capital and the largest city in Lithuania. This enchanting city features a number of unique monuments, in particular the Cathedral built on the former site of pagan temple, the famous Gate of Dawn (the pilgrimage point for many generations of Poles), one of the oldest European universities, the Gothic St. Anne's Church, and the classical Town Hall. Afternoon: We wander along the charming, crooked lanes of Vilnius to find lunch and coffee in the idyllic atmosphere of the historical core of the city. Optionally, you can visit the Rasos Cemetery, a touching site and the final resting place of Polish And Lithuanian statesmen. Evening: A dinner of local cuisine in one of the finest restaurants in the Old Town.

#### Day 5: Lithuania through the ages

Morning: We set out to **Trakai**, one of the main tourist destinations in the Baltic States, to visit a 14th century castle built in the middle of a lake and on the largest of three islands. Afternoon: We move on to a 3000 sq m bunker, locate 25 km from Vilnius, where the authentic atmosphere of the socialist world has been recreated. Upon arrival, we will be dressed in special Soviet-style clothes and be guided into the underground museum. After this time travel to the Cold War ear, we return to present day by heading north to the Park of Europe. The exceptional park is located in the geographic centre of the continent and it is an outdoor exhibition ground of the international modern art. Evening: Free time and dinner in Vilnius.

#### Day 6: Peasants vs nobility - a flashback from the past

Morning: After early breakfast, we start our journey back to Poland. Afternoon: We stop in **Białystok** for lunch. This is followed by a visit to a local heritage park in Wasilkow, where we will take part in handicraft

workshops set in the mood of 19th century villages. We then return to Białystok for a lesson in the extraordinary history of this formerly multicultural city. Evening: We arrive in the charming village of **Kiermusy** for a trip back in time to enjoy the sarmatic atmosphere of a traditional Polish court. You will be served dishes made according to old Polish recipes and freshly baked bread. Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 7: A lazy afternoon in a sleepy town

Morning: Free time in **Kiermusy**. Afternoon: On the way back to Warsaw, we stop in **Tykocin**, a fairly small town with a distinctive shtetl character. Today, Tykocin resembles an ethnographic museum with its charming wooden houses, a 17th century synagogue that miraculously survived World War II and a majestic baroque church. Return to Warsaw is scheduled at approx. 16:00.

