



KRAKÓW

for Adventurers



A Book of Wonders

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Welcome to **KRAKÓW**

Kraków is a major city in Poland, often thought the most beautiful and significant. The home of kings for more than 500 years, it played a fine role in Polish history and culture.

Even though you & I aim for the local and unknown in Kraków, we obviously can't ignore its tourist side.

I've planned a trip for us in the centre later on but first, let's talk a bit about the background.



The Wawel Hill

The oldest settlements in Kraków (or Cracow in English) were established on what now is Wawel Hill by the Vistula (Wisła) river - the mount on which the castle stands.

Speaking of the hill... it's said that once a dragon called Smok Wawelski lived in a cave under it, eating Kraków's sheep and virgins. Though it was later killed by one brave young man, you can still meet Smok at the feet of [Wawel castle](#) → where he breathes fire.

As the settlement grew and moved below the Wawel Hill, the castle was built. What's left of the original structures from can still be explored on Wawel's courtyard.

The Old Town (Stare Miasto)

Meanwhile, the Old Town of Kraków was blooming. Its centre is the [Main Market Square \(Rynek\)](#) → - the biggest square of this type in Europe. You can find the Mariacki church, the Cloth Hall and the Town Hall there, among many other attractions.

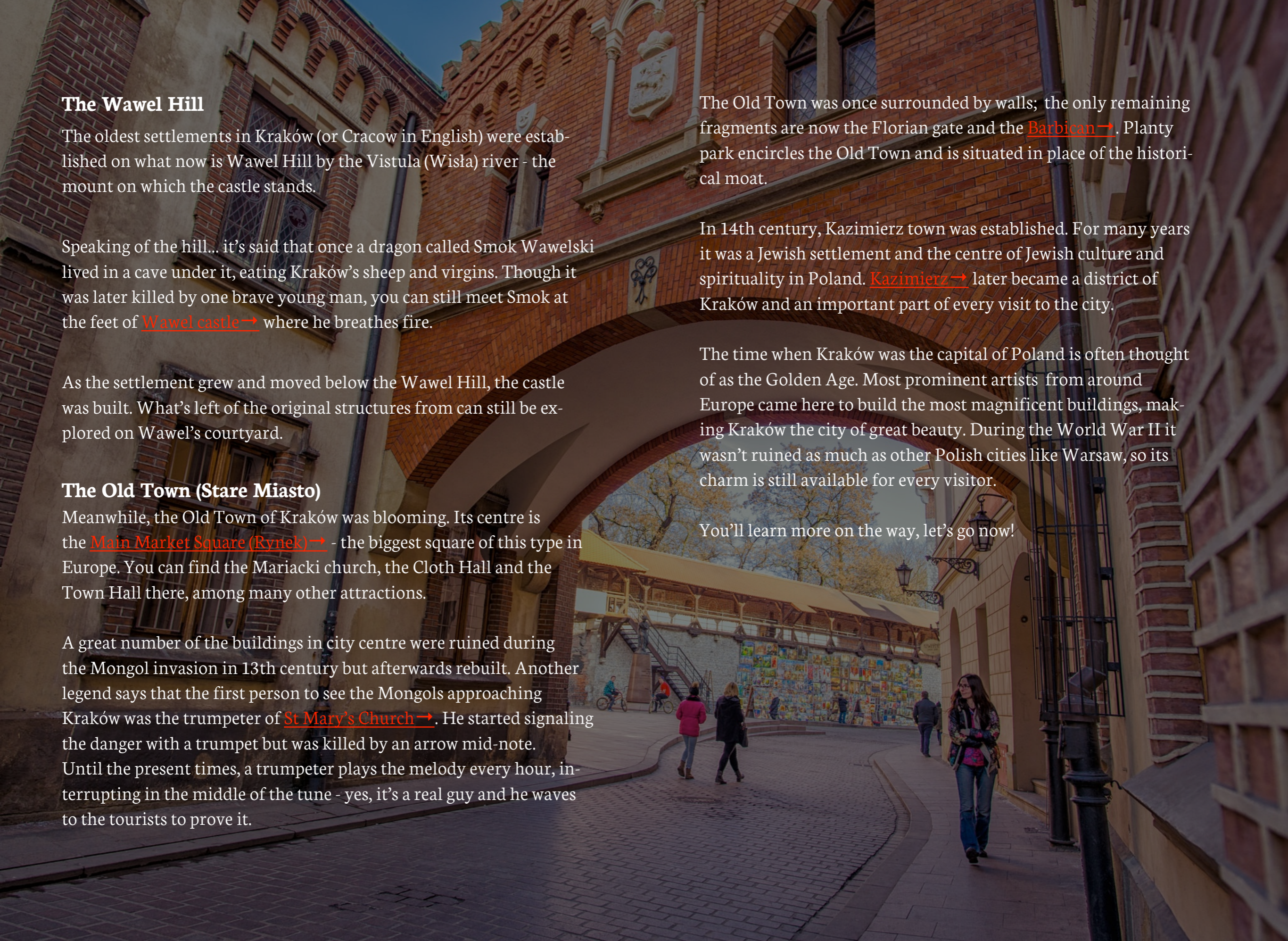
A great number of the buildings in city centre were ruined during the Mongol invasion in 13th century but afterwards rebuilt. Another legend says that the first person to see the Mongols approaching Kraków was the trumpeter of [St Mary's Church](#) →. He started signaling the danger with a trumpet but was killed by an arrow mid-note. Until the present times, a trumpeter plays the melody every hour, interrupting in the middle of the tune - yes, it's a real guy and he waves to the tourists to prove it.

The Old Town was once surrounded by walls; the only remaining fragments are now the Florian gate and the [Barbican](#) →. Planty park encircles the Old Town and is situated in place of the historical moat.

In 14th century, Kazimierz town was established. For many years it was a Jewish settlement and the centre of Jewish culture and spirituality in Poland. [Kazimierz](#) → later became a district of Kraków and an important part of every visit to the city.

The time when Kraków was the capital of Poland is often thought of as the Golden Age. Most prominent artists from around Europe came here to build the most magnificent buildings, making Kraków the city of great beauty. During the World War II it wasn't ruined as much as other Polish cities like Warsaw, so its charm is still available for every visitor.

You'll learn more on the way, let's go now!



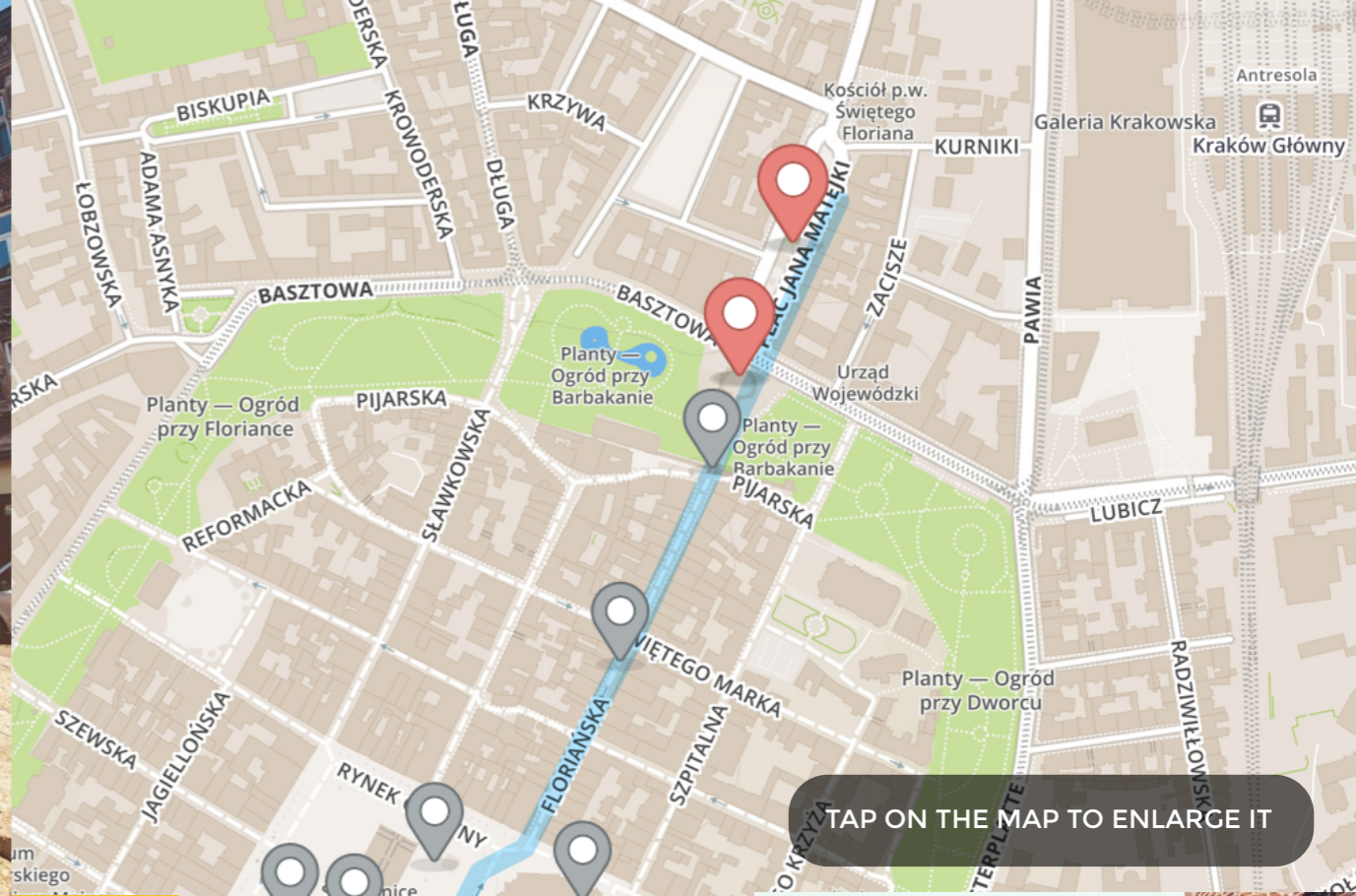
01

ROYAL ROAD

Itinerary

As the Royal Road passes by the most prominent landmarks of Kraków it was used during the coronation processions, parades and other official events.

Today you and I will walk through it, marvel on the most famous attractions of the city and maybe detour a couple of times to see something special or just eat something in one of the many cafes on the way.



01

KNOWN FOR
BATTLE OF GRUNWALD MONUMENT

MATEJKO SQUARE

Named after Polish artist Jan Matejko, known for his historical and military paintings.

Kraków's Academy of Fine Arts also bears his name and is situated on the right side of

the square, facing the Main Market.

There's also the enormous Grunwald Monument, erected for the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald. Fought between Poland and Teutonic Order, the battle was the greatest victory in Polish history.

02

BUILT IN
15TH CENTURY

BARBICAN

Polish Name: Barbakan

A part of medieval fortifications, barbican stands just outside city walls.

Its main purpose was to protect the city from Turkish invaders - hence the small windows used by archers. Kraków's barbican is the best preserved in the world, and now hosts exhibitions and events.



ST FLORIAN'S GATE

Polish Name: Brama Floriańska

This gothic gate served for many years as the main entrance to the city.

Kraków's fortifications encircled the whole Old Town and featured 47 watchtowers with

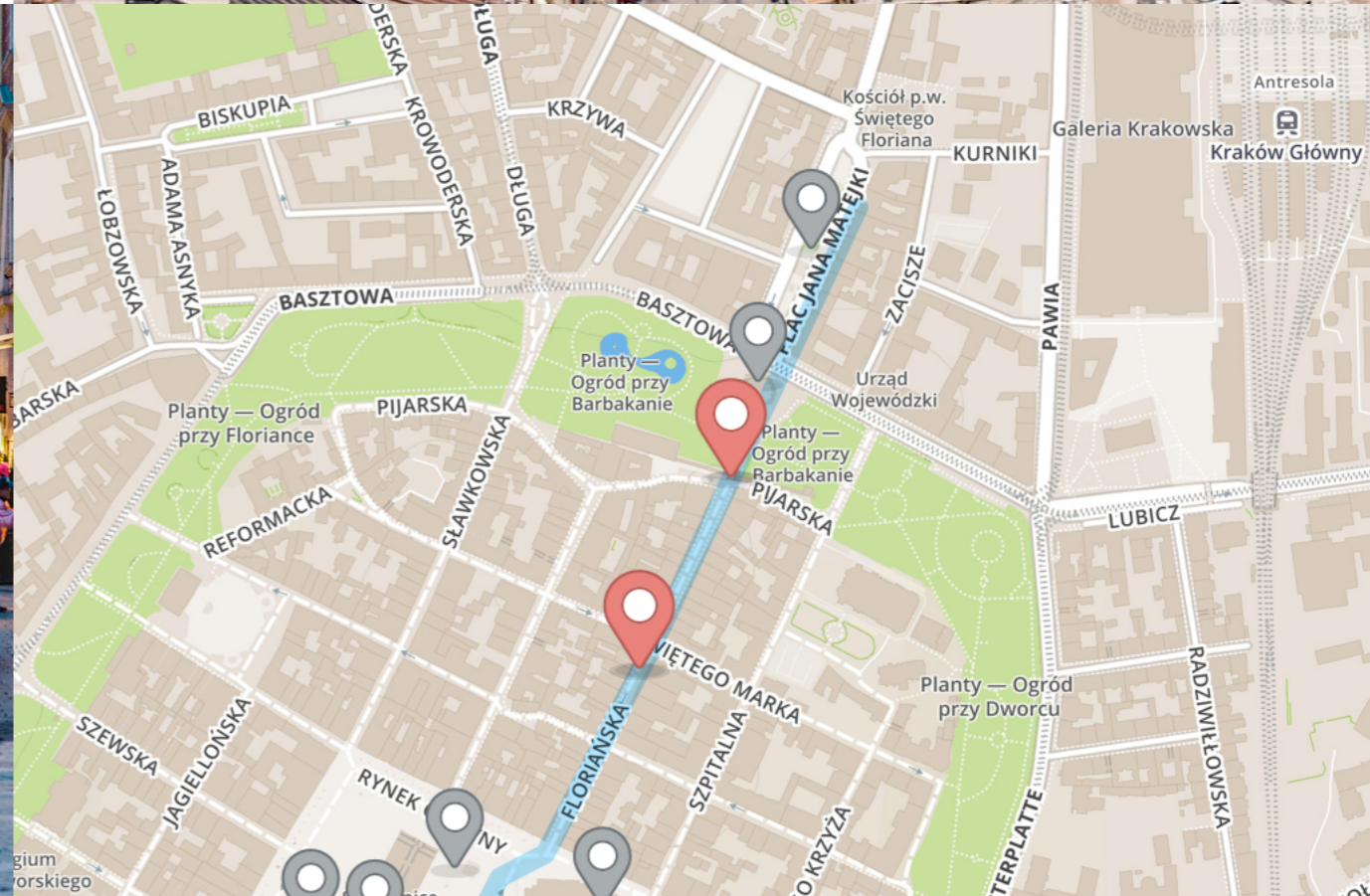
8 gates. St Florian's gate, its three adjoining towers and the walls between them are the only remaining parts of the construction - the rest was unfortunately demolished during the 19th century modernization of the city.

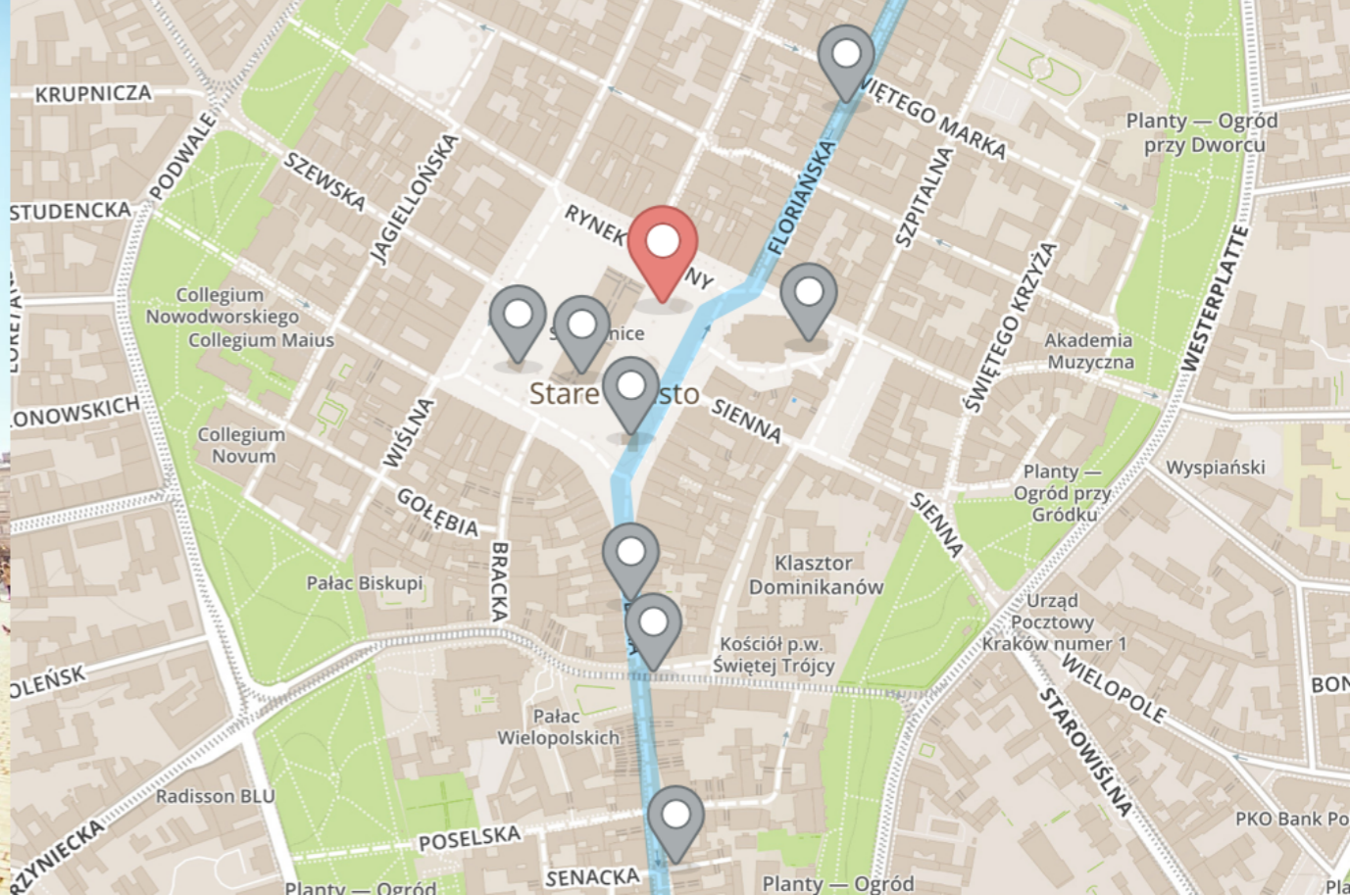


FLORIAŃSKA STREET

Polish Name: Ulica Floriańska

A busy street sprinkled with cafes, restaurants, shops, hotels, pubs, clubs, and more. Floriańska is the most classical Kraków gets.





05

DATES BACK
TO 13TH CENTURY

GREAT FOR
NIGHTLIFE

THE MAIN MARKET SQUARE

Polish Name: Rynek Główny

The biggest medieval town square in Europe and the centre of the Old Town.

Surrounded by townhouses and noble residences, it has been the main trading point of

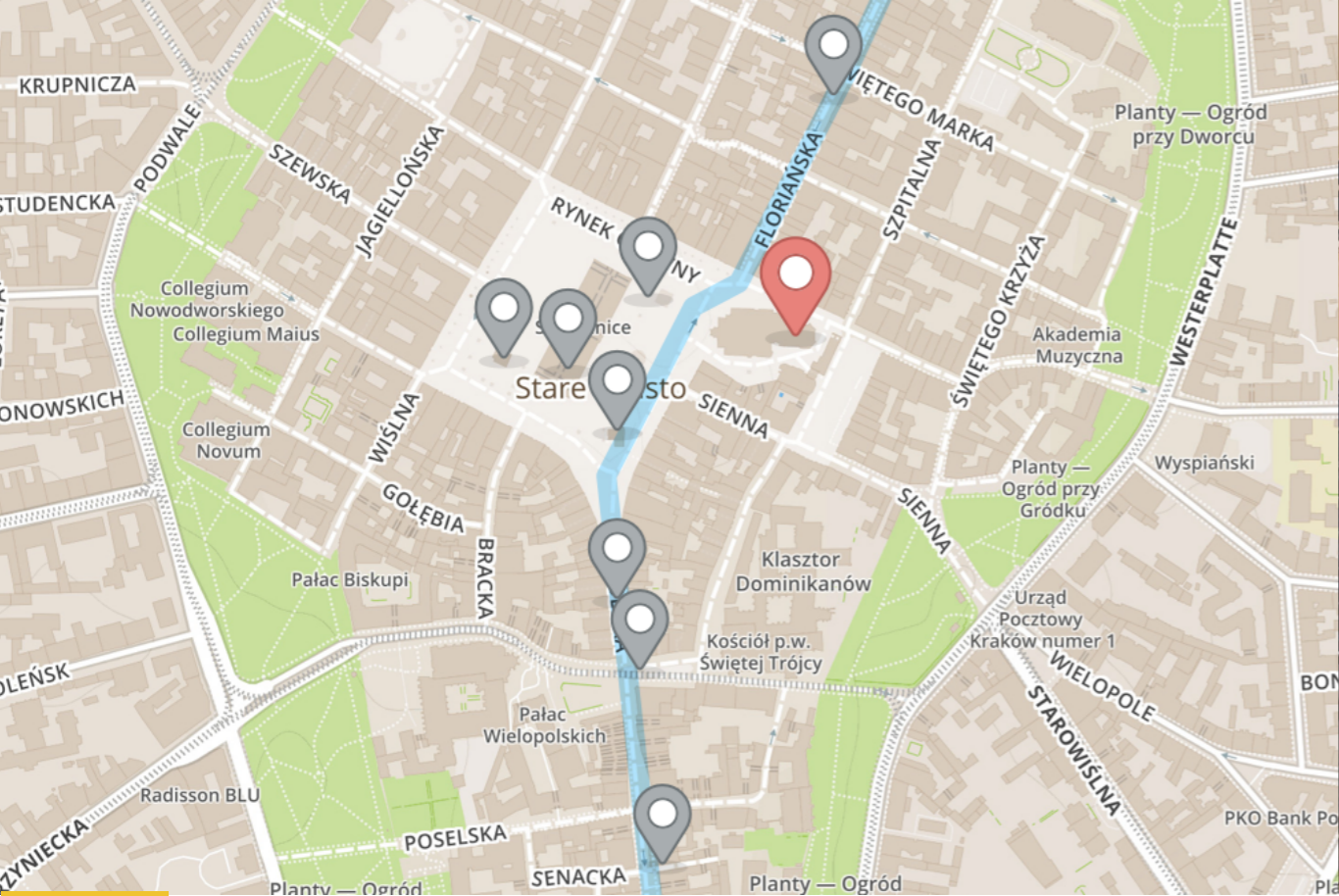
Kraków and witnessed many major events of Polish history. Rynek's buildings are mostly neoclassical but the basic structures and cellars were built in the Middle Ages and still can be explored. Today the Main Market is a popular street life spot.



The monument of Adam Mickiewicz, a Polish poet, which serves as a meeting spot of the locals.



Tourists on the Main Market Square on a warm summer night



06

KNOWN FOR
TWO TOWERS, THE TRUMPETER, THE VEIT STOSS ALTAR

ST MARY'S BASILICA

Polish Name: Kościół Mariacki

The symbol of Kraków itself - a gothic, brick church with two towers.

St Mary's is mostly famous for the magnificent wooden altar carved in XV century by Veit Stoss (Wit Stwosz). The enormous figures are very realistically sculpted - you can see them from up close if you enter the

church's side door.

[Learn more about the altar →](#)

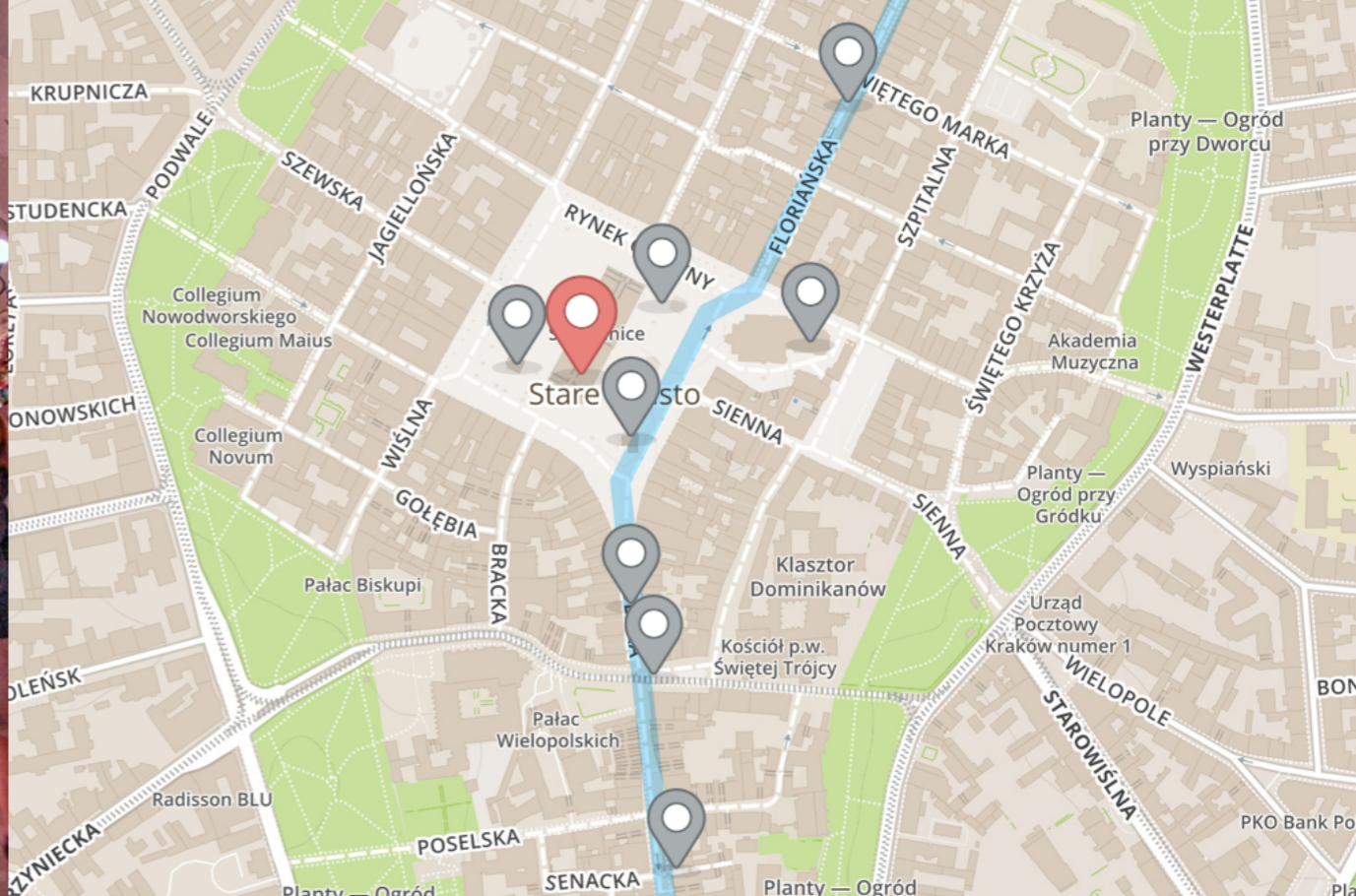
Legend says the church was built by two brothers. When one of them built the taller tower the other got jealous and killed his sibling, but felt guilty after finishing his structure and in consequence committed suicide.



Mariacki church from Florjanska Street



Horse carriages in front of Mariacki



07

GREAT FOR
SOUVENIR SHOPPING

KNOWN FOR
HIGH PRICES, THE ARCADES

THE CLOTH HALL

Polish Name: Sukiennice

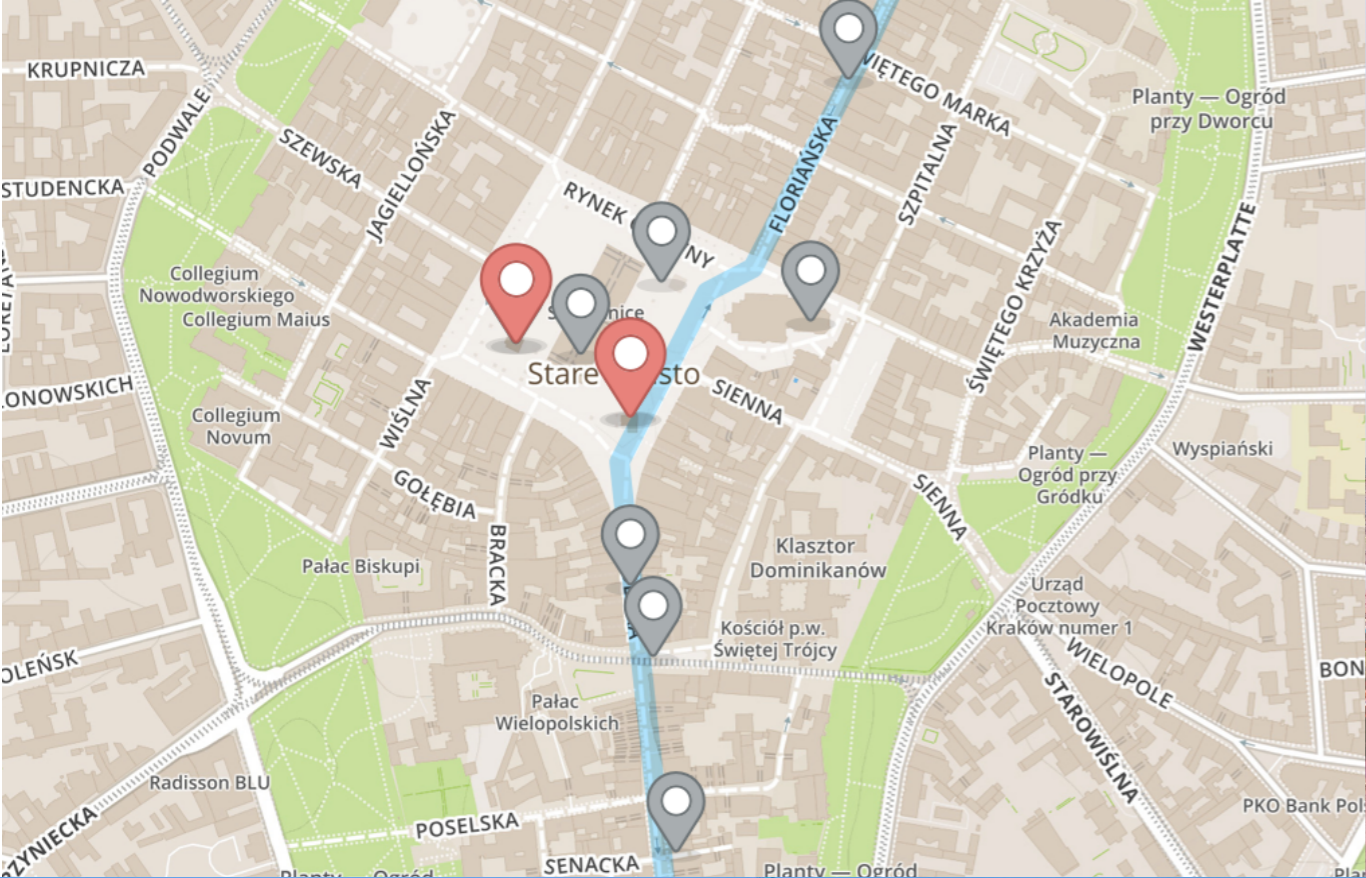
As Kraków was on the crossing of trade routes, the Cloth Hall has been the centre of international trade.

Situated in the centre of Rynek, the Cloth Hall remains the main feature of Rynek and its commer-

cial centre, with souvenir stalls selling wooden sculptures, amber jewelry, folk clothes and such. A museum of 19th century Polish art is located on the upper floors. Of particular note are the reliefs and sculptures on Sukiennice's attic and arcades.



The Cloth Hall and Rynek from above



08

HEIGHT
70 METRES (230 FT)

TOWN HALL TOWER



What remains of Kraków's Town Hall and its adjoining Granary is the tower. Cellars once held prison, now a theatre and cabaret. A (very) small museum and a tourist info point are located inside the tower.



09

BUILT IN
THE END OF 10TH CENTURY

ST ADALBERT'S CHURCH

Polish Name: Kościół Świętego Wojciecha

This small, modest church happens to be the oldest one in Poland.

It's actually older than the whole Market Square itself! The church holds a small museum in the basement and remains open to practitioners.

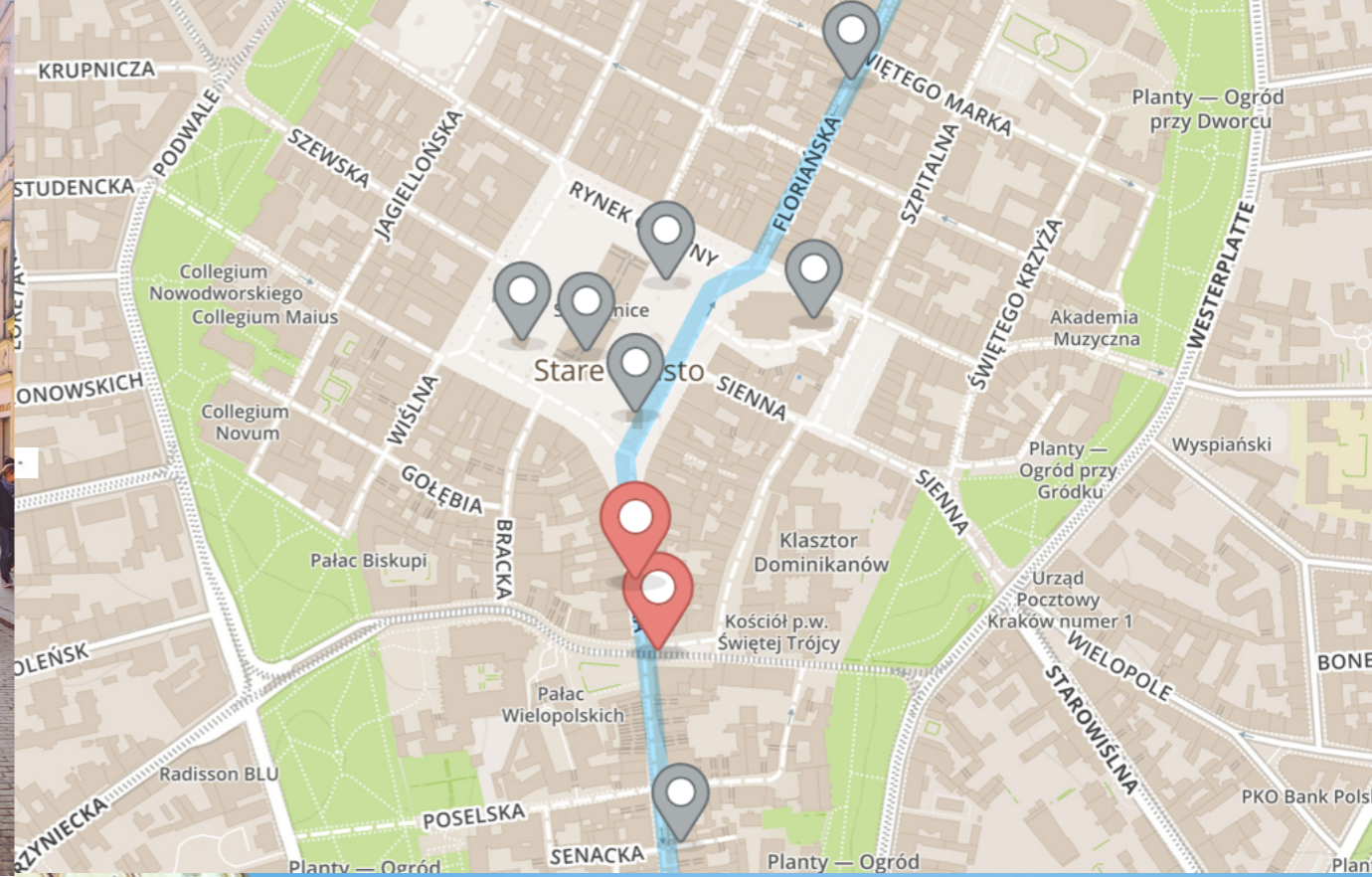
10

KNOWN FOR
PICKPOCKETS

GRODZKA STREET

The road leading to the Wawel castle. Full of restaurants and shops with souvenirs.

[Check out the souvenir guide →](#)



11

THE SPOT TO
CATCH A TRAM OR TAXI

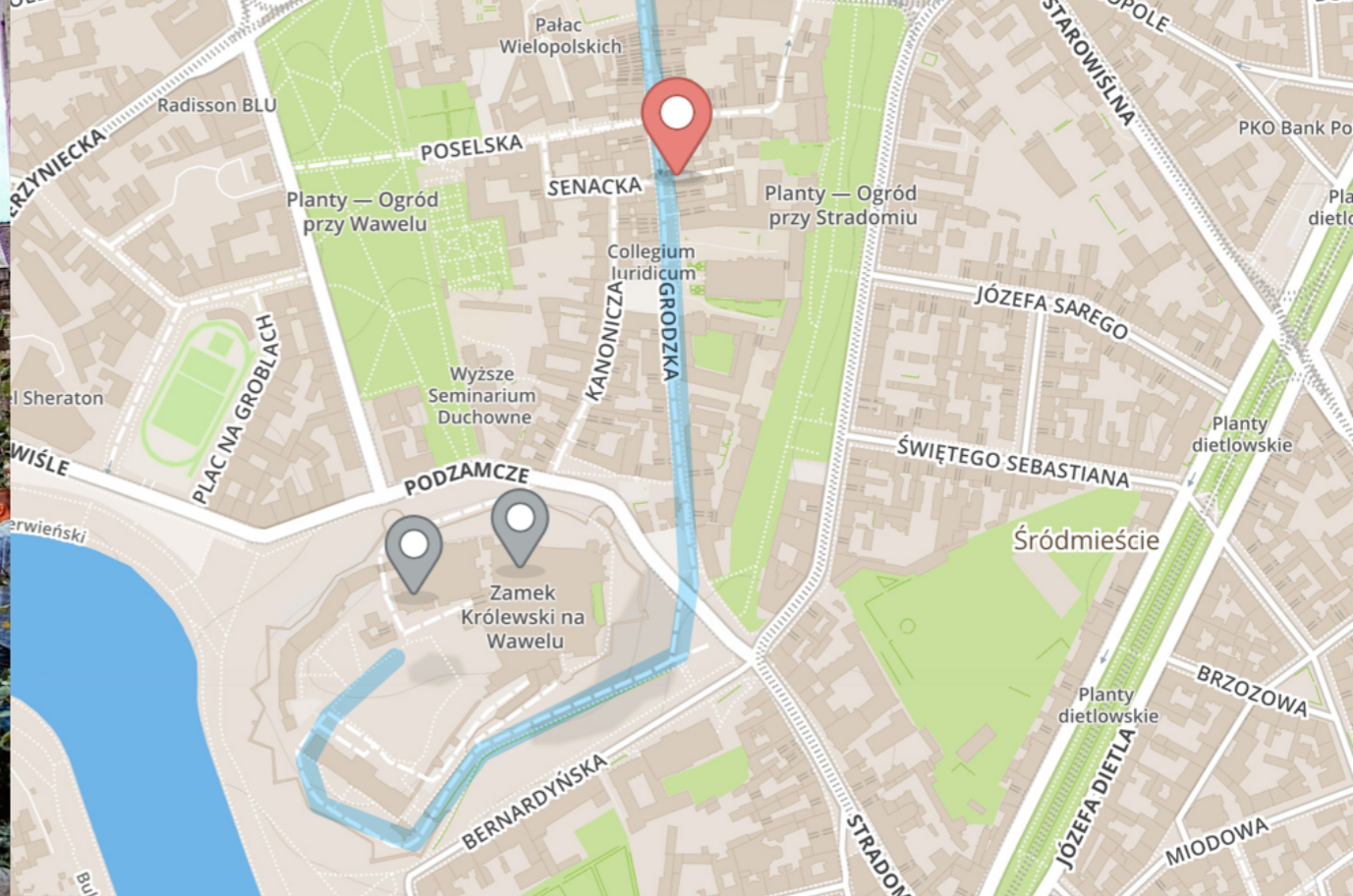
ALL SAINTS SQUARE

Polish Name: Plac Wszystkich Świętych

The main attractions here are the Church of St. Francis of Assisi with its stained glass windows and Trinity Church (often called Dominican).

A tourist info centre is placed in the modern brown building – the main spot to buy event tickets in Kraków.





12

KNOWN FOR
THE PILLARS, FOUCAULT PENDULUM

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CHURCH

Polish Name: Kościół Świętych Apostołów Piotra i Pawła

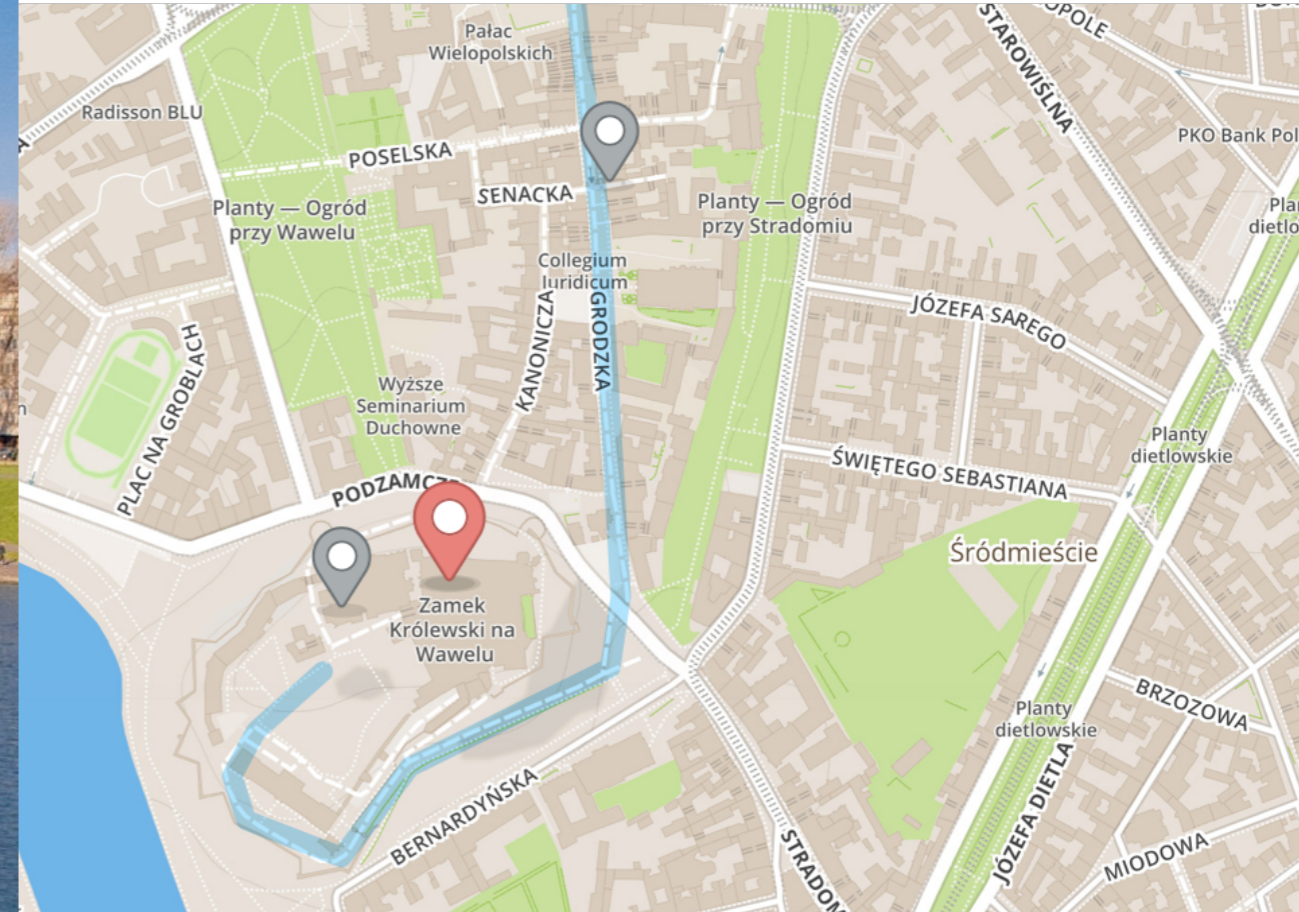
A richly decorated baroque church inspired by St Susanna's in Rome.

The pillars in front of the church are adorned with statues of the Apostles.

As Poland has been and still is a very religious country, Kraków has quite a lot of churches as you might have noticed. All of them are still in use and celebrate Roman Catholic masses every Sunday.



Peter and Paul's with adjacent church of St Andrew. The view from Grodzka Street



13

BUILT IN
14TH CENTURY

THINGS TO SEE
THE DRAGON, THE TAPESTRIES, THE ROYAL TREASURY

WAWEL CASTLE

The home of Polish kings for more than five hundred years.

Two gates lead to the castle - one uphill, on the left of Grodzka street and the second more official one, on the right. You can freely enter the courtyard

colonnade but will have to buy a ticket for visiting the royal rooms.

I highly recommend a visit with a guide - you'll learn everything you need to know about Wawel and Kraków this way. More on exhibitions and routes [here](#) →



The colonnade on the courtyard of Wawel castle.



Wawel Castle and the Vistula river.



14

KNOWN FOR
SIGISMUND BELL, THE ROYAL CRYPTS

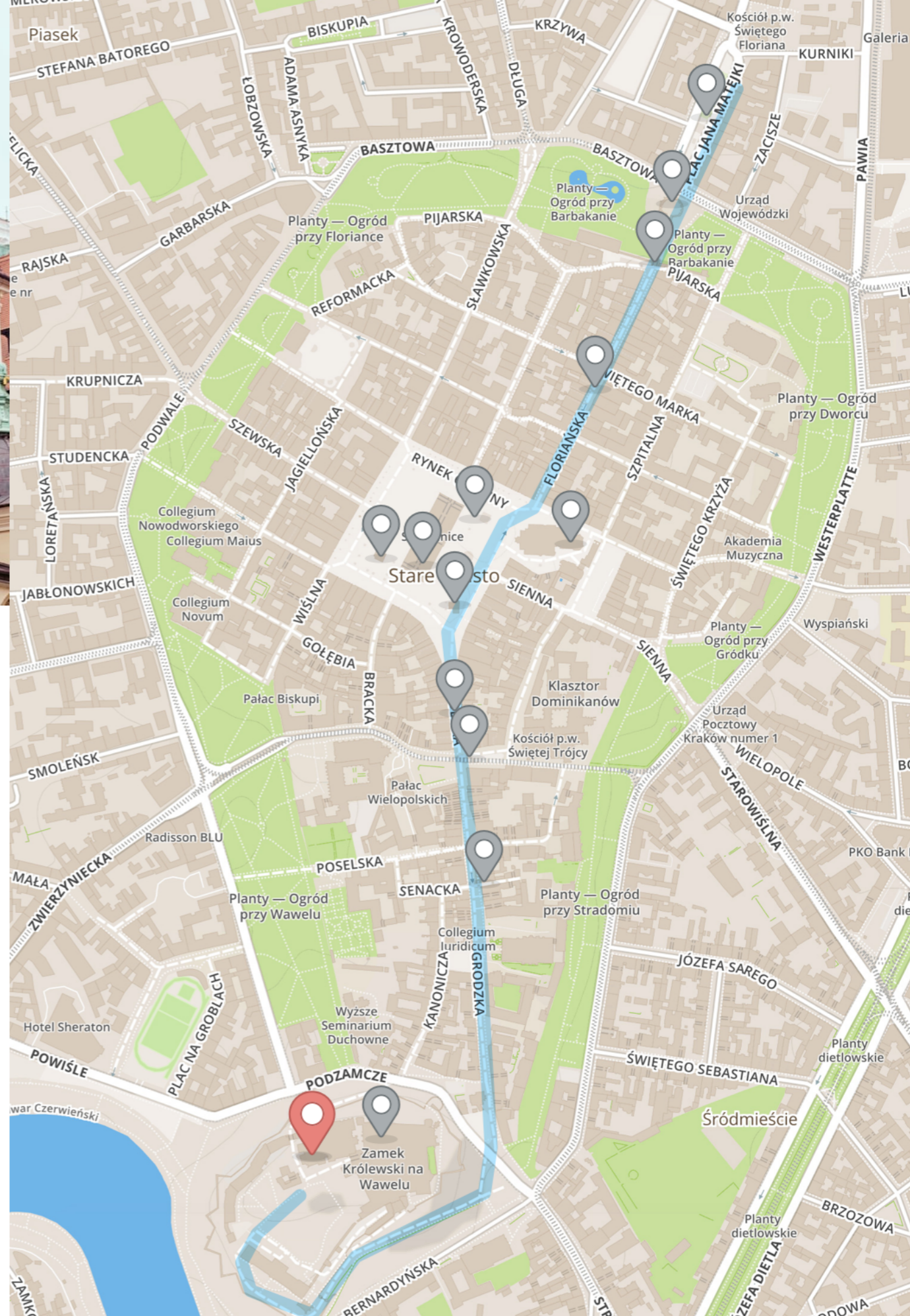
WAWEL CATHEDRAL

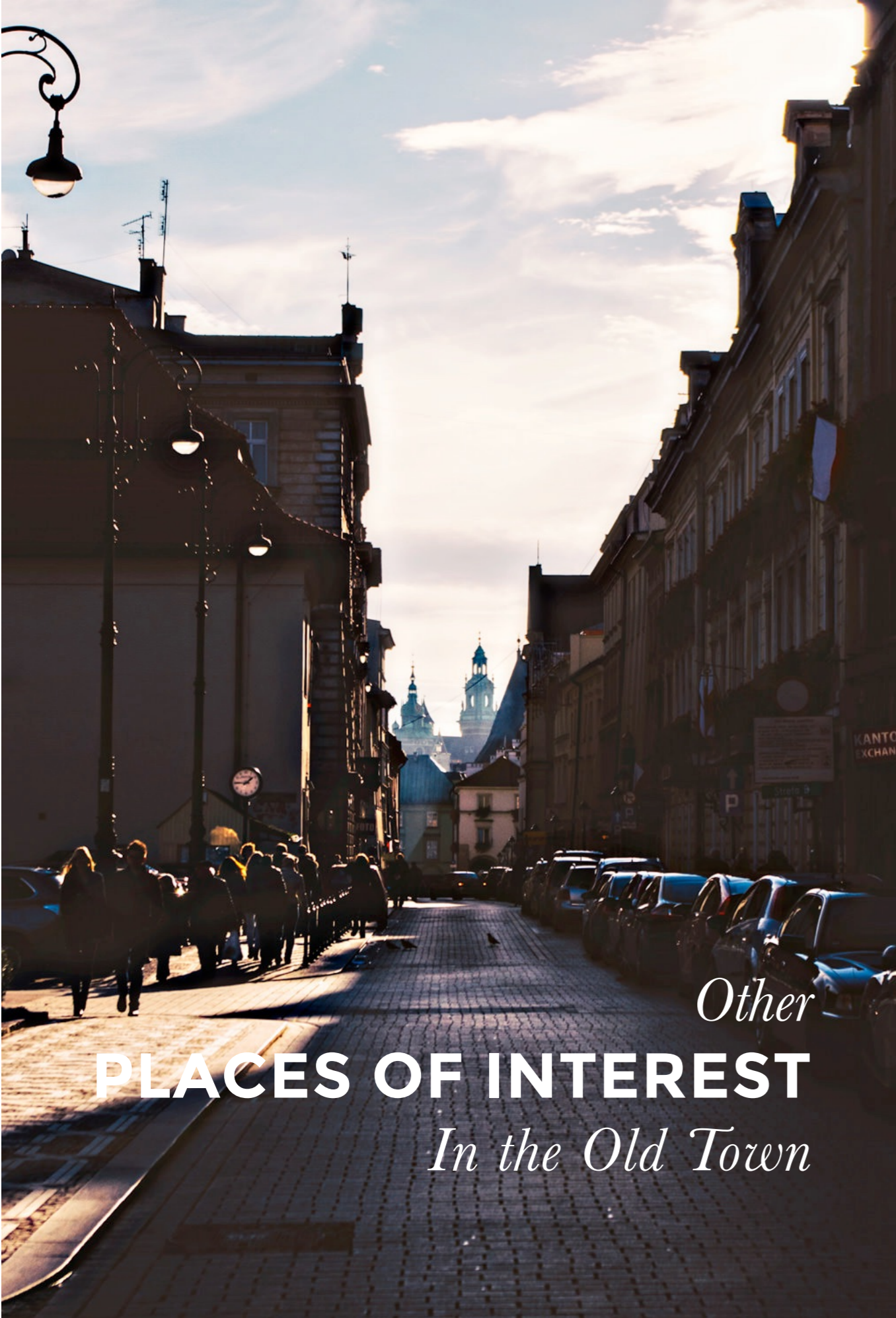
Polish Name: *Katedra na Wawelu*

The coronation and burial site of Polish kings and probably the most important church in Poland.

Its crypts hold the tombs of Polish monarchs, saints,

heroes and other notables. In the Sigismund Tower of the Cathedral hangs the Sigismund Bell, which only tolls on major Catholic holidays and very special occasions. For a small fee you can climb the Tower to see the view from Wawel Hill.





15

SITUATED
ON JAGIELLONSKA STREET

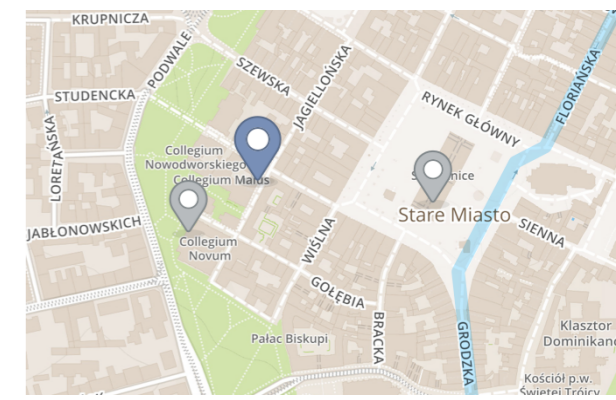
FAMOUS STUDENT
NICOLAUS COPERNICUS

COLLEGIUM MAIUS

The oldest building of one of the oldest universities in Europe - Jagiellonski University, founded in 1364.

on time. To access it, enter a gate from Jagiellońska Street.

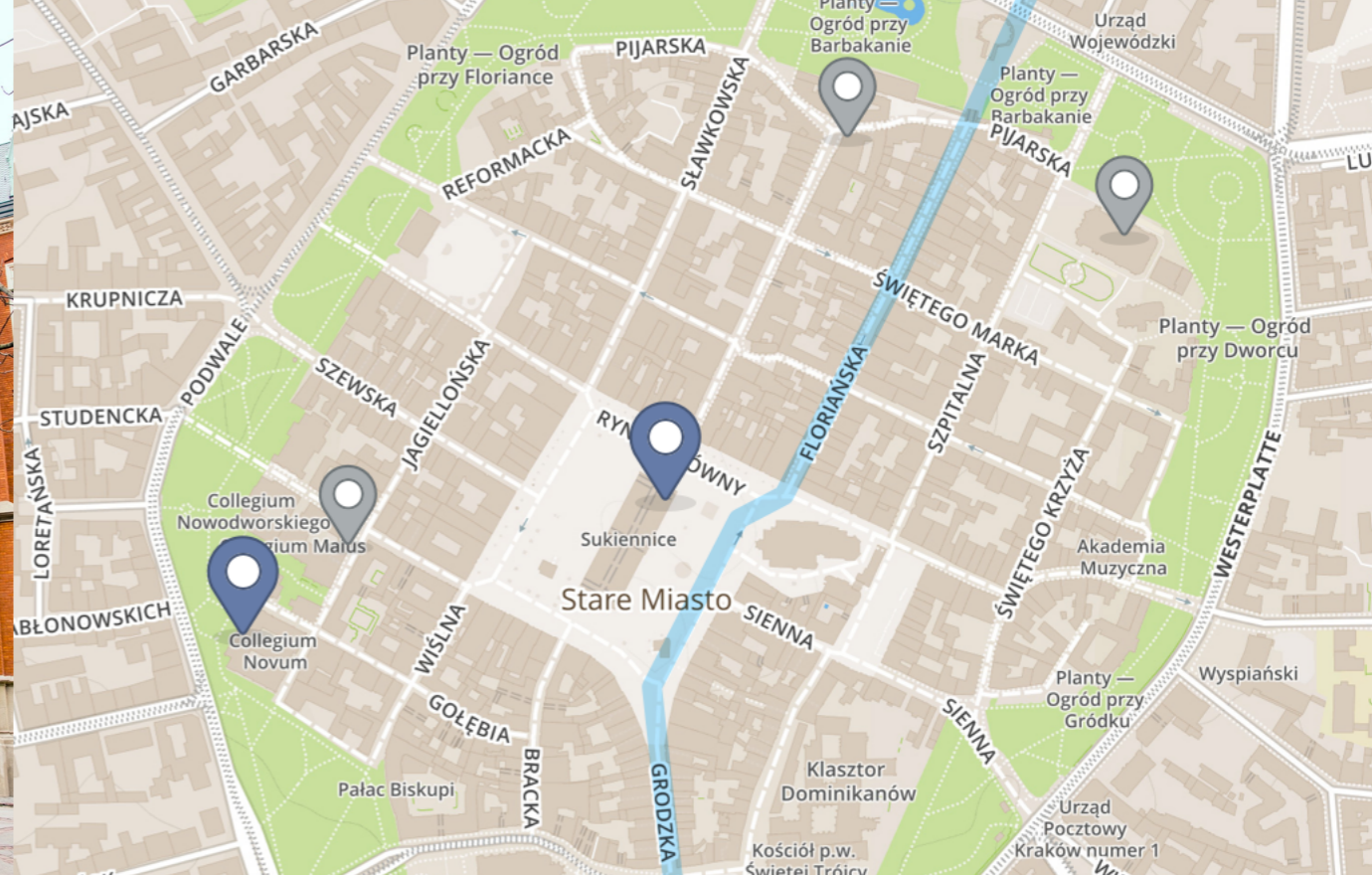
Explore gothic lecture rooms, professors' quarters, library and more in University's Museum. Collegium is open between 10am and 2pm, so be sure to get there



Other
PLACES OF INTEREST
In the Old Town

COLLEGIUM NOVUM

The main building of Jagiellonian University, built in Neo-Gothic style in 19th century. You can come inside, but probably not visit the halls as there are still classes held in Novum.



RYNEK'S UNDERGROUNDS

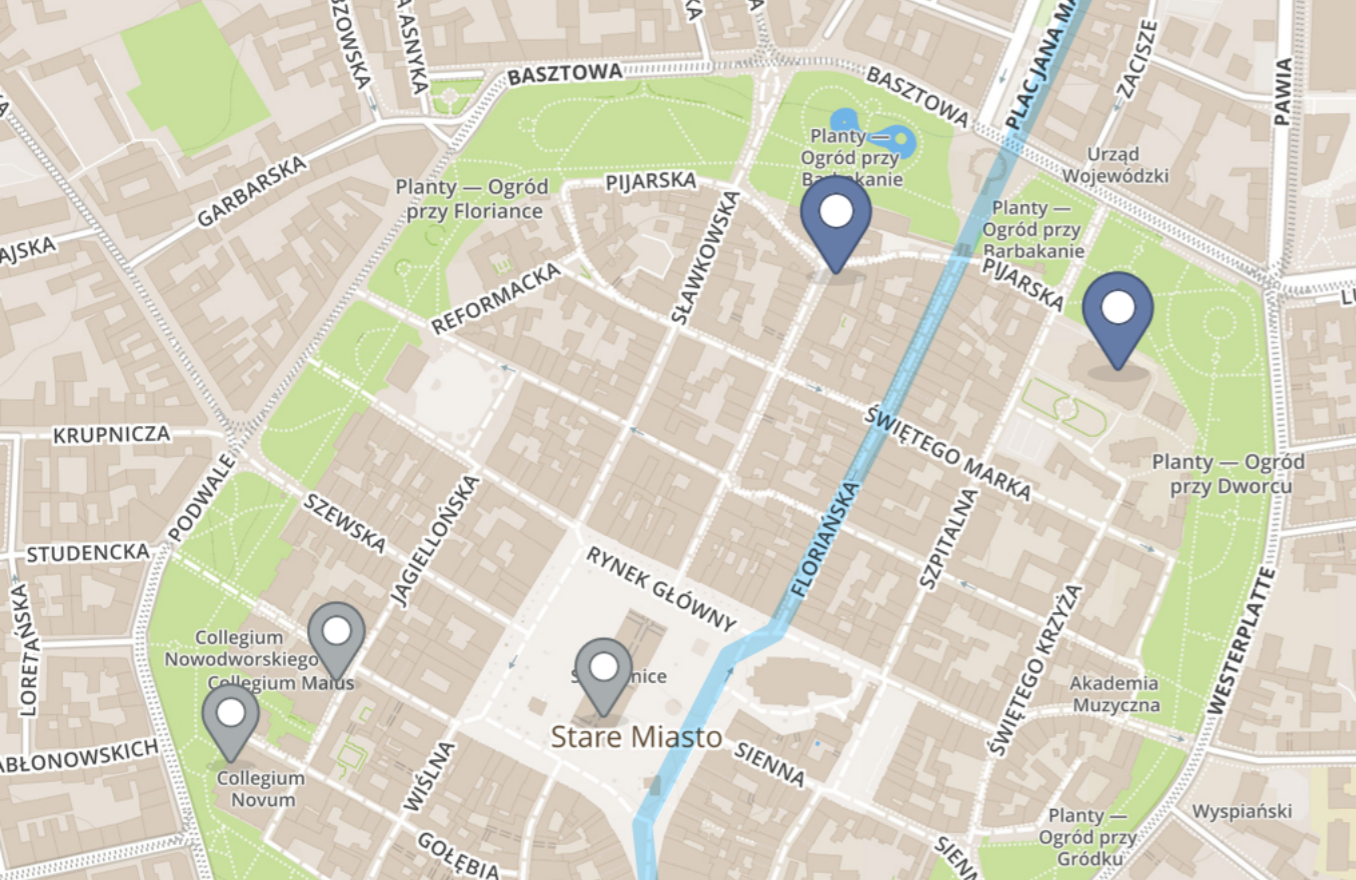
Polish Name: Podziemia Rynku

In the past times, the base level of Rynek was 5 metres lower than today; you can now explore the fascinating vaults and basements of Rynek, as well as Kraków's history and legends in this new, interactive museum.

Just remember to first [book your tickets here](#) →

The entrance to the museum is in Sukiennice, by the pyramid fountain but the ticket pickup point is on the exact opposite side of the building.





18

SITUATED
ON JANA STREET 19

CZARTORYSKI MUSEUM



A vast collection of European art collected by Czartoryski family, the most famous artwork being da Vinci's Lady with an Ermine. The museum is now renovated (re-opening planned in 2015) and the painting is exhibited on the Wawel Castle.



19

SITUATED
BY PLANTY NEAR TRAIN STATION

KNOWN FOR
HAND PAINTED CURTAINS

JULIUS SŁOWACKI THEATRE

Polish Name: Teatr Słowackiego

An impressive theatre which has had a significant role in Polish culture.

Named after Julius Slowacki who, along with Adam

Mickiewicz, was the greatest poet of Poland.

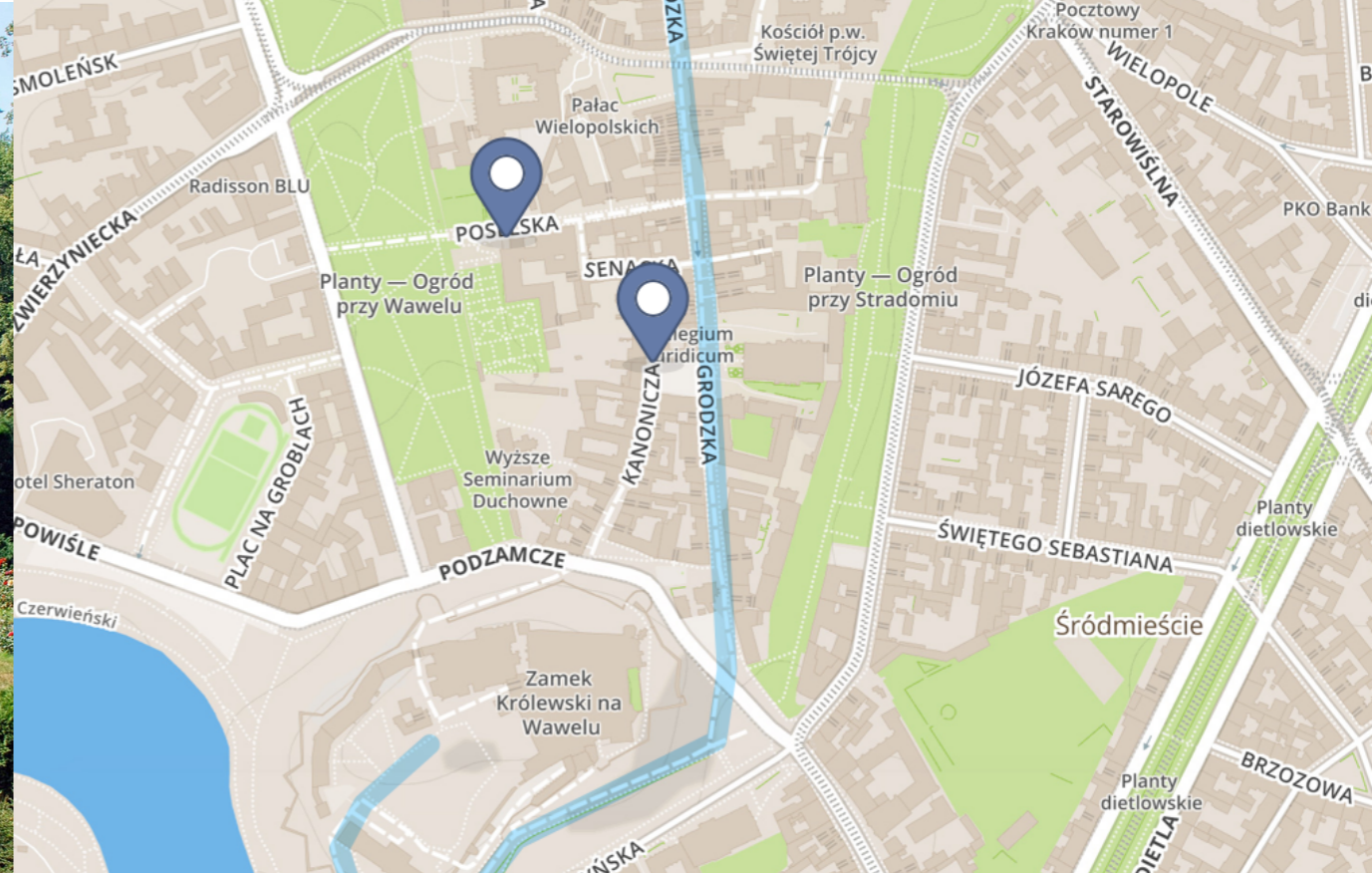
The theatre shows Polish, as well as international plays. Unfortunately you can't visit its interior without a guide.

20

SITUATED
ON POSELSKA STREET

ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Exhibits from excavations of Slavic regions. Learn about the Hun warriors, Scythian princesses and Slavic mythology in this museum. It's worth going there in the summer, when museum's well-kept Renaissance garden offers a moment of rest from the city's noise.



21

KNOWN FOR
RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE PORTALS

KANONICZA STREET

Filled with restaurants and cafes - like **Bona Cafe** (which is also a bookshop), Kanonicza is a prettier alternative to the Grodzka Road. There's a museum of Erasmus Ciołek, which hosts a large collection of Medieval Art.

Enter one of the gateways to explore the hidden courtyards and gardens.





DID YOU KNOW?

THE OLDEST CAFE IS JAMA MICHALIKA ON FLORIANSKA STREET

CAFES AND RESTAURANTS

The choice of restaurants and cafes in city centre can be overwhelming.

Here's a list of my favourites but I highly encourage you to explore for yourself!



Nowa Prowincja

If you're looking for a place with "Kraków feel", Prowincja is the one. Order the best hot chocolate in Poland, home-made cakes and watch the people of Kraków in their natural habitat.



Pod Wawelem

Polish and international food that will fit any taste. Marvel on the view of Wawel Castle from their terrace and, if you're a beer lover, order your drink in a 1 litre mug.



Glonojad

Its atmosphere will take you to your college years and the food will surely convince you that vegetarian doesn't mean tasteless.



Bunkier

Though the name (bunker) suggests a modern, cold place, Bunkier is actually a cute cafe in the middle of Planty park. Its cozy atmosphere, delicious food and fragrant drinks make it a must-visit.



Moa Burger

There's been a burger craze in Kraków recently and its result was the creation of some amazing burger joints. Moa offers burgers with any kind of meet, as well as vegetarian options.



Wierzynek

A legendary restaurant situated where the most famous and abundant feast in Poland took place in 14th century. Now it serves traditional Polish food with modern twists and is a place where VIPs dine when they come to Kraków.



House of Beer

Wide variety of local and international beer, tapped and bottled. Just tell the bartender what you like and he'll surely choose something special for you.



Charlotte

The most hipster place in town, Charlotte is a high-end french bakery. Perfect for a breakfast.



Youmiko Sushi

A new and unique sushi restaurant. Though the place is small to the extremes, the taste of their sushi is extraordinary, as they use fresh local fish and vegetables.



Karma

Vegetarian & vegan bistro with easygoing attitude.



Gospoda Koko

Polish restaurant that offers super cheap (14 zloty) meals. A place where students, professors, artists, travellers, rich and poor all meet to dine together.



Dynia

Grab a quick snack or eat a meal in this popular and beautiful Italian restobar. If you're in Kraków during the summer, check out their garden!



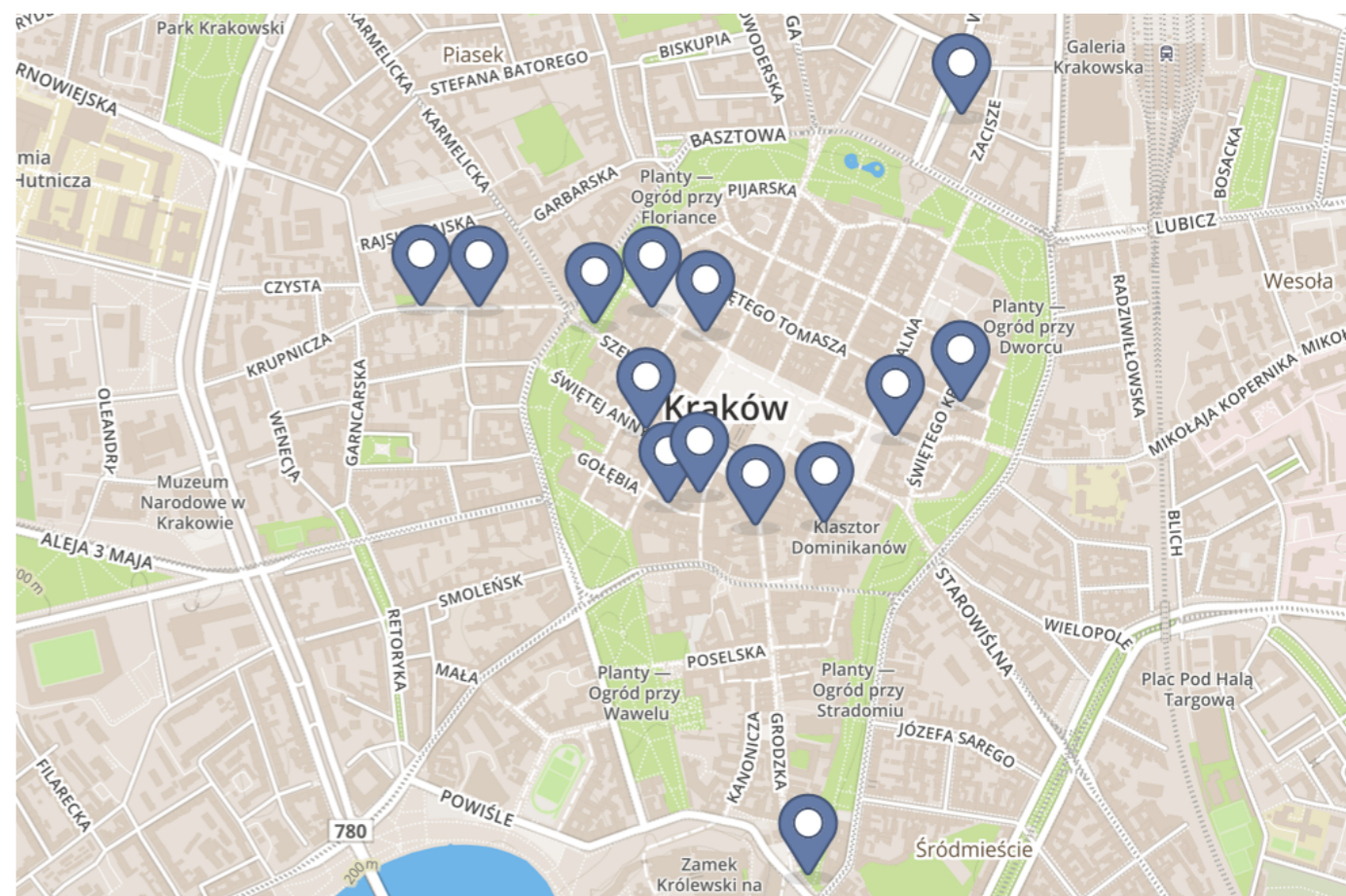
Ambasada Śledzia

Vodka shots & herring are the only thing on the menu. There are similar places around the city, but this one was the first.



Chimera

Salad bar with a very wide variety of fresh salads, tarts and freshly squeezed juices. Enjoy them in their pretty summer garden, with hand painted decor on the walls.

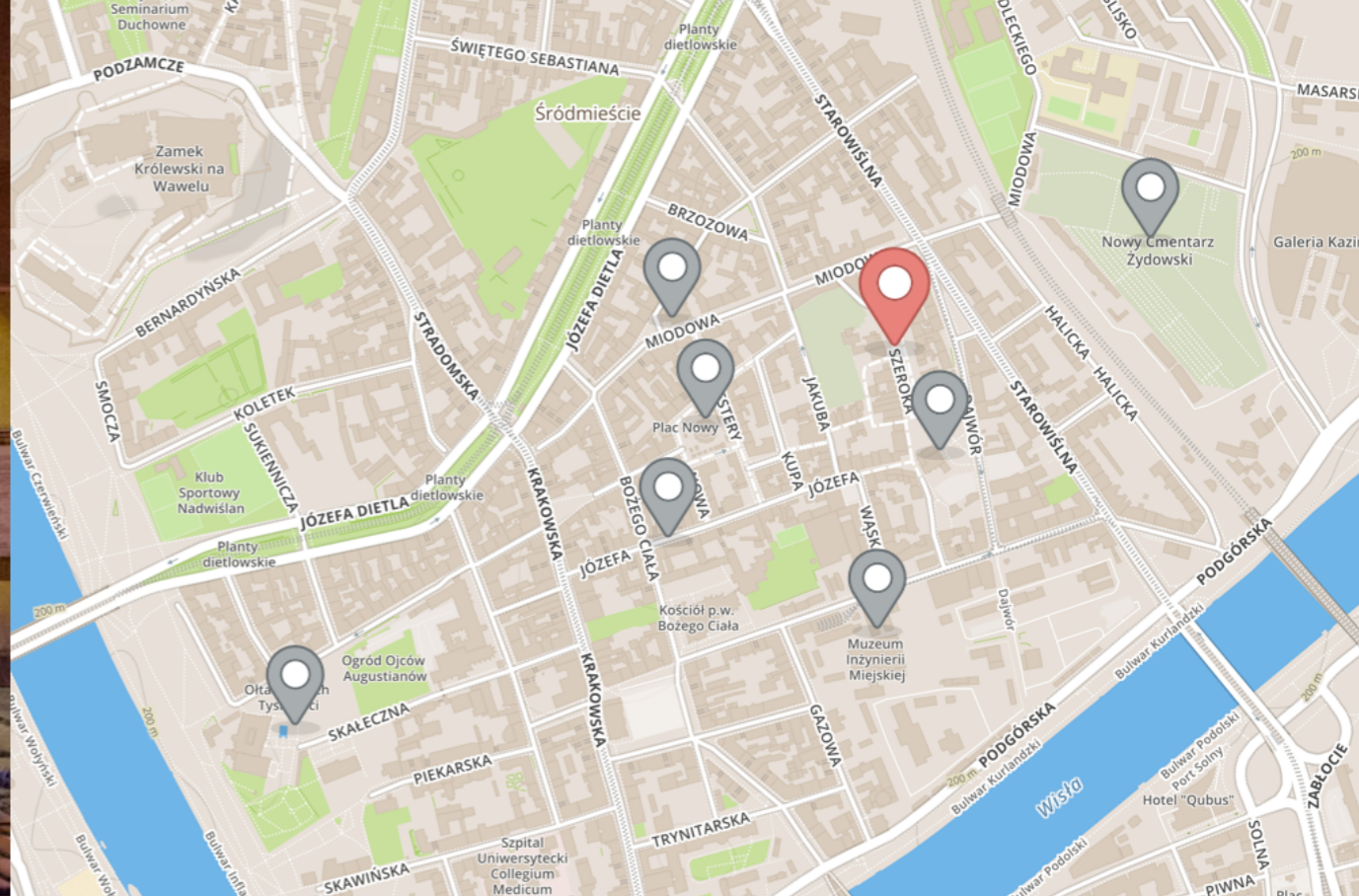


02

The Secrets of **KAZIMIERZ**

Once a separate town where Christian and Jewish religions coexisted peacefully for hundreds of years, Kazimierz has been a district of Kraków since 19th century. During the World War II the Jewish people were moved to Podgórze Ghetto across the river or worse, sent to concentration camps. Before the war there were 60 thousand Jews in Kraków but in 1945 - only 2 thousands, including the ones saved by Oscar Schindler in his factory.

Forgotten after the war, Kazimierz was a dangerous district and not every citizen of Kraków was brave enough to go here. Now it's not only a major tourist magnet, but also the second most popular night club district, with a more easy-going atmosphere than the Old Town. Some of the old Kazimierz remains still, hiding in antique shops and cute cafes.



01

KNOWN FOR
JEWISH CUISINE RESTAURANTS

TYPE
SQUARE

SZEROKA STREET

A market square converted to a wide street (hence the name - szeroka means wide) and the centre of Jewish town.

Szeroka is surrounded by dignitaries' houses, Jewish buildings

(like the Old Mikvah), and three synagogues: **Wolf Popper**, **Remuh** with its cemetery and the **Old Synagogue**. All of the synagogues and the cemetery can be visited, though they were destroyed and ransacked by the Germans during the World War II.



The old noblemen's houses on Szeroka Street

THE OLD SYNAGOGUE

Jewish name: Alte Schul, Polish name: Stara Synagoga

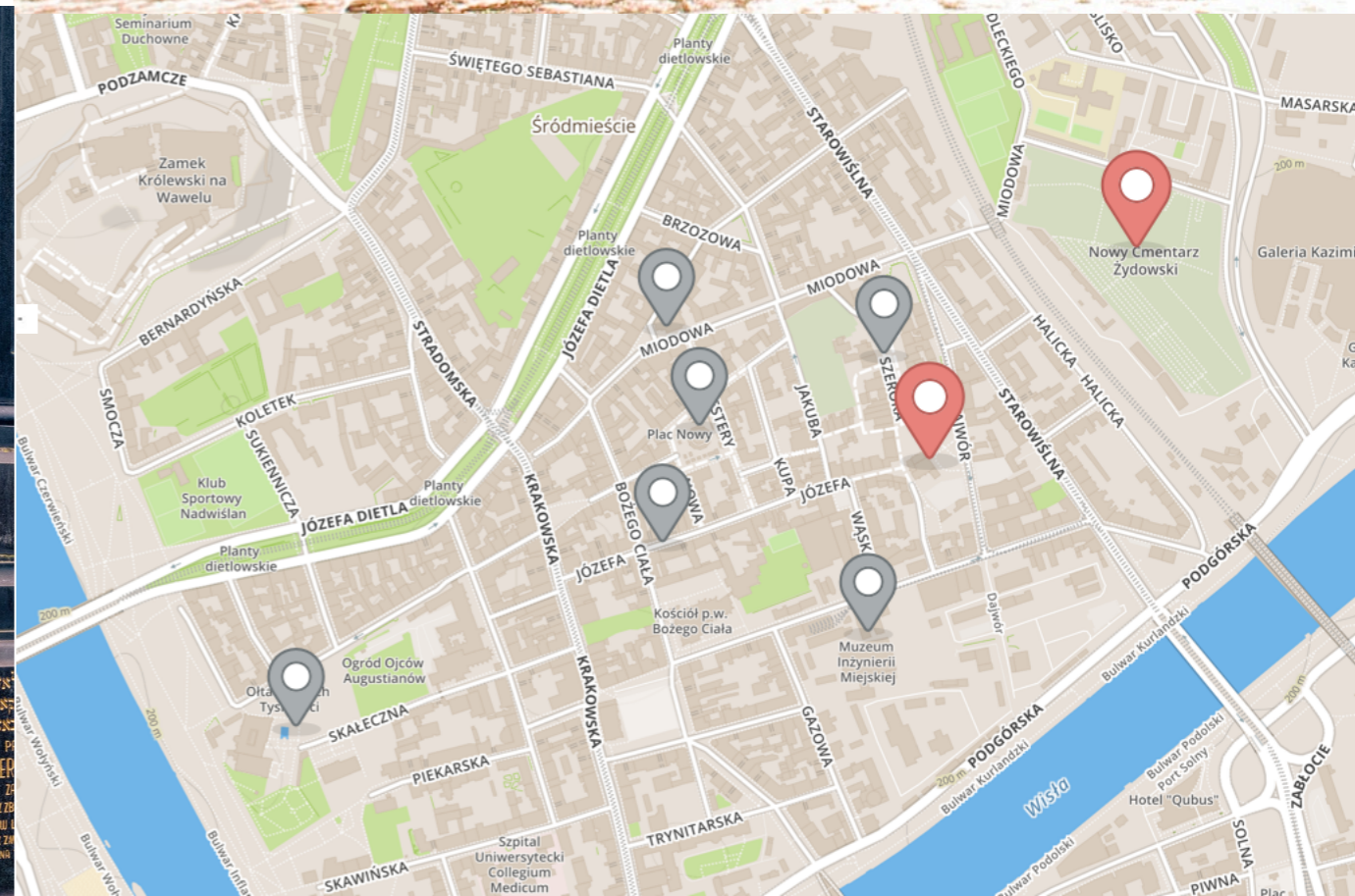
The oldest synagogue in Poland and one of the most precious buildings of this kind in Europe. Its architecture was a mix of gothic and renaissance styles and until 1939 it remained the main cultural and religious centre of Kazimierz. The Old Synagogue

was severely devastated during the war, to the point where no restoration can bring it to the former glory. Now serves as a museum of History and Culture of Kraków Jews.



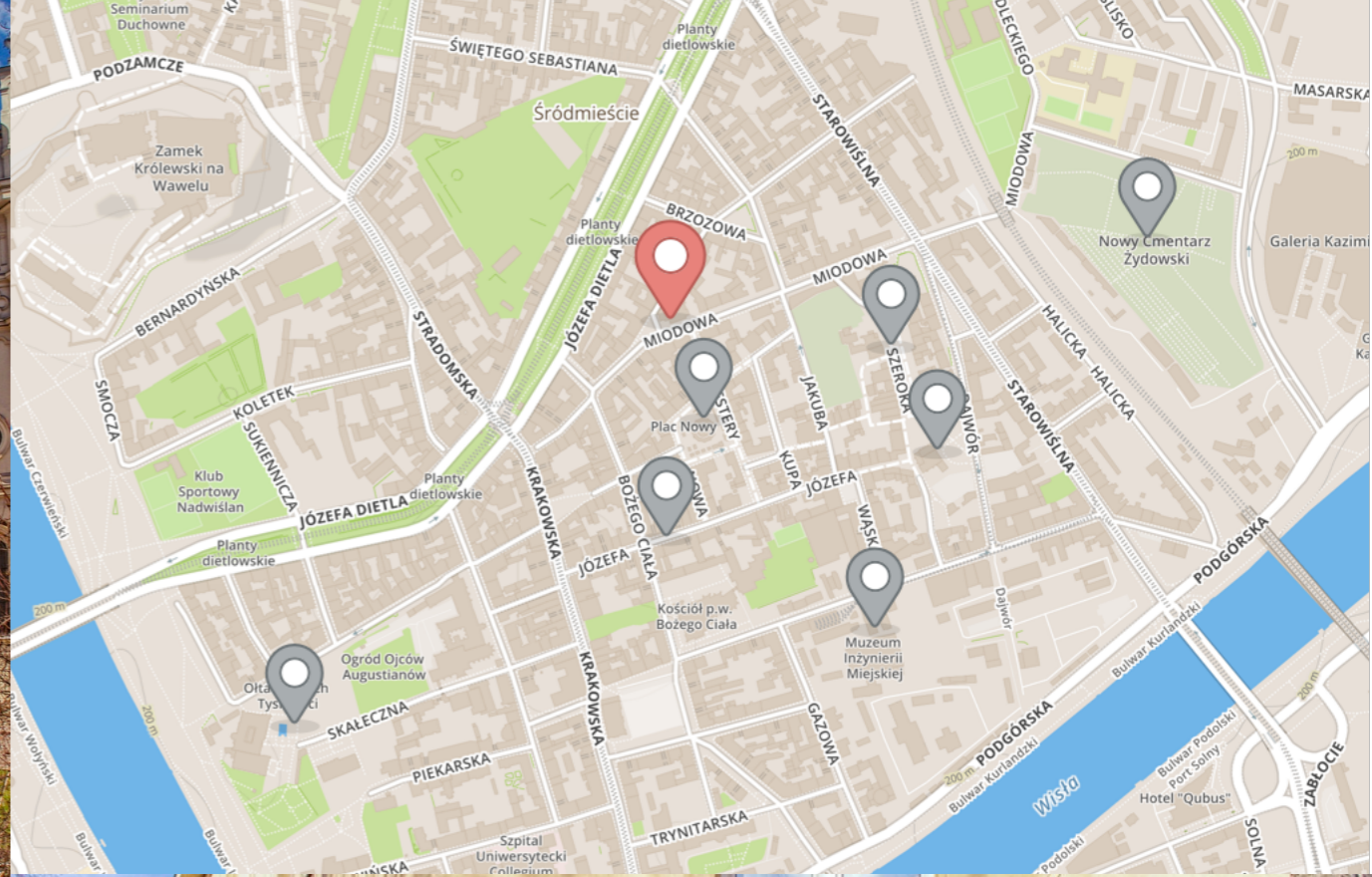
THE NEW CEMETERY

The headstones from this cemetery were used by Nazis for paving the roads during World War II. Some of them were found later though and restored. Now you can find over 1000 tombstones here, as well as plaques funded by the survivors of Holocaust.



TEMPEL SYNAGOGUE

Established by progressive Jews in 19th century. Unlike other synagogues in Kraków, Tempel wasn't seriously damaged during the War - its Torah Ark, wooden galleries, and polychromes are still well preserved. It's been revived thanks to the Jewish Festival, when it becomes the venue of Klezmer music concerts.



THE JEWISH CULTURE FESTIVAL

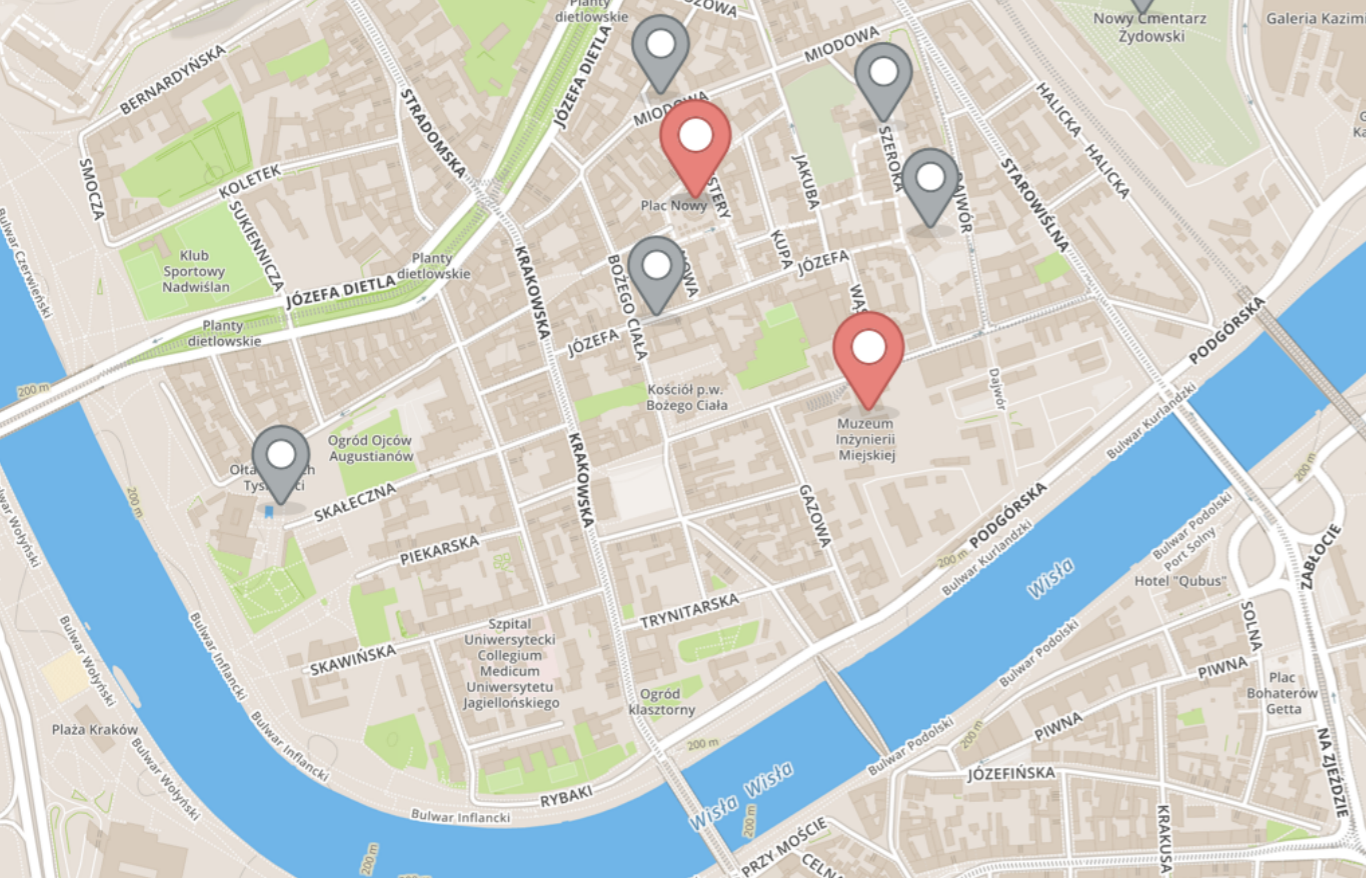
Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej

If you're interested in Jewish culture, visit Kraków in the end of July for the famous [Jewish Culture Festival](#) →. Lasting more than a week, it hosts workshops (like traditional calligraphy, songs or cut-outs) and history tours of Kazimierz.

During the night concerts take place, with great klezmer music.

The end of the festival is marked by an amazing concert on Szeroka street, with jaunty music playing all night long.





05

SITUATED ON WAWRZYNCA STREET

MUSEUM OF MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING

Great for kids and adults, this interactive museum teaches about science and technology.



06

KNOWN FOR ZAPIEKANKIS

NOWY SQUARE

Polish Name: Plac Nowy

Don't be alarmed by its somewhat unattractive looks - Nowy is the centre of night-life in Kazimierz. Just pick one of the clubs and move to another later on! It's also the place to try zapiekanki - half a baguette with cheese,

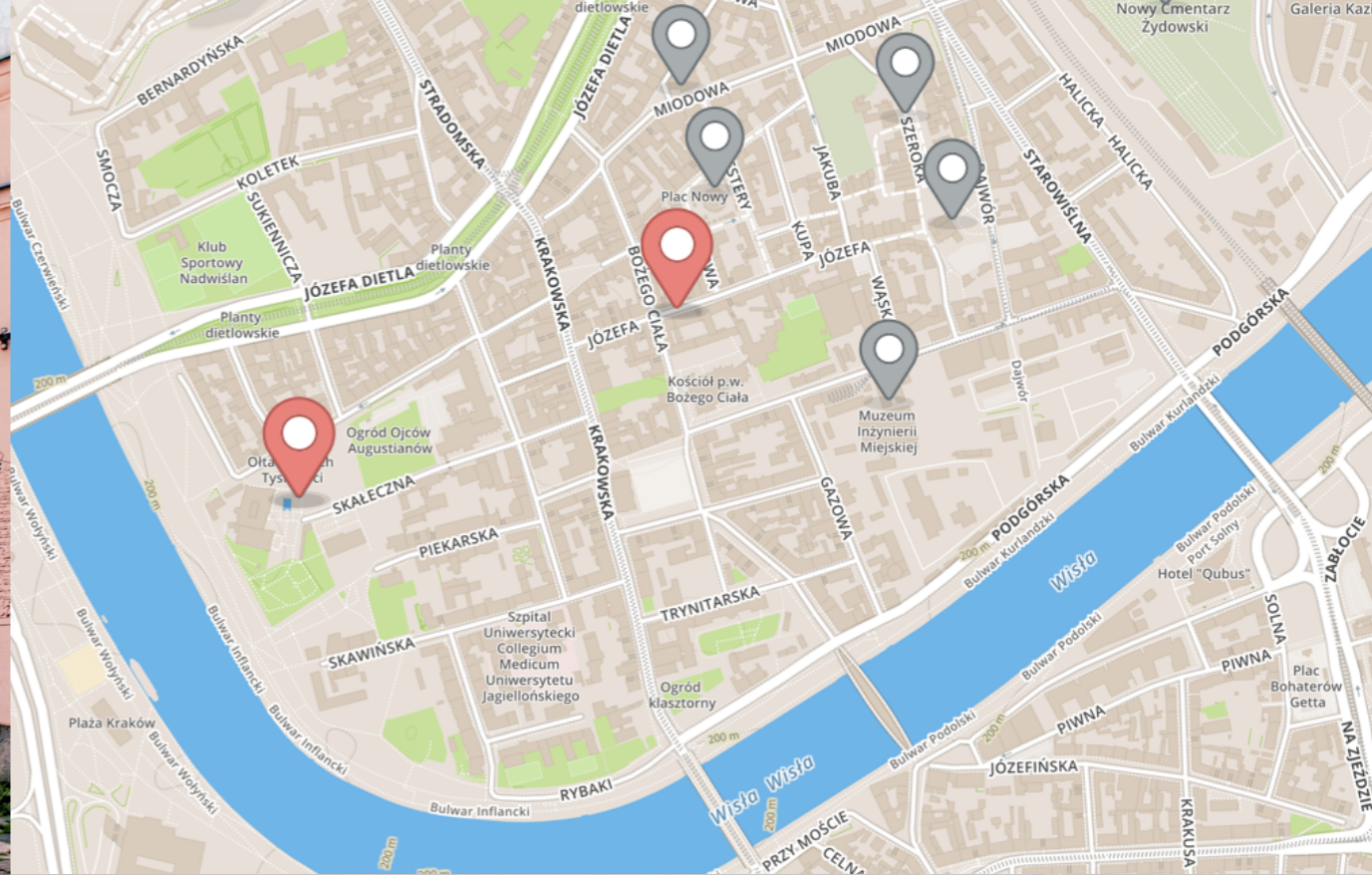
mushrooms, and anything you can imagine. The best ones are sold at Endzior in a round building (Okraglak) in the centre of Nowy. The square transforms into a flea market on weekends.

07

KNOWN FOR
BEAUTIFUL CAFES

JÓZEFA STREET

The artistic heart of Kazimierz.
From antique shops and cafes to modern design spaces - you can find anything here.



08

BUILT IN
15TH CENTURY

DID YOU KNOW
THERE ARE NO WOMEN BURIED IN THE CRYPTS

SKAŁKA CHURCH

Meaning “small rock”, it’s a church and monastery on the site of murder of St Stanislaus, the patron of Poland. The church’s crypts serve as a national pantheon, where the prominent Polish artists and heroes are buried.





DID YOU KNOW?
KRAKÓW HAS 1000+ CAFES AND RESTAURANTS

CAFES AND RESTAURANTS

Already visited old synagogues and cemeteries? Time to stroll around and discover the atmosphere of old Jewish quarter in these cozy places.

Time to stroll around and discover the atmosphere



Alchemia

You don't get more "Kraków" than Alchemia. The place is legendary and a favorite among many Polish artists. Among other curiosities, you can access the smoking room by walking through a wardrobe.



Zazie Bistro

The best restaurant in Kazimierz and probably the whole city. Serving French cuisine, Zazie offers high quality food with a reasonable price tag. You'd probably need to reserve a seat on high season or weekends.



Bagelmama

Did you know that bagels originated in Kraków? Obwarzanki were brought by Jewish immigrants to New York, where they started to add cream, salad and other ingredients to them. Now, bagels are back in Kraków with style, in one of the most beautiful restaurants in town.



Cheder

A cozy and friendly cafe ran by Jewish Culture Festival Society. Apart from drinking great teas, you can read books about Jewish history in almost every language in existence.



Judah Square

A food truck spot on the corner of Wawrzyńca and Wąska streets - you'll recognise it by a black and white mural. Pick your favourite truck - I always stick with Frytki Belgijskie offering fresh Belgian fries with home made sauces.



Czajownia

This place is like a travel to the East, with a wide range of teas and water pipe tastes composed just for you.



Kolanko nr 6

A restaurant and cafe that offers great food and atmosphere all day long. Concerts, slideshows and lectures are very often held here but Kolanko's decor is what is keeps people coming.



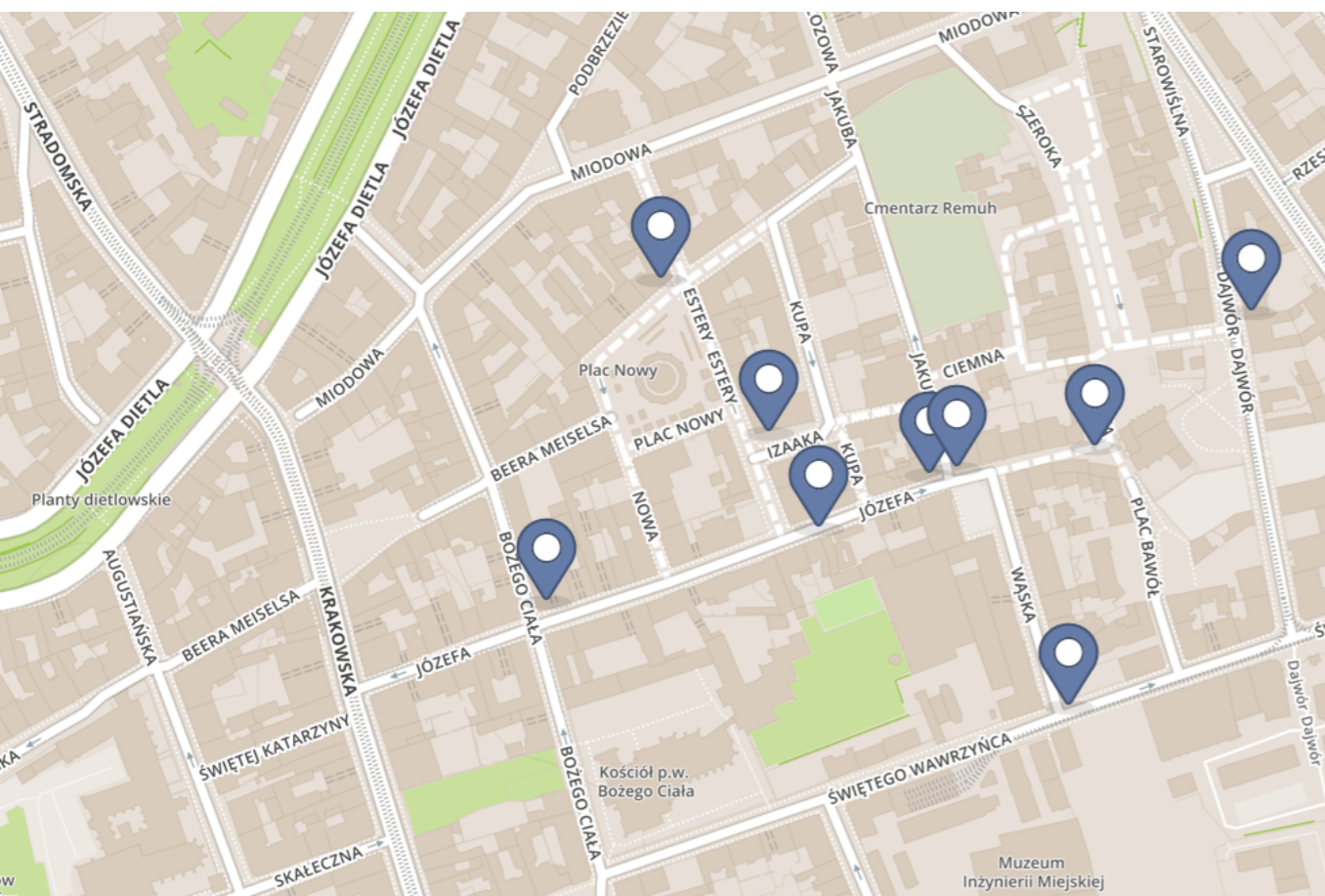
Stajnia Pub

The most amazing summer garden in Kraków, with a courtyard that's inspires painters and photographers. It serves wide variety of traditional pub food.



Nova restobar

Simple but good food for every taste, in the heart of Kazimierz.



Inside Alchemia cafe on Nowy Square



03

Things to see in other
DISTRICTS

After seeing the classics of Old Town and the shabby streets of Kazimierz, you probably wonder what to do next. Here's my choice of interesting spots all around the city - enjoy exploring them!



DID YOU KNOW?

PODGÓRZE IS THE MOST HIPSTER DISTRICT IN KRAKÓW

PODGÓRZE

Across the river from Kazimierz, Podgórze is mostly visited because it was a site of Nazi Ghetto.

But this place has a lot more to offer than grim reminders of its past. It's recently been revived

thanks to the pedestrian bridge from Kazimierz and pretty bars, as well as hipster coworking spaces opened in the area. Podgórze is best explored by foot, as it has a lot of picturesque spots.

Plac Bohaterów Getta

The square was a central point of the ghetto and a place where the Germans gathered people before sending them to concentration camps, or just executed them on the spot. A pharmacy "Under the Eagle" located by the square, was the Ghetto's resistance quarters - and now hold a museum, largely financed by Steven Spielberg and Roman Polanski.

Remains of the Ghetto walls

The walls that separated the Ghetto from the rest of the city contained panels which looked like Jewish tombstones. 17 thousand people locked inside were not allowed to leave this place under threat of death sentence. The only remaining parts of the walls are situated on Lwowska street.

Oscar Schindler's Enamel Factory

A museum showcasing the history of Nazi occupation in Kraków, situated in the former factory of Oscar Schindler, a German entrepreneur who saved over a thousand Jews during the war. He was acknowledged in a monumental movie "Schindler's List" by Steven Spielberg. [Learn more about the museum here →](#)

Oscar Schindler's Factory museum is connected with MOCAK, the Modern Art museum.

Bednarski's Park

A lush and quiet park in an old quarry, with glimpses on Wawel castle and nearby Józefa church. After exiting the North park gate, take Stawarza street to get to an Austrian fort and a small St Benedict's church, open only once a year during Rękawka festival.

Krakus mound

A walking distance from Bednarski's Park is the oldest man-made structure in Kraków. Dating back to prehistoric times, the mound has a wooden core inside and was probably built for religious and memorial purposes.

Kładka Bernatka

The "love bridge" crossing Wisła river from Kazimierz to Podgórze.

Bal

A restaurant in a modern open space, with tasty food and huge tables.

Rękawka Cafe

A small cafe with good coffee and homely feel .





DID YOU KNOW?

THE MOST PROMINENT TOWNHOUSES CAN BE FOUND BY RYNEK DEBNICKI

DEBNICKI

Quiet district not far from the centre, with 19th century villas and the views on Wawel castle

Dębnicki Parc

An attractive and modern park by the Wisła river. Best in spring, when its flowers are in full bloom.

Skałki Twardowskiego / Zakrzówek

A large park with a lake situated in an old quarry. Lots of paths to walk, rocks to climb and panoramas of Old Town to see. Though it's officially forbidden to go near the water, you can follow the locals to marvel on Zakrzówek's lake that reminds of Mediterranean beaches, with steep lime rocks immersed in blue water.

A must-see.

Konfederacka 4

Situated in an old bakery, this restaurant has everything I need. Friendly mood, great food and cakes (the brownie!), plus you get to watch the cooks prepare your meal.



TO GET THERE
TAKE A TRAM NUMBER 4 TO WZGORZA KRZESLAWICKIE

NOWA HUTA

Huta started as a village called Mogiła.

Archeological evidence suggests this area has been continuously settled since the neolithic ages, though its oldest remaining building is the 13th century Cisterian Abbey. During the communist times a steelwork company was

built here, and that's where the name comes from - Huta means steel mill. The area surrounding the plant was designed from scratch. For a long time Huta was considered a dangerous district, but now it's a quiet place where you can enjoy wide alley walks and experience the communist side of Kraków.

The Sanctuary Of The Holy Cross Of The Cistercian Abbey

Its surroundings are the most attractive parts of Huta, with old ruined cottages, a wooden church and nearby forest.

Aleja Róż

The main alley of Nowa Huta, surrounded with typical estates and a gathering spot of the locals. To experience the real communist Huta, visit "Stylowa" restaurant situated by the alley - weird clients, rude waitresses and typical "polish bar" menu will convince you that modern times are better.

Sendzimir steelworks headquarters

Its architecture was inspired by Renaissance, but because it's still used by its current owner ArcelorMittal, you can't visit its rooms.



DID YOU KNOW?

COWS HAD BEEN HERDED ON BŁONIA MEADOW UNTIL 1990s

KROWODRZA

District dominated by students, hosting the campus of Kraków's University of Technology.

Jordan Park

Not quite as dreamy as parks in other major European cities, but great for kids and a good place to sunbathe in the summer.

Błonia

Huge meadow in the centre. It's mainly used for concerts, events, and as a track for Kraków's runners (route length 3,5 km)

Trattoria Pergamin

My favourite Italian restaurant in the whole city, with southern decor, low prices and delicious fresh food.

04

Kraków is situated in Lesser Poland region, which is one of the richest and most fascinating areas in Poland. From hikes in the mountains to important historical locations, taking a short trip away from the city can be as satisfying as seeing the city itself.

One day
TRIPS
Outside Kraków



DID YOU KNOW?
THE RAFTING ROUTE IS 18KM LONG

DUNAJEC RIVER GORGE

Running through Pieniny mountains on the border of Poland and Slovakia, the Dunajec gorge offers an opportunity for a great adventure. The most popular activity is **rafting on Dunajec river**, which lasts 2-3 hours and offers the opportunity to see the notable features of Pieniny National Park.

The season lasts from 1st April to 31st October. The best way to get to the gorge is by taking a bus from Kraków to Szczawnica and then finding a bus to Sromowice-Kąty marina (there are signs all over the place).

Szczawnica town and the mountains surrounding it can themselves be a great place to stay, as they're quiet and hiking there is a lot easier than in Tatra mountains.



DID YOU KNOW?
OJCÓW THE SMALLEST OF POLISH NATIONAL PARKS

OJCÓW NATIONAL PARK

Situated in a valley containing limestone cliffs, ravines and caves. Places to visit include Łokietka's Cave, ruins of a medieval castle in Ojców, Pieskowa Skała castle and of course the forest with its gorgeous rocks.

Get there by taking a tram to Bronowice Nowe from anywhere in the city and then a bus number 210 to Będkowice. The closest stop is "Czajowice".





DID YOU KNOW?

THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS TRAIL IN TATRAS IS ORLA PERĆ

TATRY MOUNTAINS

The best way to start your adventure in this wonderful mountain range is to get to Zakopane town. In summer you can catch a bus every half hour from the main Bus Station in Kraków and then a minibus anywhere directly from Zakopane Station. Just don't stay in this town unless you have to, it's hideous.

Morskie Oko

A mountain lake with stunning views on the highest parts of Polish Tatras. The road is paved and very easy, though it still takes about two hours to get to the lake. Don't miss this! *Take the bus to Palenica/Morskie Oko from Zakopane.*

Kasprowy Wierch

You can either take a cablecar to the top of the mountain or try to climb it yourself (it takes about 1,5 hours but you need good shoes). Either way, the view is absolutely magnificent and worth every penny. *From Zakopane take a bus to Kuźnice.*

Dolina Chochołowska

The longest valley in Poland is perfect for a relaxing walk in marvelous surroundings. The best time to go is spring, when the valley is covered in purple crocuses. *Take a bus to Siwa Polana.*

Morskie Oko from above



Climbing Kasprowy Wierch



05

Ideas for spending time in Kraków during any time of the year. Warm yourself up in the winter or relax by the river in the heat of the summer!

Seasonal
PLEASURES



Seasons
WINTER



Although winter months can be tough in Kraków, they are also a festive time full of warm spicy wine and long evenings at the bars.

December is the best time to visit the Christmas Market on the Main Market Square. Get warm with some hot grog, try local foods and roasted nuts or buy small presents for your loved ones in the stalls placed directly on the Rynek.

News Year's Eve in Kraków is celebrated on the Main Market Square, with thousands of people enjoying the concerts and the fireworks at midnight. Be sure to make a reservation in a restaurant of your choice at least a month prior to the New Year.

January and **February** are best spent shopping - from local shops to malls, the sales are everywhere. Visit Floriańska and Szewska streets for bargain prices or go to the most popular shopping centre - Galeria Krakowska, just by the Main Train Station.

If the weather outside is unbearably cold, hide in one of these places:

T.E.A. Time

A new pub for beer lovers, which offers freshly brewed beer (they have their own brewery in the basement) and an English pub experience.

Cafe Magia

Charming cafe in a covered courtyard, perfect for a coffee in an intimate and beautiful setting.

Massolit

If book&tea are your perfect way to spend winter, you'll love Massolit. Just relax with one of their books on Poland or some classic literature - all of them are in English.

U Babci Maliny

Affordable Polish food. All-time favourites include mushroom soup served in bread & baked pierogi - this will surely warm you up.

A map of all cafes&restaurants in Kraków is available [here](#) →



Seasons
SPRING



With the improving weather comes the best season to visit Kraków and its surroundings. There aren't as many tourists as during the summer and the parks in full bloom are refreshing after a day full of visiting.

If you happen to be in Kraków during Easter or on the 3rd of May, rent a bike to cycle along the Vistula river and visit [Camaldonese Hermit Monastery](#) → in Bielany. It's the only time women can visit the monastery find out how the life in a monastery looks like. Men can visit it at all times (even book a night in the monastery) and if they're lucky - convince one of the monks to show them their cell.

A bit further down the Vistula river is the **Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec**, available for a visit all year round. Apart from seeing the monastic buildings, you can spend time in abbey surroundings hiking, sunbathing or eating barbecue.

The cycling route leads on both sides of the river from the city centre up to Tyniec Abbey and is about 12 km long in one way.

Film lovers should consider visiting Kraków in spring for its **Off camera festival** and the **Film Music festival**, with the most notable composers (Hans Zimmer, Joe Hisaishi) performing live on Kraków's stages.

[Find the event calendar for Kraków here](#) →

Wianki

The last day of spring is celebrated with a festival called Wianki. Under the Wawel castle, right by the Wisła river St John's Fair is held, with shows of medieval arts and crafts and a traditional competition of wreath making. It all ends with a concert and fireworks in the evening of June 21st and people releasing their wreaths on the water for good fortune.



Seasons
SUMMER



Beware that the streets and cafes will be overcrowded with tourists. It's still a pleasant time to visit Kraków and when you'll feel overwhelmed by the number of people, just relax by the Vistula river.

Kraków has two places to **sunbathe or take a swim** without leaving the city. Kryspinów lake (not far from the airport) and Bagry (from Teatr Bagatela take a tram 20 to Lipska stop).

There's also everyone's favorite **Zakrzówek**, which will probably remind you of Croatian coast. It's officially forbidden to go near the water, but you can still enjoy a hike.

Kraków is also famous for its **mounds** - there are five of them in the city and they were created to commemorate important people in Polish history. The closest to the city is the Kościuszko's mound with the views on the Old Town. Everyone's favourite is Piłsudzki's mound, situated in Wolski Forest. Sunbathe on the hillsides, take a hike in the woods or visit the nearby zoo.

Get to both of the mounds by taking a bus 152 from Teatr Bagatela (Chełm stop).

These places will refresh you during the heat of the summer:

Pauza

Super tasty melon lemonade in an art gallery - who can say no to that?

Forum Przestrzenie

A cafe in the old Forum hotel offers deckchairs by the river and a view on the castle. The bar and decor have a strong 70s feel.

U Romana

The secret place of the locals. Take a lift to the roof of the Academy of Music (Tomasza 43), get a glimpse into student's life - and enjoy the view from above on the Old Town.

Starowiślna 83

The most legendary ice-cream shop in Kraków. The choice isn't big but trust me, it's worth the wait.

Zaulek Niewiernego Tomasza

Three great cafes on one plaza: Dym, Loch Camelot and Cherubino. It's the prime drinking venue for the locals.



Seasons
AUTUMN



Planty park encircling the old town is a favourite all year round, but autumn might be the best moment to stroll around in romantic atmosphere.

With rains and falling leaves comes the time for Kraków's **alternative music festivals** - [Unsound](#) → and [Sacrum Profanum](#) →

Remember to buy the tickets early enough, as those venues got extremely popular lately.

You can also spend your time browsing Kraków's **flea markets** in search of new decor for your home. Try Hala Targowa or Plac Nowy on Sundays for antique furniture, jewellery, cameras and all the other... stuff. Get there very early in the morning for the best finds.

Or maybe you're a fan of creepy Halloween experiences? There's an inconspicuous church of **St. Casimir the Prince** (it's just behind the Slowacki's Theatre) that can give you the chills. From 1st to 3rd of November visit its catacombs and see almost a thousand excellently preserved, mummified bodies. Just please don't make me go there with you!

Wszystkich Świętych

Though Halloween parties in Poland are becoming more and more popular, the traditions are still cherished. Here, the All Saints Day is a time to remember the dead relatives and visit their graves. The cemeteries are lit up with thousands of candles and it's a quiet and serious day for Polish people. Note that 1st October is a national holiday in Poland.

Nativity Scenes

Autumn is spent in preparation for Christmas and it's time when Kraków's traditional nativity scenes (szopka) are exhibited. These are small buildings adorned with stained glass, towers with pinnacles and tiny figures referring not only to the birth of Christ, but also to Polish history. A szopka tournament is held among the best craftsmen in Kraków on the first Thursday of December and the greatest designs end up in Krzysztofory museum.

06

Tips on
KRAKÓW

Useful information for your trip: where to get a perfect shot, what souvenir to buy and seriously, how to get from the airport to the city centre?

Find out in this chapter!

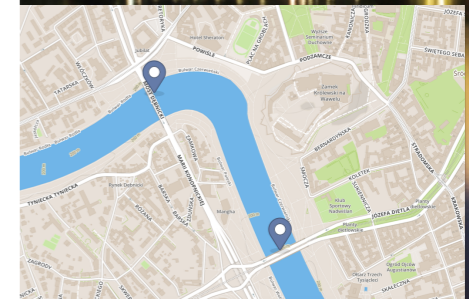
THE BEST PHOTO SPOTS IN KRAKÓW

Are you a photographer looking for great photo spots? Or just a tourist who likes having great photos in their family album?

Here's my choice of the best photo spots and some of the tips how to capture them perfectly.

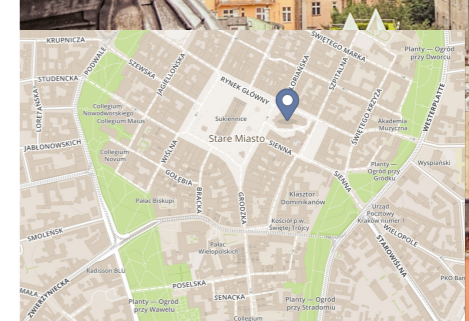
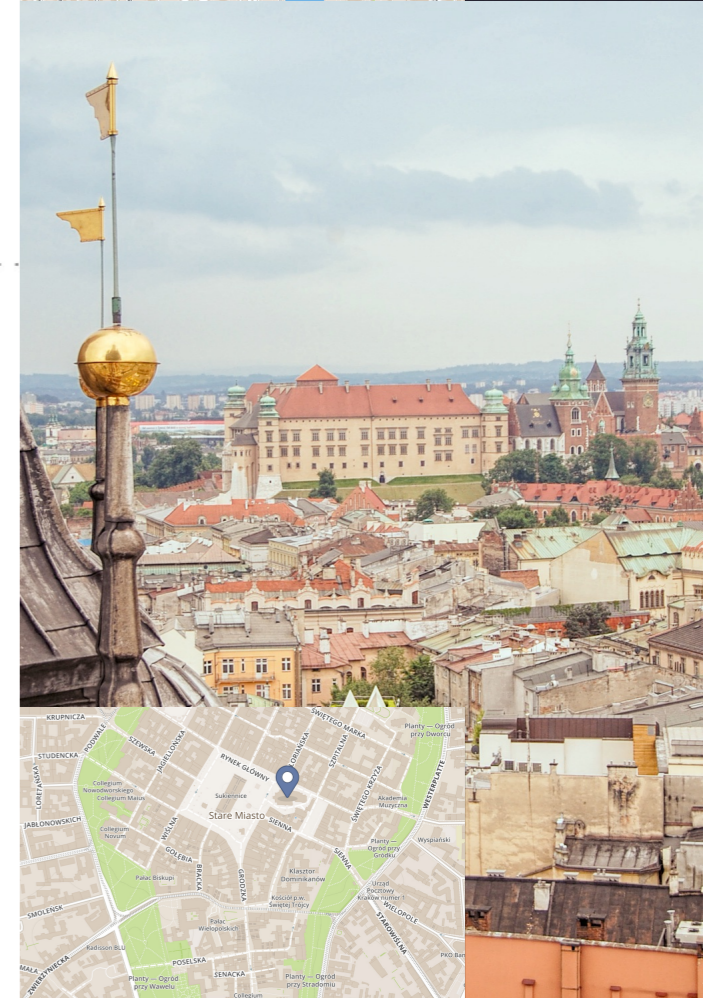
THE WAWEL CASTLE

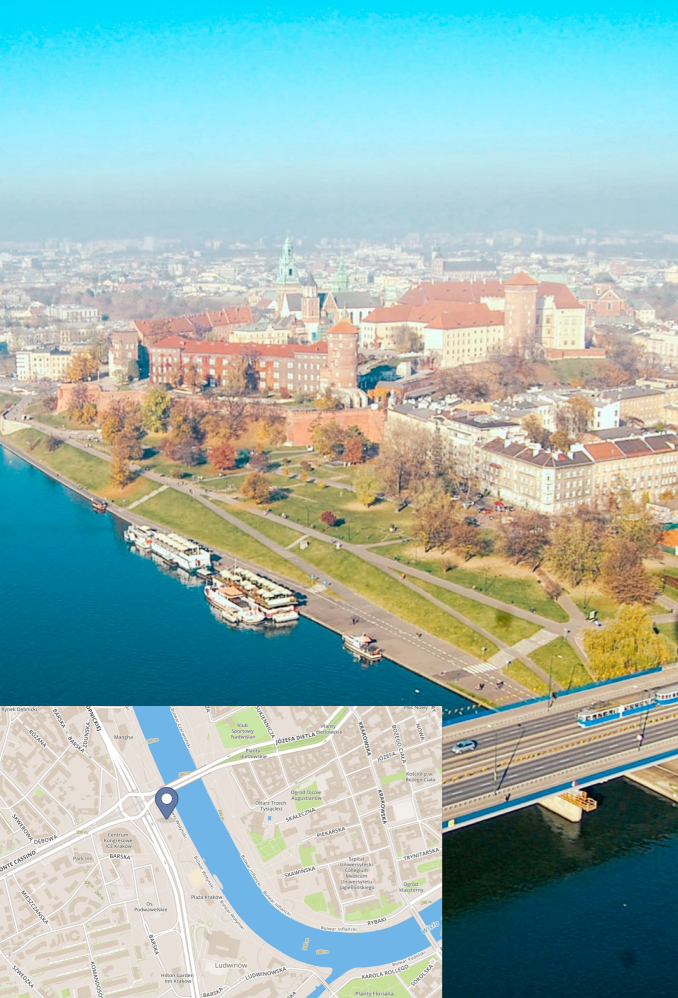
Most of the visitors of the city first see Wawel Castle from Grodzka Street, coming from the Main Market Square. It's actually the back of the castle and not its best side. To get a better shot, go to Dębnicki or Grunwaldzki bridges in the evening and take a long exposure of the castle, reflecting in Vistula's waters.



THE OLD TOWN FROM ABOVE

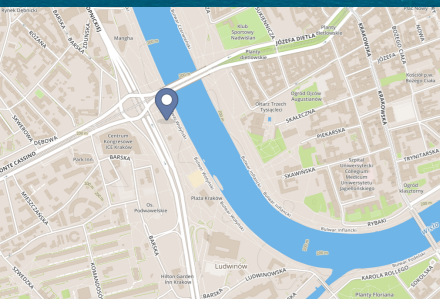
Enjoy cities from above? Climb the tower of St Mary's church (for only 5zł) - and take stunning photos of the Main Market Square. You also get to meet one of the trumpeters of Kraków and maybe have a chat about their job. Awesome!





BALLOON FLIGHT

Prefer to get a panoramic view of the city line? Try the balloon on Grunwaldzki bridge and capture all of the main attractions of Kraków in one photo.

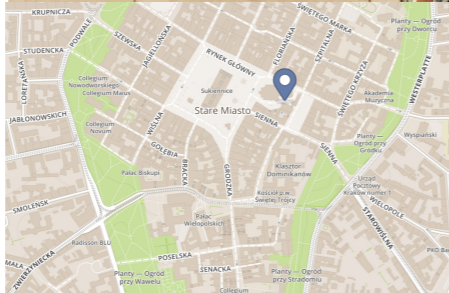


NARROW STREETS

Don't forget that the numerous, narrow streets around Rynek are full of unexpected sights. Find some of Kraków's secrets in one of them!

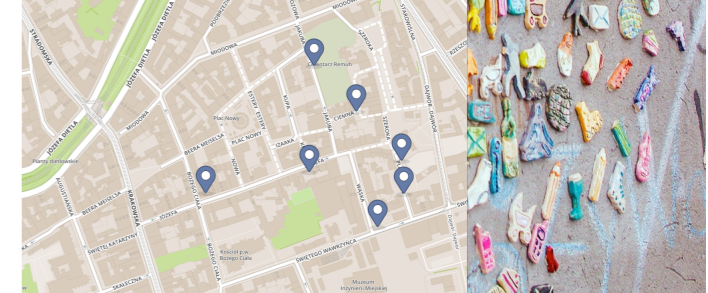
MARIACKI SQUARE

A small and picturesque square on the right side of St Mary's church. Capture its small details or try to get an unusual shot of Mariacki with the Main Market in the background.



DETAILS IN KAZIMIERZ

The old Jewish quarter might be hard to capture because of the cars parked on its narrow streets. It has its perks though and you can capture them by shooting the details: beautiful portals, street art and worn out buildings. I've prepared a small guide of interesting places in Kazimierz to capture - can you find all of them?





DID YOU KNOW?

KAZIMIERZ HAS THE MOST ANTIQUE SHOPS IN TOWN

ALTERNATIVE SOUVENIRS

Plush dragons, mugs and Tshirts are souvenirs usually bought in Kraków. But Polish designers offer much more!

Here's a selection of alternative places where you can get unique souvenirs from Poland. Some can themselves be a reason to visit the city!

Marka

A concept store specializing in home decor, but also including toys and kitchen utensils. Everything in this place was designed and produced in Poland.

Józefa 5

Kalva pottery

Cups, mugs and plates with beautiful drawings of animals. All designed, handmade and lovingly packed in Kraków.

Stolarska 13/14

Idea Fix store

A clothes & accessories shop with Polish designers only. Creative, beautiful and useful.

Bocheńska 7

Absurdalia

Toys, decorations and other cute stuff in this small shop are all supporting Polish artists

Grodzka 42



HOW THINGS WORK IN KRAKÓW

Trams and buses

Kraków's city infrastructure is probably the best in Poland and you can get everywhere by bus or tram - the tickets are the same for both.

Night buses and trams run past midnight at every every full hour - the best places to catch one are Teatr Bagatela & the Main Train Station.

Teatr Bagatela and the Main Train Station (Dworzec Główny) are also the main hub spots in the centre and you can get anywhere from there.

Tickets

Buying tickets can get quite frustrating for tourists (and even locals) and ticket inspections are very frequent in Kraków. Below are the basics.

Start with deciding **where** you need to go. If it's in Kraków, just pick the regular Zone I tickets, but if you're travelling longer distances, like from/to the airport, you have to pick up the agglomeration Zone I+II ticket (it's valid in the city too).

Then, try to figure out **how long** the journey might take you. There are different time tickets:

20-minute - for shorter trips, usually no longer that 12 stops. You can change if you need to, but don't exceed the 20 minutes.

40-minute/1 ride - if you plan to travel for about 40 minutes (with changes) or as long as you want, if you don't need to change.

60-minute etc. - time on the ticket, with changes.

People with disabilities, older than 70 and children under 4 years of age ride for free.

If you're a student under 26 or a pensioner, you should get a reduced ticket (ulgowy). In all the above cases, you need to have a document confirming you're entitled get reduced price ticket.

In other cases or when you're not sure, just buy an Adult ticket (Normalny).

You'll learn it quick. In general if you are closer than 12 stops to your destination, just get a 20-minute Adult ticket and problem solved.

Buy the tickets from a ticket machine in the vehicle or from the driver (they sell only 1 hour tickets) - in both cases you need change.

Machines located on the stops sometimes accept cards.

Oh, and remember to validate the ticket inside the vehicle!

Getting from the Kraków Balice airport to city centre

The best way to get to the city centre from the airport is by bus.

They run every 20 minutes from the bus stop on the right from the main entrance.

First though you need to buy an Agglomeration ticket (4 zł) in the ticket machine on the bus stop - it takes only 10zł cash so you might need to get change.

You can also get a cab in front of the airport. It costs about 40zł - if you paid more than 80, you were ripped off.

Taxis

You don't "catch a ride" in Kraków, don't even waste your time. It's best to find a spot where cabs are parked or call one.

The cheapest taxis are iCar (+48)12-888-00-00 or (+48)12-653-55-55. Other options include

Radio Taxi (+48)12-419-00-00,

Wawel (+48)800-66-66-66

Barbakan (+48)501-139-661. Usually the price is below 2.5 zł per kilometre in the centre and 5 outside the city.

Arriving by train or bus

If you're arriving at Main Railway Station (Dworzec Główny) or Bus Station (Regionalny Dworzec Autobusowy), you are almost in the city centre and can get to all the attractions on foot. The stations have been renewed and finally aren't so ugly. Just take the main tunnel going to the shopping centre Galeria Krakowska, you can catch a cab, a bus or a tram nearby.

Full map of all stops in Kraków is available [here](#) →. If you're looking for a way to get anywhere in the city, it's best to use krakow.jakdojade.pl →

Walking

Here's a secret that's actually not a secret. Kraków isn't that big. All the main attractions are within a walking distance from each other, which makes it the perfect city for the ones who enjoy a hike.

Obwarzanki

Thin round bagels sold on almost every corner in city centre. They must be fresh to taste good and unfortunately it's pretty hard to tell which stall sells the best obwarzanki, as they tend to change places. Just try some and learn on your mistakes. The classics are covered in salt, poppy seeds or sesame, though now there are also cheese or "pizza" ones.

Prices

Poland is well known for its low prices - especially compared to Western Europe. Sample prices are:

- bread - 3zł (0.7 euro)
- water (1.5 litre bottle) - 2zł (0.5 euro)
- beer - 3zł (0.7 euro)
- coke/Pepsi (1 litre) - 4 zł (1 euro)
- beer in a bar - 6zł to 9zł (1.5 to 2.5 euro) - more than 12zł is a rip-off
- big dinner in a good restaurant - 25 to 50zł (6 to 12.5 euro)

Tipping

The waiters obviously like being tipped after the meal, though it's not obligatory and totally up to you. Restaurants don't add tips to the bill

Polish language

In general, you don't need to bother learning Polish and foreigners in major cities spend years here without knowing the language. Not even all Poles speak correct Polish, as it's super hard!

Young people understand English perfectly well and you can just try sign language with the rest, they're used to it in Kraków.

National Holidays

Holidays in Poland are a statutory time when every shop is closed - seriously, don't expect anything to be open. Dates include 1st and 6th January, Easter and Easter Monday, 1st and 3rd May, Pentecost (50 days after Easter), Corpus Christi day (60 days after Easter), 15th August, 1st and 11th November, Christmas and Boxing Day.

The weather

In general, Polish weather is very unpredictable so you have to be prepared for anything. Winters in Kraków can get very cold and the temperature can fall to -20°C (-4°F) in just a couple of days. Recently winters have been quite warm, with only a few chilly days, but expect temperatures around -5°C (23°F) up to $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ (41°F). It rains a lot during the spring and autumn, especially April and November - plan to have a raincoat or an umbrella on you at all times. It's about $+15^{\circ}\text{C}$ (59°F) during those seasons, though in late May or June it can get much hotter. The summers sometimes get unbearably hot, with temperatures rising up to $+35^{\circ}\text{C}$ (95°F) and very humid nights. As mentioned before, there isn't any rule to that and during one day the temperature can drop.

Internet connection

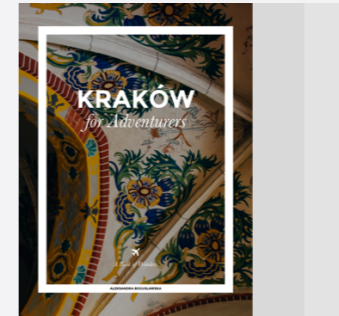
Wifi is available in some cafes only and you probably shouldn't count on it - it's usually very slow and unreliable. Try McDonald's or KFC if you need Internet urgently.

If you must be connected at all times, consider getting a SIM Card from T-mobile - available in supermarkets or in T-mobile shops. 1GB costs 5 zlotys and you can top it up online at any time.



About the Author

Aleksandra Boguslawska is a photographer, traveler and writer from Kraków, currently living in Lisbon, Portugal. You can read her travel blog at tailsofwonders.com and follow her on Instagram and Twitter [@tailsofwonders](https://twitter.com/tailsofwonders)



About the Book

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