

POLAND

Trips & Pilgrimages

Krakow

Warsaw

Gdansk

Wroclaw

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Czech Republic

Hungary

Slovakia

Latvia

Lithuania

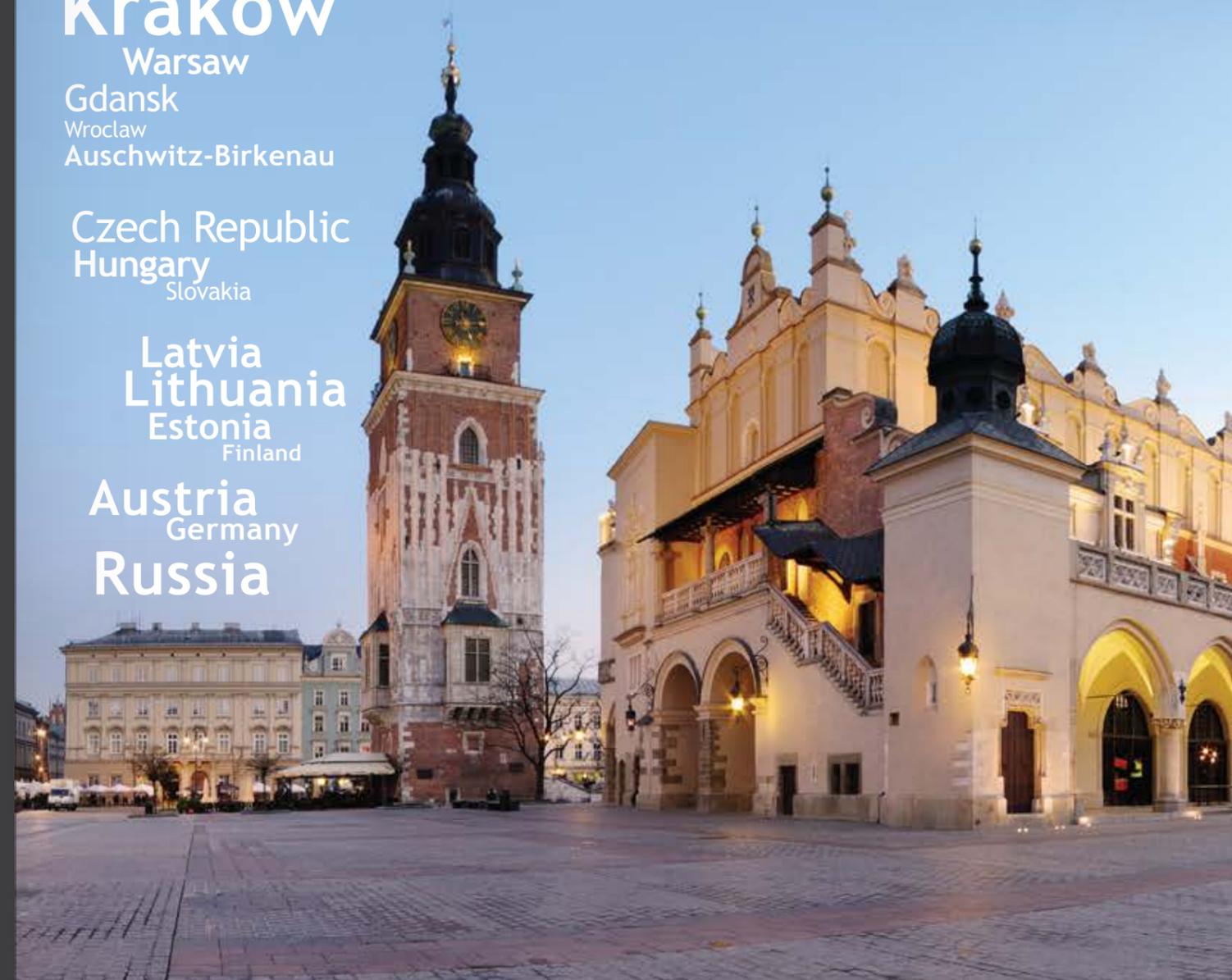
Estonia

Finland

Austria

Germany

Russia





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Dear Friends and Travel Partners

Welcome to the latest brochure from our travel agency, Ernesto Travel, the result of our efforts undertaken especially for you. Here you will find destinations ideal either for your holidays or for pilgrimages, school trips, incentive events, city breaks, meetings and conferences.

The Ernesto Travel team is a group of 12 people who are at your service 24 hours a day to guarantee that you have a safe and unforgettable travel experience within Central and Eastern Europe.

We offer a combination of beautiful medieval towns together with the modernity and energy characteristic of this part of Europe. All of this at affordable prices and with top-quality services, delicious meals, new coaches and superb hotels.

Hotels

Central Europe is distinguished by its modern hotels, most of which have been recently built.

We co-operate with a group of verified hotels in different cities. We check their quality ourselves, and feedback from our clients is greatly valued.

We offer a range of three-, four-, and five-star hotels.



Restaurants

In our opinion you cannot say you are satisfied with your travels unless you eat well.

All of our guests share our views, and so for them we specially prepare traditional local meals in accordance with their needs. From our experience we know that the best option is to eat enough and to eat well.



Transport

Our coaches and minibuses offer the best in comfort, and they keep journey time to a minimum.

We have been working with courteous, experienced drivers for years and they have every concern for your complete safety. Journeys with them are always pleasant, and we always arrive on time.





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Krakow

Krakow is my hometown, the place where I was born and grew up. My family and friends come from this city as well. I believe that my life will always be associated with this city.

Krakow is a marvellous place, full of exciting contrasts. While preparing tour programmes, I always make use of every opportunity to reveal this variety. It is definitely important to know something of the history of this city of Polish kings, rich as it is in architectural treasures and monuments. Krakow's preserved medieval Old Town joined the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1978.

Jagiellonian University, one of the oldest and most highly rated universities in Europe, was founded here in 1364. As a result, even today Krakow is known for being a student city, with over 20 universities and colleges and over 200,000 students from Poland and the rest of Europe.



Sacred Krakow: The Second Rome

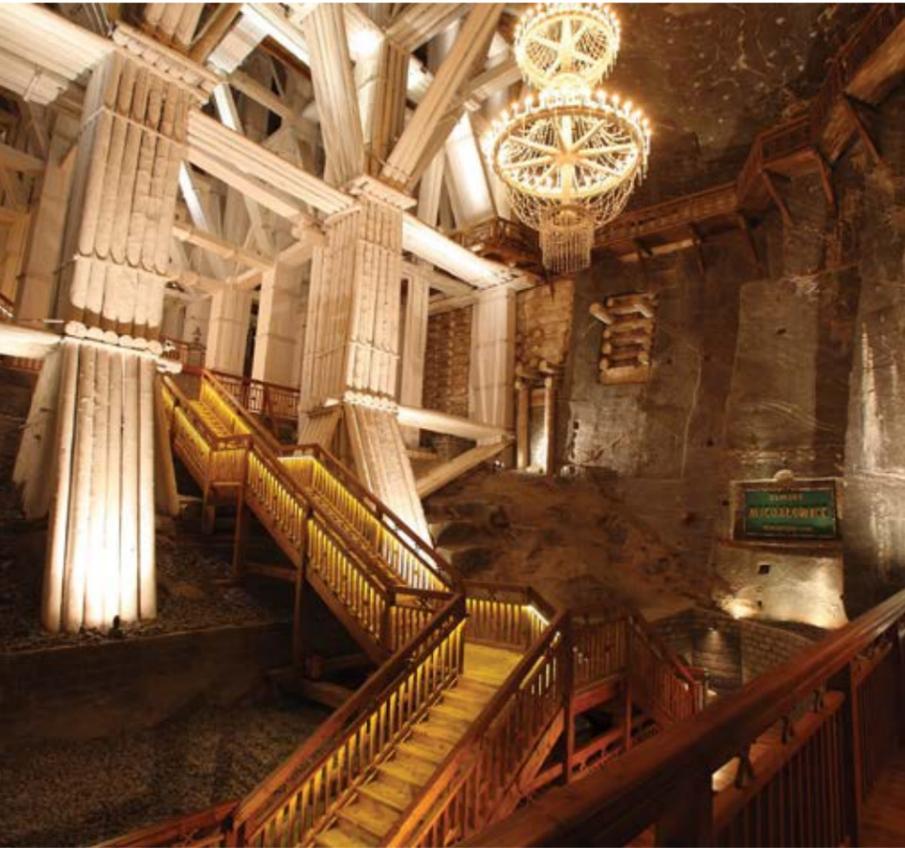
Krakow is often called the City of a Thousand Churches, and since the 16th century has been called the Second Rome. Krakow is distinguished for its architecture, both ancient and modern. It is also a place of religious and cult interest for the majority of its inhabitants.

It was Krakow which Karol Wojtyla left in 1978 to become the head of the Church as Pope John Paul II.

Pilgrims from all over the world come to visit:

- Saint Mary's Church with the Veit Stoss altar
- Wawel Cathedral
- St Adalbert's Church
- The Papal Window
- The Church of Saint Michael the Archangelo
- Tyniec Abbey
- The Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Łagiewniki, dedicated to the cult of St Faustina Kowalska.





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Wieliczka

We promise you an unforgettable adventure!

Over a million tourists from Poland and other countries visit this unique place each year - which is not surprising, as this outstanding salt mine has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1978.

This astonishing underground world, sculpted out of the rock salt by miners, is completely different from the world above. The labyrinth of passages, beautiful chambers, lakes and salt sculptures create an atmosphere which will remain in your memory for a long time.

UNDERGROUND PILGRIMAGE

During the pilgrimage to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, you have a chance to admire outstanding sights: marvellous chapels, sacred sculptures made of salt, chambers, halls and passages. The most important part of your visit is the marvellous Chapel of St Kinga, with the altar and pulpit sculpted in salt. In the chapel you will also see a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper carved in salt.

If your group is accompanied by a priest, it is possible to finish your pilgrimage with the Holy Mass.



Folklore

Enjoy! You're on holiday!

Food, drink, music and dance all create a great entertainment opportunity, while at the same time providing an unusual context in which to discover the culture and history of Krakow.

The Krakowiak is a folk dance from Krakow which originated in the 17th century and, together with the traditional Krakow costume, is one of the symbols of Poland.

Krakow takes pride of place in a number of legends, the most popular being those of the Wawel Dragon, the bugle call from St Mary's, and the Lajkonik. There are other interesting symbols of the city, like obwarzanki (a kind of bagel), bead necklaces, amber, horses and carts in the Main Market Square, street artists, colourful student parades, and Christmas Nativity scene competitions, held annually since 1937.

There are many more symbols, and new ones still appear, because Krakow is a city full of history and culture. It is also well known for parties which continue into the wee hours!





Auschwitz - Birkenau

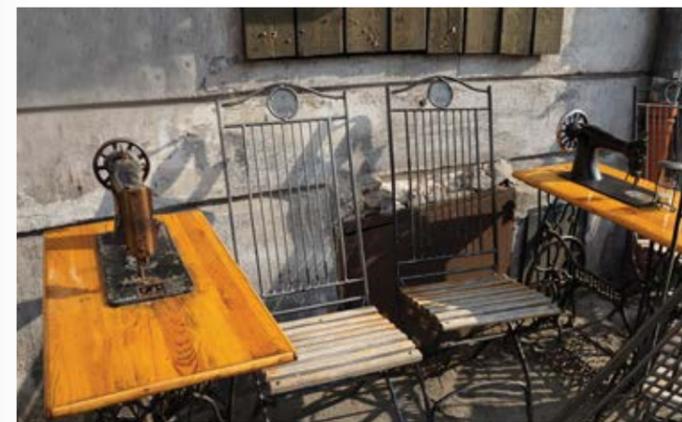


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The concentration camp in Oswiecim (Auschwitz) is a place of huge significance, a symbol of 20th-century terror, cruelty and homicide. It was the biggest extermination camp established by German soldiers in the 1940s. At first it was supposed to be one of many work camps created at that time. However, after its development in 1942, it became a place of the so-called Final Solution: the plan to exterminate people of Jewish origin living in the territory under Nazi occupation.

It is impossible to estimate the precise number of victims, as the SS destroyed almost all the documents and the rest were taken by the Soviets. Nevertheless, the number of victims is estimated at 1.5 million.

After the war, the camp was transformed into a museum and memorial. It was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1979 as a witness to the consequences of fanaticism, extreme nationalism and racism, and to sustain the memory of crimes committed by the Nazi soldiers.



Kazimierz

Kazimierz is Krakow's Jewish Quarter, perfectly preserved and full of history and culture. For many years it was the centre of Jewish public and religious life, until the mass deportation of Jewish society during the Nazi occupation.

You will be enchanted by the magical atmosphere of this place, where you may encounter synagogues and traces of the life of Jewish people. During the day you can visit galleries featuring local artists, or a colourful flea market. In the evening numerous bars and restaurants are full of cheerful crowds, which makes Kazimierz a favourite place for students and music lovers.

We will invite you to a klezmer music concert so that you can experience even more vividly the unique atmosphere of this district. The combination of live music and the moving history in the lyrics is a guarantee of unbeatable entertainment.



fot. Giulio Napolitano

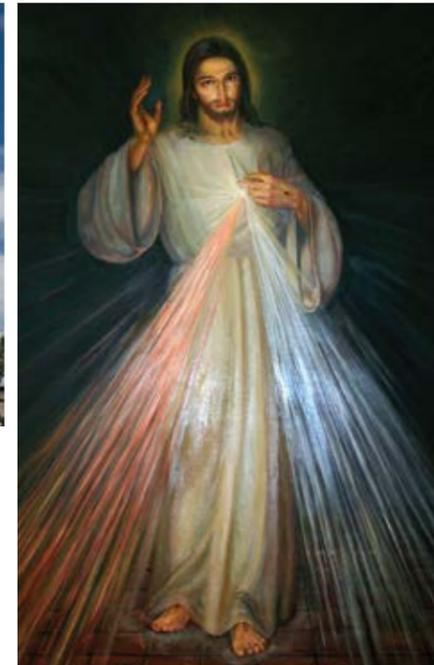
Following in the Footsteps of John Paul II

Following in the footsteps of John Paul II, you will visit remarkable places, like Wadowice, Krakow, Łagiewniki, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and Częstochowa, and discover all that is connected with the Pope's life from his birth to his pontificate and pilgrimages.



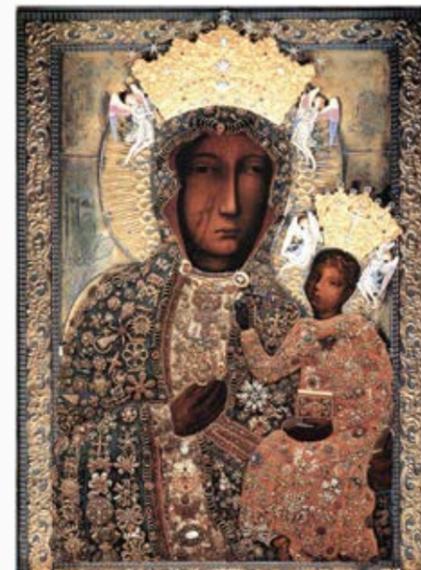
WADOWICE

Wadowice, the birthplace of Pope John Paul II, is where everything began, the small city where you will start to follow in the footsteps of this great pope. The house in which Karol Wojtyła was born and grew up has been converted into a museum that presents his life and papacy.



ŁAGIEWNIKI

Pope John Paul II consecrated the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in 2002, which is where the image of Merciful Jesus and St Faustina's relics are kept. The Sanctuary is visited by pilgrims from 89 different countries, which makes it the only Sanctuary visited by so many nationalities.



CZĘSTOCHOWA

The Częstochowa Sanctuary, with its image of the Black Madonna, is one of the most important places on a pilgrim's itinerary of Poland. Every year, 4 million people travel on foot to Czestochowa, taking part in a tradition that dates back to medieval times. During his pontificate, John Paul II visited this sanctuary six times and presented it with a Golden Rose and his blood-spoilt papal belt, which he'd been wearing during the assassination attempt in 1981.



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City Breaks

Would you like to spend a weekend in the historic centre of a beautiful city? We can offer you trips to Polish cities as well as others in Central Europe.

Consider Krakow, a marvellous city of art and culture; Warsaw, Poland's capital, where you will encounter both modernity and history; beautiful Gdansk, set on the Baltic Sea; and finally Wrocław, often referred to as a Venice of the North.

Or you may decide to visit one of the European capitals, like Tallin in Estonia, Riga in Latvia, or Vilnius in Lithuania, with beautiful centres dating back to the Middle Ages. Prague, Vienna and Budapest also await you.

These places are so famous they don't need to be advertised. Whichever you decide to visit, you will discover new places ripe with history, see interesting sights and monuments, relax and eat well.

School Trips

Have fun, travel and learn at the same time with Ernesto Travel! Education through travel provides many benefits, like discovering the world and its different cultures, learning about history and art, spending time together and much more.

Trips thematically connected with the Second World War include: Auschwitz, Kazimierz (the former Jewish Quarter), the Krakow Ghetto, the Warsaw Ghetto, the Concentration Camp in Majdanek, Berlin, Sachsenhausen, Prague, Terezin and other destinations which may complement your teaching programme.

Showing the places associated with recent history also has fine educational results. Our school trips keep a happy balance between learning and sightseeing.



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Corporate Events & Incentives

Nowadays, more and more companies decide to get involved in corporate events and incentives. We at Ernesto Travel understand the need to reward and motivate staff, which results in more efficient work and improved profits overall. Let us organise

corporate events for your clients, partners and staff - in Poland or elsewhere in Europe. Keeping in mind all of your needs, we will aim to create the most rewarding and unforgettable event, a source of future benefits for your company.



Spas

Relax and have some time just for yourself! Among many interesting places to visit, we also offer spa resorts. Some of them are conveniently located in city centres, others are on the outskirts with a lot of green space, peace and quiet. All the resorts provide high-quality services and exceptional treatments.

Dentistry

High quality for moderate prices. Professional dentists and clean, well-equipped surgeries meet the highest standards and give you a good reason to take care of your teeth while on holiday. What's more, all the staff speak English.



Mazury

The Mazury region, together with the National Parks of the North, is one of the prettiest places in the world - and that's official! It is a little-known fact that in the contest for the New Seven Wonders of the World, Mazury was rated as one of the 28 prettiest places in the world, famous for its lakes and rivers.

Situated in the north-east of the country, down the ages the region has always been of interest to both Poland and Germany. It is characterised by a

rich diversity of flora and fauna and by numerous lakes which cover a huge surface area. This natural Polish treasure consists of small, medium and huge lakes connected by a number of canals.

Natural parks, pristine rivers, alleys of old trees and huge European bison make the Mazury region a paradise for those who are thrilled by the beauty of the natural world and by magnificent, untouched landscapes.



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Zakopane

The Tatra Mountains, the most picturesque place in Poland, are known for their outstanding natural qualities. Their peaks are the highest and the prettiest in the country. The different heights of the numerous mountain ridges make them ideal for hiking.

Zakopane lies at the foot of the Tatras and is often called the winter capital of Poland. Known as a town of artists, it hosts a number of cultural events,

concerts and exhibitions. The town attracts all who are looking for work- and life-friendly surroundings.

Tradition is alive and well in Zakopane: people still dwell in wooden houses, men work as shepherds, and women are occupied with knitting. In their homes people speak the local dialect, and for religious occasions they wear traditional costume. At Krupowki, the town's commercial centre, local

products are sold, e.g. oscypek (ewe's milk cheese), kierzki (sheepskin shoes), sweaters, gloves, scarves and hats made of pure wool.

One of the biggest adventures in the mountains - a truly unforgettable one - is the Dunajec River tour through the valleys of the Pieniny Mountains. The journey is aboard traditional boats (basically log rafts) which are steered by experienced raftsmen.





Is this New York? Shanghai? No, it's Warsaw!

A city of great charm and a unique, cosmopolitan atmosphere, Warsaw boasts modern skyscrapers, spacious parks and huge shops. It is the beating heart of a young and dynamic Poland, always proud of its history.

This is modern Warsaw, a city which, completely destroyed during the Second World War, was rebuilt thanks to the huge efforts of the Polish nation, always defending its roots. While walking along its wide, majestic streets, you may still sense the atmosphere of the post-war city.

Nowadays, Warsaw is the capital of Poland and its biggest city. It is also the main trade and business centre of the country, which is ready to meet the future.



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Gdansk

Gdansk was one of Europe's richest cities in the 17th century. With its thousand-year history it was one of the most important cities in the Hanseatic League, a union of towns which had a monopoly on trade on the Baltic Sea and covered a large part of Northern Europe.

It was here in 1980 that the independent trade union Solidarity emerged, led by Lech Walesa, later the President of Poland. Solidarity was adamantly opposed to the Communist government, and this led to the fall of the regime and finally to the introduction of democracy in Poland, changing the history of Europe.

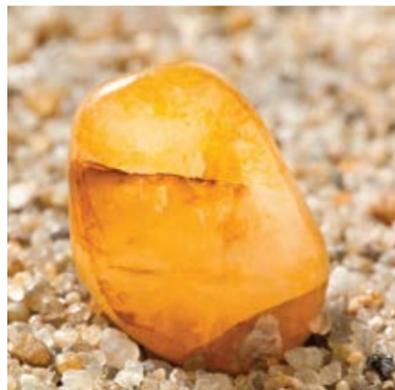
Nowadays Gdansk is a very modern city, yet full of cosy streets and squares, which are trade centres. One of its treasures is amber, also known as Polish gold.

Malbork

The Gothic castle of Malbork, set on the Nogat River a few kilometres from Gdansk, is known for its massive brick towers. It was built around 1300 by Teutonic Knights who, for over 150 years, ruled the coast of the Baltic Sea.

Malbork Castle is said to be the biggest brick fortification in Europe and one of the biggest castles in the world. Despite stormy historic events, the castle has preserved its charm and every year it attracts thousands of tourists.





Estonia

You can be sure you won't get lost in Estonia. All you need is a device with Internet access, because Wi-Fi services cover 95% of the country. It's not surprising that Skype was invented here. The country is also famous for dozens of lakes, huge areas of forests and its 1,521 islands.

While visiting Tallin, the capital of Estonia, stroll the streets of the Old Town and you will find yourself back in medieval times. The heart of the city is the Market Square, where a Christmas tree was displayed for the first time in 1441.

Finland

Finland constitutes a border between Scandinavian harshness and Baltic vitality.

You will be enchanted with Helsinki, its monumental architecture, a harbour full of yachts, and delicious cuisine dominated by salmon and berries. Tourists are usually fascinated with the Finnish language, which is the most difficult and exotic of any in Europe.



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Lithuania

Lithuania is known for its sandy beaches, golden amber and delicate flax. The life here, between stork nests and green forests, is slow.

Vilnius, the capital of the country, is one of the prettiest examples of Baroque style, as in each square you will meet a genuine example of the period.

Latvia

Latvia sings from dawn to dusk. Love of singing is what most characterises the Latvian people, and UNESCO has declared it to be their national heritage.

Riga Old Town is always full of life, where you will hear not only traditional music, but also modern tunes and rhythms, as in the newest clubs anywhere.



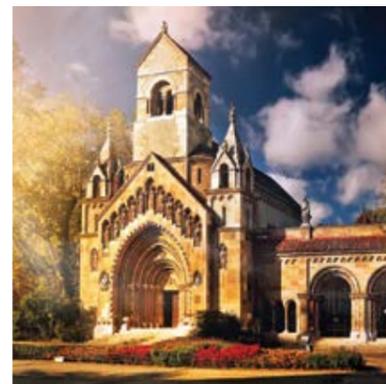
Budapest



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One of the prettiest capitals in Central Europe. During the day the city is dominated by the marvellous neo-Gothic Parliament building, while at night it glitters with a thousand lights reflected in the Danube River.

Budapest, as well as the whole of Hungary, is known for delicious cuisine (especially goulash), good wines, singing and dancing to the rhythm of the Csardas, the traditional folk dance. All of this awaits you, so come and experience for yourself this remarkable city.



Prague

You cannot visit Europe without seeing this historic city and trade centre, famous all over the world. Prague is particularly significant for its history, culture and art. Each district has its own special atmosphere, making this a city of a thousand faces, distinguished by multiple architectural styles.

Among the places which are a must on any tourist itinerary, consider taking in the Charles Bridge, which joins the Old Town with Mala Strana district; the Castle, built in the 9th century; the famous Golden Lane; St. Vitus gothic cathedral; and the John Lennon Wall, which in the '80s became the symbol of freedom.



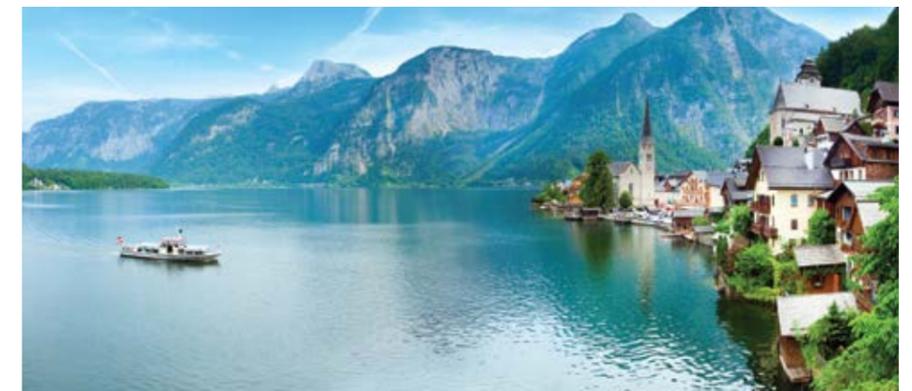


On the Beautiful Blue Danube... Austria

An amazing country in the centre of Europe. Austria, with its charming landscapes, historic sites, art and delicious cuisine, is an ideal destination for any tourist. Vienna, the capital, is a magnificent city in the heart of Europe. Full of history, it has a lot to offer those who are fascinated by art and architecture.

This former capital of the Habsburg Empire is also famous for its cuisine. Here you can enjoy meals from

different countries which used to form part of the Empire. Most characteristic of Austrian cuisine are its various soups, Wiener Schnitzel (breaded and fried veal steak), and many desserts, like strudel and Sachertorte with its secret recipe. When in Salzburg - "the kingdom of Mozart" - you might like to try Mozartkugeln (Mozart balls), traditionally made of marzipan covered with nougat, placed on a stick and dunked in chocolate.



Germany



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Germany is the country of beer, Currywurst, autobahns and many impressive monuments. In October there's the famous Oktoberfest, the festival of beer and sausage. In winter, you can visit Nuremberg and its Christmas market, the oldest one in Europe. With Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI being a native of Germany, it is also worth visiting places of religious interest, like Altoetting or Schönstatt.

Ulm is where the tallest church in the world is situated. Its steeple is over 530 feet (162 meters) tall and has 768 steps.

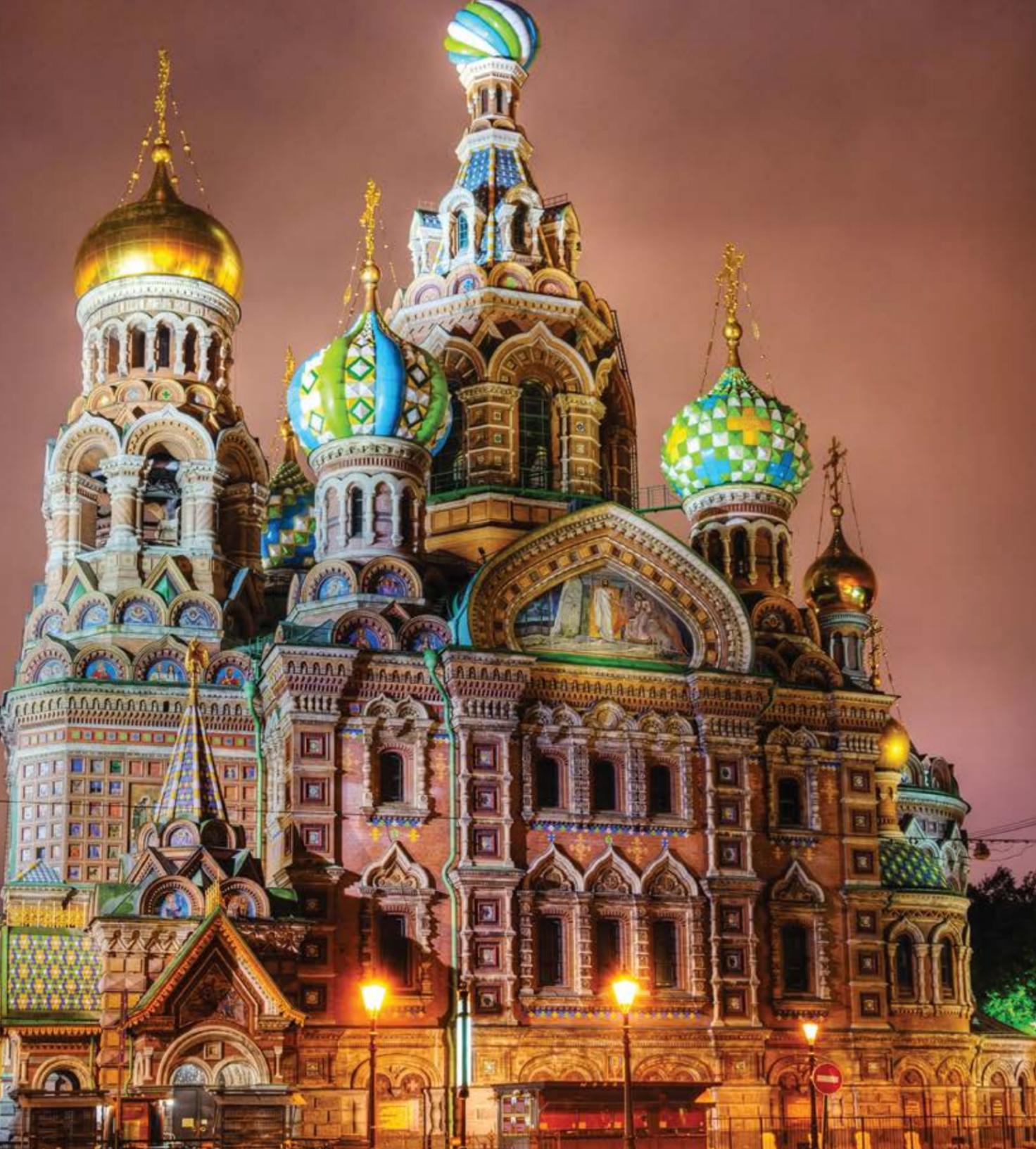
The nation's capital, Berlin, is symbolised by the Brandenburg Gate and the Berlin Wall. The city boasts a double number of theatres, opera houses and museums, because until 1989 Berlin was divided in half. Even today, in different areas of the city,

parts of the Berlin Wall remain. Another symbol of the city is the Red City Hall, built in the 1860s, which is home to the mayor and the government of the Federal State of Berlin.

From Berlin you can go to Potsdam and visit beautiful Sanssouci Palace, surrounded by its grand garden and vineyard, the most northerly one in Europe.

The twin-spired cathedral in Cologne is a World Heritage Site. It is the second biggest in Germany, built in 1890.

And you cannot neglect the state of Bavaria with its fairy-tale castles. One of the most widely recognised buildings in the country is Neuschwanstein Castle, situated two hours by bus from Munich. This was Walt Disney's inspiration for his castles in Disneyland and the company's famous logo.



Cuisine

Would you like to discover Polish culture? You can do this like other people, by visiting museums, or... by eating! Below, especially for you, we describe the best dishes, because we want you to discover the taste of Poland. Our specialities are the following:

Pierogi – served savoury or sweet, these are dumplings made of dough stuffed with cottage cheese, mushrooms, meat or fruit.

Żurek – a soup made in various ways, depending on the region. It is slightly sour and often served with halved hard-boiled eggs, bits of sausage or potatoes. It is also a typical dish served at Easter.

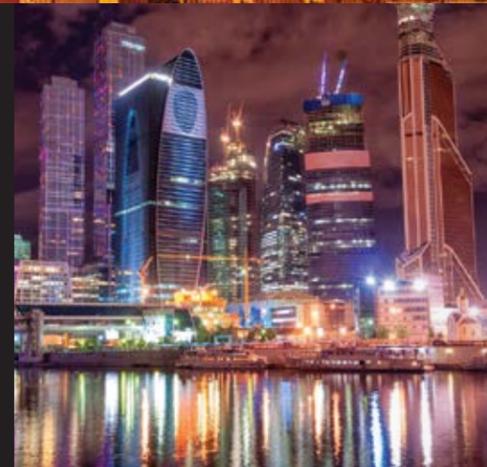
Potato pancakes – grated potatoes fried in oil, often served with different types of sauce (usually a meat and mushroom sauce).

Bigos – a stew of sauerkraut and different types of meat, mushrooms, onions, seasoning and sometimes prunes. It is always made for Christmas.

Kremowka – cream cake consisting of two layers of puff pastry with a deep filling of pastry cream in between, sometimes with a portion of alcohol.

Russia

Russia sheds a new light on what we have already seen. Moscow and Saint Petersburg represent the exotic face of Europe, especially with its precious amber, exquisite vodka, and splendid buildings dating back to the Russian Empire. A fast train will take you from Moscow to St Petersburg, and our guides will show you the world of Orthodox churches and Cyrillic writing.



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You cannot resist such a trip!



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