

My favourite places in Krakow (by area)

* = best / very "Krakow"

The following list I have put together probably includes more restaurants, cafes and bars, than actual museums and sightseeing spots. That's because the city is so beautiful explored on foot and many of the restaurants and bars are themselves within very old buildings with amazing interior architecture. Part of the charm of visiting Krakow is to just wander around and explore the hidden courtyards & cloisters within its medieval (topped with Renaissance) fabric . . .

The areas are all within walking distance of each other (except for Nova Huta, which you can get to by tram or taxi).

KRAKOW OLD TOWN

- *Main Square (Rynek Glowny) - *Sukiennice cloth hall, *St. Mary's Church (see famous sculpted altar inside)
- *Collegium Maius - beautiful Gothic architecture, one of Europe's oldest university cloisters (Jagiellonian street)
- *Barbakan medieval fort and *Florińska gate (end of Florińska street)
- Grodzka street (leading from main square to castle): classical music concerts in St. Peter & Paul Church; off Grodzka: *Franciscan Church - pop inside to see beautiful art nouveau stained glass windows
- Kanonicza street - cute street, Pope John II & Copernicus lived here (parallel to Grodzka)
- *Wawel Castle & cathedral, *fire-breathing dragon statue, *walk along the Vistula River (note that to see many parts of the castle interior, you must make a reservation beforehand)
- little poster gallery/store with great Polish film/theatre posters (Stolarska street)

Interesting fact: the green belt surrounding the old town, outside the medieval walls, used to be a moat.

Museums / Art Galleries

- *Krakow Historical Museum - underneath main square, original walls, very cool, entrance through Sukiennice cloth hall
- *Pharmacy Museum - amazing medieval pharmacy, several storeys (Florińska street)
- Bunkier Sztuki - contemporary art gallery (Plac Szczepanski square)
- National Art Gallery - above Sukiennice cloth hall
- Czartoryski Museum art collection (may still be closed)
- National Museum - occasionally has good exhibitions (al. 3 Maja)

Restaurants

- Przypiecek - small & cheap, pierogi (Slawkowska street)
- Bar na Rogu - one of few remaining "milk bars", cheap but tasty Polish food (Karmelicka street)
- *Chimera - great cheap vegetarian salad bar with courtyard patio (Sw Anny street)
- *Chlopskie Jadlo - traditional Polish highlander food (Grodzka street)
- *Dyńia - cute patio at back, popular with locals (Krupnicza street)
- Mieta - great quality food, popular with locals (Krupnicza street)
- Trufla (Plac Szczepanski square)
- Polskie Smaki - Polish (next to Trufla)
- *Pod Aniolami - Polish, higher end (Grodzka street)
- Wesele - Polish, higher end (Main Square)
- Wierzynek - Polish, expensive, very old - literally used to dine kings (Main Square)
- Hotel Pod Wawelem - near castle, go to roof terrace for great view over river (Powisle street)

Cafes

- *Cafe Camelot - super cute, my personal fave (Tomasza street)
- *Bunkier Sztuki - cafe outside art gallery, super awesome (Plac Szczepanski square)
- *Charlotte - trendy, hipster (Plac Szczepanski square)
- Jama Michalika - cool old interior, my mum went there as a student in the 60s! (Florińska street)
- Wedel - amazing hot chocolate (Main Square)
- Cafe Meho - has cute secret garden at the back (Krupnicza street)
- Karma - trendy (Krupnicza street)
- Bococa - also has really good food, but further away, on the way to our apartment (plac Inwalidow)

Bars

*Klub Kulturalny - very cool underground cellar, my personal fave (Szewska street)

*Pierwszy Lokal na Stolarskiej, Stolarnia - very cool atmosphere (Stolarska street)

*Klub Re - great summer patio, has concerts (Mikolajska street)

Pod Baranami - famous for live jazz (Main Square)

Betel - has concerts (Plac Szczepanski square)

*Dolne Mlyny - recently opened, old cigar factory turned into hipster area of cafes, craft bar, restaurants, the Krakow version of the "Distillery" district (near Krupnicza)

Barka - on boat on the river, near castle & Kazimierz

Hotel Forum - cool Modernist building by riverside, hipster bar by night & beach lawn chairs by day

KAZIMIERZ - old Jewish quarter

- *old Jewish cemetery

- Szeroka street, Synagogue, Galicia Jewish Museum

- Plac Nowy square (party central by night)

Restaurants

*Kolanko - amazing crepes, cool interior courtyard (Jozefa street)

Szeroka street has many traditional kosher Jewish restaurants

Cafes

*Cheder (Jozefa street) & Hamsa (Szeroka street) - great Israeli coffee

Mostowa Art Cafe - cute cafe and bar, near river (Mostowa street)

Bars

*Alchemia - very cool "Tom Waits" style atmosphere, has concerts downstairs (Plac Nowy square)

*Singer - also very cool, has crazy dancing late sometimes, notice sewing machines (Plac Nowy square)

Mleczarnia - through courtyard (Meiselsa street, near Plac Nowy)

Piekny Pies - also dance club (Bozego Ciala street)

PODGORZE / ZABLODZIE - up and coming "hip" area across the river

Museums / Art Galleries

*Schindler's Factory Museum - history of Krakow & Jewish ghetto during WWII, amazing multimedia experience (Lipowa)

*Cricoteka - museum dedicated to Krakow's avant-garde (1960s etc.) theatre director Tadeusz Kantor (Nadwislanska)

MOCAK - large contemporary art gallery, also Polish collection (Lipowa street)

The Ghetto Heroes Square Monument - very poetic, about liquidation of Jewish ghetto (Plac Bohaterow Ghetta)

Bars

*Drukarnia - old printing shop turned into bar, dancing downstairs (Nadwislanska street)

Lipowa 6 - wine bar (Lipowa street)

Bal - also restaurant and bar (Slusarska street)

NOWA HUTA - satellite "worker town" built during Communism

*Nowa Huta Cultural Centre - exhibition of Beksin'ski paintings (artist featured in recent film "The Last Family")

Social realist architecture

Steelworks factory: if there is a concert on, go! (surreal experience & sound is out of this world)

OUTSIDE KRAKOW

Wieliczka Salt Mine

Auschwitz

Zakopane mountain town - (recommended restaurant with live music off main strip: Bakowa Zohylina)

Tyniec - 12th c. Benedictine Monastery by the river

Ojcowska Dolina - great for biking trip, picturesque valley with Jurassic rocks and castle ruins

When you arrive in the main square, you can go to the Tourist Info Center on Sw. Jana street and pick up a free monthly copy of "Karnet" magazine, which has listings of cultural events (festivals, concerts, exhibitions, theatre, etc.). Also see posters around town. Krakow is a student town with tons of great festivals & events happening year-round.

Favourite festivals:

Krakow Film Festival (May/June)

Wianki - concerts, dragons & fireworks by the river (June)

Jewish Culture Festival - my personal fave, concert & wild dance party on Szeroka street the last Saturday (June/July)

Sacrum Profanum Festival - similar to Unsound (September)

Unsound Festival - electronic music in unconventional locations around the city, including the Steelworks (October)

Enjoy !!!

- MK