

Poland: Warsaw to Krakow

Bike Vacation Only

Trace the Vistula River along magnificent landscapes of meadows, castles, and medieval towns during VBT's Poland guided tour. Traverse fertile fruit orchards and scenic pasturelands, and for a dramatic change of scenery, cycle the tranquil, sylvan landscapes of the Niepolomice Forest. Shop for fresh picnic ingredients at a farmer's market, explore Gothic castles and ruins, and sample Sandomierski mead brewed in the same place for over 1,000 years. You'll visit charming Old World towns, ride a horse and buggy, and venture underground to merchants' cellars and a UNESCO-acclaimed salt mine. Each day brings a new, unforgettable adventure.

Cultural Highlights

Join your Trip Leaders as they shop for a picnic lunch at a farmers' market.

Ferry across the Vistula River to the ruins of the 16th-century Janowiec Castle.

Learn about the history and folklore of the quaint village of Kazimierz Dolny during a guided tour.

Lunch in a late-Baroque palace, one of the most beautiful residences in Poland.

Visit underground merchant cellars beneath the town square on a walking tour of Sandomierz.

Cycle through fertile orchards in a region sometimes called the "Tuscany of Poland."

Learn the delicious secrets of making a traditional fruit dessert during a private cooking demonstration.

Sample Sandomierski mead, a unique brew produced only in this region for over 1,000 years.

Roll along tranquil paved routes through a sylvan landscape in Niepolomice Forest.

Tour the astonishing Wieliczka Salt Mines, and savor a Polish vodka tasting in one of its underground chambers.

Explore Krakow's Old Town on a guided walking tour

What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain throughout the trip and is ideal for beginning cyclists. There are longer options with slight hills for the more experienced cyclists.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 01:15 - 04:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 63°/48°, May 65°/47°, Jun 70°/52°, Jul 73°/55°, Aug 73°/54°, Sep 64°/47°, Oct 54°/40°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 2.4, May 2.0, Jun 2.6, Jul 3.0, Aug 2.8, Sep 1.8, Oct 1.6

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer to Pulawy

At 8:00 a.m., all guests meet the VBT representative at Warsaw's Mamaison Hotel Le Regina Warsaw (address: Koscielna 12, 00-218 Warsaw; tel: +48 22 5316043) for the transfer to Pulawy (approximately 2.5 hours, including a stop on the way). Please be dressed in cycling clothes and ready for biking. If you are so delayed that you will miss the morning transfer, your transfer to the hotel in Kazimierz Dolny will be at your own expense. We suggest you take a train to Pulawy. Trains from Warsaw Central train station to Pulawy's Miasto station operate every couple of hours and cost approximately 50 Polish zloty (about \$19 USD). From Pulawy's Miasto train station, take a taxi (approximately 30 minutes) to your hotel in Kazimierz Dolny. Cost of the taxi is approximately 65 Polish zloty (about \$25 USD). If you are delayed for any reason, please contact the hotel in Kazimierz Dolny. The hotel staff will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders.

Afterward, you will shuttle to the nearby quaint riverside artist village of Kazimierz Dolny, where you can take time for a late lunch on your own.

Tonight, get to know your fellow travelers over a welcome cocktail, followed by dinner at the hotel.

Hotel: Krol Kazimierz

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 14.5 km (9 miles)

Morning

Warm-Up Ride Pulaway: 14.5 km (9 miles)

What to Expect: This easy warm-up loop ride takes you to a beautiful viewpoint of Poland's most important river, the Vistula. You will also be guided through examples of Polish allotment gardens.

DAY 2: Weekly farmers' market / Ferry across the Vistula River / Janowiec Castle

After breakfast this morning, walk with your trip leaders to the town square, where you'll shop for today's picnic at the weekly farmers' market. You can choose from an array of fresh fruits and vegetables in season and browse numerous stalls of antiques, paintings, and souvenirs. From here, you'll enjoy a scenic ride along the Vistula River to a small ferry, which will transport you to the opposite bank, where you'll cycle to the nearby ruins of the 16th-century Janowiec Castle. After a short visit at your leisure, join your trip leaders for a picnic lunch on the castle's lawn.

The afternoon is yours to experience the beautiful countryside by bike. If you prefer, return to the hotel to enjoy the pool and spa or to explore the charming streets of Kazimierz Dolny. Later, learn more about this quaint village and its history and folklore during a unique tour.

This evening, dinner is on your own. Among your options is a unique, Jewish-themed tavern that serves old-fashioned cooking with a kosher twist.

Hotel: Krol Kazimierz

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 27 – 54.9 km (16.8 – 34.1 miles)

Morning

Kazimierz Dolny to Janowiec Castle: 27 km (16.8 miles)

Afternoon

Janowiec to Kazimierz with Shuttle: 9.4 km (5.8 miles)

Janowiec to Kazimierz: 27.9 km (17.3 miles)

What to Expect: This morning, ride along the Vistula River to a small ferry, where you'll cross to the opposite bank. Then, cycle to the nearby ruins of the 16th-century Janowiec Castle. In the afternoon, you can ride farther through the beautiful countryside or return to the hotel by support vehicle.

DAY 3: Lunch in a Baroque palace / Sandomierz / Underground merchant cellars

This morning, shuttle south to the starting point of today's ride. After a morning spin, you'll stop for lunch at one of the most beautiful residences in Poland, a richly ornamented, late-Baroque palace built in the mid-18th century. After lunch, ride to your hotel, located just outside the 14th-century gates of Opatowska—entrance to the picturesque town of Sandomierz.

Sandomierz' location on the banks of the Vistula River made it a prominent town on the medieval trade route that ran from the Middle East through southern Russia and Ukraine and on into central Europe. During an included walking tour, you'll visit the underground merchant cellars beneath the town square. As your subterranean stroll comes to a close, your local guide will point out several restaurant options for dinner on your own. Afterward, your hotel is an easy stroll away.

Hotel: Hotel Sarmata

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26.6 – 42.8 km (16 – 32,2 miles)

Morning

Maruszow to Czyzow Szlachecki: 26.6 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Czyzow Szlachecki to Sandomierz Hotel Sarmata: 26 km (16.2 miles)

What to Expect: The morning ride will depart from the Skanzen Museum after our visit and follow country roads through scenic pasturelands to the lovely country setting of the Baroque Palace. After lunch at the Baroque Palace, continue cycling on country roads with some rolling hills before arriving to the town of Sandomierz and Hotel Sarmata. There will be some traffic for the last few kilometers prior to arriving to the hotel. The support vehicle will also be available for those wishing to shuttle directly to the hotel after lunch.

DAY 4: The "Tuscany of Poland" / Cooking demonstration and mead tasting

Today's Poland guided tour takes you for a ride through the countryside—where you'll discover why this region is often called the "Tuscany of Poland." As you roll along country roads through fields and past orchards, you'll be astonished by the variety of fruit: cherries, apples, pears, apricots, peaches and more grow in this fertile basin. Return to Sandomierz for lunch on your own and further exploration of this interesting medieval town. This afternoon, you may continue cycling these lovely roads, relax at your hotel, or at a café in town.

This evening, you'll meet the family that owns your hotel for a cooking demonstration. Using fresh fruit from the orchards you passed today, they will demonstrate how to make a traditional dessert from an old family recipe. After dinner, sample a local favorite—Sandomierski mead, traditional mead that has been brewed only in this region of Poland for more than 1,000 years.

Hotel: Hotel Sarmata

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 27.7 km – 49.7 km (17 – 33.4 miles)

Morning

Sandomierz Loop with Skotniki: 27.7 km (17 miles)

Sandomierz Loop with Skotniki and Gorki: 31.4 km (22 miles)

Afternoon

Sandomierz Loop: 18.3 km (11.4 miles)

What to Expect: You'll set out today through a pastoral landscape, on country roads that lead you through fields and past orchards. In the morning, you can choose to ride through rolling hills at the end of the route or take a non-hilly shortcut. If you wish to continue riding, you can add an 18.3 km (11.4 mile) route along lovely roads in the afternoon.

DAY 5: Niepolomice Royal Castle / The Niepolomice Forest / Wieliczka

This morning, you'll shuttle to the beautiful Niepolomice Forest. Its name derives from the Old Polish word *niepolomny*, which meant "impassable," but today you'll ride lovely paved roads through this sylvan landscape. The forest consists of six nature reserves; the largest is home to the European bison.

After your easy ride, you'll arrive in the lovely town of Niepolomice for lunch on your own and the option to visit the Niepolomice Royal Castle. Originally built in 14th-century Gothic style as a hunting lodge, it was later rebuilt in late Renaissance style. This afternoon, you may take a longer riding option from Niepolomice to your hotel, located in the town of Wieliczka.

This evening is yours to explore Wieliczka. Stroll through the beautiful town and its park, and enjoy dinner at one of the local restaurants on your own.

Hotel: Hotel Grand Sal

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 23.3 – 40.8 km (14.5 – 25.4 miles)

Morning

Niepolomice Loop: 23.3 km (14.5 miles)

Afternoon

Niepolomice to Wieliczka: 17.5 km (10.9 miles)

What to Expect: This morning, you'll shuttle to the beautiful Niepolomice Forest for an easy loop ride. After lunch, you may either shuttle back to the hotel in Wieliczka or continue riding.

DAY 6: Riding along the Vistula River / Tyniec Monastery / Farewell dinner

After breakfast you will have a short shuttle to the starting point of today's ride outside of Kraków. Your ride will once again follow the banks of the Vistula river, mostly on a lovely bike path. Your ride takes you past historical monuments of Poland, such as the Wawel Royal Castle and the famous Monastery at "Skalka." The morning ride will end in the shadows of the Tyniec Monastery, situated on a limestone rock with a beautiful view of the river. After the morning ride, you may shuttle to the hotel and enjoy an afternoon at leisure. If you prefer a longer riding option, you may retrace your route back to the starting point of the morning's ride and shuttle to the hotel.

In the evening, your small group gathers for a festive farewell dinner at the Hotel Grand Sal, where you'll dine on the savory creations of the hotel's renowned chef.

Hotel: Hotel Grand Sal

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 18.6 – 37.2 km (12 – 24 miles)

Morning

Vistula River to Tyniec Monastery: 18.6 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Monastery return ride along Vistula River: 18.6 km (24 miles)

What to Expect: This morning's ride takes you to the banks of the Vistula River and the countryside surrounding Krakow. If you wish to continue riding after lunch, you may loop back to the starting point of the ride.

DAY 7: Transfer to Krakow / Krakow walking tour / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

You'll have a later start to your final morning of Poland guided tour. Enjoy the extra time to return to the Salt Mines and attend Mass in the underground cathedral, or simply relax before meeting the group to walk to Wieliczka's bus stop and begin the short journey to Krakow. VBT's guide will meet you in Krakow and escort you on a walking tour of the Old Town.

Your luggage will be waiting for you at the Hotel Amadeus in Krakow after your included walking tour. Your tour will end at approximately 1:00 p.m. at the hotel. You should not plan on flying out of Krakow any earlier than 3:30 p.m. Travel time to the airport from the Hotel Amadeus is approximately 30 minutes. Krakow's main train station is a short 20-minute walk from the Hotel Amadeus or approximately five minutes by taxi.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Hotel Sarmata (Days: 3,4)

This quaint, family-owned hotel has all the charm of a stylish Polish inn and is surrounded by a large park with an inviting summer garden. It is ideally situated just about 650 feet (200 meters) from the Opatowska Gate, the entrance to the city's Old Town. Hotel Sarmata features a sauna and a Jacuzzi. All of its spacious rooms have free WiFi, LCD TV, and a safe box sized to hold a laptop. Guests can relax at an onsite wine bar with a selection of more than 150 wines. Front desk staff is available 24 hours a day and can arrange laundry and ironing service.

Krol Kazimierz (Days: 1,2)

The charming Hotel Krol Kazimierz was renovated from a 17th-century granary. It offers a prime location in the heart of Kazimierz Dolny, next to the riverside promenade and just a half-mile (0.8 km) from the town's market square. References to local history, such as the replica of the town's famous well, add to its Old World ambiance. While here, enjoy the view from a magnificent patio, play a game of bowling or billiards, and perhaps take advantage of the spa center, with its swimming pool and Turkish and Finnish saunas. Savor Polish and international cuisine in the hotel's Ester restaurant, and dance the night away in the hotel's nightclub. Each of the 115 rooms is tastefully decorated and offers all the comforts of a modern hotel, including air conditioning, LCD TV, free WiFi, a minibar, in-room safe, and private bath with

shower.

Hotel Grand Sal (Days: 5,6)

The Hotel Grand Sal, located in the picturesque St. Kinga Park, occupies an impeccably renovated structure that once housed the Salt Baths of the Wieliczka Salt Mines. At once lavish and cozy, the building dates to the turn of the 20th century and was refurbished to mirror the detail and style reflected in archival materials. Its interiors emphasize the hotel's intimate connection with the mines. Its stylized furnishings and high-quality fabric create a warm and refined atmosphere. During your stay, you will have easy access to the adjacent Mikolaj Danilowicz entrance to the mine shaft. Each room features climate control, satellite TV, telephone, safe, free WiFi, hair dryer, cosmetics made from Wieliczka salt, and a private bath with shower.