



The coat of arms

**Kraków** is one of the oldest and largest cities in Poland and definitely one of the most recognized Polish places worldwide. Once the capital city of Polish Kingdom, nowadays it is the capital of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship and an important centre of culture and education.

### The history



Kraków drawing end of XVIIth century

Legends attribute that Kraków has been established by Krak, who built it on the hill, over dragon's nest. Earliest settlement trace back to the 4th century, and chronicles from 8th century mention Kraków as the capitol of Vistulans tribe. At the turn of 10th and 11th century Kraków became a major centre of trade, and in 1038 the capital city of the Kingdom of Poland. Trade and foreign contacts flourished as Kraków entered the Hanseatic league.

After the Piast dynasty extinction and the passing of the throne to Swedish House of Vasa, Kraków lost its importance. The new king wanted his capital to be closer to Sweden, hence he moved the court to Warsaw.



The Wawel castle

After the Poland's partitions, Kraków fell into Austrian hands and became a capital of Galicia Province. Of all the parts of Poland divided, the Austrian annexation was the most benevolent – Kraków could become the "Polish Athens", a centre of culture, art and education. Famous people of that period include the painters Jan Matejko or the Kossak family, writers Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz and Stanisław Wyspiański. Also the march for independence of Józef Piłsudski's troops took place from Kraków.

During the Nazi occupation Kraków was the capital of General Government, under the leadership of Hans Frank. Many relics and monuments of national culture were destroyed and looted. The intellectual elite and the Jew population was dispatched to concentration camps, including the near-by Płaszów and Auschwitz.



Kazimierz district

The Soviet forces liberated the city in early 1945 in almost untouched condition. Kraków's population has quadrupled since the end of the war. The communists to diminish the intellectual independency of Kraków, built the largest steel mill in the suburb of Nowa Huta, just to have a resource of labour class in vicinity to Poland's elites.

For Kraków, the year 1978 proved to be crucial – the city was placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites and the archbishop of Kraków, Karol Wojtyła, was elevated to the papacy as John Paul II.

### The city nowadays

The city is a magnet to tourism, offering wide variety of activities and places to see – being on the prestigious UNESCO historical monument list and a the title of "European Capital of Culture" of the year 2000 speak for itself. But the city is not only antiquity, culture and tourism.

Kraków is a major centre of education. Not only it has the oldest university in Poland (Jagiellonian University) but also 18 other university-level institutions with over 170000 students, and several dozen other schools of higher education.

The city is the key center for service and business activity. With heavy industry that was once introduced by force by the communists gone, the city's industry shifted to light industry and services. There are several multinational companies present in Kraków, including centers serving of IBM, General Electric, and Motorola, along with foreign, mainly British and German-based companies.



The building of Krakow's radio



Flea market on the Old Market

## What to see and do



St. Mary's Basilica on Old Market



The "Lajkonik"  
– one of the symbols of Kraków –  
traditional Tartar rider on a pony



The Cloth Hall by night

The Kraków's Old Town, together with the Wawel castle, St. Mary's Basilica and the Cloth Hall are a must-see points on a trip to Kraków. However, the city's rich offering is more than a checklist of standard tourist sights replicated on every visitor's itinerary. The Old Town itself, build on a chequered plan, remained almost intact since mid. XIIIth century. Its main jewel is the main marketplace with Sukiennice (the Cloth Hall) and gothic St. Mary's Church, with early-renaissance altar by Wit Stworz.

The Wawel castle dominates upon the city and Wisła river. Wawel incorporates the gothic and renaissance elements, with the Sigmuntus Chapel, and is the final resting place of Polish kings and distinguished Poles.

Restored parts of the city walls and the XVth century Barbican circle around the Old Town. The nearby Kazimierz, once a separate town, is Jewish district with preserved synagogues and cemetery.

Kraków has over 30 museums, including the famous for its painting collection National Collections of Art in Wawel or the Museum of Czartoryski Dukes. It is also home for the Jagiellonian University, the first and oldest in Poland and second in middle Europe.

Actors, painters, musicians and poets make the city a magical place in which each moment becomes history. You will especially witness them in the Old Town, while performing or exhibiting their art.

## Retail Projects

The newest shopping centre in Kraków is the Galeria Krakowska by ECE (5 Pawia St.). Located in the very heart of the city on the former coach and train station, it is just one step away from the Old Town. Over quarter thousand shops welcome the visitors on three levels (60.000 sq m GLA).

The Galeria Kazimierz (34 Podgórska St.) located in Kazimierz district, has 36.000 sq m and 160 shops. The GTC project melts into the climate of craft and trade neighborhood of Kazimierz.

Zakopianka (Cefic Polska) is located near the borders of Kraków on a busy highway to Zakopane (62 Zakopańska St.). Offering 65.000 sq m and 65 units and Carrefour anchor, it is the biggest shopping centre in the southern Poland.

Other retail projects include the M1 centre on 67 Pokoju Avenue, a Metro Group project with almost 100 shops and Krokus shopping centre by Apsys Polska (37 Bora-Komorowskiego St.).

In the nearest future Kraków will obtain four new projects. Bonarka City Center (TriGranit & Immoeast) will be built on the spot of an old chemistry plant (Puszkarska St.). The Bronowice Retail Park will include IKEA market and 29.000 sq m GLA gallery. The Solvay Park (WP Intwestment) is being build opposite the Zakopianka centre – its opening is scheduled on September. Also Neinver is planning its Factory Outlet opening this year.



The modern style entrance to  
Galeria Krakowska



Galeria Kazimierz

## Useful Telephones:

City Information Centre – Town Hall Tower (Main Market Square) +48 12 433 73 10

Balice International Airport +48 12 295 58 00

### Kraków Statistics

Population (2006)	756600
City Area	327 sq km
Density of population	2314 per. / sq km
Working population (2004)	500900
Unemployment rate	6,9%
Average monthly gross wages & salaries	2433 PLN
GDP per capita	33103
Commercial companies (2004)	10047

### Kraków Trivia:

- The cost of the Wit Stworz's altar was 2808 florins – amount equaled to annual income of Kraków in XVth century.
- The Mariacki bugle-call is played every noon suddenly stops to commemorate the unsuccessful Tatar attack on the city, during which a bugle player was killed while alarming the city inhabitants.
- Kraków is one of the main destinations for stag parties in EU.