

International School of Dakar



Poland Exploration 12 to 19 October 2013

Day 1 Saturday, 12 October

We leave Dakar's Leopold Sedar Senghor airport shortly after midnight and after changing planes in Lisbon we arrive at Warsaw airport at 14:10. We collect our luggage, meet with the **etr** tour leader and transfer by private coach to our hotel located in the city center. Upon arrival we settle in and have time to freshen up before we enjoy a leg- stretching walk and a first glimpse at the neighborhood. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant followed by an early night. Overnight Warsaw.

Day 2 Sunday, 13 October

This morning after breakfast we start our exploration of Poland's capital with a visit to the heart of the city, **Old Town Quarter**. An area which was completely destroyed during World War II, it has been beautifully reconstructed to its original splendor. We explore the **Royal Castle** and **St. John's Cathedral**, a Gothic church and witness to some of the most important events in the history of Poland, with sarcophagi containing the remains of eminent Polish figures. We then have some free time for lunch around **Old Town Market Square** then we stroll along the **Royal Route**, with its superb aristocratic residences and famous monuments, including the Holy Cross Church containing urns of Fryderyk Chopin and Wladyslaw Reymont, winner of the Nobel Price for Literature. We end our day with a walk through the **Royal Park**, one of the most beautiful parks in Warsaw commonly known as Lazienki or the "Baths" and a visit to the interiors of the so-called '**Palace on the Water**', the lavish summer residence of the last King of Poland, Stanislaw August Poniatowski (1764-95). We return to our hotel with time to freshen up before dinner at a local restauracja. Overnight Warsaw.



Day 3 **Monday, 14 October**

After breakfast we board our coach for a full day excursion as we make our way towards **Kazimierz Dolny**, a picturesque historic town on the Vistula River. Many claim it to be the nicest small town in Poland as well as the pearl of the Polish Renaissance. We then explore the historical city of **Lublin**, with the Old Town and the 15th century Russian Byzantine frescos in the Holy Trinity Chapel. Later this afternoon we visit the unique **Museum of Socialist Realism** in the palace of Kozlowka, where we see artifacts collected during the forty years of communist rule. Given time, we then head to the city's most visible landmark, the **Palace of Culture and Science**. The building itself was a gift from the infamous Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin and was controversial from its inception. Following a design popular in 1950's Moscow, the building was been considered to be a symbol of Soviet domination (and Socialist Realism) and through Soviet sway ended in 1989, at least some of that negative feeling persists until today. We'll head directly to the 30th floor from where we are able to take in a panoramic view of the capital. We then go back to our hotel to freshen up before dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Warsaw.

Day 4 **Tuesday, 15 October**

Today we have a guided tour of the **Jewish District**. Before World War II the city of Warsaw had one of the greatest numbers of Jewish inhabitants in the world. Although their heritage was almost annihilated by the Nazis, there are still several hidden traces of Jewish culture and history. We visit the former ghetto, where a memorial to the heroes of the ghetto, Umschlagplatz and the remains of Nalewki and Mila Street give us an insight of the tragedy that took place here during the German occupation. We'll also have a look at **Nozyk Synagogue**, which is the only remaining synagogue in Warsaw, the **Jewish Theatre** and the **Jewish Cemetery**. We also learn the history of Dr. Janusz Korczak, who created an orphanage for Jewish children in Warsaw and famously declined his own personal reprieve when Nazi soldiers ordered the 196 orphans to the death camp at Treblinka. Time permitting, we'll view his orphanage before an early lunch. We then go back to the hotel, get our luggage and load our private coach for the transfer to Kraków. Upon arrival we settle in and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Krakow.

Day 5 **Wednesday, 16 October**

After breakfast, we begin our exploration of Kraków with a tour of the historic city center, starting at the **Barbican**, a defensive bastion constructed in 1498 based on Arabic rather than European defensive architecture, which are parts of the original city walls. Then we walk through **St. Florian's Gate** (once the city's main entry point) to the Market Square.



There we can visit the Sukiennice or **Cloth Hall**, which dominates one side of the square, and has an interesting upstairs museum of 19th century paintings in Europe's largest medieval town square. We also see the **Town Hall Tower**, **St Mary's Church** and **St. Adalbert's Church**, the oldest building on the square. We then have some free time for lunch before we make our way up to **Kazimierz**, the historic Jewish quarter which once was home to the largest population of Jews in Poland. Those having seen 'Schindler's List' may recognize some of the areas as many of the scenes were filmed here. We walk across **Wolnica Square**, have a look at one of the many synagogues, and visit **Oscar Schindler's factory**. We then have some time for strolling the neighborhoods before dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Krakow.

Day 6 Thursday, 17 October

We begin our exploration in earnest today with our early departure for **Oswiecim**, where we will visit the infamous Nazi concentration camps **Auschwitz-Birkenau**. An estimated 1.5 million people were murdered and thousands more suffered here during World War II. We visit the museum, the barracks and crematorium in order to better understand the terrible history that took place here. After lunch, we continue our day with on-site workshops getting deeper understanding of the holocaust. In the late afternoon we board our coach for the return to Kraków where we arrive in time for dinner. Overnight Krakow.

Day 7 Friday, 18 October

Our day starts with by a journey to the **salt mines at Wieliczka**. Upon arrival we begin with a descent into the underground caverns of this extraordinary natural cavern, in which the galleries and chambers are spread over 4 km on 3 different levels! We will see among other themes, salt carvings of cathedrals and chapels, crystal caves and even Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Returning to the surface, we make our way back to Kraków where we have some free time for lunch. We then continue our day's excursion at **Wawel Hill** for a visit to the **Royal Palace** and **Wawel Cathedral**, the old seat of the Polish Kings, which for four centuries served as the coronation and burial place of Polish royalty. The cathedral contains 18 different chapels and their treasures, along with 100 kings and queens interned in the crypt. This complex also houses some of the **National Art Collections** including tapestries, period furniture, paintings and military accessories. We have some free time for last minute shopping before our farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Krakow.

Day 8 Saturday, 19 October

Today we have an early breakfast and having packed our bags we board our coach for our inevitable transfer from Kraków to Warsaw airport for our flight back home. We depart at 14:55 and after changing planes in Lisbon we arrive in Dakar at 23:55.

This itinerary may change due to opening times, weather and the needs of the group.

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