

Trekking in Poland and Slovakia

July 6 to July 16, 2023

Trip #2330

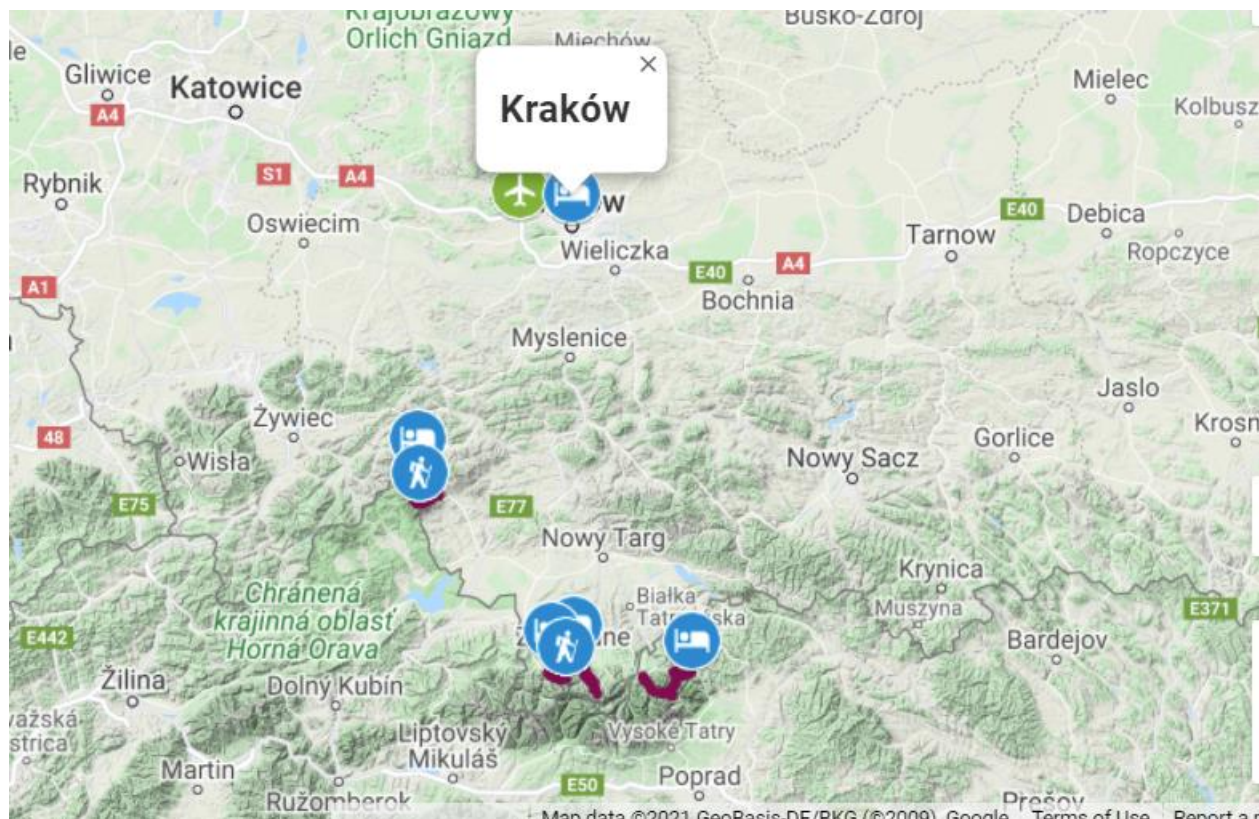


Photo Courtesy of The Natural Adventure Company

Trip Overview

Join us for a cultural and hiking adventure in Poland and Slovakia. The trip includes three days exploring several areas of historical significance in and around Krakow, Poland and eight-days of hiking in the Western Carpathian Mountains to include Babia Góra National Park in Poland and the Tatras in Poland/Slovakia. We will spend one day in Krakow after arrival to acclimate, taking a walking tour of the Wawel Castle, the Cathedral and a tour of the Wieliczka Salt Mine. The next day we will start the hiking portion of our trip starting in Zywiecki Beskid, the second highest mountain range in the Polish part of the Carpathians and climbing Devils Peak in Babia Góra National Park listed by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve. The next day we will be transported Siwi Polana where we will begin our three-day trek through beautiful valleys in Tatra National Park to Zakopane, nestled at the foot of the spectacular Tatra Mountains. We will be transported across the border to Slovakia to the northern part of Belianske Tatras, visiting the charming villages of Javorina and Ždiarof. We will finish our trip with two days in Krakow visiting the Jewish Quarter, Kazmierz and Schindler's Factory and taking a guided tour to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Map



Trip Difficulty

This trip is rated Vigorous. Please click on the link to view the AMC Trip Rating System: [Ratings](#)

You must be able to hike up to 8 hours a day, most days are 5 to 7 hours not including breaks, at a moderate pace, with elevation gains of up to 3,500 feet, while carrying enough equipment in your day pack to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury.

Daily Itinerary

***Leave the US on July 5th or earlier to arrive in Krakow, Poland on Day 1.

Day 1 – Thursday, July 6th

Arrive in Krakow.

Take a taxi to our hotel in Krakow.

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Wyspianski (Krakow)

Meals included: Dinner

Day 2 – Friday, July 7th

Wawel Castle, Cathedral and Wieliczka Salt Mine Guided Tour with Lunch



"Wawel Castle" by Cynewulf is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Today we will take a walking tour of the former residence of Polish kings and a symbol of Polish statehood. Wawel Castle, now a museum, hosts a vast collection of paintings, graphics, sculptures, fabrics, goldsmiths, military items, porcelain, and furniture. After the tour we will have a traditional Polish lunch before we head off to the town of Wieliczka to explore the Salt Mine. At 700 years old, we will explore the underground church, sculptures, carvings and even an underground lake. Tour time – 7 ½ hours

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Wyspianski (Krakow)
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

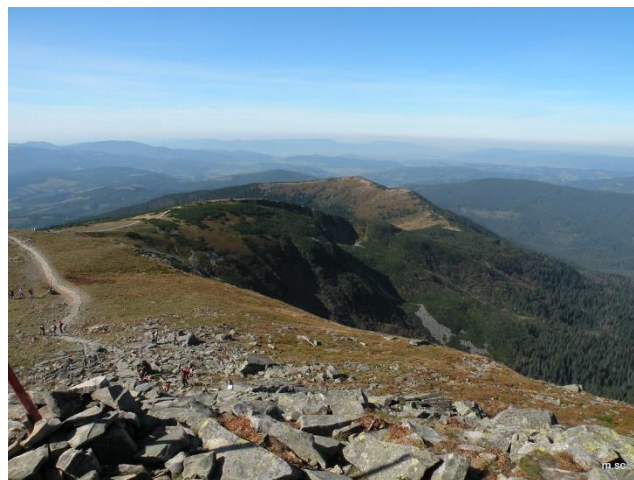
Day 3 – Saturday, July 8th

Krowiarki Pass to Zawoja

Today we transfer to Krowiarki Pass, approximately 2 hours, and will climb Diablak (5,660') or the Devil's Peak, the highest summit in *Babia Gora* Biosphere Reserve.

Hiking for the day: 10.25 miles, 5-6 hours, ↑3422'
↓4730'

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel&Spa Jawor (Zawoja)
Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner



"Babia Gora" by m.sc. is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Day 4 – Sunday, July 9th

Zawoja to Koscielisko

After breakfast, we transfer to Siwa Polana in Chocholowska Valley where we will hike to Koscielisko through the famous and beautiful Chocholowska and Koscieliska Valleys in the Tatra National Park.

Hiking for the day: 12.5 miles, 5-7 hours, ↑3461' ↓3370'

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Czarny Potok (Zakopane)
Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 – Monday, July 10th

Koscielisko to Zakopane

Again, after breakfast, we transfer to Koscielisko where we will hike to Zakopane through Malej Laki Valley and Kondracka Pass. Enjoy the rugged, limestone and dolomite ridges, covered with dazzling evergreens, following the trail twisted through the dark shadows of the towering mountainsides, with views of the brightly-illuminated valleys. Stroll from the charming Strązyska Valley to the picturesque Siklawica waterfall.

Hiking for the day: 8.4 miles, 5-6 hours, ↑2296' ↓2579'
Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Czarny Potok (Zakopane)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 – Tuesday, July 11th

Valley of the Five Lakes

Walk to the Valley of the Five Lakes (Gasienicowe Lakes Valley). You can easily see the first four lakes (Wielki, Mały, Przedni and Czarny) walking around the mountain hut. The last one, Zadni Staw Polski, requires a longer hike on the blue trail towards Świnica – one of the highest peaks in Poland, 7,545'. Enjoy the crystal-clear lakes of different shapes and colors and take in the spectacular views.

Hiking for the day: 11.2 miles, 5-7 hours, ↑2926' ↓2930'
Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Czarny Potok (Zakopane)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 – Wednesday, July 12th

Javorina to Ždiar

Today our driver will pick us up and take us across the border to Slovakia. We will start our hike in Javorina, a charming village in Poprad District in the Prešov Region. Hike to Ždiar, one of the oldest settlements in the Tatras. The culture of Goral people is evident everywhere from the gingerbread-style log buildings and the local embroidery to traditional meals, heavy with cheese. We'll visit the Bachledka Treetop walk in the heart of majestic forests of the Pieniny National Park, a long and winding pathway at the top of the forest and don't miss the view from the 32-metre-high observation tower.



"Chodník Korunami Stromov (Treetop walk)" by young shanahan is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Hiking for the day: 10.5 miles, 5-6 hours, ↑3200' ↓3655'

Accommodation: Guesthouse Penzi3n Źdiar (Źdiar)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 – Thursday, July 13th

Belianske Tatras / Krakow

Enjoy a short walk in the Belianske Tatras. Although most of the area is not accessible to protect the rare animals and plants, we can still stroll along Monkova Dolina. The main ridge of the mountain is made of limestone and dolomite and differs significantly from the High Tatras. The northern parts of the Belianske Tatras are home to the largest population of the Tatra chamois, and typical flower of the mountains is the beautiful edelweiss. Transfer to Krakow in the afternoon.

Walking for the day: 3.1 miles, 1-2 hours, ↑673' ↓210'

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Wyspianski (Krakow)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 – Friday, July 14th

Jewish Quarter Kazimierz & Schindler's Factory & Ghetto Guided Tour



Guided walking tour of the Jewish Quarter, Kazmierz and Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory. The rest of the day will be free time on your own. Tour time – 4 ½ hours

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Wyspianski (Krakow)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

"Kraków, Kazimierz" by JerzyW is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Day 10 – Saturday, July 15th

Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial Guided Tour

Guided walking tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. Tour time – 12 hours.

Accommodation: 3*** Hotel Wyspianski (Krakow)

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 – Sunday, July 16th

Departures

Travel home or continue your journey on your own.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodations, Meals and Transportation

Our trip, as a group, will begin at our hotel on Day 1. Accommodations are in charming centrally located 3*** hotels and one night in a guesthouse in Zdiar. We will have breakfast at our hotels and dinner at the hotel or at nearby restaurants. Most restaurants offer local specialties as well as international cuisine. Lunches are not included in the cost of the trip. You will have opportunities to get food at local markets and a few hotels offer trail lunch to go options.

When applicable, transportation will be provided to the start of hikes each day to include the return to Krakow after the completion of our trek. Transportation will be provided for our Wieliczka Salt Mine and Auschwitz-Birkenow tours. You will be on your own for transportation to and from the Krakow Airport. The cost for a taxi, each way, is about \$22. Transfers during our trek include:

- Transfer from Krakow to Krowiarki Pass on Day 3
- Transfer from Zawoja to Siwa Polana on Day 4 then transfer to Zakopane at the end of the day
- Transfer from Zakopane to Koscielisko on Day 5
- Transfer from Zakopane to Javorina on Day 7
- Transfer from Belianske Tatras to Krakow on Day 8
- Luggage transfers between the accommodations when changing hotels – one bag per person up to 55 lbs.

Weather

The climate is mostly of a mountain and alpine character. Windy weather is typical, and during summer afternoon rainstorms are usual. The average temperature is around 65 degrees.

Trip Price

The AMC Member price is \$2,675. The non-member price is \$2,775. To join the AMC (2022 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#). A deposit of \$1,000 is due with the application. **Your balance payment is due April 15, 2023.**

Price includes:

- All lodging, breakfasts, and dinners including a farewell dinner
- Guided walking tour of the Wawel Castle, Cathedral & the Wieliczka Salt Mine
- Guided walking tour of the Jewish Quarter, Kazmierz and Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory
- Guided walking tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum

- Welcome meeting
- All local transportation during group activities
- Luggage transfers between the accommodations when changing hotels – one bag per person up to 55 lbs.
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage

Price does not include:

- International Travel to Krakow Airport. At this time, we estimate the cost for a round trip ticket between the East Coast and Krakow will be between \$1,600 and \$2,000.
- Airport Transfers – To and From the Airport
- Lunches and trail snacks. (Lunch supplies can be purchased at local markets or from some hotels)
- Beverages (e.g. coffee/tea, mineral water, alcohol, etc.)
- Travel insurance
- Other Personal expenses

While participant airfare is not included in the trip price, leaders may assist participants in making suitable reservations. At a minimum, participants will be told when and where they must join the group for the official start of the trip's planned activities. Once your air tickets are purchased, they are your responsibility – do not make any non-refundable travel plans until told to do so by the leaders.

Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price also includes an AMC overhead fee to cover the administrative expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions. The trip fee includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, which is required by the AMC. It does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If these possibilities concern you, individual travel insurance is recommended. More information about included emergency medical and evacuation insurance, as well as about optional and recommended travel insurance, will be provided to participants in their formal acceptance letters, which will be sent out when the trip has the required number of accepted applicants.

The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was submitted to the Adventure Travel Committee for approval. The final price of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make. If the trip's financial position is strong enough at the start, the leaders may make partial refunds during the trip, in the form of payments toward some meals and/or free time activities which would otherwise not be included. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur, will be shared by trip participants. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. All Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.

The trip fee that you pay to us includes coverage for emergency medical evacuation and assistance through an emergency service provider. This is not standard medical insurance or trip cancellation insurance. It will cover up to \$5,000 for accident expenses (and sickness expenses only for international trips) and up to \$200,000 for emergency evacuation and repatriation. Coverage only includes the dates of travel of the official AMC trip, so coverage for early arrival or trip extension is not included. This

coverage includes access to global emergency assistance services that provides the support you or your family may need in a crisis, beyond what the AMC and/or the volunteer leaders may be able to provide. It will also document the incident should a claim need to be filed.

Participant Expectations

When you participate in this activity, you should be in proper condition for the challenges outlined in this prospectus and equipped with the appropriate gear as stated. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety. Prior to your acceptance as a participant in this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in trip activities.

This trip is designed so that everyone may experience our adventure in Poland and Slovakia through shared participation in activities and tasks in an organized group environment. AMC travelers are known for their cooperative efforts, and expectations are that all participants will be considerate of others sharing this AMC Adventure Travel experience.

It may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it be of the group or of the individual. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

AMC Mission

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the conservation, recreational and educational principles and mission of the club. The leaders will encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.

Application Process

We expect a group size of 12 to 14 trekkers plus your two AMC Adventure Travel leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible.

1. Complete the online [Trekking in Poland and Slovakia application](#).
2. Mail your \$1000 deposit check, made out the **Appalachian Mountain Club** to: Brian Tausendfreund, 118 Laurel Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

You will not be accepted until you have completed the four steps above, and the leader has determined by telephone conversation with you, that you and the trip are a good match. Your check will be deposited if you are offered a spot on this trip and you accept. Deposit checks from wait-listed applicants will not be cashed until we offer them a spot on the trip AND they accept.

Cancellation Policy

The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the fact that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. The published minimum penalty schedule is zero before

February 15, 2023, \$250 from February 15 to April 15, 2023, and no refund if cancelled after April 15, 2023. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant. Should the leaders be able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced or zero penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip.

Terms, Conditions and General Information

Please carefully read the Terms, Conditions and General Information listed below which can be found at [Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions](#) under the “Trip Resources” tab.

- Cancellation Policy
- Leaders’ Right to Change Itinerary
- Leaders’ Expectations of Participants
- Trip Price
- Passports and Travel Documents
- Safety
- AMC Activity Rating System

Leaders



Brian Tausendfreund is a four-season trip leader and instructor for the AMC NH Chapter. He has completed numerous rounds of the NH 48, including in winter, and has led trips to each of the NE 67 summits.

He has co-led trips to the "Tour of Mont Blanc" in 2018 and a trip to Luxembourg in 2019. He has hiked in the high peaks in California, Death Valley, Nevada and the beautiful canyons of Utah. He also travels frequently in Europe. Brian is certified in Wilderness First Aid via SOLO, and CPR via American Heart Association.



Michelle Spaziani is a Leader with the AMC’s Adventure Travel program. She has summited the Northeast’s 115 4,000-footers, and NH’s 48 4,000-footers in winter; section-hiked the ~260-mi New England Trail; and adventured in 30+ U.S. national parks and ~30 countries. She pursues her wanderlust via solo and group travel and hiking and has an affinity for the polar regions having visited Greenland, Iceland, and Antarctica. She is a certified Leave No Trace[™] Trainer and Wilderness First Responder.

For questions, you can contact either leader at

Brian Tausendfreund – btausend1@gmail.com

Michelle Spaziani – michellespaziani@hotmail.com

What to Bring

Here is a list of what to bring to have a good time on this trip:

Required Gear

Day Pack with rain cover, large enough to carry what is needed for your safety and convenience
Personal first aid

Rain gear (both jacket and pants)

Water bottles or hydration bladder (at least 2 liters)

Hiking shorts or convertible hiking pants

Long and short sleeve hiking shirts

Light jacket or fleece to layer up/added warmth

Hat for warmth, and gloves or mittens

Comfortable hiking boots or shoes and socks (liner socks also recommended)

Sunglasses

Sun hat

Sun protection lotion

Lip protection balm

Head lamp with extra batteries

Insect repellent

Leisure clothes & shoes for sightseeing and restaurants (moderate amount)

Personal toiletries – including shampoo and soap

Camera

Optional Recommendations

Ear plugs

Trekking poles

Bathing suit

Gaiters

Extra shoelaces

Face cloth – not usually provided in European hotels