

The UNESCO Wooden Architecture & The Polish Countryside

DURATION

8 days

AVAILABILITY

every day

Discover traditional Poland as you travel through charming villages, explore local customs, meet talented artisans, get to know residents, and sample regional specialties.

This tour is ideal for travelers who enjoy wooden architecture, rural landscapes, and traditional village life. Throughout the countryside, you'll discover creative traditions that give each village its own character.

Southern Poland's wooden churches and tserkvas offer a fascinating glimpse into traditional craftsmanship and tell stories of faith and community. Several are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

PRICING

Contact us for pricing: travel@staypoland.com

ITINERARY

Day 1

The Historical Brilliance of Kraków

Arrival in Kraków. Upon arrival in Kraków, you'll be transferred from the airport to your hotel. After some time to freshen up, you'll join a guided tour of Poland's former royal capital. Highlights include **Wawel Cathedral**, the resting place of Polish royalty and other national

figures; **St. Mary's Basilica**, famous for its magnificent altarpiece; and the medieval **Main Market Square**.

We'll explore **Kraków's UNESCO-listed Old Town**, where cobblestone streets lead past Gothic spires, Renaissance facades, and Baroque churches.

Free time.

Day 2

Poland's Most Treasured Wooden Structures

The Kraków region has a rich architectural heritage, with wooden buildings among its most distinctive landmarks.

We head to **St. Leonard's Church in Lipnica Murowana**, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Wooden Churches of Southern Małopolska. Dating back to the 15th century, the church has survived almost unchanged. The interior is decorated with colorful ornamental patterns and figurative paintings.

Threads and Imagination

Our next stop is **Bobowa**, often called Poland's capital of bobbin lace. Its lacemaking tradition was added to Poland's National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2023.

The spread of bobbin lacemaking in Poland is traditionally associated with the Italian-born Queen Bona Sforza, who became Queen of Poland in the 16th century and is credited with helping introduce the craft to Kraków.

Skilled local artisans have made Bobowa known for its intricate handmade bobbin lace. Bobowa is also known for its international lace festivals, which attract lacemakers from across Europe and beyond.

Among the town's accomplished lacemakers is **Ewa Szpila**, who won first prizes at the Polish National Bobbin Lace Competition in 2005, 2006, and 2007, as well as an international speed-lacemaking competition in Finland in 2016. We'll learn how the women of Bobowa shaped the

town's lacemaking history.

Raw Honey - A Gift from Nature

Many cultures considered honey food of the gods. A visit to an apiary in **Stróże** brings us a taste of the sweet life.

Sądecki Bartnik is a family business founded by **Anna and Janusz Kasztelewicz**. We'll learn about the different varieties and traditional uses of honey, the highly organized society of honeybees, and how beehives are built.

We'll have **light** lunch here, with honey cake and mead.

Return transfer to Kraków.

Day 3

Where Artistic Talent Is Abundant...

Pottery Traditions

Pottery has a long tradition in the villages around Łańcut. Some artisans learned the craft from their parents, while others took it up more recently. Both help keep the tradition alive.

At the **pottery center in Medynia Głogowska**, local artisans will introduce us to traditional pottery-making and explain the skill and care that go into each piece.

We'll then dine at the **Potter's Inn**, where we'll try *pierogi* and *proziaki* — traditional soda flatbreads served with jam or cheese.

Flower Garlands of Zalipie

Our exploration continues in **Zalipie**, a village known for its colorful floral painting tradition.

Skilled local women decorate stoves, plates, aprons, fences, wells, and doghouses with colorful hand-painted floral designs. Floral designs also decorate Zalipie's church, school, and other public buildings.

One of Zalipie's best-known painters was **Felicja Curyłowa**, whose former farmstead is now a museum.

At **Dom Malarek (the Painters' House)**, the village's cultural center, we'll learn about the origins of this distinctive local tradition.

Return transfer to Kraków.

Day 4

The UNESCO-Listed Churches and Tserkvas

The UNESCO-listed wooden churches and tserkvas of the Carpathian region reflect centuries of interaction between Eastern and Western Christian traditions.

Our first stop is the **Church of St. Philip and St. James the Apostles in Sękowa**, often described as a pearl of the Low Beskid Mountains. The church received a prestigious Europa Nostra award for its conservation.

Its expansive, steeply pitched roof, squat tower, and decorated interior make it a distinctive example of traditional wooden architecture. The church was also depicted by prominent Polish artists **Józef Mehoffer** and **Stanisław Wyspiański**.

Another fine example of traditional timber craftsmanship is the **Tserkva of St. Paraskeva in Kwiatoń**, known for its colorful interior paintings and ornate iconostasis.

We'll take a break in **Krynica-Zdrój**, a Polish spa town, and enjoy traditional Lemko dishes.

Nearby, we'll visit **Powroźnik**, home to the **Tserkva of St. James the Less, the Apostle**, another remarkable example of Carpathian wooden religious architecture.

Return transfer to Kraków.

Day 5

A Historic Country Residence, Glass Painting and Slivovitsa Liquor

Poland's manor houses, traditionally the homes of the gentry, are more than architectural jewels: they are custodians of the nation's customs and patriotic spirit.

Since the 16th century, these picturesque estates have dotted the Polish countryside, each with its own history and character.

The **manor house in Stryżów** is now a museum and a branch of Wawel Royal Castle. It houses a permanent exhibition titled "Interiors of a Polish Manor House in the 19th Century."

The **open-air museum in Zubrzyca Górna** features traditional architecture from the Orawa region, with buildings spread across spacious, park-like grounds.

In Zubrzyca Górna, we'll admire works by **Stanisław Wyrteł**, a respected local artist known for painting on glass.

Although his work grew out of traditional glass painting, Wyrteł has developed a distinctive, highly regarded style that goes well beyond its conventions. His work has been exhibited throughout Poland and abroad.

The **Stanisław Wyrteł Gallery** is located at **Orawski Dwór** in Zubrzyca Górna.

We'll enjoy a light lunch of flavorful regional dishes.

Magic Matures in Our Barrels!

Finally, we head into a fruit-growing area of Lesser Poland, known for its plum, apple, and cherry orchards.

Krzysztof Maurer has extensive knowledge of fruit growing in the region. His family farm produces organic, cold-pressed fruit and vegetable juices, syrups, wines, and distilled spirits, including slivovitsa, a traditional Polish plum spirit.

The regional **Śliwowica Łącka** is included on Poland's List of Traditional Products.

The family business has participated in Małopolska's Culinary Heritage Network and has won awards for its products.

During the summer, when the outdoor tasting area is open, you can sample the farm's products while enjoying views of the surrounding mountains.

Return transfer to Kraków.

Day 6

Amazing Wood Art, Oscypek and Rafting Expedition

We'll explore **Podhale**, a region known for its strong highlander traditions and distinctive wooden architecture.

Chochółów is a small, picturesque village known for its traditional wooden houses, built with few, if any, nails.

In Chochółów, we'll have the chance to visit the character-filled studio of **Jan Zięder**, a local woodcarver and artist with a *"heavenly soul."* There's something here for everyone.

Zakopane is known for its distinctive Zakopane Style of architecture, associated with **Stanisław Witkiewicz**. Notable examples include **Villa Koliba**, **Villa Pod Jedlami**, and **Jaszczurówka Chapel**, known for its intricate woodwork.

For lunch, we'll enjoy traditional highlander specialties, including *oscypek*, a symbol of the Tatras. This spindle-shaped smoked cheese, made primarily from sheep's milk, holds EU Protected Designation of Origin status. We'll try it with a little cranberry jam.

Free time on **Krupówki Street**, Zakopane's main promenade, where shops and stalls sell regional crafts and food, and traditional Góral music can sometimes be heard in local restaurants.

On our way back to Kraków, we'll enjoy a peaceful two-hour raft trip on the **Dunajec River** through the **Pieniny Mountains**, which stretch along the Polish-Slovak border.

The wooden rafts carry passengers along the winding Dunajec River through a limestone gorge, where cliffs rise as high as 300 meters above the water. The traditional wooden rafts

have changed little over the years and are steered by local highlander raftsmen.

Return transfer to Kraków.

Day 7 — A Day at Your Own Pace

A Day at Your Own Pace

Full day at leisure.

Day 8 — Farewell to Kraków

Farewell to Kraków

A private transfer will take you to the airport for your departure.

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