

Kraków



Kraków, which celebrated its 750th birthday in 2007, is by far Poland's biggest drawcard, and it's immediately apparent why. As the royal capital for 500 years, the city was able to absorb much history and talent over the centuries and is today a treasure trove of Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Miraculously, this jewellery box emerged largely intact after WWII. As a result, no other city in Poland can boast so many historic buildings and monuments or such a vast collection of artworks, with some 2.3 million registered.

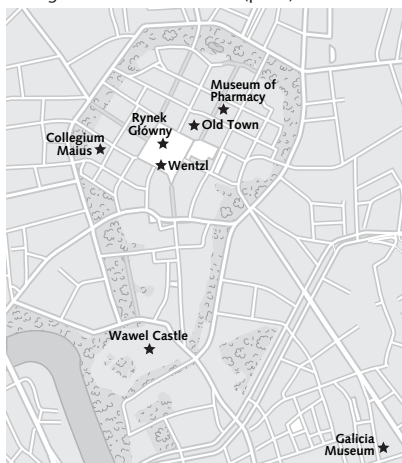
Wawel Castle is Kraków's centrepiece and a must-see, but most visitors will find themselves drawn to the Old Town, with its soaring Gothic churches and gargantuan Rynek Główny (Main Market Sq), the largest in the nation. Just outside the Old Town lies the former Jewish quarter Kazimierz, its silent synagogues reflecting the tragedy of the recent past.

Kraków is well endowed with attractions and diversions of a more modern variety, with hundreds of restaurants, bars and music clubs tucked away down its cellars and narrow alleyways. Though hotel prices are above the national average, and visitor numbers are very high in summer, this vibrant, cosmopolitan city is an essential part of any visit to Poland.

Give yourself at least several days or even a full week to do Kraków justice. This is not a place to rush through; the longer you stay, the more captivating you'll find it. And without even trying, you'll discover something pretty, old, curious or tasty around every corner.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoying an easy ride through Polish history at magnificent **Wawel Castle** (p169)
- Eyeballing odd elixirs and remedies at the wonderful **Museum of Pharmacy** (p184)
- Relaxing to the clip-clop of hooves on a tour of the Old Town from the back of a **horse-driven carriage** (p195)
- Getting down and, well, salty at the unique **Wieliczka Salt Mine** (p192)
- Meeting Copernicus face to face at the **Collegium Maius** (p183)
- Dining out on the views from and the fabulous cuisine at **Wentzl** (p202)
- Getting your head and feet around **Rynek Główny** (p172), Europe's largest medieval market square
- Witnessing both the sad past and hopeful future of Jewish Kraków at the **Galicia Museum** (p188) in Kazimierz



■ POPULATION: 752,700

■ AREA: 327 SQ KM

HISTORY

The first traces of Kraków's existence date from around the 7th century, but the earliest written record of the town dates from 966, when a Sephardic Jewish merchant from Cordova called Abraham ben Jacob (Ibrahim ibn Yaqub) visited and referred to the town in his account as a trade centre called Krakwa.

In 1000 Kraków was made a bishopric and 38 years later the capital of the Piast kingdom. Wawel Castle and several churches were built in the 11th century and the town, which had sprung up initially around Wawel Hill, grew in size and power.

The Tatars burned Kraków almost to the ground in 1241 but by 1257 the new town's centre had been set on a grid pattern, with a large market square in the middle.

Kraków rose to new prominence in 1364 when King Kazimierz Wielki, a generous patron of art and scholarship, founded the Kraków Academy, what would later be called Jagiellonian University, the second university in central Europe after the University of Prague founded four years earlier.

Kraków's economic and cultural boom led to a golden age of expansion in the 15th and 16th centuries. Kraków became a member of the Hanseatic League, which attracted craftspeople. Learning and science prospered – Nicolaus Copernicus, who would later develop his heliocentric view of the universe, studied here in the 1490s – and the population passed the 30,000 mark.

But all was not well in the royal city. In 1596 King Zygmunt III moved the capital to Warsaw, although Kraków remained the place of coronations and burials. The Swedish invasions, beginning in 1655, accelerated the decline; by the end of the following century the city's population had been reduced to 10,000. In the Third Partition of Poland (1795), Kraków was made part of the Austrian province of Galicia.

The city enjoyed reasonable cultural and political freedom under the Austrian landlords; by the close of the 19th century it had become a major centre for Polish culture and the spiritual capital of a country that officially no longer existed. The avant-garde artistic and literary movement known as *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland) was born here in the 1890s, and it was here that a national independence movement originated. The latter would go

on to spawn the Polish Legions under the command of Józef Piłsudski.

By the outbreak of WWII the city had 260,000 inhabitants, 65,000 of whom were Jews. During the war, Kraków, like all other Polish cities, saw its Jewish citizens herded into a ghetto and transported to Nazi work and extermination camps; most of them would never be seen again. The city was thoroughly looted by Nazis but didn't experience major combat or bombings. As such, Kraków is virtually the only large Polish city that has retained its old architecture and appearance.

After the war, the communist government moved quickly to open a huge steelworks at the newly created suburb of Nowa Huta, just 10km east of the Old Town, in a bid to break the traditional intellectual and religious framework of the city. The social engineering proved less successful than its unanticipated by-product – ecological disaster. Monuments that had managed to survive invasions by the Tatars, Swedes and Nazis have been gradually eaten away by acid rain and toxic gas.

With the creation of Nowa Huta and other new suburbs after WWII, Kraków trebled in size to become the country's third-largest city, after Warsaw and Łódź. The historic core, though, has changed little and continues to be the political, administrative and cultural centre of the city.

ORIENTATION

Virtually everything you'll need to see or do is conveniently squeezed into the compact Old Town, measuring roughly 800m by 1200m and encircled by Planty, a narrow parkland that was once a moat. At the centre of the Old Town is Rynek Główny (Main Market Sq) while at its southern tip sits Wawel Hill and its castle. Further south stretches the district of Kazimierz.

The bus and train stations sit next to one another just beyond the northeastern border of the Old Town; from here it's about 600m to Rynek Główny. John Paul II International Airport is at Balice, 11km west of the city centre.

Maps

The free map from the tourist offices should be sufficient for a short visit. If you want something more detailed, one of the best is the 1:20,000 scale *Kraków Plan Miasta* (7.90zł), which is published by Copernicus, and includes a 1:10,000 scale map of the Old Town.

FOCUSING ON KRAKÓW'S JEWISH LEGACY

A photojournalist by trade, Chris Schwarz opened the Galicia Museum (see p188) in 2004. Chris was born in the UK in 1948 and moved to Poland permanently in 2003. Sadly, he died of cancer three weeks after this interview with author Steve Fallon took place in Kraków.

Nice Jewish lad? I see that question as irrelevant but I get asked it a lot. My father was a secular Jew and my mother a Christian. That means I would have been Jewish enough for the camps but not Jewish enough for the rabbis.

Cameraman to curator – how did that happen? I was shooting photos for a book on the remains of eight centuries of Jewish life in Poland. The text was slow in coming in and my photos were not being seen so I decided to open a museum. Kazimierz felt saturated with centuries of Jewish history without having any Jews. The location felt right as did the timing.

Why's that? Polish intellectuals now think it is very important to keep Jewish culture alive, to remind the country of what it has lost and what it still retains. Cemeteries are being restored and synagogues renovated, Yiddish is being taught again. Europe's biggest Jewish festival takes place in Kazimierz in June. There's more going on in Jewish Kraków right now than in all of Jewish Britain.

What's your take on ul Szeroka, with its Jewish-themed restaurants, faux shop signs and klezmer (Jewish folk music) music? Tribute or Disneyland? Definitely the former. Disneyland presupposes a lot of kitsch. There are about five cafés and restaurants with a strong Jewish theme; at least they acknowledge this was a Jewish neighbourhood. Some people are offended that there are no Jews performing in the klezmer bands. I see the bands as paying homage to the art form and culture.

But no Jews at all? Very few Jews are actually involved in this revival. The reasons are obvious. The officially quoted figure for the number of Jews in Kraków is just under 200 and the average age is very old. I suspect there are another 100 who don't want to take part, just as many who don't want to know and as many as 1000 who don't know [they are Jewish].

So the future is in 'Schindler tourism'? The government just has to rethink Auschwitz. The way it works right now is really horrible. In my opinion there should be no guiding on the grounds. Instead the background should be provided in a hut by a guide and then visitors left to walk around quietly, without cameras and without mobile phones.

A place of reverence? That and more. Auschwitz has moral authority. This should be used to expose the horrors going on around us in the rest of the world. We must use this past to move forward. I can think of no better way to honour the Jews murdered here.

Demart's *Katowice + 3* (8zł) is similar but also has thumbnail maps of certain suburbs, including Wieliczka.

INFORMATION Bookshops

Austeria (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6889; High Synagogue, ul Józefa 38; ☎ 9am-7pm) Best collection of Jewish-themed books and Judaica in Kraków.

EMPIK (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 4577; www.empik.com; Rynek Główny 5; ☎ 9am-10pm) Best for newspapers and magazines.

Księgarnia Hetmańska (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 2453; Rynek Główny 17; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) Impressive selection of English-language books on Polish history and culture.

Księgarnia Pod Globusem (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 0445; ul Długa 1; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) All kinds of maps and travel guides.

Massolit Books & Café (Map p170; ☎ 012 432 4150; www.massolit.com; ul Felicjanek 4; ☎ 10am-8pm Sun-Thu 10am-9pm Fri & Sat) City's best; sells new and secondhand English-language fiction and nonfiction, including Polish history and literature in translation.

Sklep Podróżnika (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1485; ul Jagiellońska 6; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Sells a wide selection of regional and city maps, as well as Lonely Planet titles.

Cultural Centres

British Council (Map p170; ☎ 012 428 5932; 1st fl, Rynek Główny 6; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri)



INFORMATION		Monastery of the Camaldolese	
Apteka 24.....	1 F2	Monks.....	10 A4
Medicina.....	2 D3	National Museum in Kraków	
Medicover.....	3 E2	(Main Building).....	11 D3
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		New Jewish Cemetery.....	12 E3
Anikino.....	4 F2	Nimfa.....	(see 8)
Church of the		Oskar Schindler's Enamelware	
Premonstratensian Nuns.....	(see 17)	Factory.....	13 E4
Fantasy Park.....	(see 32)	Park Wodny.....	14 F1
Former Plaszów Concentration		Pharmacy Under the Eagle.....	(see 16)
Camp.....	5 F4	Piłsudski Mound.....	15 A2
International school of		Plac Bohaterów Getta.....	16 E4
Polish Language &		Premonstratensian Convent in	
Culture.....	6 C1	Zwierzyniec.....	17 D3
Kościszczka Mound.....	7 C3	Zoological Gardens.....	18 A3
Kraków Booze Cruise.....	8 D3	SLEEPING ☹	
Manggha Centre of		Camping Clepardia.....	19 E1
Japanese Art & Technology....	9 D3	Camping Nr 46 Smok.....	20 B3
		Dizzy Daisy.....	21 E2
		Hotel Petrus.....	22 C4
		Hotel Studencki Zaczek.....	23 D3
		Oleandry YHA Hostel.....	24 D2
		Stranger Hostel.....	25 D2
		Trzy Kafki.....	26 D2
		U Pana Cogito.....	27 D3
		ENTERTAINMENT ☹	
		Kino Mikro.....	28 D2
		Kino Paradox.....	29 D2
		Rotunda Cultural Centre.....	30 D3
		Scena STU.....	31 D3
		SHOPPING ☹	
		Kraków Plaza.....	32 F3
		Starmach Gallery.....	33 E4
		TRANSPORT	
		Hertz.....	34 D3

French Institute (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 5350; ul Stolarska 15; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri)

Goethe Institute (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 6902; Rynek Główny 20; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-3pm Fri)

International Cultural Centre (Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury; Map p170; ☎ 012 424 2899; www.mck.krakow.pl; Rynek Główny 25; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) Promotes European culture through exhibits and research.

Italian Institute of Culture (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 8943; ul Grodzka 49; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon, 9am-4.30pm Tue-Fri)

Judaica Foundation (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6449; www.judaica.pl; ul Meiselsa 17; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun)

Internet Access

Cafe Internet e-network (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 2394; ul Sienna 14; per hr 4zł; ☎ 24hr)

Greenland Internet Café (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 0319; ul Floriańska 30; per hr 3zł; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Internet Café Hetmańska (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1106; ul Bracka 4; per hr 4zł; ☎ 24hr)

Internet Klub Garinet (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 2233; ul Floriańska 18; per hr 4zł; ☎ 9am-midnight) The pick of the crop near the main square.

Klub Internetowy Pl@net (Map p170; ☎ 012 292 7685; Rynek Główny 24; 3zł; ☎ 10am-10pm) Right on the main square.

Labirynt Internet Art Klub (Map p187; ☎ 012 292 0514; ul Józefa 15; per hr 3,50zł; ☎ 10am-10pm) In Kazimierz.

Internet Resources

City of Kraków (www.krakow.pl) Good general information direct from city hall.

Cracow Life (www.cracow-life.com) Heaps of information on eating, drinking and entertainment.

Explore Krakow (www.explore-krakow.com) Information on sights and activities as well as accommodation.

Krakow Info (www.krakow-info.com) An excellent source for news and events.

Krakow Post (www.krakowpost.com) New English-language weekly online, with local news, interviews, features and listings.

Kraków Card

The excellent-value **Kraków Card** (www.krakowcard.com; 2-/3-day 50/65zł), available from tourist offices, travel agencies and hotels, offers free entry to 32 museums (though not those on Wawel Hill), unlimited travel on public transport, and discounts on organised tours and at certain restaurants.

Medical Services

The **US Consulate Department of Citizen Services** (☎ 012 429 6655) can provide a list of English-speaking doctors. Pharmacies are everywhere – the city counts more than 200 of them.

Apteka 24 (Map p165; ☎ 012 411 0126; ul Mogińska 21) This 24-hour pharmacy is east of the Old Town.

Dent America (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 8948; www.dent.america.pl; 2nd fl, Plac Szczepański 3) A Polish-American dental clinic.

Falck (Map p170; ☎ 96 75; www.falck.pl) Attends house calls and has its own ambulance service.

Medicover (Map p165; ☎ 012 616 1000; www.medicover.pl; ul Rakowicka 7) Has English-speaking specialist doctors and does lab tests.

Medicina (Map p165; ☎ 012 266 9665; www.medicina.pl; ul Barska 12) Oldest private health-care provider in Kraków.

Laundry

Most hostels now have washing machines (and sometimes even dryers) that you can use for free.

Betty Clean (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 0848; ul Zwierzyniecka 6; ☎ 7.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3.30pm

Sat) Branch of a chain of laundries, near southeastern border of Old Town.

Money

Kantors (private currency-exchange offices) and ATMs can be found around the centre. It's worth noting that many *kantors* close on Sunday, and areas near Rynek Główny and the main train station offer poor exchange rates.

Bank Pekao (Map p170; Rynek Główny 31; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) Travellers cheques are probably best changed here. Cash advances on Visa and MasterCard are also obtainable here, either from the cashier inside or the ATM outside.

Post

Main post office (Map p170; ul Westerplatte 20; ☎ 7.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat)

Post office (Map p170; ul Lubicz 4; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat)

Telephone

MOBILE PHONES

Orange (Map p170; ☎ 012 432 6700; www.orange.pl; ul Wielopole 2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat)

Plus GSM (Map p187; ☎ 012 422 5971; www.plusgsm.pl; ul Krakowska 4; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat)

Tourist Information

Małopolska Region Tourism Information Centre (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 7706; www.mcit.pl; Rynek Główny 1/3; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Oct-Mar) Regional tourist office inside Cloth Hall.

Tourist offices Rynek Główny (Map p170; ☎ 012 433 7310; www.karnet.krakow2000.pl; Town Hall Tower, Rynek Główny; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Mar) Old Town (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 7787; ul Św Jana 2; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat) Planty (Map p170; ☎ 012 432 0110; ul Szpitalna 25; ☎ 9am-7pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm

FOLLOW YOUR NOSE

Kraków is a wonderful city to explore on your own. The streets are well-marked, the buses and trams easy to negotiate, and the natives friendly. This book is designed to whet your appetite and to guide you when you arrive; by all means visit many of the sites and the museums listed in this chapter – they're part of the Kraków package. But at the risk of shooting ourselves in the feet and fingers, we'd like to remind you that this is a guidebook and not a handbook. Leave it in your room or backpack from time to time, and wander outside to make your own discoveries. Want to see a Kazimierz with real residents? Head south over the bridge to working-class Podgórze. Street fashion in action? Jump on tram 1 or 7 heading east to the Kraków Plaza, the city's biggest shopping mall. Or just go blindly into that great maze of streets and rail lines beyond the Old Town, poking your head into little shops, joining in a game of *piłka nożna* (football) in a park or having a beer in a local *piwnica* (pub). You've arrived in Kraków – for real.

,Oct-Apr) Wyspiański 2000 Pavilion (Map p170; ☎ 012 616 1886; Wyspiański 2000 Pavilion, Plac Wszystkich Świętych 2; ☎ 10am-8pm) Kazimierz (Map p187; ☎ 012 422 0471; ul Józefa 7; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Tourist information offices in five key locations.

Travel Agencies

Orbis Travel (Map p170; ☎ 012 619 2459; www.orbis.pl; Rynek Główny 41; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) Sells transportation tickets (air, train, ferry and organises tours).

Travel Partner (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 51 65; www.travelpartner.pl; ul Św Tomasza 4; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Cheap international air tickets.

Polish Travel Adventure (☎ 0693 648 525, 0605 231 923; www.cracow.tourism.pl) Well-regarded agency without address organises excursions and adventure travel in and out of Kraków.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Kraków is generally a safe city for travellers, although as a major tourist hot spot it has its fair share of pickpockets; be vigilant in crowded public areas.

If you're staying in the centre of the Old Town, especially near the main square, you may experience late-night noise from the area's many restaurants, bars and clubs; ask for a room at the back if this is going to be an issue. In summer, the large numbers of tourists in town can be a little overwhelming and mean long queues for top sights such as Wawel Castle and scarce seating in the more popular restaurants. Keep an eye out for the many horse-driven carriages that cart tourists around the Old Town, including along the pedestrianised streets.

Be aware that if carrying a large suitcase or backpack on a Kraków city bus you must buy an extra ticket (2.50zł).

SIGHTS

Wawel

The very symbol of the nation, the hilltop **Wawel** (*vah-vel*; www.wawel.krakow.pl) is more steeped in Polish history than any other place in the country. It was the seat of the kings for over 500 years from the early days of the Polish state, and even after the centre of power moved to Warsaw in the late 16th century, it retained much of its symbolic power. Today it is the silent guardian of a millennium of Polish history and the most visited site in the country.

The way to Wawel Hill begins at the southern end of ul Kanonicza, from where a lane leads uphill. Past the equestrian statue of Tadeusz Kościuszko, it turns to the left, leading to a vast open central square surrounded by several buildings, of which the cathedral and the castle are the major attractions.

Plan on at least four hours up here if you want anything more than just a glance over the place and be aware of the different opening hours of all the attractions. In summer, it's best to come early as there may be long queues for tickets later in the day. Alternatively, you can prebook your tickets (16zł) by phoning at least one day ahead by phone or in person at the **Tourist Service Office** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1697; Bldg 9, Wawel 5; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon, Wed & Thu, 9am-4pm Thu-Sun). If possible, avoid weekends, when Wawel is besieged by visitors.

In the southwestern part of the complex you'll find a **visitors centre** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 5155; ☎ 9am-6pm) as well as a gift shop, post office and café with outside terrace.

WAWEL CATHEDRAL

This **cathedral** (Katedra Wawelska; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 2643; Wawel 3; royal tombs & bell tower adult/concession 10/5zł; ☎ 9am-4pm or 5.15pm Mon-Sat, 12.15-4pm or 5.15pm Sun) has witnessed most of the coronations, funerals and entombments of Poland's monarchs and strongmen over the centuries, and wandering around the grandiose funerary monuments and royal sarcophagi is like a fast-forward tour through Polish history. Many outstanding artists have left behind a wealth of magnificent works of art. The cathedral is both an extraordinary artistic achievement and Poland's spiritual sanctuary.

The building you see is the third church on this site, consecrated in 1364. The original cathedral was founded sometime after the turn of the first millennium by King Bolesław Chrobry and was replaced with

a larger Romanesque construction around 1140. When it burned down in 1305, only the Crypt of St Leonard survived.

The present-day cathedral is basically a Gothic structure, but chapels in different styles were built around it later. Before you enter, note the massive iron door and, hanging on a chain to the left, huge prehistoric animal bones. They are believed to have magical powers; as long as they are here, the cathedral will remain. The bones were excavated on the grounds at the start of the 20th century.

Once inside, you'll get lost in a maze of sarcophagi, tombstones and altarpieces scattered throughout the nave, chancel and ambulatory. Among a score of chapels, a highlight is the **Holy Cross Chapel** (Kaplica Świętokrzyska) in the southwestern corner of the church (to the right as you enter). It is distinguished by the unique 15th-century Byzantine frescoes and the red marble sarcophagus (1492) in the corner by Veit Stoss. The showpiece chapel, however, is the **Sigismund Chapel** (Kaplica Zygmunowska) up the aisle and on the southern wall. It is often referred to as 'the most beautiful Renaissance chapel north of the Alps' and is recognisable by its gilded dome from the outside. Diagonally opposite is the **Tomb of St Queen Hedwig** (Sarkofag Św Królowej Jadwigi), a much beloved and humble 14th-century monarch whose unpretentious wooden coronation regalia are on display nearby.

In the centre of the cathedral stands the flamboyant Baroque **Shrine of St Stanislaus** (Konfesja Św Stanisława), dedicated to the bishop of Kraków, who was canonised in 1253 and is now the patron saint of Poland. The silver sarcophagus, adorned with 12 relief scenes from the saint's life, was made in Gdańsk between 1663 and 1691; note the engravings on the inside of the ornamented canopy erected about 40 years later.

Ascend the tower accessible through the sacristy via 70 steps to see the **Sigismund Bell** (Dzwon Zygmunta). Cast in 1520, it's 2m high and 2.5m in diameter, and weighs 11 tonnes, making it the largest historic bell in Poland. Its clapper weighs 350kg, and eight strong men are needed to ring the bell, which happens only on the most important church holidays and for significant state events. The views from here are worth the climb.

Back down in the nave, descend from the left-hand aisle to the **Crypt of St Leonard**, the only

remnant of the 12th-century Romanesque cathedral extant. Follow through and you will get to the **Royal Crypts** (Groby Królewskie) where, along with kings such as Jan III Sobieski, many national heroes and leaders, including Tadeusz Kościuszko, Józef Piłsudski and WWII General Władysław Sikorski, are buried in a half-dozen chambers.

Diagonally opposite the cathedral is the **Wawel Cathedral Museum** (Muzeum Katedralne; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 2643; adult/concession 5/2zł; ☎ 10am-3pm Tue-Sun), a treasury of historical and religious objects from the cathedral. There are plenty of exhibits, including church plate and royal funerary regalia, but not a single crown. They were all stolen from the treasury by the Prussians in 1795 and reputedly melted down.

WAWEL CASTLE

The political and cultural centre of Poland until the end of the 16th century, **Wawel Royal Castle** (Zamek Królewski na Wawelu; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 5155; Wawel 5; ☎ grounds 6am-dusk) is, like the cathedral, the very symbol of Poland's national identity.

The original, rather small residence was built in the early 11th century by King Bolesław Chrobry beside the chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary (known as the Rotunda of SS Felix and Adactus). King Kazimierz Wielki turned it into a formidable Gothic castle, but when it burned down in 1499, King Zygmunt Stary commissioned a new residence. Within 30 years a splendid Renaissance palace, designed by Italian architects, was in place. Despite further extensions and alterations, the three-storey Renaissance structure, complete with a courtyard arcaded on three sides, has been preserved to this day.

Repeatedly sacked and vandalised by the Swedish and Prussian armies, the castle was occupied after the Third Partition by the Austrians, who intended to make Wawel a citadel. Their plan included turning the castle into barracks, and the cathedral into a garrison church, moving the royal tombs elsewhere. They never got that far but they did turn the royal kitchen and coach house into a military hospital and raze two churches standing at the outer courtyard to make room for a parade ground. They also enveloped the whole hill with a new ring of massive brick walls, largely ruining the original Gothic fortifications.

The castle was recovered by Poles after WWI and the restoration began immediately and continued up until the outbreak of WWII. The work was resumed after the war and has been able to recover a good deal of the castle's earlier external form and its interior decoration.

The castle is now a museum containing five separate sections, each requiring a different ticket that is valid for a specific time. There's a limited daily quota of tickets for some parts, so arrive early if you want to see everything or phone ahead to reserve. You will need a ticket even on 'free' days.

The **Royal Chambers** (Komnaty Królewskie; adult/concession 15/8zł, free Mon Apr-Oct, Sun Nov-Mar; ☎ 9.30am-1pm Mon, 9.30am-5pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am-4pm Wed & Thu, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun), also known as the State Rooms, is the largest and most impressive exhibition; the entrance is in the southeastern corner of the courtyard, from where you'll ascend to the 2nd floor. Proceed through the apparently never-ending chain of two-dozen rooms and chambers of the castle, restored in their original Renaissance and early Baroque style and crammed with period furnishings, paintings, tapestries and works of art.

The two biggest (and the most spectacular) interiors are on the 2nd floor. The **Hall of Senators**, which was originally used for senate sessions, court ceremonies, balls and theatre performances, houses a magnificent series of six 16th-century Arras tapestries following the story of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel or Noah (they are rotated periodically). The **Hall of Deputies** has a fantastic coffered ceiling with 30 individually carved and painted wooden heads staring back at you. Meant to illustrate the life cycle of man, from birth to death, they are all that have survived from a total of 194 heads, which were carved in around 1535 by Sebastian Tauerbach. There's also a tapestry with the Polish insignia dating from 1560.

Enter the **Royal Private Apartments** (Prywatne Apartamenty Królewskie; adult/concession 20/15zł; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am-4pm Wed & Thu, 11am-6pm Sun) at the middle of the eastern side of the courtyard, and go up marble steps to the 1st floor. In a way, it's a continuation of the previous trip, but it leads through somewhat more intimate interiors, thus giving an insight into how the monarchs and their families once lived. The dozen or so apartments are visited with a guide, which is included in the ticket



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price. English-language tours depart at least once an hour. As in the Royal Chambers, you'll see plenty of magnificent old tapestries, mostly northern French and Flemish, hanging on the walls. The collection, largely assembled by

King Zygmunt August, once numbered 360 pieces, but only 138 survive. Even so, this is probably the largest collection of its kind in Europe, and one of Wawel's most precious possessions. Other highlights include the so-called **Hen's Foot**, Jadwiga's gemlike chapel

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in the northeast tower, and the sumptuous Gdańsk-made furniture in the **Alchemy Room** and annexe. The collection includes a 400kg cupboard.

The **Crown Treasury & Armoury** (Skarbiec Korony i Zbrojownia; adult/concession 15/8zł, free Mon Apr–Oct, Sun Nov–Mar; ☎ 9.30am–1pm Mon, 9.30am–5pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am–4pm Wed & Thu, 11am–6pm Sat & Sun) are housed in vaulted Gothic rooms surviving from the 14th-century castle on the ground floor of the northeastern part of the castle. The most famous object in the treasury is the *Szczerbiec*, or ‘Jagged Sword’ dating from the mid-13th century, which was used at all Polish coronations from 1320 onwards. Nearby are the shoes worn by King Zygmunt August at his coronation in 1530. The adjacent armoury features a collection of old weapons from various epochs – from crossbows, swords, lances and halberds from the 15th to 17th centuries to muskets, rifles, pistols and cannon from the 18th century onward.

The **Oriental Art Exhibition** (Wystawa Sztuka Wschodu; adult/concession 7/4zł; ☎ 9.30am–1pm Mon, 9.30am–5pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am–4pm Wed & Thu, 11am–6pm Sat & Sun) features a collection of 17th-century Turkish banners and weaponry, captured after the Battle of Vienna, displayed along with a variety of old Persian carpets, Chinese and Japanese ceramics, and other Asian antiques. The entrance is from the northwestern corner of the courtyard.

Lost Wawel (Wawel Zaginiony; adult/concession 7/4zł; ☎ 9.30am–5pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am–4pm Wed & Thu, 11am–6pm Sat & Sun), which was being renovated during our last visit, is an exhibition that’s accommodated in the old royal kitchen. Along with the remnants of the late-10th-century Rotunda of SS Felix and Adauctus, which is reputedly the first church in Poland, you can see various archaeological finds (including colourful old ceramic tiles from the castle’s stoves), as well as models of the previous Wawel churches, the foundations of which can still be seen in the central courtyard. The entrance to the exhibition is from the outer courtyard to the right of the Tourist Service Office.

DRAGON’S DEN

If you’ve had enough of high art and Baroque furnishings, complete your Wawel trip with a visit to the hokey **Dragon’s Den** (Smocza Jama; Map p170; admission 3zł; ☎ 10am–6pm Jun–Aug, 10am–5pm Apr, May, Sep & Oct), former home of the legendary Wawel Dragon (Smok Wawelski), and an easy way to get down from the hill. The entrance

to the cave is next to the **Thieves’ Tower** (Baszta Żłodzijska) at the southwestern end of the complex. From here you’ll get a good panorama over the Vistula River and the suburbs further west, including the Manggha Centre of Japanese Art & Technology (p185) on the opposite bank of the river, and the Kościusko Mound (p189) far off on the horizon.

After you buy your ticket from a coin-operated machine at the entrance, you descend 130 steps into the cave, then stumble some 70m through its damp interior and emerge onto the bank of the Vistula next to a distinctive fire-spitting **bronze dragon**, the work of contemporary sculptor Bronisław Chromy.

Old Town

The layout of the Old Town was drawn up in the mid-13th century after devastation caused by the Tatar invasions and has survived more or less in its original form. The construction of the fortifications began in the 13th century, and it took almost two centuries to envelop the town with a powerful, 3km-long chain of double defensive walls complete with 47 towers and eight main entrance gates as well as a wide moat.

When this defence system became obsolete at the beginning of the 19th century it was demolished, except for a small section to the north. The moat was filled up and a ring-shaped park called Planty was laid out on the site, surrounding the footprint-shaped Old Town with parkland.

The Old Town has a surfeit of historical monuments, including a dozen museums and some 20 of the city’s 120 churches – not to mention scores of other important sights.

The Old Town, which has been included on Unesco’s World Heritage List since 1978, is pretty much car-free and the tram crosses it only once (along ul Dominikańska and ul Franciszkańska 150m south of Rynek Główny), so you can stroll largely undisturbed by traffic noise and pollution.

RYNEK GŁÓWNY

Measuring 200m by 200m, Kraków’s **Rynek Główny** (Map p170; Main Market Sq) is the largest medieval town square in Europe and one of the finest urban designs of its kind. Its layout, based on that of a *castrum* (Roman military camp), was drawn up in 1257 and has

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been retained to this day, though the buildings have changed substantially over the centuries. Most of them now look neoclassical, but don’t let the façades confuse you – the basic structures are much older, as can be seen by their doorways, architectural details and interiors. The cellars date from medieval times.

Dominating the square is the centrally positioned **Cloth Hall** (Sukiennice; Map p170; Rynek Główny 1), once the centre of Kraków’s medieval rag trade. It was formed in the early 14th century when a roof was put over two rows of stalls and extended into a 108m-long Gothic structure in the second half of the 14th century. The hall was rebuilt in Renaissance style after a fire in 1555; the arcades were added in the late 19th century. The ground floor is still a trading centre but now one for crafts and souvenirs, while the upper floor is taken over by the **Małopolska Contemporary Art Collection** (Małopolskie Kolekcje Sztuki Nowoczesnej; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1166; www.moma.pl in Polish; adult/concession 10/5zł; ☎ 11am–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun), replacing the **Gallery of 19th-Century Polish Painting** (Galeria Sztuki Polskiej XX Wieku). That collection, with works by Józef Chełmoński, Jacek Malczewski, Aleksander Gierymski and the leader of monumental historic painting, Jan Matejko, has been moved to the Royal Castle at Niepołomice, 20km east of Kraków, for three years while Cloth Hall is renovated.

The **Town Hall Tower** (Wieża Ratuszowa; Map p170; ☎ 012 619 2320; adult/concession/family 6/4/12zł; ☎ 10.30am–6pm May–Oct), southwest of the Cloth Hall, is all that is left of the 15th-century town hall that was dismantled in the 1820s. The 70m-tall tower can be climbed in summer.

At the northern corner of the square, the 17th-century Krzysztofory Palace is home to the **Kraków City History Museum** (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa; Map p170; ☎ 012 619 2300; www.mhk.pl; Rynek Główny 35; adult/concession/family 4/3.50/8zł, free Wed; ☎ 10am–5.30pm May–Oct, 9am–4pm Wed & Fri–Sun, 10am–5pm Thu Nov–Apr). Basically the story of Kraków from 1257 to WWII, the museum features a bit of everything related to the city’s past, including old clocks, armour, paintings, Kraków’s celebrated *szopki* (Nativity scenes), and the costume of the Lajkonik (see p196).

In the southern corner of the square is the small, domed **Church of St Adalbert** (Kościół Św Wojciecha; Map p170). One of the oldest churches in the Old Town, its origins date from the 11th century. You can see the original foundations in the basement, where a small **exhibition** (☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Sat May–Sep) also presents archaeological finds excavated from the Rynek.

A few steps north of the church is the **Adam Mickiewicz statue** (Map p170), surrounded by four allegorical figures representing the Motherland, Learning, Poetry and Valour. The *szopki* competition is held in early December (see p196).

KRAKÓW FOR FREE

- Walk up to Wawel Castle (p169) on Monday morning to see where and how Poland’s royalty once lived.
- Stroll about the narrow cobbled streets of the Old Town and Rynek Główny (p172).
- Visit the Ethnographic Museum (p186) on Sunday, the day all its sections are free to visit.
- Watch out for Kraków’s colourful buskers, often performing on Rynek Główny and the adjacent streets.
- Tour private art galleries to keep yourself up to date on Polish contemporary art.
- Admire the *Lady with an Ermine* gratis on Thursday at the Princes Czartoryski Museum (p183).
- Explore the city churches, all of which are free to visit, with the exception of the chancel of the Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady.
- Watch the clock in the courtyard of the Collegium Maius (p183) go through its paces at 11am and 1pm daily.
- Climb and enjoy the view from the Piłsudski Mound (p191) in Las Wolski.
- Catch a free concert, show or exhibition around the centre; check the programme with a tourist office branch (p167).

The flower stalls, usually to the north of the statue and traditionally run by women, have been trading on this site since medieval times. The area in between is the 'pasture' for Kraków's pigeon population, which the city – unbelievably – encourages. The area is currently fenced off, as excavations for a possible underground shopping and entertainment complex are going on below the surface.

BASILICA OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Overlooking the square from the northeast is the **Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady** (Bazylika Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny; Map p170; Rynek Główny 4; adult/concession 6/4zł; ☎ 11.50am–6pm Mon–Sat, 2–6pm Sun), better known in these parts as the Mariacki. The first church on this site was built in the 1220s and, typically for the period, was 'oriented' – that is, its sanctuary pointed eastward. Following its destruction during the Tatar raids, the construction of a mighty basilica began, using the foundations of the previous church. That's why the church stands at an oblique angle to the square.

The façade is dominated by two towers of different heights. The lower one, 69m high and topped by a Renaissance dome, serves as a bell tower and holds five bells, while the taller one, which is 81m high, has traditionally been the city's property and functioned as a watchtower. It's topped with a spire surrounded by turrets – a good example of medieval craftsmanship – and in 1666 was given a 350kg gilded crown that's about 2.5m in diameter. The gilded ball higher up contains Kraków's written history. It is from this tower that the *hejnał* (bugle call; see boxed text, opposite) is sounded hourly around the clock.

The main church entrance, through a Baroque porch added to the southwest façade in the 1750s, is used by worshippers and the faithful; tourists must enter through the side door to the southeast, which leads into the chancel. The chancel is illuminated by the magnificent stained-glass windows dating from the late 14th century; the blue star vaulting of the nave is breathtaking. On the opposite side of the church, above the organ loft, is a fine Art Nouveau stained-glass window by Stanisław Wyspiański and Józef Mehoffer. The colourful wall paintings, designed by Jan Matejko, harmonise beautifully with the medieval architecture and are an appropriate background for the

high altar, which is acclaimed as the greatest masterpiece of Gothic art in Poland and allegedly acclaimed as the eighth wonder of the world by Pablo Picasso.

The altarpiece is a pentaptych (an altarpiece consisting of a central panel and two pairs of side wings), intricately carved in lime wood, then painted and gilded. The main scene, visible when the pentaptych is open, represents the Dormition (or Assumption) of the Virgin surrounded by the Apostles. The outside has a dozen sections portraying scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin. The altarpiece is topped with the Coronation of the Virgin in Heaven and, on both sides, the statues of the patron saints of Poland, St Stanislaus and St Adalbert.

Measuring about 13m high and 11m wide, the pentaptych is the largest and most important piece of medieval art of its kind. It took a decade for its maker, the Nuremberg sculptor Veit Stoss (known to Poles as Wit Stwoszcz), to complete this monumental work before it was solemnly consecrated in 1489.

The pentaptych is opened daily at precisely 11.50am and closed at 6pm, except for Saturday when it's left open for the Sunday morning Mass. The altarpiece apart, don't miss the delicate crucifix on the Baroque altar in the head of the right-hand aisle, another work by Veit Stoss, and the still larger crucifix placed on the rood screen, attributed to pupils of the master.

To the south of the church is the small, charming **Plac Mariacki**, which until the early 19th century was a churchyard. The sombre 14th-century **Church of St Barbara** (Kościół Św Barbary; Map p170), bordering the square on the east, was the cemetery chapel and serves the Polish faithful (the Mariacki was for Germans) during the Middle Ages. Note the skull and crossbones on the north exterior; just inside the entrance is an open chapel featuring stone sculptures of Christ and three of the Apostles, also attributed to the Stoss school. On the square is **Hipolit House** (Kamienica Hipolitów; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4219; www.mhk.pl; Plac Mariacki 3; adult/concession/family 6/4/10zł; free Wed; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Wed–Sun May–Oct, 9am–4pm Wed & Fri–Sun, noon–7pm Thu), a branch of the city history museum than contains faithful recreations of town house interiors from the 17th to early 19th centuries.

East of Plac Mariacki is the **Maly Rynek**, the 'Little Market Sq'. It was the meat market in medieval times.

FIRE COMPANY BUGLE BOYS

Every hour on the hour the *hejnał* (bugle call) is sounded four times on a trumpet from the higher tower of Mariacki (Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady). Today a musical symbol of the city, this simple melody, based on only five notes, was played in medieval times as a warning call. Intriguingly, it breaks off abruptly in midbar. Legend links it to the Tatar invasions; when the watchman on duty spotted the enemy and sounded the alarm, a Tatar arrow pierced his throat midphrase. Because the town was awakened from its collective slumber and defended itself successfully, the tune has stayed that way ever since. The job is now done by a handful of firemen in costume – at least from the waist up. The *hejnał* is broadcast on Polish Radio every day at noon.

PRINCES CZARTORYSKI MUSEUM

The **Princes Czartoryski Museum** (Muzeum Książąt Czartoryskich; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 5566; www.muzeum-czartoryskich.krakow.pl; ul Św Jana 19; adult/concession/family 9/6/18zł, free Thu; ☎ 10am–4pm Tue & Thu, 10am–7pm Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am–3pm Sun May–Oct, 10am–3.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat, 10am–6pm Wed, Fri & Sun Nov Apr) is one of the richest collections in town, and is itself something of a museum of a museum. Originally established in 1800 in Puławy by Princess Izabela Czartoryska as the first historical museum in Poland, the collection was secretly moved to Paris after the November Insurrection of 1830 (in which the family was implicated) and in the 1870s brought to Kraków. The collection experienced another 'excursion' during WWII when the Nazis seized it and took it to Germany, and not all the works were recovered. Even so, there's a lot to see, including a fascinating collection of European painting, mainly Italian, Dutch and Flemish. The stars of the show are Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece *Lady with an Ermine* (c 1482), one of only three da Vinci oil paintings extant, and Rembrandt's *Landscape with the Good Samaritan*, also known as *Landscape before a Storm* (1638). Other exhibitions include Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Etruscan art and Turkish weapons and artefacts, such as carpets, saddles and a campaign tent, recovered after the 1683 Battle of Vienna.

COLLEGIUM MAIUS

The **Collegium Maius** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 0549; www.uj.edu.pl/muzeum; ul Jagiellońska 15; adult/concession 12/6zł, 6zł for all Sat; ☎ 10am–3pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 10am–6pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Sat), built as part of the Kraków Academy (now the Jagiellonian University), is the oldest surviving university building in Poland, and one of the best examples of 15th-century Gothic architecture in the city. It has a magnificent arcaded courtyard and a fascinating university collection.

Inside you'll be shown half a dozen historic interiors, where you'll see rare 16th-century astronomic instruments used by star pupil Copernicus as well as some of his manuscripts, a fascinating alchemy room, old rectors' sceptres and, the highlight of the show, the oldest (and perhaps tiniest) existing globe (c 1510) showing the American continent. You'll also visit an impressive Aula, a hall with an original Renaissance ceiling, and crammed with portraits of kings, benefactors and rectors of the university (five of whom were sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1939). The treasury contains everything from copies of the 1364 university foundation papers and Jan III Sobieski's hammered silver table to film awards (including an Oscar) made to director Andrzej Wajda.

All visits are guided in groups; tours begin every half-hour and there's usually a couple of daily tours at 11am and 1pm in English. In summer it's advisable to reserve in advance, either personally or by phone. The **courtyard** (☎ 7am–dusk) can be entered free of charge. Try to visit at 11am or 1pm, when the 14th-century replica clock on the south side chimes and its cast of characters go through their paces.

Also here is an exhibition called **World of Senses** (Świat Zmysłów; ☎ 012 663 1521; adult/concession 7/5zł; ☎ 10am–1.30pm Mon–Sat), which has 40 interactive models that teach visitors how the five senses function (and can deceive us).

CHURCH OF ST ANNE

Around the corner from the Collegium Maius is the Baroque **Church of St Anne** (Kościół Św Anny; Map p170; ul Św Anny 11). Designed by the omnipresent Tylman van Gameren, and built in the late 17th century as a university church, the Church of St Anne was long the site of inaugurations of the academic year, doctoral promotions and a resting place for many eminent university professors and rectors. A spacious,

stark-white interior fitted out with fine furnishings, gravestones and epitaphs, and embellished with superb stucco work and murals – all stylistically homogeneous – puts the church among the best classical Baroque buildings in Poland.

MUSEUM OF PHARMACY

It might not sound like a crowd-pleaser but the Jagiellonian University Medical School's **Museum of Pharmacy** (Muzeum Farmacji; Map p170; ☎ 012 421 9279; www.cm-uj.krakow.pl; Floriańska 25; adult/concession 6/3zł; ☎ noon-6.30pm Tue, 10am-2.30pm Wed-Sun) is one of the largest museums of its kind in Europe and arguably the best. Accommodated in a beautiful historic town house worth the visit alone, it features a 22,000-piece collection, which includes old laboratory equipment, rare pharmaceutical instruments, heaps of glassware, stoneware, mortars, jars, barrels, medical books and documents. Several pharmacies dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, including one from Lesko, have been painstakingly recreated here, and the garret is crammed with elixirs and panaceas, including vile vials or dried mummy powder. Much attention is given to the 'righteous gentile' Tadeusz Pankiewicz (see boxed text, p190) and the Pharmacy Under the Eagle (see p189) he courageously kept in operation in the Jewish ghetto during the German occupation.

DEFENSIVE WALLS

The **Florian Gate** (Brama Floriańska; Map p170; adult/concession/family 6/4/12zł; ☎ 10.30am-6pm May-Oct) is the only one of the original eight gates in the city's *murzy obronne* (defensive walls) that was not dismantled during the 19th-century 'modernisation'. It was built around 1300, although the top is a later addition. The adjoining walls, together with two towers, have also been left standing. To the north of the gate and included in the entry fee is the **Barbican** (Barbakan; Map p170; ☎ 10.30am-6pm May-Oct). The most intriguing remnant of the medieval fortifications, the Barbican is a powerful, circular brick bastion adorned with seven turrets. There are 130 loopholes in its 3m-thick walls. This curious piece of defensive art was built around 1498 as an additional protection of the Florian Gate, and was once connected to it by a narrow passage running over a moat. It's one of the very few surviving structures of its kind in Europe, and also the largest and perhaps the most beautiful.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

This **museum** (Muzeum Archeologiczne; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 7100; www.ma.krakow.pl; ul Poselska 3; adult/concession 7/5zł, free Sun; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 2-6pm Tue & Thu, 10am-2pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-2pm Mon-Wed, 2-6pm Thu, 10am-2pm Fri & Sun Sep-Jun) presents Małopolska's history from the Palaeolithic period up until the early Middle Ages. Also on show is an absorbing collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, including both human and animal mummies, and 4200 iron coins from the 9th century. The gardens, laid out with rose bushes, magnolia trees and contemporary sculptures, are a lovely place for a stroll afterwards. Make sure you ask for an audioguide.

BASILICA OF ST FRANCIS

The mighty **Basilica of St Francis** (Bazylika Św Franciszka; Map p170; Plac Wszystkich Świętych 5) was erected in the second half of the 13th century but was repeatedly rebuilt and refurbished after at least four fires, the last and the most destructive being in 1850 when almost all the interior was destroyed. Of the present decorations, the most interesting are the Art Nouveau stained-glass windows in the chancel and above the organ loft; the latter is regarded as among the greatest in Poland. All were designed by Stanisław Wyspiański, who also executed most of the frescoes in the sanctuary and side altars.

Adjoining the church from the south is the **Franciscan Monastery** (Map p170; Klasztor Franciszkanów; ul Franciszkańska 4), which preserves its original Gothic cloister, complete with fragments of 15th-century frescoes and portraits of Kraków's bishops. Enter the cloister from the transept of the church.

DOMINICAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The equally powerful **Dominican Church of the Holy Trinity** (Kościół Dominikanów Św Trójcy; Map p170; ul Stolarska 12) was also built in the 13th century and badly damaged in the 1850 fire, though its side chapels, dating mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries, have been preserved in reasonably good shape. Monumental neo-Gothic confessionals and stalls topped with angels playing musical instruments are a later adornment. Note the original 14th-century doorway at the main (western) entrance to the church.

The monastery, just behind the northern wall of the church, is accessible from

the street. The cloister there has retained its Gothic shape pretty well and boasts a number of fine epitaphs, tombs and paintings.

WYSPIAŃSKI MUSEUM

Dedicated to one of Kraków's most beloved sons and the key figure of the *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland) movement, the **Wyspiański Museum** (Muzeum Wyspiańskiego; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 7021; www.muzeum.krakow.pl; ul Szczepańska 11; adult/concession/family 7/5/14zł, free Thu; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue, Wed & Sat, 10am-4pm Thu & Fri, 10am-3pm Sun May-Oct, 10am-3.30pm Wed, Thu & Sat, 10am-3.30pm Sun Nov-Apr), on the 1st and 2nd floors of Szolajski House, reveals how many branches of art Stanisław Wyspiański explored. A painter, poet and playwright, he was also a designer particularly renowned for his stained-glass designs, some of which are in the exhibition. Among his never realised projects was Acropolis, a political, religious and cultural centre to be built on Wawel Hill. There's a model made according to his design – an amazing mix of epochs and styles, a Greek amphitheatre and a Roman circus included.

CHURCH OF SS PETER & PAUL

The first Baroque building in Kraków, the **Church of SS Peter & Paul** (Kościół Św Piotra i Pawła; Map p170; ul Grodzka 54) was erected by the Jesuits, who had been brought to the city in 1583 to do battle with supporters of the Reformation. Designed on the Latin cross layout and topped with a large skylit dome, the church has a refreshingly sober interior, apart from some fine stucco decoration on the vault. The figures of the 12 Apostles standing on columns in front of the church are copies of the statues from 1723.

CHURCH OF ST ANDREW

Built towards the end of the 11th century, **Church of St Andrew** (Kościół Św Andrzeja; Map p170; ul Grodzka 54) is one of Kraków's oldest, and has preserved much of its austere Romanesque stone exterior. As soon as you enter, though, you're in a totally different world; its small interior was subjected to a radical Baroque overhaul in the 18th century.

ARCHDIOCESAN MUSEUM

Located in a 14th-century town house, the **Archdiocesan Museum** (Muzeum Archidiecezjalne; Map p170; ☎ 012 421 8963; ul Kanoniczna 21; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun)

presents a collection of religious sculpture and painting, dating from the 13th to 16th centuries. Also on display is the room where Karol Wojtyła (the late Pope John Paul II) lived from 1958 to 1967 (he also lived next door from 1951 to 1958), complete with his furniture and belongings – including his skis. There's also a treasury of gifts he received here too.

Outside the Old Town

There are a couple of important sights worth the easy walk west from the Old Town.

MANGGHA CENTRE OF JAPANESE ART & TECHNOLOGY

The **Manggha Centre of Japanese Art & Technology** (Map p165; ☎ 012 267 2703; www.manggha.krakow.pl; ul Konopnickiej 26; adult/concession/family 10/6/16zł, free Tue; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Sep-May, 10am-8pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug), lying on the right bank of the Vistula diagonally opposite Wawel Hill, was the brainchild of the Polish film director Andrzej Wajda, who donated the US\$340,000 Kyoto Prize money he received in 1987 for his artistic achievements to fund a permanent home for the National Museum in Kraków's extensive collection of Japanese art, ceramics, weapons, fabrics, scrolls, woodcuts and comics. The striking modern building, which opened in 1994, was designed by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. The bulk of the collection is made up of the 7000 or so pieces assembled by Feliks Jasiński (1861–1929), an avid traveller, art collector, literary critic and essayist, known by his pen name of Manggha. The centre regularly sponsors events relating to Japanese culture, including film, theatre and traditional music.

NATIONAL MUSEUM

The so-called Main Building (Gmach Główny) of the **National Museum in Kraków** (Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie; Map p165; ☎ 012 295 5500; www.muzeum.krakow.pl; Aleja 3 Maja 1; adult/concession 18/12zł, free Thu; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue & Thu, 10am-7pm Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am-3pm Sun May-Oct, 10am-3.30pm Tue, Thu & Sun, 10am-6pm Wed, Fri & Sat Nov-Apr), 500m due west of the Old Town down ul Piłsudskiego, houses three permanent exhibitions: the Gallery of 20th-Century Polish Painting, the Gallery of Decorative Art, and Polish Arms and National Colours – plus various temporary exhibitions. The painting gallery has an extensive collection of Polish painting (and some sculpture) covering the

period from 1890 until the present day. There are several stained-glass designs (including the ones for Wawel Cathedral) by Stanisław Wyspiański, and an impressive selection of Witkacy's paintings. Jacek Malczewski and Olga Boznańska are both well represented also. Of the postwar artists, take particular note of the works by Tadeusz Kantor, Jerzy Nowosielski and Władysław Hasior, to name just a few.

Kazimierz

Today one of Kraków's inner suburbs and located within walking distance south of Wawel and the Old Town, Kazimierz was for a long time an independent town with its own municipal charter and laws. Its colourful history was determined by its mixed Jewish-Polish population, and though the ethnic structure is now wholly different, the architecture gives a good picture of its past, with clearly distinguishable sectors of what were Christian and Jewish quarters. The suburb is home to many important tourist sights, including churches, synagogues and museums.

WESTERN KAZIMIERZ

The western part of Kazimierz was traditionally Catholic, and although many Jews settled here from the early 19th century until WWII – for example, the main Jewish hospital was on ul Skawińska – the quarter preserves much of its original character, complete with its churches.

Beginning at the base of Wawel Hill, walk south along the river bank. Just past the Grundwald Bridge you'll see the **Pauline Church of SS Michael & Stanislaus** (Kościół Paulinów Św Michała i Stanisława; Map p187; ul Skaleczna 15), commonly known to Poles as the Skalka (Rock) due to its location; it was built on a rocky promontory, which is no longer pronounced. Today's mid-18th-century Baroque church is the third building on the site, previously occupied by a Romanesque rotunda and later a Gothic church. It is associated with Bishop Stanisław (Stanislaus) Szczepanowski, canonised in 1253 and now patron saint of Poland. You can even see the tree trunk (on the altar to the left and encased in glass), believed to be the same one on which King Bolesław Śmiały (Boleslaus the Bold) beheaded the bishop in 1079.

The cult of the saint has turned the place into a sort of a national pantheon. The **crypt** (adult/concession 2.5/2zł; ☎ 9am-5pm) underneath

the church shelters the tombs of 12 eminent Poles, including the composer Karol Szymanowski and painters Jacek Malczewski and Stanisław Wyspiański.

About 250m east sits the **Church of St Catherine** (Kościół Św Katarzyny; Map p187; ul Augustiańska 7). One of the most monumental churches in the city, and possibly the one that has best retained its original Gothic shape, it was founded in 1363 and completed 35 years later, though the towers have never been built. The church was once on the corner of Kazimierz's market square but the area was built up in the 19th century. The lofty and spacious whitewashed interior boasts the imposing, richly gilded Baroque high altar from 1634 and some very flamboyant choir stalls.

Continue east on ul Skaleczna, turn right into ul Krakowska, and you'll see the **former town hall** (Map p187) of Kazimierz on the opposite side of the street. Built in the late 14th century in the centre of a vast market square (Plac Wolnica is all that's left), it was significantly extended in the 16th century, at which time it acquired its Renaissance appearance. The **Ethnographic Museum** (Muzeum Etnograficzne; Map p187; ☎ 012 430 5563; www.mek.krakow.pl; Plac Wolnica 1; adult/concession 6.50/4zł, free Sun; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 10am-6pm Mon, 10am-3pm Wed-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) accommodated here after WWII has one of the largest collections in Poland but only a small part of it is on display over three floors. The permanent exhibition features the reconstructed interiors of traditional Polish peasant cottages and workshops (ground floor), folk costumes, craft and trade exhibits, extraordinary Nativity scenes (1st floor), and folk and religious painting and woodcarving (2nd floor).

In the northeastern corner of Plac Wolnica is **Corpus Christi Church** (Kościół Bożego Ciała; Map p187; ul Bożego Ciała 26). Founded in 1340, it was the first church in Kazimierz and for a long time the town's parish church. Its interior has been almost totally fitted out with Baroque furnishings, including the huge high altar, extraordinary massive carved stalls in the chancel and a boat-shaped pulpit. Note the surviving early-15th-century stained-glass window in the sanctuary and the crucifix hanging above the chancel.

JEWISH QUARTER

A tiny area of about 300m by 300m northeast of Corpus Christi Church, the Jewish sector

KRAKÓW – KAZIMIERZ

See Kraków – Old Town & Wawel Map (p170)

INFORMATION	Jarden Tourist Agency.....10 D2	Hotel Klezmer-Hois.....21 D2
Austeria.....(see 8)	Jewish Museum.....(see 11)	Nathan's Villa Hostel.....22 A2
Judaica Foundation.....1 C2	Old Synagogue.....11 D2	Secret Garden.....23 B4
Labyrinth Internet Art Club.....(see 35)	Pauline Church of SS Michael & Stanislaus.....12 A4	Tournet Guest Rooms.....24 B2
Plus GSM.....2 B2	Remuh Cemetery.....13 C2	EATING 🍴
Tourist Office.....3 C3	Remuh Synagogue.....14 C2	Café Alef.....(see 18)
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	SLEEPING 🛏	Chłopskie Jadlo.....25 A2
Church of St Catherine.....4 B3	Ars Hostel.....15 A2	Ciasteczka z Krakowa.....26 A2
Corpus Christi Church.....5 C3	Goodbye Lenin Hostel.....16 D1	Dawno Temu na Kazimierzu.....27 C2
Ethnographic Museum.....6 B4	Hotel Alef.....17 A2	Klezmer-Hois.....(see 21)
Former Town Hall.....(see 6)	Hotel Alef (Branch).....18 D2	Kuchnia i Wino.....28 C3
Galicja Museum.....7 D3	Hotel Eden.....19 C2	Momo Bar.....29 B2
High Synagogue.....8 C2	Hotel Kazimierz.....20 B2	DRINKING 🍷 🍺
Isaac's Synagogue.....9 C2		Le Scandale.....30 C2
		Propaganda.....31 B2
		Singer Café.....32 C2
		SHOPPING 🛍
		Antykwariat na Kazimierzu.....(see 2)
		Blazko Jewellery Art Gallery.....(see 35)
		Galeria d'Art Naif.....33 C3
		Grappa.pl.....34 D3
		Labyrinth.....35 C3
		TRANSPORT
		Dwa Kola.....36 B3

of Kazimierz became, over the centuries, a centre of Jewish culture equal to no other in the country. With the mass deportation and extermination of the Jewish people of Kraków by the Nazis during WWII, all traces of the folklore, life and atmosphere of the quarter disappeared. Today only the architecture reveals that this was once a Jewish town, though

a handful of 'themed' restaurants, complete with live *klezmer* music most nights, have been opened on ul Szeroka. Miraculously, seven synagogues survived the war, but only one of them continues to function as a regular place of worship.

Beginning your tour from the Corpus Christi Church, walk east along ul Św Wawrzyńca

for 500m to what should be your first port of call – the **Galicja Museum** (Muzeum Galicja; Map p187; ☎ 012 421 6842, 012 422 1736; www.galicjajewishmuseum.org; ul Dajwór 18; adult/child 7/5zł; ☎ 9am-7pm), which both commemorates Jewish victims of the Holocaust and celebrates Jewish culture in Galicia past, present and future. Brainchild of the late Chris Schwarz (see boxed text, p164) it features an impressive photographic exhibition depicting modern-day remnants of southeastern Poland's once thriving Jewish community called 'Traces of Memory', video testimony of survivors and some seminal temporary exhibits, such as the recent 'Polish Heroes: Those Who Rescued Jews'.

From here walk north along ul Dajwór to ul Szeroka, traditionally the centre of the Jewish quarter. Short and wide, it looks more like an elongated square than a street and is often packed with tourists and coaches. At its southern end is the fine **Old Synagogue** (Stara Synagoga; Map p187; ☎ 012 422 0962; www.mhk.pl; ul Szeroka 24; adult/concession 7/5zł, free Mon; ☎ 10am-2pm Mon, 9am-3.30pm Wed-Sun), which dates back to the end of the 15th century, the oldest Jewish house of worship in the country. Damaged by fire in 1557, it was reconstructed in Renaissance style by the Italian architect Matteo Gucci. It was plundered and partly destroyed by the Nazis but later restored. The prayer hall, complete with a reconstructed *bimah* (raised platform at the centre of the synagogue where the Torah is read) and the original *aron kodesh* (the niche in the eastern wall where Torah scrolls are kept), houses an exhibition of liturgical objects; adjacent rooms are dedicated to Jewish traditions and art. Upstairs there's a photographic exhibit focusing on Jewish Kraków and the Holocaust.

Near the northern end of ul Szeroka is the **Remuh Synagogue** (Map p187; ☎ 012 429 5735; ul Szeroka 40; adult/concession 5/2zł; ☎ 9am-4pm Sun-Fri), the district's smallest synagogue and the only one regularly used for religious services. The synagogue was established in 1558 by a rich merchant, Israel Isserles, but is associated with his son Rabbi Moses Isserles, a philosopher and scholar.

The **Remuh Cemetery** (Map p187; ☎ 9am-4pm Sun-Fri) is just behind the synagogue. Founded in the mid-16th century, it was closed for burials in the late 18th century, when a new and larger graveyard was established. During WWII Nazis vandalised and razed the tombstones,

but during postwar conservation work some 700 gravestones, many of them outstanding Renaissance examples and dating back four centuries, were uncovered. It seems that the Jewish faithful themselves had buried the stones to avoid their desecration by foreign armies, which repeatedly invaded Kraków in the 18th century. The tombstones have been meticulously restored, making the place one of the best-preserved Renaissance Jewish cemeteries anywhere in Europe.

Near the southeastern edge of the cemetery is **Isaac's Synagogue** (Synagoga Izaaka; Map p187; ☎ 012 430 5577; ul Jakuba 25, enter from ul Kupa 18; adult/concession 7/6zł; ☎ 9am-7pm Sun-Fri), Kraków's largest synagogue. Completed in 1644, it was returned to the Jewish community in 1989. Inside you can see the remains of the original stucco-work and wall-painting decoration and a photography exhibition. Less than 100m to the southeast is the **High Synagogue** (Synagoga Wysoka; Map p187; ☎ 012 426 7520; ul Józefa 38; adult/concession 7/5zł; ☎ 9am-7pm), built in around 1560 and the third oldest after the Old and the Remuh Synagogues. It contains a photographic exhibition on the 1st floor and Kraków's best Jewish bookshop, Austeria (see p164), on the ground floor.

Northeast of the Jewish quarter and behind the railway bridge is the **New Jewish Cemetery** (Map p165; ul Miodowa 55; ☎ 8am-6pm Sun-Fri), which is much larger than the Remuh Cemetery. It was established around 1800 and is the only burial place for Jews now in use in Kraków. There are some 9000 surviving tombstones (the oldest dating from the 1840s), some of which are of great beauty. In contrast to the manicured Remuh Cemetery, this one is completely unkempt and overgrown, which makes it an eerie and very sad sight.

You can return to the Old Town by tram from ul Starowiślna, or walk south along the same street and over the bridge to the suburb of Podgórze.

Podgórze

This working-class suburb would pique few travellers' curiosities if it wasn't for the notorious role it played during WWII. It was here that the Nazis herded some 15,000 Jews into a ghetto and continued to empty it by way of deportations to the concentration camps, including one a short distance to the southwest in Płaszów. The centre of the ghetto was Plac Zgody, the ironically

KAZIMIERZ & ITS CHEQUERED PAST

Kazimierz was founded in 1335 by King Kazimierz Wielki on the southern fringe of Kraków. Thanks to numerous privileges granted by the king, the town developed swiftly and soon had its own town hall, a market square almost as large as Kraków's, and two huge churches. The town was encircled with defensive walls and by the end of the 14th century came to be Małopolska's most important and wealthiest city after Kraków.

The first Jews came to settle in Kazimierz soon after its foundation, but it wasn't until 1494, when they were expelled from within the walls of Kraków by King Jan Olbracht, that their numbers began to grow quickly. They settled in a prescribed area of Kazimierz, northeast of the Christian quarter, and the two sectors were separated by a wall.

The subsequent history of Kazimierz was punctuated by fires, floods and plagues, with both communities living side by side, confined to their own sectors. The Jewish quarter became home to Jews fleeing persecution from all corners of Europe, and it grew particularly quickly, gradually determining the character of the whole town. It became the most important Jewish centre of all Poland.

At the end of the 18th century Kazimierz was administratively incorporated into Kraków, and in the 1820s the walls were pulled down. At the outbreak of WWII Kazimierz was a predominantly Jewish suburb, with a distinct culture and atmosphere. But most Jews were killed by the Nazis in the extermination camps. Of the 65,000 Jews living in Kraków (most of whom lived in Kazimierz) in 1939, only about 6000 survived the war. The current Jewish population in the city is estimated at just under 200.

During communist rule, Kazimierz was largely a forgotten district of Kraków, partly because the government didn't want to touch the sensitive Jewish question. Then in the early 1990s along came Steven Spielberg to shoot *Schindler's List* and everything changed overnight.

In fact, Kazimierz was not the setting of the movie's plot – most of the events portrayed in the film took place in the Podgórze ghetto, Oskar Schindler's factory just outside it and the Płaszów extermination camp, all of which were further southeast, beyond the Vistula. Yet the film turned the world's attention to Kraków's Jewry as a whole, and since Kazimierz is the only substantial visual relic of Jewish heritage, it has benefited the most. 'Schindler tourism' now draws in crowds of visitors – Poles and foreigners alike – for all the right and all the wrong reasons.

named 'Peace Sq' that is today known as **Plac Bohaterów Getta**, (Map p165), where the process of selecting who would stay and who would be placed on the waiting train to one of the camps was completed. Today it is marked by a memorial by Kraków architects Piotr Lewicki and Kazimierz Latak consisting of 70 **empty chairs**, half of which are illuminated. They are meant to represent furniture and other remnants discarded on that very spot by the deportees.

On the south side of the square is the **Pharmacy Under the Eagle** (Apteka Pod Orłem; Plac Bohaterów Getta 18; ☎ 012 656 5625; adult/concession/family 4/3/8zł, free Mon; ☎ 10am-2pm Mon, 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sat) run by the non-Jew Tadeusz Pankiewicz (see boxed text, p190) during occupation and now a museum. Just south of the square are the remains of the **ghetto wall** (ul Lwowska 25-29) with a plaque marking the site. About 400km east of Plac Bohaterów Getta is **Oskar Schindler's enamelware factory** (Map p165; ul Lipowa 4).

Outer Kraków

Sights located both to the east and west of Kraków and just in (or just outside) the city limits are worth a half- or full-day excursion.

ZWIERZYNIEC

The prime attraction of the suburb called **Zwierzyniec** (Map p165), just under 3km west of the Old Town, is the **Kościusko Mound** (Kopiec Kościuszkowski; Map p165; ☎ 012 425 1116; Aleja Waszyngtona; adult/concession/family 6/4/10zł, waxworks exhibition 8/6/12zł; ☎ 9am-dusk), erected between 1820 and 1823 soon after Kościusko's death, to pay tribute to the man who embodied the dreams of independent Poland in times of foreign occupation. The mound stands 34m high, and soil from the Polish and American battlefields where Kościusko fought was placed here. The views over the city are spectacular.

The entrance is through a small neo-Gothic chapel, which has an exhibition of memorabilia related to Kościusko; there is a separate

WHEN THE SAINTS CAME MARCHING IN

At Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, a museum dedicated to the Holocaust, there is a row of trees called the 'Ave of the Righteous Among Nations'. They represent some of the 21,300-odd Gentiles (non-Jews) who either saved Jews during the Holocaust or came to their defence by putting their own lives at risk. Among those so honoured is Oskar Schindler, probably the best known of the so-called 'Righteous Gentiles' thanks to the book by Thomas Keneally originally titled *Schindler's Ark* (1982) and Steve Spielberg's mega-hit film based on the work, *Schindler's List* (1993). But Schindler, a heavy-drinking profiteer and something of an antihero, who originally managed to save the lives of Jews only because he needed their cheap labour at his enamelware factory (see p189) in Podgórze, is just one of some 6000 Poles – almost one-third of the worldwide total – named in this roll of honour. Much more altruistic and noble-minded – a man you'd much prefer to have over to dinner – was the pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz, who cajoled the authorities into letting him keep his business, the Pharmacy Under the Eagle (see p189), open in the ghetto until the final deportation, dispensed medicines (often without charge), carried news from the 'outside world' and even allowed use of the establishment as a safe house on occasion. His harrowing memoir, *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy*, describes many of these deeds in measured detail without bravado or boast, and provides an eye-witness account of the short and tragic history of the Kraków ghetto from beginning to liquidation. In March 2006 an exhibit called 'Polish Heroes: Those Who Rescued Jews' opened at the Galicia Museum p188) in Kazimierz – it is now at the Auschwitz Jewish Centre (see p358) in Oświęcim – focusing on the lives and deeds of 21 Kraków residents who acted according to the most noble principles of humanity, either directly or behind the scenes, on behalf of Jews. If they canonised living people – and we think they should – you would be walking among saints in Kraków today. Come to think of it, you are.

waxworks exhibition called Polish Routes to Independence. The large brick fortification at the mound's foothill is a fortress built by the Austrians in the 1840s (now a hotel).

To reach the mound by public transport, take tram 1, 2 or 6 southwest to the end of the line; get off at Salwator and board bus 100, which will take you (every hour or so) directly to the entrance.

LAS WOLSKI

The 485-hectare **Las Wolski** (Wolski Forest; Map p165), west of Zwierzyniec, is the largest forested area within the city limits and a popular weekend destination for city dwellers.

The forest's hilly southern part facing the Vistula, known as Srebrna Góra (Silver Mountain), is topped with the mighty **Monastery of the Camaldolese Monks** (Klasztor Kamedułów; Map p165; ☎ 012 429 7610; www.kameduli.info in Polish). The order, part of the Benedictine family of monastic communities, was brought to Poland from Italy in 1603 and in time founded a dozen monasteries throughout the country. Today there are just two in Poland, including another in Masuria.

The order, with its very strict rules, attracts curiosity – and a few ironic smiles, particularly for its Memento Mori ('remember you must

die') motto – and its members' ascetic way of life. The monks live in seclusion in hermitages and contact each other only during prayers; some have no contact with the outside world at all. They are vegetarian and have solitary meals in their 'homes', with only five common meals a year. The hermits don't sleep in coffins as rumoured, but they do keep the skulls of their predecessors in the hermitages.

Kraków was the first of the Camaldolese seats in Poland; a church and 20 hermitages were established here between 1603 and 1642, and the whole complex was walled in. Not much has changed since. The place is spectacularly located and can be visited.

You approach it through a long walled alley that leads to the main gate, the ceiling of which is covered in naive frescoes. Once you are let in, you walk to the massive white limestone façade of the monastery church (50m high and 40m wide). A spacious, single-nave interior is covered by a barrel-shaped vault and lined on both sides with eight ornate Baroque chapels. The Baroque main altar is impressive.

Underneath the chancel of the church is a large chapel used for prayers and, to its right, the crypt of the hermits. Bodies are placed into niches without coffins and then sealed. Latin inscriptions state the age of the deceased

and the period spent in the hermitage. The niches are opened after 80 years and most of the remains moved to a place of permanent rest. It's then that the hermits take the skulls to keep in their shelters.

In the garden behind the church are 14 surviving hermitages where several monks live (others live in the building next to the church), but the area is off-limits to tourists. You may occasionally see hermits in the church, sporting long bushy beards and fine white cassocks.

Men can visit the church and crypt any day from 8am to 11am and 3pm to 4.30pm; guests are allowed in every half-hour. Women can enter the complex only on certain feast days, of which there are a dozen: Easter, Easter Monday, 3 May, Pentecost (two days), Sunday after 19 June, 2nd and 4th Sundays in July, first Sunday in August, Assumption of Mary (15 August), Mary's Birthday (8 September) and Christmas.

The hermitage is 7km west of the city centre. Take tram 1, 6 or 32 to the end of the line in Zwierzyniec and change for any westbound bus except the 100. The bus will let you off at the foot of Srebrna Góra, then it's a 200m walk up the hill to the church.

After visiting the monastery you can walk north for about 1km through the forest to the 20-hectare **Zoological Gardens** (Ogród Zoologiczny; Map p165; ☎ 012 425 3551; Aleja Kasy Oszczędności Miasta Krakowa 14; adult/concession 12/6zł; ☎ 9am-dusk), which is home to about 2000 animals representing 300 species from around the world.

ICONIC LAJKONIK: KRAKÓW'S HORSEMAN

Another symbol of Kraków is the Lajkonik, a bearded man dressed in richly embroidered garments, a tall pointed hat and riding a hobbyhorse. He comes to life on the Thursday after Corpus Christi (late May or June) and heads a joyful pageant from the Premonstratensian Convent in Zwierzyniec to the Old Town's Rynek Główny.

Exact details of the Lajkonik's origins are hard to pin down, but one story involves a Tatar assault on Kraków in 1287. A group of raftsmen discovered the tent of the commanding khan on a foray outside the city walls and dispatched the unsuspecting Tatar leader and his generals in a lightning raid. The raftsmen's leader then wore the khan's richly decorated outfit back to the city.

The pageant, accompanied by a musical band, takes at least six hours to complete the trip, while the Lajkonik takes to dancing, jumping and running, greeting passers-by, popping into cafés en route, collecting donations and striking people with his mace, which is said to bring them good luck. Once the pageant reaches the main square, the Lajkonik is greeted by the mayor and presented with a symbolic ransom and a goblet of wine.

The Lajkonik's garb and his hobbyhorse were designed by Stanisław Wyspiański; the original design is kept in the Kraków City History Museum. It consists of a wooden frame covered with leather and embroidered with nearly a thousand pearls and coral beads. The whole outfit weighs about 40kg.

About 1km further north is the **Piśsudski Mound** (Kopiec Piśsudskiego; Map p165; admission free; ☎ 24hr), the youngest and, at 35m, the tallest of the four city mounds. It was erected in honour of the marshal after his death in 1935 and was formed from soil taken from WWI Polish battle sites. Bus 134 from the zoo will bring you back to the city. You can also reach the Piśsudski Mound from the Kościusko Mound on foot via a well-marked trail in about 2½ hours.

TYNIEC

A distant suburb of Kraków, 12km southwest of the centre, **Tyniec** (off Map p165) is the site of the **Benedictine Abbey** (Opactwo Benedyktynów; off Map p165; ☎ 012 259 5025; www.benedicite.pl; ul Benedyktyńska 37) dramatically perched on a cliff above the Vistula. The Benedictines came to Poland in the second half of the 11th century, and it was in Tyniec that they established their first base. The original Romanesque church and the monastery were destroyed and rebuilt in the 14th and 18th centuries. Today the church is essentially a Baroque building, though the stone foundations and the lower parts of the walls, partly uncovered and behind protected glass to the west of the church, show its earlier origins.

You enter the complex through a pair of defensive gates, resembling the entrance to a castle, and find yourself in a large courtyard. To the southwest is an octagonal wooden pavilion, which protects a stone well dating from 1620.

The monastery itself, home to 40 monks, cannot be visited but the church is open to all. Behind a sober façade, the dark interior is fitted out with a mix of Baroque and Rococo furnishings; up to the left are the remnants of early wall paintings. The organ is plain but has a beautiful tone, and concerts are held here in summer. Have a look at the exuberant Rococo pulpit.

To reach the abbey, take bus 112 from the Rondo Grunwaldzkie, the roundabout on the west side of Grunwald Bridge.

NOWA HUTA

The youngest and largest of Kraków's suburbs, **Nowa Huta** (New Steelworks; off Map p165; www.nh.pl in Polish) is a result of the postwar rush towards industrialisation. In the early 1950s a gigantic steelworks and a new town to serve as a bedroom community for its workforce, were built about 10km east of the centre of Kraków. The steel mill accounted for nearly half the national iron and steel output, and the suburb has become a vast urban sprawl, populated by over 200,000 people.

Because of increasing awareness of environmental issues, the industrial management was forced to cut production and reduce the workforce, yet the mammoth plant is still working despite the fact that it's unprofitable.

The steelworks can't be visited, but you may want to have a look around the suburb. Nowa Huta is a shock after the Old Town's medieval streets. Tram 4, 14 or 15 from Kraków Główny train station will drop you at **Plac Centralny**, the suburb's central square. Drop into the **tourist office** (off Map p165; Os Słoneczne 16; ☎ 012 643 0303; www.karnet.krakow2000.pl; ☹ 10am-2pm Tue-Sat) a couple of hundred metres north for a free map and to inspect the **Nowa Huta Museum** (off Map p165; www.mhk.pl; adult/concession 4/3zł, free Wed) inside. It doesn't matter where you start your sightseeing as the landscape varies little throughout the district. Most of the area is a grey concrete sea of Stalinist-style architecture, but fortunately, there are a few interesting sights in that sea.

In the northwestern part of the suburb, is the **Church of Our Lady Queen of Poland** (Kościół Najświętszej Marii Panny Królowej Polski; off Map p165; www.arkapana.pl in Polish; ul Obrońców Krzyża), otherwise known as the Arka Pana (Lord's Ark). This interesting, though rather heavy, ark-shaped construction was the first new church permitted in Nowa Huta after WWII, and

was completed in 1977 entirely by volunteer labourers. Up till then, Nowa Hutans used the two historic churches that had somehow managed to escape the avalanche of concrete. They are both on the southeastern outskirts of Nowa Huta, in the Mogiła suburb about 2.5km southeast of Plac Centralny (tram 15), and are worth a visit if you are in the area.

The small, shingled **Church of St Bartholomew** (Kościół Św Bartłomieja; off Map p165; ul Klasztorna) dates from the mid-15th century, which makes it Poland's oldest surviving three-nave timber church. If it's locked, enquire at the house at the back, and a nun may open it for you.

Across the street is the **Cistercian Abbey** (Opactwo Cystersów; off Map p165), which consists of a church and monastery with a large garden-park behind it. The Cistercians came to Poland in 1140 and founded abbeys around the country, including this one in 1222.

The church, open most of the day, has a large three-nave interior with a balanced mix of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque furnishings and decoration. Have a look at the Chapel of the Crucified Christ (in the left transept), the polyptych in the high altar, and the beautiful stained-glass windows behind it.

WIELICZKA

Just outside the administrative boundaries of Kraków, some 14km southeast of the city centre, Wieliczka (vyeh-leech-kah) is famous for its ultra-deep **Salt Mine** (Kopalnia Soli; off Map p165; ☎ 012 278 7302; www.kopalnia.pl; ul Daniłowicza 10; adult/concession/family 46/31/174zł Jul & Aug, 45/30/168zł Sep-Jun; ☹ 7.30am-7.30pm Apr-Oct, 8am-5pm Nov-Mar), which has been in continuous operation for 700 years and can be visited. It's an eerie world of pits and chambers, and everything has been carved by hand from salt blocks. The mine was included on Unesco's World Heritage List in 1978.

The Wieliczka mine is renowned for the preservative qualities of its microclimate, as well as for its health-giving properties. An underground sanatorium has been established at a depth of 135m, where chronic allergic diseases are treated by overnight stays.

The mine has a labyrinth of tunnels, about 300km distributed over nine levels, the deepest being 327m underground. A section of the mine, some 22 chambers connected by galleries, is open to the public as a museum, and it's a fascinating trip.

You visit three upper levels of the mine, from 64m to 135m below the ground, walking

NOWA HUTA: SOCIALIST WET DREAM & NIGHTMARE

The postwar communist regime deliberately built Nowa Huta steelworks in Kraków to give a 'healthy' working-class and industrial injection to the strong aristocratic, cultural and religious traditions of the city. It was of no interest to city planners that Kraków had neither ore nor coal deposits and that virtually all raw materials had to be transported from great distances. The project also did not take into account that the site had one of the most fertile soils in the region, nor that construction of the complex would destroy villages that could trace their histories back to the early Middle Ages.

The communist dream hasn't materialised exactly as planned. Nowa Huta hasn't, in fact, threatened the deep traditional roots of Kraków. Worse, it actually became a threat to its creators, with strikes breaking out here as frequently as anywhere else, paving the way for the eventual fall of communism. The steelworks did, however, affect the city in another way: it brought catastrophic environmental pollution that threatened people's health, the natural environment and the city's historical monuments.

through an eerie world of pits and chambers, all hewn by hand from solid salt. Some have been made into chapels, with altarpieces and figures, others are adorned with statues and monuments – all carved out of salt – and there are even underground lakes.

The showpiece is the ornamented **Chapel of St Kinga** (Kaplica Św Kingi), which is actually a fair-sized church measuring 54m by 18m, and 12m high. Every single element here, from chandeliers to altarpieces, is of salt. It took over 30 years (1895) for one man and then his brother to complete this underground temple, and about 20,000 tonnes of rock salt had to be removed. Occasional Masses and concerts are held here. Other highlights are the salt lake in the **Eram Barącz Chamber**, whose water contains 320g of salt per litre, and the 36m-high **Stanisław Staszic Chamber** with its panoramic lift.

Included in the entry price is a visit to the **Kraków Saltworks Museum**, accommodated in 14 worked-out chambers on the third level of the mine, where the tour ends, but most visitors appear to be 'salted away' by then. From here a fast mining lift takes you back up to the real world.

Visitors are guided in groups and the tour takes about two hours. You walk about 2km through the mine – wear comfortable shoes. The temperature in the mine is 14°C. In July and August English-language tours depart every half-hour from 8.30am to 6pm. During the rest of the year there are between six and eight daily tours in English.

Minibuses (2.50zł) to Wieliczka depart Kraków every 10 minutes between 6am and 8pm from the northern end of ul Starowiślna, near the main post office, and drop passengers

off at the bottom of the road leading up to the salt mine entrance. Trains between Kraków and Wieliczka (3zł, 15 minutes) leave every 45 minutes throughout the day, but the train station in Wieliczka is over a kilometre from the mine.

To avoid the tremendously long queues at Wieliczka itself, especially in season, you are strongly advised to buy your ticket from one of the tourist offices in Kraków (see p167) before setting out.

ACTIVITIES

Poland's largest water park, **Park Wodny** (Map p165; ☎ 012 616 3190; www.parkwodny.pl; ul Dobrego Pasterza 126; per hr adult/concession Mon-Fri 16/16zł, Sat & Sun 19/17zł, all day incl sauna weekdays 38/32zł, weekend 43/37zł; ☹ 8am-10pm), is 2.5km northeast of the Old Town and accessible by bus 125, 128 and 152 from the train station. It boasts various pools, including one enormous one with hundreds of metres of water chutes and slides, climbing-walls, Jacuzzis, and various saunas, as well as video games, an internet café, a restaurant and a water bar.

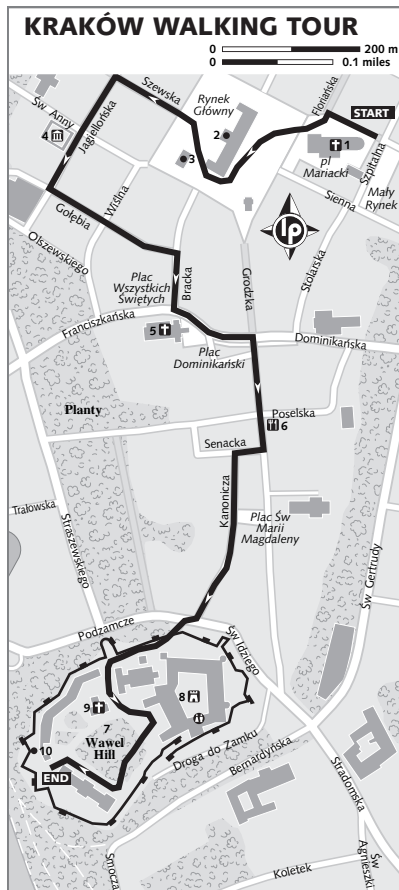
Roughly 2km east of the city centre, **Fantasy Park** (Map p165; ☎ 012 290 9515; www.fantasypark.pl; Aleja Pokoju 44; ☹ 10am-2am), in the Kraków Plaza shopping centre, is the perfect place to head on a rainy day. It has 20 ten-pin bowling lanes (54zł to 84zł per hour, depending on the time of day and day of the week), plus billiards, air-hockey, video arcades and even an internet café and bar. There's also a supervised kids' play area (10zł to 15zł per hour). You can get here on tram 1, 14 or 22.

Bird Service (Map p170; ☎ 012 292 1460; www.bird.pl; ul Św Krzyża 17) is Poland's No 1 specialist in

bird-watching tours. It organises birding trips in eastern Poland, including the Białowieża and Biebrza National Parks and organises the Polish Bird Festival, held annually in the second week of May in northeastern Poland. This is a holiday package (from €400) that covers eight nights' accommodation in an optimal bird-watching location, half-board and information. Bird Service also offers week-long bicycle tours along the Dunajec River in the Carpathian Mountains (from €420).

WALKING TOUR

Start an easy, 'introductory' tour of Kraków outside the Mariacki, the **Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady (1)** in Rynek Główny. Take a leisurely stroll around the main market



WALK FACTS

Start/Finish Rynek/Dragon's Den
Distance approximately 1.5km
Duration around 1½ hours

square, passing through the **Cloth Hall (2)** to browse the craft stalls. Head west past the **Town Hall Tower (3)**, which you might consider scaling for fabulous views of the square and city. Enter ul Szewska and follow it to the junction with ul Jagiellońska, then turn south and walk to the **Collegium Maius (4)** for at least a quick look at the famous courtyard and its clock. Carry on to the junction with ul Gołębia. Turn right and follow this road southeast as far as ul Bracka, then turn south past the **Basilica of St Francis (5)**, and join busy ul Grodzka, which is replete with eateries, including **Miód Malina (6; p201)**, should you fancy a bite. Go as far as ul Senacka, and from there turn south onto charming ul Kanonicza. This will lead you right to the foot of **Wawel Hill (7)**. Climb to the top to visit the stately **Wawel Royal Castle (8)** and **Wawel Cathedral (9)**, or just take in the stunning views across the river. If you want to get closer to the water, go to the entrance of the **Dragon's Den (10)** in the southwestern part of the Wawel complex and walk down the stairs.

KRAKÓW FOR CHILDREN

Kraków isn't the most child-friendly of cities, but there's enough going on in the vicinity to keep kids amused for a few days. The main attraction for younger children is undoubtedly **Park Wodny (p193)**, a very modern and well-equipped water-park complex, with three pools, 800m of water slides and chutes and a 30m rapids labyrinth.

Fantasy Park (p193) has a supervised children's play area with climbing frames and the like to keep toddlers occupied, while older siblings can try their hand at bowling, billiards or video games.

Hands-on science is offered at the **Collegium Maius (p183)**, where older children can explore the five human senses through interactive models. The swords, crossbows and suits of armour at **Crown Treasury & Armoury (p172)** in Wawel will keep some kids (especially boys) enthralled for longer than you may think.

The puppet shows that play regularly at **Teatr Groteska (p205)**, though in Polish language, are a big hit with kids and adults alike.

Away from the city centre, the **Zoological Gardens (p191)** are an obvious choice for a day out with the kids, and there are pleasant grounds for a walk afterwards, including one to the eminently climbable **Piśsudski Mound (p191)** a kilometre to the north.

Around 2km northeast of the centre, **Anikino (Map p165; ☎ 012 411 3007; www.anikino.pl; ul Nieduza 4; ☎ 9am-9pm)**, just off Aleja Jana Pawła II, is a supervised indoor play area for toddlers, with prices starting at 10/12zł for the first hour on weekdays/weekends, and 18/25zł for the day.

LANGUAGE COURSES

The granddaddy of all Polish language schools is Jagiellonian University's **School of Polish Language & Culture (Szkoła Języka i Kultury Polskiej; Map p170; ☎ 012 421 3692; www.uj.edu.pl/Polonia/en; ul Garbarska 7a)**. It organises intensive two-week (50-hour) courses (€350) during the academic year, and courses lasting up to six weeks (€720) in summer. A private school that gets good reports is the **International School of Polish Language & Culture (Map p165; ☎ 012 661 4030; www.polishcourse.org; 5th fl, ul Bronowicka 58)**, with courses lasting one/two weeks (25/50 hours) costing €170/260.

TOURS

The most romantic way to tour Kraków is in one of the many **horse-drawn carriages (half/full hr 100/200zł)**, which line up at the northern end of Rynek Główny and on ul Grodzka opposite the Church of St Andrew. You decide which route you want to take, or leave it up to the driver to take you for a trot round the sights of the Old Town or even down to Kazimierz.

Cracow Tours (Map p170; 012 430 0726; www.cracowtours.pl; ul Krupnicza 3) offers a four-hour bus tour of the city (adult/concession 120/60zł) and **Tour Bus (☎ 0501 377 604; www.tourbus.pl; day ticket adult/concession 50/25zł)** is a 'jump-on, jump-off' bus, but neither can get you into the Old Town and parts of Kazimierz like the little five-seat carts run by **Omega City Tour (☎ 0506 832 999; www.omega.civ.pl/citytour)** and **Krak Tour (☎ 0886 664 999)** can. Expect to pay about 170zł per person for an hour's run-around with taped commentary.

If you prefer to see the city on foot, several companies offer walking tours including **Marco der Pole (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 2131; www.marcoerpole.com.pl; ul Kanonicza 15)**, with one of the Old Town departing at 10am daily and the tour of Kazimierz at 1.30pm between April

and early November. Both last three hours and cost 45zł.

To our mind the best bicycle tour in town is that offered by **Krakow Bike Tours (☎ 0663 731 515; www.krakowbiketour.com)**, whose four-hour spin on wheels around town (59zł) starts daily at 1pm and will take you to everything from Rynek Główny and Wawel to Oskar Schindler's factory in Podgórze. It has excellent guides and commentary. Two-hour Kraków by Night Tours (49zł) run May to September.

A 45-minute cruise on the Vistula River is available on the **Nimfa (Map p165; ☎ 012 422 0855, 0663 165 910; adult/concession 15/10zł)** berthed below Wawel Hill near Grunwald Bridge between five and seven times a day Monday to Saturday. If you want to get on the drink with a drink, jump aboard the ever-popular **Kraków Booze Cruise (Map p165; ☎ 0500 597 050; www.krakowboozecruise.com)**, which departs from the same spot at 7pm every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The cost (60/90zł for women/men) gets you all the beer you can drink, all you can eat from the barbecue and vegetarian buffet, and a couple of hours on the water.

Theme tours include those run by **Crazy Guides (☎ 0500 091 200; www.crazyguides.com)**, which offers entertaining tours of the city's communist-era suburbs, including a 2½-hour one to Nowa Huta (119zł), in a restored East German Trabant car. The **Jarden Tourist Agency (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 7166; www.jarden.pl; ul Szeroka 2)** specialises in Jewish-heritage tours. The most popular one, Retracing Schindler's List (two hours by car), costs 65zł per person. All tours require a minimum of three people and must be arranged in advance.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Kraków has one of the richest cycles of annual events in Poland. Ask any tourist-office branch (see p167) for more details or check the website www.krakow-info.com.

January

New Year's Concert (www.dkpodgorze.krakow.pl in Polish) Kraków ushers in the New Year with prestigious classical-music at **Teatr im J Słowackiego (Map p170)**, which is at Plac Św Ducha 1, while plebs make do with fireworks and rock bands in Rynek Główny.

February

Shanties International Festival of Sailors' Songs (www.shanties.pl in Polish) Going strong for two dozen years, despite Kraków's inland location.

March

Back Days n Music (www.amuz.krakow.pl) Baroque fugues and such for days at the **Academy of Music** (Map p170) at ul Basztowa 8.

April

Paka Cabaret Review (www.paka.pl in Polish) Of interest mostly to Polish speakers but plenty of one-offs around town for visitors too.

May

Juvenalia During this student carnival, students receive symbolic keys to the town's gates and take over the city for four days and three nights. There's street dancing, fancy-dress parades, masquerades and lots of fun.

Cracovia Marathon (www.cracoviamaraton.pl) An increasingly popular international running event.

Krakow International Film Festival (www.cracow.filmfestival.pl) Film festival that's been going for almost half a century shows some 350 films from 20 countries.

June

Lajkonik Pageant (www.mhk.pl) Seven days after Corpus Christi (usually June but possibly late May). This colourful pageant headed by Lajkonik, a comical, oh-so-Cracovian figure disguised as a bearded Tatar riding a wooden horse, parades from a church in Zwierzyniec to the main market square accompanied by loud, high-pitched music.

Jewish Culture Festival (www.jewishfestival.pl) The biggest Jewish festival in Europe features a variety of cultural events including theatre, film, music and art exhibitions, and concludes with a grand open-air *klezmer* concert on ul Szeroka.

July

International Festival of Street Theatre (www.teatrktto.pl in Polish) Takes place on Rynek Główny.

Summer Jazz Festival (www.cracjazz.com) Featuring the best of Polish modern jazz.

August

Music in Old Kraków International Festival (www.capellacracoviensis.art.pl) Kraków's most important musical event goes for two weeks, spans five centuries of musical tradition, from medieval to contemporary, and is presented in concert halls, churches and other historic interiors.

September

Sacrum-Profanum Festival (www.sacrumprofanum.pl) Classical music festival dedicated to composers of different countries each year (Russia 2005, France 2006, USA 2007 etc).

Pierogi Festival (www.biurofestivalowe.pl) Three-day fête honouring the king of dumplings.

October

Organ Music Festival (www.filharmonia.krakow.pl) With a tradition of over 30 years, this festival gives people a chance to listen to organ recitals, which take place in several city churches.

November

Zaduski Jazz Festival (strzu@hot.pl) This popular festival, held in jazz clubs around the city, livens up an otherwise dull month.

December

Kraków Christmas Crib Competition (www.mhk.pl) Held on the main market square beside the statue of Adam Mickiewicz on the 1st Thursday of December, this contest attracts crowds of spectators. A sort of Nativity scene, but very different from those elsewhere in the world, Kraków's *szopki* are elaborate compositions built in an architectural, usually churchlike form, and made in astonishing detail from cardboard, wood, tinfoil and the like – some are even mechanised. The prize-winners are put on display until mid-February at a special exhibition in the Kraków City History Museum (see p181). You can see gold medalists from previous years at the Ethnographic Museum (see p186).

SLEEPING

Kraków is Poland's premier tourist destination, with prices to match. Here expect to pay up to 200zł for a budget double, up to 400zł for midrange, and anything over that for top end. There is an ever-increasing supply of accommodation options but advance booking during the busy summer season is recommended for the very central places. The Old Town is the main area for midrange and top-end hotels, as well as a few budget places, while cheaper, and sometimes better-value, options can be found outside the area bounded by the Planty.

Kazimierz also has a number of atmospheric midrange and top-end hotels, in a quieter location. Note that some of the more expensive hotels often quote prices in euros.

Modern hostels, geared towards the needs (and expectations) of Western backpackers are springing up everywhere, both inside and out of the city centre, while private rooms and apartments may be the answer, if you're intending to stay a bit longer. **Wawelturn** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1921; www.wawelturn.com.pl; ul Pawia 8; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) arranges accommodation in private rooms (from 55zł per person) in private homes scattered around the city (so check the location carefully first). The apartments (studios from 140zł) are self-contained, and come with kitchens and bathrooms.

Good websites for apartment rentals include www.krakow-apartments.com and www.noce.pl.

Old Town & Surrounds

BUDGET

Kraków has a good supply of budget places, though the cheapest places are outside the centre so you will need to do some commuting. Bright, clean, modern hostels with multilingual staff and 'luxuries' like washing machines and dryers are a very welcome addition to the budget accommodation scene, while the older, cheaper, traditional hostels may be a bit basic for some. During holidays, the older hostels tend to fill up with noisy groups of school kids and readers have complained about standards of cleanliness. During the summer, several student hostels let out rooms on the outskirts of town, and these often have good on-site facilities.

Kraków has several camping grounds, all of which are pretty distant from the centre but are linked to it by public transport.

Oleandry YHA Hostel (Map p165; ☎ 012 633 8822; www.smkrakow.pl/eng; ul Oleandry 4; dm 22-34zł; ☒) About 1km west of the Old Town and just north of the *Zaczek*, this is a very big (and often very noisy) 330-bed place with basic dorms in need of updating (and/or a good wash) and lots of rules, including a midnight curfew. Take tram 15 from outside the main train-station building and get off just past Hotel Orbis Cracovia.

Hotel Studencki Zaczek (Map p165; ☎ 012 633 1914; www.zaczek.bratniak.krakow.pl; Al 3 Maja 5; s/d/tr from 90/110/165zł; ☐ ☒) This student dormitory is just past the Main Building of the National Museum 1km west of the Old Town. It has a variety of accommodation on offer, including cheaper rooms with shared bathrooms. Breakfast is 10zł extra.

Trzy Kafki (Map p165; ☎ 012 632 8829; www.trzykafki.pl; Al Słowackiego 29; s/d/tr/q 60/80/100/120zł; ☒) Roughly 1.5km northwest of the Old Town, this place is part of a chain of three establishments in Kraków, and has fairly simple but excellent-value rooms with modern shared bathrooms and kitchens. It offers a laundry service, and breakfast is 10zł to 15zł extra. Reach here from the Old Town on tram 3, 5, 7 or 19.

Dizzy Daisy (Map p165; ☎ 012 92 0171; www.hostel.pl; ul Pędzichów 9; dm 35-60zł, d 120-160zł, tr 150-210zł; ☒ ☒) This rather stunning 52-bed hostel

is a bit out of the centre (500m north of the main market square) but has stunning modern décor, great facilities and attracts an international crowd of party people.

Cracow Hostel (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1106; www.cracowhostel.com; Rynek Główny 18; dm 40-70zł; ☒) Location, location, location. This all-dormitory hostel on three floors may not be the best in town, with somewhat cramped rooms of between four and 18 beds. But it's perched high above the main market square, with an amazing view from the comfortable lounge.

Stranger Hostel (Map p165; ☎ 012 634 2516; www.thestrangerhostel.com; ul Kochanowskiego 1/3; dm 30-60zł, d 120-160zł; ☐ ☒) Recently included in the Lonely Planet BlueList as one of the 10 hippest hostels in the world, this 32-bed place makes up for its off-centre location with parties, barbecues and DVD films on a 3m screen. Some people have been known to check in and never check out. Most rooms have eight to 12 beds, though there is one double.

Hostel Giraffe (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 0073; www.hostelgiraffe.com; ul Krowoderska 31; d 45-60zł, d 160zł; ☐ ☒) This upbeat place north of the Old Town manages to be both laid-back and stylish at the same time. There are all the expected amenities – free laundry and internet, large kitchen etc – but the old piano in the bar is an extra.

Hostel Flamingo (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 0000; www.flamingo-hostel.com; ul Szewska 4; dm 55-80zł, d 170zł; ☒ ☒) Any place that bills itself as 'run by flamingos for flamingos' gets our custom. We love the pink and lilac décor, the cheeky attitude and the great location just steps west of the main market square. Dorms have four to 10 beds.

Camping Clepardia (Map p165; ☎ 012 415 9672; www.clepardia.pl; ul Pachoskiego 28a; per person/tent 20/10zł, bungalows d/tr from 100/130zł; ☎ Apr-mid-Oct; ☐ ☒) Clepardia has tent space and several cabins with a bathroom, and guests have free access to the outdoor swimming pool next door. It's 4km north of the centre, and accessible by bus 115 from the main train station. The site is opposite the Elea department store.

Camping Nr 46 Smok (Map p165; ☎ 012 429 8300; www.smok.krakow.pl; ul Kamedulska 18; per person/tent 20/12zł, bungalows d/tr from 150/170zł; ☐) This quiet camping ground with 11 rooms is around 4km west of the Old Town in leafy Zwierzyniec. To get here from the train station, take tram 2 to the end of the line in Zwierzyniec and change for any westbound bus (except bus 100).

Kraków is awash with modern hostels that have all the amenities and a surfeit of good times. Among other good bets are the following:

Ars Hostel (Map p187; ☎ 012 422 3659; www.arshostel.pl; ul Koletek 7; dm 45-60zł; 📍) This 40-bed hostel is famed as much for its name ('art' in Latin) as for its location below Wawel.

Hostel Centrum Kraków (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1157; www.centrumkrakow.pl; ul Św Gertrudy; dm 45-60zł; 📍) Quiet all-dorm hostel on three floors convenient to both the Old Town and Kazimierz.

Hostel Gardenhouse (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 2824; www.gardenhouse.pl; 3rd fl, ul Floriańska 5; dm 50-65zł; 📍) This hostel has an enviable location in a 15th-century building behind the Mariacki.

MIDRANGE

Centrally located hostels with comfortable twins and doubles have become a realistic alternative for those looking for moderately priced accommodation. Many midrange hotels are located away from the heart of the city, but there are a few within easy walking distance of Rynek Główny and other major sights.

Jordan Guest Rooms (Pokoje Gościnne Jordan; Map p170; ☎ 012 421 2125; www.nocleg.jordan.pl; ul Długa 9; s/d/tr 140/210/280zł; 📍) Jordan is a reasonable and very modern place on the northern edge of the Old Town. The 20 rooms are on the upper floors but you book through the travel agency-cum-jewellery shop downstairs.

Hotel Campanile (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 2600; www.campanile.com.pl; ul Św Tomusza 34; s & d 219-329zł; 📍) Part of a French chain, this 106-room modern hotel has somehow succeeded in nestling in the Old Town, just a few blocks from the Rynek. It has attractive, bright rooms done out in 'corporate décor'.

Hotel Petrus (Map p165; ☎ 012 269 2946; www.petrus.net.pl; ul Pietrusińskiego 12; s €48-65, d €60-75; 📍) Get away from the crowds at this beautifully appointed place close to Park Skąły Twardowskiego and its lake, about 2km southwest of the city centre. The 27 rooms are cool and modern and there's a cosy lounge with a log fire, as well as a sauna, gym, restaurant and beer garden. Rates are 10% cheaper at the weekend.

Polonia House (Dom Polonii; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4355; www.wspolnota-polska.krakow.pl; Rynek Główny 14; s/d 198/235zł, apt 267-348zł) You couldn't ask for a more central location than this. The Dom has just two high-ceilinged double rooms (over-

looking the Rynek) and one double suite, all on the top floor. Needless to say, it gets booked out far in advance.

U Pana Cogito (Map p165; ☎ 012 269 7200; www.pcocito.pl; ul Bałuckiego 6; s/d/q 210/260/340zł; 📍) White and cream seem to be the colours of choice at this friendly 14-room hotel in a lovely mansion about 1km southwest of the centre. All rooms have big bathrooms and refrigerators, and for extra privacy, the one apartment has a separate entrance. The hotel also has its own restaurant, also done out in fresh, minimalist white.

Hotel Royal (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 3500; www.royal.com.pl; ul Św Gertrudy 26-29; s 179-249zł, d 279-369zł, tr 399zł, ste 450-600zł; 📍) This large and impressive Art Nouveau edifice is one of the surprisingly few hotels close to Wawel Hill. It's split into two sections; the 38 higher-priced two-star rooms are cosy and far preferable to the 69 fairly drab one-star ones at the back.

Hotel Saski (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 4222; www.hotel.saski.com.pl; ul Sławkowska 3; s 250-320zł, d 290-390zł, tr 440zł; 📍) If you're in the mood for a touch of *belle époque* Central European style, but without the hefty price tag, the Saski may be the place for you. This grand old establishment occupies a historic mansion just off Rynek Główny. The uniformed doorman, rattling century-old lift and ornate furnishings lend the place a certain glamour, and though the rooms themselves are comparatively plain, most have very modern bathrooms, and the double set of doors is an unusual feature. Cheaper singles and doubles share a bathroom.

Hotel Pollera (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1044; www.pollera.com.pl; ul Szpitalna 30; s 210-320zł, d 260-390zł, tr 330-470zł; 📍) The Pollera is a classy place dating from 1834 with 42 large rooms crammed with elegant furniture. The singles are unexciting, but the doubles are far nicer, and it's central and quiet.

Hotel Polonia (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1233; www.hotel-polonia.com.pl; ul Basztowa 25; s/d/tr/ste 260/303/350/450zł, without bathroom from 98/111/130zł; 📍) The Polonia occupies a grand old building near the train and bus stations. The rooms are light and modern but many overlook the noisy main road. The suites are particularly spacious and attractive though. Rooms without en suite are not so nice.

Wielopole Guest Rooms (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1475; www.wielopole.pl; ul Wielopole 3; s 210zł, d 320-380zł; 📍) Wielopole's 36 bright, mod-

ern rooms are housed in a renovated block with a great courtyard on the eastern edge of the Old Town, and all have spotless bathrooms. Breakfast (served in your room) costs 20zł extra.

Hotel Wit Stwosz (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 6026; www.wit-stwosz.com.pl; ul Mikołajska 28; s 275-295zł, d 330-370zł, tr 385-450zł, apt 490-550zł; 📍) Wit Stwosz occupies a recently renovated 16th-century town house northeast of the Rynek. Its 17 rooms are fully modernised, though some are a bit plain. Overall it's comfortable, stylish and remarkably good value for its location.

Hotel Jan (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 1969; www.hotel-jan.com.pl; ul Grodzka 11; s 250-320zł, d 340-430zł, tr 460zł) Hotel Jan is a restored town house with 50 beds on a busy and often noisy pedestrian street, just a stone's throw from Rynek Główny. Rooms are pleasant and comfortable, and the cool medieval cellar makes an atmospheric setting for breakfast.

Hotel Pod Wawelem (Map p170; ☎ 012 426 2626; www.hotelpodwawelem.pl; Plac Na Groblach 22; s 240-420zł, d 340-560zł, apt 520-600zł; 📍) This hotel, at the foot of Wawel and overlooking the river, has just been renovated and has a crisp and up-to-date feel to it. The 48 rooms are generously proportioned and look either onto the river or the castle. The view from the rooftop café is stunning.

TOP END

There are plenty of upmarket accommodation options in the Old Town and around, which is certainly Kraków's most atmospheric area in which to stay.

Hotel Alexander (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 9660; www.alexhotel.pl; ul Garbarska 18; s/d 340/420zł; 📍) The Alexander is a modern, if slightly anonymous, 38-room place, offering the usual standard of three-star comfort. It's on a shabby but quiet street, just west of the Old Town.

Hotel Wawel (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 13 00; www.hotel.wawel.pl; ul Poselska 22; s 300zł, d 430-520zł; 📍) Ideally located just off busy ul Grodzka, what was once the midrange Wawel-Tourist has undergone a major facelift and emerged as the Wawel. Its 40 rooms are large, comfortable and now very stylish. It's set far enough back from the main drag to avoid most of the Old Town noise.

Hotel Pugetów (Map p170; ☎ 012 432 4950; www.donimirski.com; ul Starowiślna 15a; s/d/tr/ste 250/510/600/790zł; 📍) Kraków's first boutique hotel, the Pugetów stands proudly next to the

19th-century neo-Renaissance palace of that name and offers just seven rooms and suites with individual names (Conrad, Bonaparte) and identities. Think embroidered bathrobes, black-marble baths and a fabulous silver-service cellar restaurant.

Hotel Pod Różą (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 3381; www.hotel.com.pl/podroz; ul Floriańska 14; s/d/ste 550/650/750zł; 📍) A hotel that has never closed, even in the dark, dreary days of communism, 'Under the Rose' offers antiques, Oriental carpets, a wonderful glassed-in courtyard restaurant and state-of-the-art facilities.

Hotel Amadeus (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 6070; www.hotel-amadeus.pl; ul Mikołajska 20; s/d/ste €160/170/240; 📍) Amadeus, with its Mozartian flair, is one of Kraków's most refined hotels. Its 22 rooms are tastefully furnished (if somewhat small) and service is of a high standard. There's a sauna and a small fitness centre, and a well-regarded gourmet restaurant. Check out the photos of famous guests in the lobby.

our pick Hotel Stary (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 3400; www.stary.hotel.com.pl; ul Szczepańska 5; s/d/ste 700/850/950zł; 📍) Setting new standards for accommodation in Poland, the 53-room Stary is housed in an 18th-century aristocratic residence that exudes charm. But the only thing 'old' about this place is its name and the building it is in. The fabrics are all natural, the bathroom surfaces Italian marble and the free internet service ultra highspeed.

Hotel Copernicus (Map p170; ☎ 012 424 3400; www.hotel.com.pl/copernicus; ul Kanonicka 16; s 700zł, d 850-950zł, ste from 1200zł; 📍) Nestled in two beautifully restored buildings in one of Kraków's most picturesque and atmospheric streets, the 29-room Copernicus is arguably the city's finest and most luxurious hotel. The rooftop terrace, with spectacular views over Wawel, and the swimming pool, accommodated in a medieval vaulted brick cellar, add to the hotel's allure.

Kazimierz

BUDGET

Budget accommodation has finally arrived in Kazimierz as it grows in popularity as both a sightseeing and nightlife district.

our pick Goodbye Lenin (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 2030; www.goodbyelenin.pl; ul Berka Joselewicza 23; dm 30-60zł, d 120-140zł; 📍) Just about our favourite hostel in Kraków, this 70-bed place with a cheeky Polish People's Republic theme and

Mediterranean colours is down a quiet street off ul Starowiślna. Most dorm rooms have four to six beds and we love the spacious downstairs lounge with a popular bar and pool table. The kitchen is open forever and tea and coffee are gratis.

Secret Garden (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 5445; ul Skawińska 7; dm 45zł, s/d/tr/q 80/120/165/200zł; ☒ ☑ ☒) This 18-room hostel in Western Kazimierz has three wings decorated according to different themes – films, fruits and flowers – and 18 bright and colourful rooms. The only drawback is that there are no bathrooms en suite.

Tournet Guest Rooms (Tournet Pokoje Gościnne; Map p187; ☎ 012 292 0088; www.accommodation.krakow.pl; ul Miodowa 7; s 100-140zł, d 120-180zł, tr 220zł) This is an excellent-value neat pension in the centre of Kazimierz, offering simple but comfortable and quiet rooms. The bathrooms, however, are tiny. Check-in time is noon to 10pm.

Nathan's Villa Hostel (Map p187; ☎ 012 422 3545; www.nathansvilla.com; ul Św Agnieszki 1; dm 50-65zł, d/tw 160/180zł; ☒ ☒ ☒) The doyen of modern hostels in Kraków, Nathan's is located roughly halfway between the Old Town and Kazimierz. Comfy rooms (dorms have four to 10 beds), sparkling bathrooms, free laundry, a cellar bar and back garden with barbecue, and friendly, professional staff make this place a big hit with budget travellers.

MIDRANGE

Kazimierz has a small selection of interesting midrange hotels, some with a distinct Jewish flavour. It's a pleasant, peaceful and now fashionable place to stay.

Hotel Klezmer-Hois (Map p187; ☎ 012 411 1245; www.klezmer.pl; ul Szeroka 6; s 220-260zł, d 280-320zł, apt 500zł) This uniquely stylish little hotel has been restored to its prewar, Jewish character, and has 10 airy rooms, each decorated differently, though the cheaper rooms do not have private bathrooms. There's a good-quality Jewish restaurant (see p202) on site, as well as an art gallery, and live music every evening.

Hotel Kazimierz (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 6629; www.hk.com.pl; ul Miodowa 16; s €60-65, d €75-80, tr €90-95; ☒ ☒ ☒) This friendly inn in the heart of the Jewish quarter has 35 simple but modern, comfortable rooms above a popular restaurant. We love the stained glass.

Hotel Alef (Map p187; ☎ 012 424 3131; www.alef.pl; ul Św Agnieszki 5; s/d/tr €59/77/92; ☒ ☒ ☒) ul Szeroka (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 3870; ul Szeroka 17) This hotel

within the shadow of Wawel has 45 large, charming rooms, furnished with genuine antiques and delightful paintings. The tiny (four-room) branch at ul Szeroka has a good Jewish restaurant.

Hotel Eden (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6565; www.hoteleden.pl; ul Cienna 15; s/d/tr/ste 260/350/430/550zł; ☒ ☒ ☒) Located in three meticulously restored 15th-century town houses, the Eden has 27 comfortable rooms and comes complete with a pub, a sauna and the only mikvah (traditional Jewish bath) in Kraków. Kosher meals are available on request.

EATING

By Polish standards, Kraków is a food paradise. The Old Town is tightly packed with gastronomic venues, serving a wide range of international cuisines and catering for every pocket.

Kraków has plenty of budget eateries called *jadłodajnia* (something like 'diner') and offer hearty Polish home-style meals at very low cost. Cheap takeaway fare can be found along ul Grodzka, while better-quality restaurants line the streets away from the main square. Kazimierz has a number of small restaurants, some of which offer Jewish-style cuisine and are worth the walk.

Old Town & Surrounds

BUDGET

Bar Smaczny (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4220; ul Św Tomasz 24; mains 3.20-8.20zł; ☒ ☒ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) This simple place northeast of the Rynek claims to have the best *pierogis* (dumplings) in Kraków and we'll vouch for that assertion. There's a good choice of vegetarian ones.

Jadłodajnia (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 1444; ul Sienna 11; mains 3.60-10zł; ☒ ☒ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Probably the best of the old-style restaurants serving home-style food, this place dates back to 1934. Savoury soups and meat-and-potato dishes prevail.

Bar Wegetariański Vega (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 3494; www.vegarestauracja.com.pl in Polish; ul Św Gertrudy 7; mains 5-12zł; ☒ ☒ 9am-9pm) Vega is an excellent, exclusively vegetarian place, serving tasty *pierogi*, crepes, tofu and salads in bright and pleasant surrounds.

U Babci Maliny (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 4818; www.kuchniaubabcimaliny.pl in Polish; ul Szpitalna 38; mains 5-14zł; ☒ ☒ 11am-10pm) ul Stawkowska (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 7601; ul Stawkowska 17) 'At Granny Raspberry's' is a godsend for travellers on a budget, with hearty

Polish staples at giveaway prices served in an overwrought boudoir-like basement eatery. Love the boas and the chandelier.

Greenway (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 1027; www.greenway.pl; ul Mikołajska 14; mains 8-12.50zł; ☒ ☒ 10am-10pm Mon-Fri, 11am-9pm Sat & Sun) Some of Kraków's best-value vegetarian and vegan fare is on offer at Green Way, with veggie burgers, enchiladas and salads on the menu.

Taco Mexicano (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 5441; ul Poselska 20; mains 12-16zł) If you hanker after something from 'south of the border' and Slovakian bread dumplings is not what you had in mind, this cantina is for you. It's popular with locals and visitors alike, and serves fairly authentic enchiladas, burritos and tacos.

Sakana Sushi Bar (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 3086; www.sakana.pl; ul Stawkowska 5/7; mains 9-30zł; ☒ ☒ noon-11pm Mon-Sat, 1-10pm Sun) With sushi and sashimi floating around in little boats that loop around a 'canal' encircling a communal figure-eight table, the Sakana just has to be different. There's tempura too and some unusual soups.

Gruzińskie Chaczapuri (☎ 0501 223 183; www.chaczapuri.pl in Polish; mains 10-20zł; ☒ ☒ 9am-midnight) ul Floriańska (Map p170; ul Floriańska 26) ul Grodzka (Map p170; ul Grodzka 3) If you have a hankering for something a little different, this cheap and cheerful chain of Georgian restaurants with five branches in Kraków serves up grills, salads and steaks and, the house speciality: cheese pie.

MIDRANGE

Gospoda CK Dezerter (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 7931; www.ck-dezerter.pl in Polish; ul Bracka 6; mains 12-25zł; ☒ ☒ 9am-11pm Sun-Thu, 9am-midnight Fri & Sat) Dezerter is a pleasantly decorated place that focuses on traditional, meaty Galician specialities, including Austrian and Hungarian cuisine.

Smak Ukraiński (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 9294; www.ukraiński.pl; ul Kanonicza 15; mains 15-25zł; ☒ ☒ noon-10pm) Hidden away below one of Kraków's most attractive streets, this little place presents authentic Ukrainian dishes in a cosy little cellar decorated with predictably folksy flair. Expect lots of dumplings, borscht (the Ukrainian variety) and waiters in waistcoats.

Indus Tandoori (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 2282; ul Stawkowska 13/15; mains 10-33zł; ☒ ☒ 10am-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun) By all accounts the best Indian restaurant in town, the Indus serves curries, tandoori dishes and *thalis* (metal trays with a selection of tasty treats), in a long narrow dining room.

Orient Ekspres (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 6672; www.orient-ekspres.krakow.pl; ul Stolarska 13; mains 15-33zł; ☒ ☒ noon-11pm) Hercule Poirot might be surprised to find this elegant eatery here, well off the route of its railway namesake. The food is a mix of international dishes, served with wine by the glass. Mellow music, candlelight and the choo-choo-train theme make it a good place for a romantic tête-à-tête.

Jama Michalika (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1561; www.jamamichalika.pl; ul Floriańska 45; mains 10-40zł; ☒ ☒ 9am-10pm) If these walls could talk... Established in 1895, this cavernous place was traditionally a hang-out for writers, painters, actors and other artistic types and the birthplace of the *Młoda Polska* movement. Today it's a grand, Art Nouveau restaurant with a very green interior and lots of theatrical etchings adorning the walls. The traditional Polish food is reasonable value but the compulsory coat-check, and pay toilets are an annoying extra expense.

Balaton (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 0469; www.balaton.krakow.pl; ul Grodzka 37; mains 21-32zł; ☒ ☒ noon-10pm) Balaton, with its shabby décor and uninspired wait staff, may not look inviting, but it's a very popular place for simple Hungarian food and seems to fill up quickly every night.

Nostalgia (Map p170; ☎ 012 425 4260; www.nostalgia.krakow.pl; ul Karmelicka 10; mains 17-37zł; ☒ ☒ noon-11pm) A refined version of the traditional Polish eatery, Nostalgia features a fireplace, overhead timber beams, uncrowded tables and courteous service. Wrap yourself around Russian dumplings, pork loins in green pepper sauce, or veggie options such as potato pancakes. In warm weather there's an outdoor dining area.

Miód Malina (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 0411; ul Grodzka 40; mains 23-45zł; ☒ ☒ noon-11pm) The charmingly named 'Honey Raspberry' serves 'enlightened' Polish dishes in colourful surrounds. Grab a window seat and order the forest mushrooms in cream and any of the duck or veal dishes.

Casa della Pizza (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 6498; Mały Rynek 2; mains 14-48zł; ☒ ☒ 10am-late) As the name would suggest, this is an amenable and unpretentious place in the Little Sq, away from the bulk of the tourist traffic. It has a very long menu of pizza and pasta dishes and a lovely terrace with perfect views of the Mariacki towers. The downstairs bar section is the Arabian-styled Shisha Club (www.shisha.pl), serving Middle Eastern food.

Cherubino (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 4007; www.cherubino.pl; ul Św Tomasz 15; mains 22-49zł; ☒ ☒ noon-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun) Cherubino, which

bills itself as a restaurant and winery, offers lovely Italian dishes amid a charming, artsy interior. The antique carriages filling up the room are wonderful.

TOP END

Paese (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 6273; ul Poselska 24; mains 28-66zł; ☎ noon-11pm) The name hints at it but the Moor's head with a bandana confirms it: this is a Corsican, not a French restaurant. The thatched-cottage décor is comfortable and the dishes – duck in lavender sauce, veal with rosemary, saddle of venison – well chosen and redolent of the maquis. Fish and vegetarian options are also on the menu.

Metropolitan (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 9803; www.metropolitan-krakow.com; ul Sławkowska 3; mains 31-79zł; ☎ 7.30am-midnight Mon-Sat, 7.30am-10pm Sun) Attached to the Hotel Saski, the Metropolitan is a snazzy fusion restaurant with a distressed Mediterranean look to it. It has nostalgic B&W photos of international locales plastering the walls and is a great place for breakfast. It also serves pasta, grills and steaks, and more ambitious things like honey and orange roasted duck leg.

our pick Wentzl (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 5712; www.wentzl.pl; Rynek Główny 21; mains 53-66zł; ☎ 1-11pm) To our mind Kraków's finest restaurant, this eatery dating back to 1792 and perched high above the main market square has timbered ceilings above you, Oriental carpets and fine oil paintings all around. The food is sublime – foie gras, chanterelles in cream, duck marinated in *źubrówka* (bison grass vodka) – and service of a predictably high standard.

Cyrano de Bergerac (Map p170; ☎ 012 411 7288; ul Sławkowska 26; mains 40-90zł; ☎ noon-midnight) One of Kraków's top eateries, this restaurant serves fine, authentic French cuisine in one of the most beautiful cellars in the city. Artwork and tapestries add to the romance and in warmer months there's seating in a covered courtyard.

Kazimierz BUDGET

Momo Bar (Map p187; ☎ 06096 85775; ul Dietla 49; mains 4-13zł; ☎ 11am-8pm) Vegans will cross the doorstep of this restaurant with relief – the majority of the menu is completely animal-free. The space is decorated with Indian craft pieces, and serves up subcontinental soups, stuffed pancakes and rice dishes, with a great range

of cakes. The *momo* (Tibetan dumplings; 12.50zł) are worth ordering.

MIDRANGE

Chłopskie Jadło (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 8520; ul Św Agnieszki 1; mains 18-55zł; ☎ 10am-10pm Sun-Thu, 10am-midnight Fri & Sat) Old Town (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 5157; ul Św Jana 3) This place, a short walk south of Wawel, looks like a rustic country inn somewhere at the crossroads in medieval Poland, and serves up traditional Polish 'peasant grub' (as its name says). Live folk music is performed here on Friday and Saturday, and seating in antique sleighs adds to the rustic atmosphere. We love the *żurek* (sour rye) soup in a bread loaf.

Kuchnia i Wino (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6710; www.kuchniawino.eu; ul Józefa 13; mains 27-49zł; ☎ noon-10pm) The name – 'Cuisine and Wine' – may not suggest this bistro has a lot of imagination, but just try one of the delightfully inspired Mediterranean dishes on the short menu such as veal with basil. We love the sky-painted ceiling and the Tuscan tones.

A number of restaurants in and around ul Szeroka offer Jewish-inspired dishes such as *czulent* (bean casserole with beef and vegetables), *knyshy* (aka *knish*, a dumpling with the filling of potato, ground meat, sauerkraut, onions or buckwheat groats) and stuffed gooseneck. The best of the lot is **Dawno Temu na Kazimierzu** (Once upon a Time in Kazimierz; Map p187; ☎ 012 421 2117; ul Szeroka 17; mains 18-34zł; ☎ 10am-midnight), a blast from the past with sewing machines on the tables and old Jewish shop signs outside. You'll find similar dishes, décor and atmosphere at the following two places, which also feature live *klezmer* music nightly at about 8pm.

Café Alef (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 3870; www.alef.pl; ul Szeroka 17; mains 10-48zł; ☎ 10am-midnight)

Klezmer-Hois (Map p187; ☎ 012 411 1245; ul Szeroka 6; mains 16-46zł; ☎ 10am-9.30pm)

DRINKING

You'll be spoiled for choice when heading out for a drink in Kraków. The Old Town alone supposedly counts 400 bars and pubs, and ul Szewska, running west from the main market square, is a particularly fruitful hunting ground. Some offer snacks or meals, but most are just watering holes, many in vaulted cellars. For teetotallers and/or those in search of something hot, there are plenty of cafés and teahouses around too.

Pubs & Bars

OLD TOWN

Nic Nowego (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 6188; ul Św Krzyża 15; ☎ 7am-3am Mon-Fri, 10am-3am Sat & Sun) 'Nothing New', run by a genuine Paddy, is a 'modern Irish café-bar' and a welcome addition to the drinking scene in Kraków. It's a bright, modern place with a long bar, a great atmosphere and good food.

CK Browar (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 2505; ul Podwale 6/7; ☎ 9am-2pm Sun-Thu, 9am-4pm Fri & Sat) Serious tippers will head for this microbrewery with its own cavernous drinking hall, and order the home brew in 3L tubes a metre high, which the wait staff bring to your table and fix onto special taps.

Ciemnia Club (Map p170; ☎ 0692 651 311; ul Krowoderska 8; ☎ 6pm-2am Sun-Thu, 6pm-5am Fri & Sat) This is Kraków's premier gay bar with facilities intended for those seriously OFB (out for business). Ring and await appraisal/approval; this is Poland, after all.

Pod Papugami (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 8299; ul Św Jana 18; ☎ 1pm-2am) 'Under the Parrots' is a vaguely 'Irish' cellar pub decorated with old motorcycles, street signs, musical instruments and other junk. It's good to escape to, with its pool table and tunnel-like maze of rooms.

Piwnica Pod Żłotą Pipą (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 9466; ul Floriańska 30; ☎ noon-midnight) The 'Pub under the Golden Pipes' is another inviting cellar bar. It's more sedate than most such places, better suited to conversation than listening to music.

Black Gallery (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 0030; ul Mikołajska 24; ☎ noon-6am Mon-Sat, 2pm-6am Sun) Underground pub-cum-nightclub with a modern aspect: split levels, exposed steel frame lighting and a metallic bar. It really gets going after midnight.

U Louisa (Map p170; ☎ 012 617 0222; Rynek Główny 13; ☎ 11am-1am Sun-Wed, 11am-4am Thu-Sun) This stylish pub is conveniently located below the main square as you enter from ul Grodzka. Big screens to watch sports and wi-fi throughout rounds out the picture.

KAZIMIERZ

Singer Café (Map p187; ☎ 012 292 0622; ul Estery 20; ☎ 9am-4am Sun-Thu, 9am-5am Fri & Sat) Louche hang-out of choice among the Kazimierz cognoscenti, this laid-back café-bar has nothing to do with music per se (is that Serbian pop we hear in the background?) but is a nod to all the sewing machines around. Great place.

Le Scandale (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6855; Plac Nowy 9; ☎ 8am-3am) Smooth drinking hole with low black leather couches, ambient lighting and a gleaming well-stocked bar. Full of mellow drinkers sampling the extensive cocktail list.

Propaganda (Map p187; ☎ 012 292 0402; ul Miodowa 20; ☎ 11am-3am Sun-Thu, 11am-5am Fri & Sat) This is another one of those places full of communist nostalgia, but so real are the banners and mementoes here that we almost started singing the 'Internationale'. Killer cocktails.

Cafés & Teahouses

Wiśniowy Sad (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 2111; ul Grodzka 33; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat & Sun) With its old furniture, lace tablecloths and scattered antiques, the 'Cherry Orchard' evokes the world of Chekhov and serves Russian-style tea and pastries. Sip your Darjeeling to live piano recitals at 8pm from Thursday to Sunday.

Café Camelot (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 0123; ul Św Tomasa 17; ☎ 9am-midnight) For coffee and cake, try this genteel haven hidden around an obscure street corner in the Old Town. Its cosy rooms are cluttered with lace-covered candle-lit tables, and a quirky collection of wooden figurines featuring spiritual or folkloric scenes.

Ciasteczka z Krakowa (Map p187; ☎ 012 428 2890; ul Stradomska 19; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) This bakery-cum-café has some of the best cakes and pastries in Poland.

Café Bunkier (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 0585; Plac Szczepański 3a; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Thu, 9am-2am Fri-Sun) The 'Bunker' is a wonderful café with a positively enormous glassed-in terrace tacked onto the Bunkier Sztuki (Art Bunker), a cutting-edge gallery northwest of the Rynek. It's one of the few modern buildings in the Old Town and looks just like its name suggests. Enter from Planty.

Demmers Teahouse (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 1660; ul Kanonicka 21; ☎ 11am-7pm) An outlet of the famous Viennese *teehaus*, this is the best place in Kraków for a cup of tea. It sells 130 varieties, many of which can be tried in an intimate tearoom in the 13th-century cellar of this lovely building with sgraffito.

ENTERTAINMENT

Kraków has a lively cultural life, particularly in theatre, music and visual arts, and there are numerous annual festivals. The comprehensive Polish and English monthly magazine *Karnet* (www.karnet.krakow.pl; 4zł), available

at any branch of the tourist office (see p167), lists almost every event in the city.

Another free what's-on monthly magazine, *This Month in Kraków* (www.cracow.pl), has less-detailed coverage. The bimonthly *Kraków In Your Pocket* (www.inyourpocket.com), which has a cover price of 5zł but is often free at tourist-information offices, hotels and bars, has excellent coverage of entertainment, including bars, pubs and clubs.

In addition to the websites of Cracow Life (www.cracow-life.com) and Krakow Post (www.krakowpost.com), excellent online sources of information are www.krakow.nightlife.com and, for club events and parties, www.kr-nightlife.pl and www.where2b.org.

Nightclubs

There are quite a number of nightclubs and discos in and around the Old Town. The following places are the best and most popular at the moment.

Rdza (Map p170; ☎ 06003 95541; www.rdza.pl; ul Bracka 3/5; ☎ 7pm-6am) This basement club attracts some of Kraków's more sophisticated clubbers with its Polish house and exposed brick walls and comfy sofas. The more consistent door policy of late is welcomed.

7 Club (Map p170; ☎ 012 631 9500; Św Filipa 7; ☎ 6am-2am Sun-Thu, 6am-5am Fri & Sat) Still hanging in there after all these years, Kraków's oldest gay venue is a dance club at the weekend, with strip and drag shows to boot (and we're *not* talking a dress code here).

EI Sol (Map p170; ☎ 012 633 8835; www.elsol-krakow.pl; ul Batorego 1; ☎ 7pm-midnight Sun-Thu, 7pm-3am Fri & Sat) This Latino club reverberates to the sound of salsa, merengue, samba and bossa nova nightly.

Prozak (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1128; www.prozak.pl; Plac Dominikański 6; ☎ 7pm-4am Sun-Thu, 7pm-6am Fri & Sat) A legend in its own lifetime, this nightlife giant was once celebrated for luring Kraków's rich and beautiful into its labyrinth of passageways, nooks and crannies. It still draws in the clubbing faithful, but too many (drunken) foreigners have scared away the local talent.

Cień (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 2177; www.cienklub.pl; ul Św Jana 15; ☎ 8pm-5am Tue-Thu, 8pm-7am Fri & Sat) The enormous 'Shadow' attracts a perfect (as in fake tans) crowd with house sounds produced by DJs fresh in from Ibiza and great décor. A tough door policy will keep half your mates out.

Music Bar (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 2546; ul Szewska 9; ☎ 11am-1am) Not for serious clubbers (you

know who you are), this complex, with a large bar in a covered courtyard and the rather chichi Light Box Gallery (open 6pm to 4am Thursday to Sunday) up the glass stairs, mostly attracts a young crowd.

Grungy joint **Łubiu-Dubu** (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 0521; www.lubiodubu.pl; 4th fl, ul Wielopole 15; ☎ 4pm-2am Sun-Thu, 6pm-4am Fri & Sat) is an echo of the past, from the garish colours to the collection of objects from 1970s Poland. In the same building you'll also find the erstwhile gay **Kitsch** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 5299; www.kitsch.pl), Kraków's popular last port of call, on the 2nd floor and the more trendy and musically risk-taking **Caryca** (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 0863) on the 1st floor.

Jazz

Kraków has a lively jazz scene and a number of clubs have live music (tickets around 20zł) year-round.

Jazz Club U Muniaka (Map p170; ☎ 012 423 1205; ul Floriańska 3; tickets 20zł; ☎ 6.30pm-2am) Housed in a fine cellar, this is one of the best-known jazz outlets in Poland, the brainchild of saxophonist Janusz Muniak, who often performs here. There are concerts most nights from 9.30pm.

Harris Piano Jazz Bar (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 5741; www.harris.krakow.pl in Polish; Rynek Główny 28; ☎ 9am-2am May-Oct, 1pm-2am Nov-Apr) Another active jazz haunt, Harris hosts jazz and blues bands most days of the week except Sunday at 9pm.

PiecArt (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 6425; www.piec.art.pl in Polish; ul Szewska 12; ☎ 1pm-3am) This cosy cellar club tends to stage acoustic jazz on Wednesday and irregular gigs on other days.

Piano Rouge (Map p170; ☎ 012 431 0333; www.thepianorouge.com; Rynek Główny 46; ☎ noon-3am) This sumptuous jazz club and restaurant, in a cellar on the north side of the main market square, is decked out with classic sofas, ornate lampshades and billowing lengths of colourful silk. Live jazz every night at 9.30pm or 10pm.

Classical Music & Opera

Classical music concerts are staged in venues throughout Kraków in the summer months but especially at Polonia House (p198) and the Church of SS Peter & Paul (p185).

During the rest of the year the **Filharmonia Krakowska** (Kraków Philharmonic; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4312; www.filharmonia.krakow.pl; ul Zwierzyniecka 1; ☎ box office noon-7pm Tue-Fri, 1hr before performance Sat & Sun) is home to one of the best orchestras in the country.

The **Opera Krakowska** (Kraków Opera; ☎ 012 628 8101; www.opera.krakow.pl) performs at the **Teatr im J Słowackiego** (below) as there's no proper opera house in Kraków.

Cinemas

Kraków counts just under 20 cinemas, with many of them in the centre. The cinemas that may have some art-house and quality mainstream movies on their programme include **Kino Mikro** (Map p165; ☎ 012 634 2897; www.kinomikro.pl in Polish; ul Lea 5), **Kino Paradox** (Map p165; ☎ 012 430 0025; www.cmjordan.krakow.pl; ul Krowoderska 8) and the cinema at the **Rotunda Cultural Centre** (Map p165; ☎ 012 634 3412; www.rotunda.pl; ul Oleandry 1).

Theatre

Kraków has just over a dozen theatres and is second only to Warsaw in that department.

Cricoteka (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 8332; www.cricoteka.com.pl; ul Kanonicza 5; ☎ 10am-2pm Mon-Fri 10am-2pm Wed, Fri & Sat, 2-6pm Tue & Thu) Cricoteka is the archive that documents the avant-garde (and now defunct) Cricot 2 theatre, created in 1955 by Tadeusz Kantor and the city's best-known theatre outside the national borders. Theatre buffs may be interested in visiting this place while the museum that will hold the documents is completed in Podgórze.

Stary Teatr w Krakowie (Kraków Old Theatre; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4040; www.stary-teatr.krakow.pl; ul Jagiellońska 1; ☎ box office 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) This is the best-known (and most beautiful) city theatre and has attracted the cream of the city's actors.

Teatr im J Słowackiego (Julius Słowacki Theatre; Map p170; ☎ 012 422 4022; www.slowacki.krakow.pl; Plac Św Ducha 4; ☎ box office 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm performance days) This important theatre focuses on Polish classics and large-scale productions. It's in a large and opulent building (1893) that's patterned on the Paris Opera, and is southwest of Rynek Główny.

Teatr Groteska (Map p170; ☎ 012 633 3762; www.groteska.pl; ul Skarbowska 2; ☎ box office 8am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri & 1hr before performance) The 'Grotesque Theatre' stages mostly puppet shows and is especially known for its creepy, wordless version of *The Golem*, the story of a Frankenstein-like clay creature brought to life by a Prague rabbi.

Scena STU (Map p165; ☎ 012 422 2744; www.scenastu.com.pl in Polish; Aleja Krasińskiego 16/18; ☎ box office 9am-7pm Mon-Fri & 2hr before performance Sat & Sun) The 'STU Stage' started in the 1970s as a politically

involved student theatre and was immediately successful. Today it is a solid professional troupe performing avant-garde plays.

SHOPPING

Kraków's Old Town has a vast array of shops, selling everything from tacky T-shirts to exquisite crystal glassware, and all within a short walk from the main market square. Ul Grodzka and ul Floriańska are good places to start looking. If you're in a mall mood, the **Galeria Krakowska** (Map p170; ☎ 012 428 9900; www.galeria-krakowska.pl; ul Pawia), next to the train station, has 270 shops.

Antiques

For everything from rust to diamonds check out the two weekend flea markets in Kazimierz. The one on Saturday morning is held in Plac Nowy and the one on Sunday in the Hala Targowa (Market Hall) on ul Grzegorzewska northeast of the Jewish quarter.

Salon Antyków Pasja (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1096; ul Jagiellońska 9; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) This is one of the most established antique salons in the Old Town, with clocks, maps and bric-a-brac.

Antykariat na Kazimierzu (Map p187; ☎ 012 292 6153; ul Meiselsa 17; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun) In the basement of the Judaica Foundation in Kazimierz, this Aladdin's cave is a jumble of antique china, glass, paintings, books and other assorted schlock.

Art

For a complete listing of art galleries in the city, get a hold of the free flyer *Galerie* (www.poland-art.com) produced every two months.

Labyrint (Map p170; ☎ 012 292 6080; www.galeria.labyrint.and.pl in Polish; 1st fl, ul Floriańska 36; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Labyrint No 2 (Map p187; ☎ 012 292 1300; ul Józefa 15; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) The two 'Labyrinths' are more affordable places for art, and show a decent mix of both painting and sculpture.

Jan Fejkiel Gallery (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 1553; www.fejkielgallery.com; ul Grodzka 65; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) Fejkiel has one of the best collections of contemporary prints and drawings in Kraków.

Starmach Gallery (Map p165; ☎ 012 656 4317; www.starmach.com.pl; ul Wegierska 5; ☎ 11am-6pm Mon-Fri) One of the most prestigious art galleries in town, Starmach has renowned contemporary painting.

Galerie d'Art Naïf (Gallery of Naive Art; Map p187; ☎ 012 421 0637; <http://artnaive.sky.pl>; ul Józefa 11; 🕒 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) This Kazimierz gallery exhibits and sells the work of some of Poland's most celebrated Naive painters and sculptors, and folk artists.

Andrzej Mleczko Gallery (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 7104; www.mleczko.pl; ul Św Jana 14; 🕒 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) The gallery displays and sells comic drawings and other articles by Poland's most popular satirical cartoonist, Andrzej Mleczko (see boxed text, opposite).

Galeria Plakatu (Poster Gallery; Map p170; ☎ 012 421 2640; www.cracowpostergallery.com; ul Stolarska 8-10; 🕒 noon-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat) Poland has always excelled in the art of poster making and this is the city's largest and best choice of posters, created by Poland's most prominent poster makers.

Gifts & Souvenirs

An obvious place to look for gifts and souvenirs (not always of the highest quality) is the arcaded **Cloth Hall** (p181), which houses dozens of little shops selling jewellery, wooden chess sets, glass, textiles, T-shirts and other reasonably priced items.

Krosno (Map p170; ☎ 012 421 5496; Plac Mariacki 1; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) This small shop sells an attractive range of glassware made by Poland's famous Krosno factory.

Mikołajczyki Amber (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 3696; ul Kanoniczna 22; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun) Branch of a chain selling 'Baltic gold', Poland's most treasured semiprecious material. Unlike some amber shops, Mikołajczyki Amber includes a certificate of quality with each purchase.

Galeria Bukowski (Map p170; ☎ 012 433 8855; ul Sienna 1; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) This unbearably cute shop specialises in *miś pluszowy* (teddy bears) of all shapes, sizes, hues and descriptions.

Blażko Jewellery Art Gallery (Map p187; ☎ 012 430 6731; Józefa 11; 🕒 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) Exceptionally well-designed and -crafted baubles from a young Kazimierz-based jeweller.

Sporting Goods

If you're going to play the game, you'll need the kit.

Grappa.pl (Map p187; ☎ 012 421 1778; www.grappa.pl in Polish; ul Dajwór 25; 🕒 10.04am-6.04pm Mon-Fri, 10.04am-3.04pm Sat) This affable and helpful shop stocks everything you'll need to start hiking, trekking or climbing.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

John Paul II International Airport (☎ 012 295 5800; www.lotnisko-balice.pl) is in Balice, about 11km west of the city. The only domestic flights from here are to Warsaw (up to 10 a day), which you can reach more cheaply centre to centre by train, and Gdańsk (twice daily). Kraków has direct international flight connections with up to four dozen mostly European cities including Dublin, Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome and Vienna. There are also flights to Chicago (daily) and New York (twice weekly).

LOT (Map p170; ☎ 0801 703 703; ul Basztowa 15; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) makes reservations and issues tickets.

Bus

The modern bus terminal is behind the city's main train station, Kraków Główny, just northeast of the Old Town. Travel by bus is particularly advisable to places like Zakopane (16zł, 2½ hours) as it's considerably shorter and faster than by train, and fast PKS buses go there roughly every half-hour. Two private companies, **Trans Frej** (www.trans-frej.com.pl) and **Szwagropol** (www.szwagropol.pl), also run buses to Zakopane, which are marginally cheaper and much faster (15zł, 1¾ hours). Tickets for Trans-Frej are available from **Waweltur** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 1921; www.waweltur.com.pl; ul Pawia 8; 🕒 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat); for Szwagropol, tickets are sold by **Centrum Turystyki** (Map p170; ☎ 012 422 2904; ul Worcella 1) opposite the train station. Both also go to Nowy Sącz (16zł) and Nowy Targ (14zł).

There are around six daily PKS departures to Częstochowa (15zł, three hours) and hourly ones to Oświęcim (8zł, 1½ hours). Other destinations include up to five buses a day to Lublin (35zł, 4½ hours), six to Zamość (21zł to 35zł, four to five hours) and 10 to Cieszyn (15zł, two hours) at the Czech border. There are also up to four buses a day to Warsaw (38zł to 43zł, five to 5½ hours). Other destinations are better served by train.

There are plenty of international buses run by **Eurolines** (www.eurolinespolska.com.pl), including those to Amsterdam (269zł, 20½ hours), Budapest (100zł, 7½ hours), London (349zł, 27 hours), Munich (231zł, 19 hours), Paris (349zł, 24 hours), Prague (115zł, 10 hours), Riga (194zł, 20 hours), Rome (350zł, 25 hours) and Vienna (130zł, 10½ hours).

NOT FROM THE DRAWING BORED

Andrzej Mleczko is Poland's foremost satirical cartoonist. His work appears regularly in the national media, including *Polityka*, Poland's biggest-selling news weekly. He lives in Kraków.

Local boy? I was born in Tarnobrzeg near Rzeszów in what we call 'Polska C' [small towns and villages in rural Poland]. I came to Kraków in 1967 to study architecture.

So a native by now then... Yes, but it took a long time. People here are very conservative by nature. They say that the only true Cracovian is one whose grandfather owned a *kamienica* (town house) on Rynek Główny!

Architecture to satire... How did that happen? I drew from the age of four and should have gone to the art academy. But when I applied, they examined my drawings and said as politely as they could that they were too 'mannerist'. I had to go where my drawing was needed, where it could be put to use.

Did you just wake up one day and decide to be funny? No, it just emerged. There wasn't one single event. But when I was 12 I sent some of my drawings in to a children's radio programme. 'Your drawing is very good,' said the show's moderator, 'but why are the pictures so sad?' This was an excellent review as it made me look at the way I did things.

How different was pursuing your line of work under the old régime? There was relative freedom under [Communist party secretary Edward] Gierek and you did as much as you could get away with. I could draw, say, [then Soviet leader] Brezhnev with a funny moustache as long as I did it in a polite, almost praising sort of way. The year under martial law was different. Artists boycotted the media.

Has the humour changed? Humour never changes – only reality does. The years since 1989 have affected the topics we laugh at, not the humour itself.

Some of your cartoons are a bit, well, language dependent, no? Not necessarily. Lots of my cartoons are without captions. Many have sexual references; everyone understands sexual eroticism and there's not much difference to it around the world. And some have little text. A nun being pursued by a baby penguin shouting 'Mama!' The funniest cartoon is still a man, a pavement and a banana peel.

Is there anything especially Polish about you humour? There seems to be a lot on politics, religion and sex. (Laughter) These are pretty universal themes! I just do what is in my head at the moment. I just can't really analyse it like that. I guess that will have to be done after my death!

I can't live without... My work room at the lower end of ul Grodzka and particularly my table. I envy people who can draw anywhere.

One sight a visitor to Kraków cannot miss is... The metaphysical stained-glass windows in the Basilica of St Francis by Wyspiański. They're wonderful.

Information and tickets are available from Waweltur as well as **Jordan** (Map p170; ☎ 012 393 5266; www.jordan.pl; 🕒 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) in the bus terminal. Check the website www.eurolinespolska.com.pl for the latest prices and timetable information.

Train

The lovely Kraków Główny (Kraków Central) train station, on the northeastern outskirts of the Old Town, handles all international and most domestic trains. The only other station

of any significance is Kraków Płaszów, 4km southeast of the city centre, which operates a few trains that don't call at Kraków Główny. Local trains between the two stations run every 15 to 30 minutes. All trains listed here depart from the central station. Advance tickets for international and domestic trains can be booked directly at the station or from Cracow Tours (p195).

Each day from Kraków, 10 fast trains head for Warsaw (71zł to 89zł, 2¾ hours) and to Wrocław (34zł, 4½ hours). Count on six trains

to Poznań (50zł, five to six hours), two to Lublin (40zł to 115zł, five hours) and eight to Gdynia via Gdańsk (105zł, 7¼ hours).

To Częstochowa (31zł, two hours), there are two morning fast trains as well as several afternoon/evening trains. Trains to Katowice (20zł, 1½ hours) run every half-hour to an hour. There are plenty of trains daily to Tarnów (13zł, 1½ hours). A dozen of these trains continue to Rzeszów (19.50zł, 2½ hours). To Oświęcim (11zł, 1½ hours), there are a couple of trains early in the morning and then nothing until the afternoon.

Internationally, there are daily direct trains to Berlin, Bratislava, Bucharest, Budapest, Hamburg, Kyiv, Odesa, Prague and Vienna.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

The airport can be reached on bus 192 (2.50zł, 40 minutes) from just north of the bus station. It runs once or twice an hour from about 5am to 11.30pm; night bus 602 then kicks in. You can also board the 192 (as well as the less frequent bus 208) at Plac Invalidów on the corner of Aleja Słowackiego and ul Królewska. Bear in mind you will be charged 2.50zł for a large suitcase or backpack.

Balice airport is now linked with Kraków by train (4zł, 20 minutes), which is faster and cheaper than the bus when you consider the additional baggage charge. Trains depart Kraków Główny once or twice an hour between 4am and 11.30pm. From the station at Balice you can walk 300m to the terminal or wait for the shuttle bus, which runs every half-hour.

A taxi between the airport and the city centre should cost about 50zł.

Bicycles

You can rent bicycles from several outfits in Kraków including **Eccentric Bike Tours & Rentals** (Map p170; ☎ 012 430 2034; ul Grodzka 2; per hr/5hr/day 6/25/40zł; 🕒 10am-8pm) in the Old Town and **Dwa Koła** (Two Wheels; Map p187; ☎ 012 421 5785; ul Józefa 5; 3hr/5hr/day 15/20/30zł; 🕒 9am-8pm) in Kazimierz.

Car & Motorcycle

With limited parking, and much of the Old Town a car-free zone, driving in Kraków will be more of a hindrance than a help. If you are travelling by car, the major route into the

city is the A4; note that a 5zł toll is paid when you enter and exit it. The Old Town is closed to traffic, except for access to two guarded car parks on Plac Szczepański (though this is likely to close very soon) and Plac Św Ducha if you can find a space. If not, use one of the guarded car parks in the surrounding area, including those along ul Karmelicka near the Stranger Hostel (Map p165), and ul Powisle (Map p170) northeast of Wawel. Street parking in the area outside the Old Town, known as 'Zone C', requires special tickets (*karta postojowa*), which you buy from kiosks, mark with the correct month, day and time, and then display on your windscreen. They cost 3zł for one hour and must be displayed from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

RENTAL

Many of the big international car-rental firms have offices in Kraków including **Hertz** (Map p165; ☎ 012 422 2939; www.hertz.com.pl; Hotel Orbis Cracovia, Aleja Focha 1; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat). However, you should get a better deal at one of the local firms that distribute their leaflets around town, including **Joka Rent a Car** (Map p170; ☎ 012 429 6630; www.joka.com.pl; ul Starowiślna 13) next door to the Hotel Pugetów.

Public Transport

Kraków is served by an efficient network of buses and trams that run between 5am and 11pm. Some night buses (which begin with a '6') run later.

Single-journey (2.50zł), one-hour (3.10zł) and one-/two-/three-day (10.40/18.20/25zł) tickets can be bought at street kiosks, and must be validated as soon as you board. Note that a single ticket is also required for bulky luggage. Tickets for night buses are 5zł. Most tourist attractions are in the Old Town or within easy walking distance, so you won't need buses or trams unless you're staying outside the centre.

Taxi

If you need one of Kraków's 3500 cabs, these are some of the better-known companies:

Barbakan Taxi (☎ 012 9661, 0800 404 400)

Euro Taxi (☎ 012 9664)

Express Taxi (☎ 0800 111 111)

Lajkonik Taxi (☎ 012 9628)

Radio Taxi (☎ 012 9696, 0800 500 919)

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