

= Kraków =

Kraków ( Polish pronunciation : [ ˈkrakuf ] listen ) , also Cracow or Krakow ( US English / ˈkrʰɑːkə / , UK English / ˈkræka / ) , is the second largest and one of the oldest cities in Poland . Situated on the Vistula River ( Polish : Wisła ) in the Lesser Poland region , the city dates back to the 7th century . Kraków has traditionally been one of the leading centres of Polish academic , cultural , and artistic life and is one of Poland 's most important economic hubs . It was the capital of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland from 1038 to 1569 ; the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1569 to 1795 ; the Free City of Kraków from 1815 to 1846 ; the Grand Duchy of Cracow from 1846 to 1918 ; and Kraków Voivodeship from the 14th century to 1998 . It has been the capital of Lesser Poland Voivodeship since 1999 .

The city has grown from a Stone Age settlement to Poland 's second most important city . It began as a hamlet on Wawel Hill and was already being reported as a busy trading centre of Slavonic Europe in 965 . With the establishment of new universities and cultural venues at the emergence of the Second Polish Republic in 1918 and throughout the 20th century , Kraków reaffirmed its role as a major national academic and artistic centre . The city has a population of approximately 760 @, @ 000 , with approximately 8 million additional people living within a 100 km ( 62 mi ) radius of its main square .

After the invasion of Poland at the start of World War II , Kraków became the capital of Germany 's General Government . The Jewish population of the city was forced into a walled zone known as the Kraków Ghetto , from which they were sent to German extermination camps such as the nearby Auschwitz never to return , and the Nazi concentration camps like Płaszów .

In 1978 , Karol Wojtyła , archbishop of Kraków , was elevated to the papacy as Pope John Paul II – the first Slavic pope ever , and the first non @-@ Italian pope in 455 years . Also that year , UNESCO approved the first ever sites for its new World Heritage List , including the entire Old Town in inscribing Cracow 's Historic Centre . Kraków is classified as a global city by GaWC , with the ranking of High sufficiency . Cited as one of Europe 's most beautiful cities , its extensive cultural heritage across the epochs of Gothic , Renaissance and Baroque architecture includes the Wawel Cathedral and the Royal Castle on the banks of the Vistula river , the St. Mary 's Basilica and the largest medieval market square in Europe , the Rynek Główny . Kraków is home to Jagiellonian University , one of the oldest universities in the world and traditionally Poland 's most reputable institution of higher learning .

In 2000 , Kraków was named European Capital of Culture . The city will also host the next World Youth Day in 2016 .

= = Etymology = =

The name of Kraków is traditionally derived from Krakus ( Krak , Grakch ) , the legendary founder of Kraków and a ruler of the tribe of Lechitians . In Polish , Kraków is an archaic possessive form of Krak and essentially means " Krak 's ( town ) " . Krakus 's name may derive from " krakula " , a Proto @-@ Slavic word meaning a judge 's staff , or a Proto @-@ Slavic word " krak " meaning an oak , once a sacred tree most often associated with the concept of genealogy . The first mention of Prince Krakus ( then written as Grakch ) dates back to 1190 , although the town existed as early as the 7th century , inhabited by the tribe of Vistulans .

The city 's full official name is Stołeczne Królewskie Miasto Kraków , or " Royal Capital City of Kraków " . In English , a person born or living in Kraków is a Cracovian ( Polish : krakowianin ) .

= = History = =

= = = Early history = = =

Kraków 's prehistory begins with evidence of a Stone Age settlement on the present site of the

Wawel Hill . A legend attributes Kraków 's founding to the mythical ruler Krakus , who built it above a cave occupied by a dragon , Smok Wawelski . The first written record of the city 's name dates back to 965 , when Kraków was described as a notable commercial centre controlled first by Moravia ( 876 ? 879 ) , but captured by a Bohemian duke Boleslaus I in 955 . The first acclaimed ruler of Poland , Mieszko I , took Kraków from the Bohemians and incorporated it into the holdings of the Piast dynasty towards the end of his reign .

In 1038 , Kraków became the seat of the Polish government . By the end of the 10th century , the city was a leading centre of trade . Brick buildings were constructed , including the Royal Wawel Castle with St. Felix and Adaukt Rotunda , Romanesque churches such as St. Adalbert 's , a cathedral , and a basilica . The city was almost entirely destroyed during the Mongol invasion of 1241 . It was rebuilt practically identical , based on new location act and incorporated in 1257 by the high duke Bolesław V the Chaste who following the example of Wrocław , introduced city rights modelled on the Magdeburg law allowing for tax benefits and new trade privileges for the citizens . In 1259 , the city was again ravaged by the Mongols . A third attack in 1287 was repelled thanks in part to the new built fortifications . In 1335 , King Casimir III of Poland ( Kazimierz in Polish ) declared the two western suburbs to be a new city named after him , Kazimierz ( Casimiria in Latin ) . The defensive walls were erected around the central section of Kazimierz in 1362 , and a plot was set aside for the Augustinian order next to Skałka .

The city rose to prominence in 1364 , when Casimir III of Poland founded the University of Kraków , the second oldest university in central Europe after the Charles University in Prague . King Casimir also began work on a campus for the Academy in Kazimierz , but he died in 1370 and the campus was never completed . The city continued to grow under the joint Lithuanian @-@ Polish Jagiellon dynasty . As the capital of the Kingdom of Poland and a member of the Hanseatic League , the city attracted many craftsmen , businesses , and guilds as science and the arts began to flourish . The royal chancery and the University ensured a first flourishing of Polish literary culture in the city .

= = = Poland 's ' Golden Age ' = = =

The 15th and 16th centuries were known as Poland 's Złoty Wiek or Golden Age . Many works of Polish Renaissance art and architecture were created , including ancient synagogues in Kraków 's Jewish quarter located in the north @-@ eastern part of Kazimierz , such as the Old Synagogue . During the reign of Casimir IV , various artists came to work and live in Kraków , and Johann Haller established a printing press in the city after Kasper Straube had printed the Calendarium Cracoviense , the first work printed in Poland , in 1473 .

In 1520 , the most famous church bell in Poland , named Zygmunt after Sigismund I of Poland , was cast by Hans Behem . At that time , Hans Dürer , a younger brother of artist and thinker Albrecht Dürer , was Sigismund 's court painter . Hans von Kulmbach made altarpieces for several churches . In 1553 , the Kazimierz district council gave the Jewish Qahal a licence for the right to build their own interior walls across the western section of the already existing defensive walls . The walls were expanded again in 1608 due to the growth of the community and influx of Jews from Bohemia . In 1572 , King Sigismund II , the last of the Jagiellons , died childless . The Polish throne passed to Henry III of France and then to other foreign @-@ based rulers in rapid succession , causing a decline in the city 's importance that was worsened by pillaging during the Swedish invasion and by an outbreak of bubonic plague that left 20 @,@ 000 of the city 's residents dead . In 1596 , Sigismund III of the Swedish House of Vasa moved the administrative capital of the Polish ? Lithuanian Commonwealth from Kraków to Warsaw .

= = = 18th to early 20th centuries = = =

Already weakened during the 18th century , by the mid @-@ 1790s the Polish ? Lithuanian Commonwealth had twice been partitioned by its neighbors : Russia , the Habsburg empire , and Prussia . In 1791 , the Austrian Emperor Joseph II changed the status of Kazimierz as a separate city and made it into a district of Kraków . The richer Jewish families began to move out . However ,

because of the injunction against travel on the Sabbath , most Jewish families stayed relatively close to the historic synagogues . In 1794 , Tadeusz Kościuszko initiated an unsuccessful insurrection in the town 's Main Square which , in spite of his victorious Battle of Racławice against a numerically superior Russian army , resulted in the third and final partition of Poland . In 1809 , Napoleon Bonaparte captured former Polish territories from Austria and made the town part of the Duchy of Warsaw . Following Napoleon 's defeat , the 1815 Congress of Vienna restored the pre-war boundaries but also created the partially independent Free City of Kraków . An insurrection in 1846 failed , resulting in the city being annexed by Austria under the name the Grand Duchy of Cracow ( Polish : Wielkie Księstwo Krakowskie , German : Großherzogtum Krakau ) .

In 1866 , Austria granted a degree of autonomy to Galicia after its own defeat in the Austro-Prussian War . Politically freer Kraków became a Polish national symbol and a centre of culture and art , known frequently as the " Polish Athens " ( Polskie Ateny ) or " Polish Mecca " . Many leading Polish artists of the period resided in Kraków , among them the seminal painter Jan Matejko , laid to rest at Rakowicki Cemetery , and the founder of modern Polish drama , Stanisław Wyspiański . Fin de siècle Kraków evolved into a modern metropolis ; running water and electric streetcars were introduced in 1901 , and between 1910 and 1915 , Kraków and its surrounding suburban communities were gradually combined into a single administrative unit called Greater Kraków ( Wielki Kraków ) .

At the outbreak of World War I on 3 August 1914 , Józef Piłsudski formed a small cadre military unit , the First Cadre Company ? the predecessor of the Polish Legions ? which set out from Kraków to fight for the liberation of Poland . The city was briefly besieged by Russian troops in November 1914 . Austrian rule in Kraków ended in 1918 when the Polish Liquidation Committee assumed power .

== 1918 to the present ==

With the emergence of the Second Polish Republic , Kraków resumed its role as a major academic and cultural centre with the establishment of new universities such as the AGH University of Science and Technology and the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts , including a number of new and essential vocational schools . It became an important cultural centre for the Polish Jews with a Zionist youth movement relatively strong among the city 's Jewish population . Kraków was also an influential centre of Jewish spiritual life , with all its manifestations of religious observance from Orthodox , to Chasidic and Reform flourishing side by side .

Following the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany in September 1939 the city became part of the General Government , a separate administrative region of the Third Reich , and from 4 November 1939 its capital . The General Government was headed by Hans Frank who was based in the city 's Wawel Castle . The Nazis envisioned turning Kraków into a completely German city after removing all Jews and Poles , renamed locations and streets into German and sponsored propaganda attempting to portray it as a historically German city . In an operation called " Sonderaktion Krakau " , more than 180 university professors and academics were arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps , though the survivors were later released on the request of prominent Italians . The Jewish population was first confined to a ghetto in which many died of illness or starvation . Those in the Ghetto were later murdered or sent to concentration camps , including Płaszów and Auschwitz . Roman Polanski , the film director , is a survivor of the Ghetto , while Oskar Schindler selected employees from the Ghetto to work in his enamelware plant , Deutsche Emailwaren Fabrik ( Emalia for short ) saving them from the camps . Although looted by occupational authorities , Kraków remained relatively undamaged at the end of World War II , sparing most of the city 's historical and architectural legacy . Soviet forces entered the city on 18 January 1945 and started arresting Poles loyal to the Polish government-in-exile or those who had served in the Home Army .

After the war , under the Polish People 's Republic , the intellectual and academic community of Kraków was put under total political control . The universities were soon deprived of printing rights and autonomy . The Stalinist government ordered the construction of the country 's largest steel mill

in the newly created suburb of Nowa Huta . The creation of the giant Lenin Steelworks ( now Sendzimir Steelworks owned by Mittal ) sealed Kraków 's transformation from a university city to an industrial centre . The new working class , drawn by the industrialisation of Kraków , contributed to rapid population growth .

In an effort that spanned two decades , Karol Wojtyła , cardinal archbishop of Kraków , successfully lobbied for permission to build the first churches in the new industrial suburbs . In 1978 , Wojtyła was elevated to the papacy as John Paul II , the first non - Italian pope in 455 years . In the same year , UNESCO placed Kraków Old Town on the first ever list of World Heritage Sites .

#### = = Geography = =

Kraków lies in the southern part of Poland , on the Vistula River ( Polish name : Wisła ) , in a valley at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains , 219 m ( 719 ft ) above sea level ; half way between the Jurassic Rock Upland ( Polish : Jura Krakowska - Człuchowska ) to the north , and the Tatra Mountains 100 km ( 62 mi ) to the south , constituting the natural border with Slovakia and the Czech Republic ; 230 km ( 143 mi ) west from the border with Ukraine . There are five nature reserves in Kraków , with a combined area of ca . 48 000 hectares ( 120 acres ) . Due to their ecological value , these areas are legally protected . The western part of the city , along its northern and north - western side , borders an area of international significance known as the Jurassic Bielany - Tyniec refuge . The main motives for the protection of this area include plant and animal wildlife and the area 's geomorphological features and landscape . Another part of the city is located within the ecological ' corridor ' of the Vistula River valley . This corridor is also assessed as being of international significance as part of the Pan - European ecological network . The city centre is situated on the left ( northern ) bank of the river .

#### = = = Climate = = =

Kraków has an oceanic climate ( Cfb ) according to the Köppen climate classification system , one of the easternmost localities in Europe to do so . A mere 100 km ( 62 mi ) north - east of Kraków ( east of Tarnów , and north of Kielce ) , the January mean dips below  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  (  $27^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) and thus becomes continental ( Dfb ) in nature . The Kraków climate is also influenced by its far inland position , with significant temperature differences between seasons . Average temperatures in summer range from 18 to 19  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 64 to 67  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) and in winter from  $-2$  to  $0$   $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 28 to 31  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) . The average annual temperature is 8  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 48  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) . In summer temperatures often exceed 25  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 77  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) , and even 30  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 86  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) , while winter drops to  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 23  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) at night and about 0  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 32  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) at day ; during very cold nights the temperature can drop to  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 5  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) . Since Kraków lies near the Tatra Mountains , there are often occurrences of halny blowing ( a foehn wind ) , causing temperatures to rise rapidly , and even in winter reach up to 20  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( 68  $^{\circ}\text{F}$  ) .

The climate table below presents weather data from the years 2000 - 2012 although the official Köppen reference period was from 1981 - 2010 . According to ongoing measurements , the temperature has increased during these years as compared with the last series . This increase averages about 0.6  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  over all months . Warming is most pronounced during the winter months , with an increase of more than 1  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  in January .

#### = = = Air Pollution = = =

Since a couple of years growing with the economic meaning and individual transport Krakow faces the problem of Air pollution . In 2012 the city holds the 213th place out of 1215 cities of the most polluted ones referring to World Health Organization ( WHO ) .

#### = = Cityscape = =

Developed over many centuries , Kraków provides a showcase setting for many historic styles of architecture . As the city expanded , so too did the architectural achievements of its builders . It is for this reason that the variations in style and urban planning are so easily recognisable .

Built from its earliest nucleus outward , and having escaped much of the destruction endured by Poland during the 20th @-@ century wars , Kraków 's many architectural monuments can typically be seen in historical order by walking from the city centre out , towards its later districts . Kraków is one of the few medieval towns in Poland that does not have a historic Ratusz town hall in its Main Square , because it has not survived the Partitions of Poland .

Kraków 's historic centre , which includes the Old Town , Kazimierz and the Wawel Castle , was included as the first of its kind on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1978 . The Stare Miasto is the most prominent example of an old town in the country . For many centuries Kraków was the royal capital of Poland , until Sigismund III Vasa relocated the court to Warsaw in 1596 . The whole district is bisected by the Royal Road , the coronation route traversed by the Kings of Poland . The Route begins at St. Florian 's Church outside the northern flank of the old city @-@ walls in the medieval suburb of Kleparz ; passes the Barbican of Kraków ( Barbakan ) built in 1499 , and enters Stare Miasto through the Florian Gate . It leads down Floriańska Street through the Main Square , and up Grodzka to Wawel , the former seat of Polish royalty , overlooking the Vistula river . Old Town attracts visitors from all over the World . Kraków historic centre is one of the 13 places in Poland that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites . The architectural design of the district had survived all cataclysms of the past and retained its original form coming from the medieval times . The Old Town of Kraków is home to about six thousand historic sites and more than two million works of art . Its rich variety of heritage architecture includes Gothic , Renaissance and Baroque buildings . Kraków 's palaces , churches , theatres and mansions display great variety of color , architectural details , stained glass , paintings , sculptures , and furnishings .

In addition to the old town , the city 's district of Kazimierz is particularly notable for its many renaissance buildings and picturesque streets , as well as the historic Jewish quarter located in the north @-@ eastern part of Kazimierz . Kazimierz was founded in the 14th century to the south @-@ east of the city centre and soon became a wealthy , well @-@ populated area where construction of imposing properties became commonplace . Perhaps the most important feature of medieval Kazimierz was the only major , permanent bridge ( Pons Regalis ) across the northern arm of the Vistula . This natural barrier used to separate Kazimierz from the Old Town for several centuries , while the bridge connected Kraków to the Wieliczka Salt Mine and the lucrative Hungarian trade route . The last structure at this location ( at the end of modern Stradom Street ) was dismantled in 1880 when the northern arm of the river was filled in with earth and rock , and subsequently built over .

By the 1930s , Kraków had 120 officially registered synagogues and prayer houses that spanned across the old city . Much of Jewish intellectual life had moved to new centres like Podgórze . This in turn , led to the redevelopment and renovation of much of Kazimierz and the development of new districts in Kraków . Most historic buildings in central Kazimierz today are preserved in their original form . Some old buildings however , were not repaired after the devastation brought by the Second World War , and have remained empty . Most recent efforts at restoring the historic neighborhoods gained new impetus around 1993 . Kazimierz is now a well @-@ visited area , seeing a booming growth in Jewish @-@ themed restaurants , bars , bookstores and souvenir shops .

As the city of Kraków began to expand further under the rule of the Austro @-@ Hungarian Empire , the new architectural styles also developed . Key buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries in Kraków include the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts , the directorate of the Polish State Railways as well as the original complex of Kraków Główny railway station and the city 's Academy of Economics . It was also at around that time that Kraków 's first radial boulevards began to appear , with the city undergoing a large @-@ scale program aimed at transforming the ancient Polish capital into a sophisticated regional centre of the Austro @-@ Hungarian Empire . New representative government buildings and multi @-@ story tenement houses were built at around that time . Much of the urban @-@ planning beyond the walls of the Old Town was done by Polish

architects and engineers trained in Vienna . Some major projects of the era include the development of the Jagiellonian University 's new premises and the building of the Collegium Novum just west of the Old Town . The imperial style planning of the city 's further development continued until the return of Poland 's independence , following the First World War . Early modernist style in Kraków is represented by such masterpieces as the Palace of Art by Franciszek M?czy?ski and the ' House under the Globe ' . Secession style architecture , which had arrived in Kraków from Vienna , became popular towards the end of the Partitions .

With Poland 's regained independence came the major change in the fortunes of Kraków ? now the second most important city of a sovereign nation . The state began to make new plans for the city development and commissioned a number of representative buildings . The predominant style for new projects was modernism with various interpretations of the art @-@ deco style . Important buildings constructed in the style of Polish modernism include the Feniks ' LOT ' building on Basztowa Street , the Feniks department store on the Main Square and the Municipal Savings Bank on Szczepa?ski Square . The Józef Pi?sudski house is also of note as a particularly good example of interwar architecture in the city .

After the Second World War , new government turned toward Soviet influence and the Stalinist monumentalism . The doctrine of Socialist realism in Poland , as in other countries of the People 's Republics , was enforced from 1949 to 1956 . It involved all domains of art , but its most spectacular achievements were made in the field of urban design . The guidelines for this new trend were spelled @-@ out in a 1949 resolution of the National Council of Party Architects . Architecture was to become a weapon in establishing the new social order by the communists . The ideological impact of urban design was valued more than aesthetics . It aimed at expressing persistence and power . This form of architecture was implemented in the new industrial district of Nowa Huta with apartment blocks constructed according to a Stalinist blueprint , with repetitious courtyards and wide , tree @-@ lined avenues .

Since the style of the Renaissance was generally regarded as the most revered in old Polish architecture , it was also used for augmenting Poland 's Socialist national format . However , in the course of incorporating the principles of Socialist realism , there were quite a few deviations introduced by the communists . One of these was to more closely reflect Soviet architecture , which resulted in the majority of works blending into one another . From 1953 , critical opinions in the Party were increasingly frequent , and the doctrine was given up in 1956 marking the end of Stalinism . Currently the soc @-@ realist centre of Nowa Huta is considered to be a meritorious monument of the times . This period in postwar architecture was followed by the mass @-@ construction of large Panel System apartment blocks , most of which were built outside the city centre and thus do not encroach upon the beauty of the old or new towns . Some examples of the new style ( e.g. , Hotel Cracovia ) recently listed as heritage monuments were built during the later half of the 20th century in Kraków .

After the Revolutions of 1989 and the birth of the Third Republic in the later half of the 20th century , a number of new architectural projects were completed , including the construction of large business parks and commercial facilities such as the Galeria Krakowska , or infrastructure investments like the Kraków Fast Tram , giving the city a great deal of quality solutions blending with its centuries @-@ old heritage . A good example of this would be the 2007 @-@ built Pawilon Wyspia?ski 2000 , which is used as a multi @-@ purpose information and exhibition space , or the award @-@ winning Ma?opolski Garden of Arts ( Ma?opolski Ogród Sztuki ) , a multi @-@ purpose exhibition and theatre complex located in the historic Old Town .

= = = Parks and gardens = = =

There are about 40 parks in Kraków including dozens of gardens and forests . Several , like the Planty Park , Botanical Garden , Park Krakowski , Jordan Park and B?onia Park are located in the centre of the city ; with Zakrzówek , Lasek Wolski forest , Strzelecki Park and Park Lotników ( among others ) in the surrounding districts . Parks cover about 318 @.@ 5 hectares ( 2002 ) of the city .

The Planty Park is the best @-@ known park in Kraków . It was established between 1822 and 1830 in place of the old city walls , forming a green belt around the Old Town . It consists of a chain of smaller gardens designed in various styles and adorned with monuments . The park has an area of 21 hectares ( 52 acres ) and a length of 4 kilometres ( 2 @.@ 5 mi ) , forming a scenic walkway popular with Cracovians .

The Jordan Park founded in 1889 by Dr Henryk Jordan , was the first public park of its kind in Europe . The park built on the banks of the Rudawa river was equipped with running and exercise tracks , playgrounds , the swimming pool , amphitheatre , pavilions , and a pond for boat rowing and water bicycles . It is located on the grounds of a larger Kraków ? s B?onia Park . The less prominent Park Krakowski was founded in 1885 by Stanis?aw Rehman but has since been greatly reduced in size because of rapid real estate development . It was a popular destination point with many Cracovians at the end of the 19th century .

= = = Environment = = =

There are five nature reserves in Kraków with a total area of 48 @.@ 6 ha . Smaller green zones constitute parts of the Kraków @-@ Cz?stochowa Upland Jurassic Landscape Parks ' Board , which deals with the protection areas of the Polish Jura . Under its jurisdiction are : the Bielany @-@ Tyniec Landscape Park ( Park Biela?sko @-@ Tyniecki ) , Tenczynek Landscape Park ( Park Tenczy?ski ) and Kraków Valleys Landscape Park ( Park Krajobrazowy Dolinki Krakowskie ) , with their watersheds . All natural reserves of the Polish Jura Chain are part of the CORINE biotopes programme due to their unique flora , fauna , geomorphology and landscape . The western part of Kraków constitute the so @-@ called Obszar Krakowski ecological network , including the ecological corridor of the Vistula river . The southern slopes of limestone hills provide conditions for the development of thermophilous vegetation , grasslands and scrubs .

The city is spaced along an extended latitudinal transect of the Vistula River Valley with a network of tributaries including its right tributary Wilga , and left : Rudawa , Bia?ucha , D?ubnia and Sanka . The rivers and their valleys along with bodies of water are some of the most interesting natural wonders of Kraków .

= = Governance = =

The Kraków City Council has 43 elected members , one of whom is the mayor , or President of Kraków , elected every four years . The election of the City Council and of the local head of government , which takes place at the same time , is based on legislation introduced on 20 June 2002 . The current President of Kraków , re @-@ elected for his fourth term in 2014 , is Jacek Majchrowski . Several members of the Polish national Parliament ( Sejm ) are elected from the Kraków constituency . The city 's official symbols include a coat of arms , a flag , a seal , and a banner .

The responsibilities of Kraków 's president include drafting and implementing resolutions , enacting city bylaws , managing the city budget , employing city administrators , and preparing against floods and natural disasters . The president fulfills his duties with the help of the City Council , city managers and city inspectors . In the 1990s , the city government was reorganised to better differentiate between its political agenda and administrative functions . As a result , the Office of Public Information was created to handle inquiries and foster communication between city departments and citizens at large .

In 2000 , the city government introduced a new long @-@ term program called " Safer City " in cooperation with the Police , Traffic , Social Services , Fire , Public Safety , and the Youth Departments . Subsequently , the number of criminal offences went down by 3 percent between 2000 and 2001 , and the rate of detection increased by 1 @.@ 4 percent to a total of 30 @.@ 2 percent in the same period . The city is receiving help in carrying out the program from all educational institutions and the local media , including TV , radio and the press .

## == Districts ==

Kraków is divided into 18 administrative districts ( dzielnica ) or boroughs , each with a degree of autonomy within its own municipal government . Prior to March 1991 , the city had been divided into four quarters which still give a sense of identity to Kraków : the towns of Podgórze , Nowa Huta , and Krowodrza which were absorbed by Kraków as it expanded , and the ancient town centre of Kraków itself .

The oldest neighborhoods of Kraków were incorporated into the city before the late 18th century . They include the Old Town ( Stare Miasto ) , once contained within the city defensive walls and now encircled by the Planty park ; the Wawel District , which is the site of the Royal Castle and the cathedral ; Stradom and Kazimierz , the latter originally divided into Christian and Jewish quarters ; as well as the ancient town of Kleparz .

Major districts added in the 19th and 20th centuries include Podgórze , which until 1915 was a separate town on the southern bank of the Vistula , and Nowa Huta , east of the city centre , built after World War II .

Among the most notable historic districts of the city are : Wawel Hill , home to Wawel Castle and Wawel Cathedral , where many Polish kings are buried ; the medieval Old Town , with its Main Market Square ( 200 metres ( 660 ft ) square ) ; dozens of old churches and museums ; the 14th @-@ century buildings of the Jagiellonian University ; and Kazimierz , the historical centre of Kraków 's Jewish social and religious life .

The Old Town district of Kraków is home to about six thousand historic sites and more than two million works of art . Its rich variety of historic architecture includes Renaissance , Baroque and Gothic buildings . Kraków 's palaces , churches and mansions display great variety of color , architectural details , stained glass , paintings , sculptures , and furnishings .

In the Market Square stands the Gothic St. Mary 's Basilica ( Kościół Mariacki ) . It was re @-@ built in the 14th century and features the famous wooden altar ( Altarpiece of Veit Stoss ) , the largest Gothic altarpiece in the World , carved by Veit Stoss . From the church 's main tower a trumpet call ( hejnał mariacki ) , is sounded every hour . The melody , which used to announce the opening and closing of city @-@ gates , ends unexpectedly in midstream . According to legend , the tune was played during the 13th @-@ century Tatar invasion by a guard warning citizens against the attack . He was shot by a Tatar archer while playing , the bugle @-@ call breaking off at the moment he died . The story was recounted in a book published in the late 1920s called The Trumpeter of Krakow , by Eric P. Kelly , which won a Newbery Award .

The current divisions were introduced by the Kraków City Hall on 19 April 1995 . Districts were assigned Roman numerals as well as the current name : Stare Miasto ( I ) , Grzegórzki ( II ) , Prądnik Czerwony ( III ) , Prądnik Biały ( IV ) , Łobzów ( V ) , Bronowice ( VI ) , Zwierzyńiec ( VII ) , Dąbniki ( VIII ) , Łagiewniki @-@ Borek Fałszycki ( IX ) , Swoszowice ( X ) , Podgórze Duchackie ( XI ) , Bieżanów @-@ Prokocim ( XII ) , Podgórze ( XIII ) , Czyżyny ( XIV ) , Mistrzejowice ( XV ) , Bieżczyce ( XVI ) , Wzgórze Krzeszawickie ( XVII ) , and Nowa Huta ( XVIII ) .

Map of districts of the City of Kraków

## == Economy ==

Kraków is one of Poland 's most important economic centres and the economic hub of the Lesser Poland ( Małopolska ) region . Following the collapse of communism , the private sector has been growing steadily . There are about 50 large multinational companies in the city , including Google , IBM , Royal Dutch Shell , Motorola , Delphi , MAN SE , General Electric , Aon Hewitt , Hitachi , Philip Morris , Capgemini , and Sabre Holdings , along with other British , German and Scandinavian @-@ based firms . The city is also the global headquarters for Comarch , a Polish enterprise software house . In 2005 , Foreign direct investment in Kraków has reached approximately 3 @.@ 5 billion USD . Kraków has been trying to position itself as Europe 's Silicon Valley , based on the large number of local and foreign hi tech companies . The unemployment rate in Kraków was 4 @.@ 8 percent in May 2007 , well below the national average of 13 percent . Kraków is the second city in



Poland ( after Warsaw ) most often visited by foreigners . According to the World Investment Report 2011 by the UN Conference for Trade and Development ( UNCTAD ) , Kraków is also the most emerging city location for investment in global BPO projects ( Business Process Outsourcing ) in the world .

In 2011 , the city budget , which is presented by the Mayor of Kraków on 15 November each year , has a projected revenue of 3 @. @ 5 billion zł . The primary sources of revenue were as follows : 14 % from the municipal taxation on real estate properties and the use of amenities , 30 % in transfers from the national budget , and 34 % in state subsidies . Projected expenditures , totaling 3 @. @ 52 billion zł , included 21 % in city development costs and 79 % in city maintenance costs . Of the maintenance costs , as much as 39 % were spent on education and childcare . City of Kraków development costs included 41 % toward road building , transport , and communication ( combined ) , and 25 % for the city 's infrastructure and environment . The city has a high bond credit rating , and some 60 % of its population is below the age of 45 .

= = Knowledge and Innovation Community EIT = = =

Kraków is one of the co @-@ location centres of Knowledge and Innovation Community ( Sustainable Energy ) of The European Institute of Innovation and Technology ( EIT ) .

InnoEnergy is an integrated alliance of reputable organisations from the education , research and industry sectors . It was created based on long standing links of cooperation as well as the principles of excellence . The partners have jointly developed a strategy to tackle the weaknesses of the European innovation landscape in the field of sustainable energy .

= = Transport = =

Public transport is based on a fairly dense network of tram and bus lines operated by a municipal company , supplemented by a number of private minibus operators . Local trains connect some of the suburbs . The bulk of the city 's historic area has been turned into a pedestrian zone with rickshaws and horse buggies ; however , the tramlines run within a three @-@ block radius ( pictured ) . The historic means of transportation in the city can be examined at the Museum of Municipal Engineering in the Kazimierz district , with many old trams , cars and buses .

Rail connections are available to most Polish cities . Trains to Warsaw depart every hour . International destinations include Berlin , Budapest , Prague , Hamburg , Lviv , Kiev , and Odessa ( June ? September ) . The main railway station is located just outside the Old Town District and is well @-@ served by public transport .

Kraków 's airport , ( John Paul II International Airport Kraków ? Balice , Polish : Międzynarodowy Port Lotniczy im . Jana Pawła II Kraków @-@ Balice , ( IATA : KRK ) ) is 11 km ( 7 mi ) west of the city . Direct trains cover the route between Kraków Główny train station and the airport in 15 minutes . The annual capacity of the airport is estimated at 1 @. @ 3 million passengers ( second largest airport in Poland ) ; however , in 2007 more than 3 @. @ 042 million people used the airport , giving Kraków Airport 15 percent of all air passenger traffic in Poland . Currently , the airport offers 59 connections and is operated by 2 terminals ( international T1 and national T2 ) . The Katowice International Airport is located 80 km or about 75 minutes from Kraków .

= = Demographics = =

Kraków had a recorded population of 762 @, @ 508 in 2015 . According to the 2006 data , the population of Kraków comprised about 2 % of the population of Poland and 23 % of the population of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship . Selected demographic indicators are presented in a table ( below ) , compiled on the basis of only the population living in Kraków permanently . The larger metropolitan area of the city encompasses a territory in which ( in 2010 ) 1 @, @ 393 @, @ 893 inhabitants live .

Already in the Middle Ages , the population of Kraków consisting of numerous ethnic groups ,

began to grow rapidly . It doubled between 1100 and 1300 from 5 @, @ 000 to 10 @, @ 000 , and in 1400 counted 14 @, @ 000 inhabitants . By 1550 , the population of metropolitan Kraków was 18 @, @ 000 ; although it went down to 15 @, @ 000 in the next fifty years due to calamity . By the early 17th century the Kraków population had reached 28 @, @ 000 inhabitants .

In the historical 1931 census preceding World War II , 78 @. @ 1 % of Cracovians declared Polish as their primary language , with Yiddish or Hebrew at 20 @. @ 9 % , Ukrainian 0 @. @ 4 % , German 0 @. @ 3 % , and Russian 0 @. @ 1 % . The ravages of history have greatly reduced the percentage of ethnic minorities living in Kraków . The official and unofficial numbers differ , as in the case of Romani people . Hence , according to the 2002 census , among those who have declared their national identity ( irrespective of language and religion ) in Kraków Voivodeship , 1 @, @ 572 were Slovaks , followed by Ukrainians ( 472 ) , Jews ( 50 ) and Armenians ( 22 ) . Romani people , officially numbered at 1 @, @ 678 , are estimated at over 5 @, @ 000 . Statistics collected by the Ministry of Education reveal that , even though only 1 % of adults ( as per above ) officially claim minority status , as many as 3 % of students participate in programmes designed for ethnic minorities .

Population growth in Kraków since 1791

= = = Religion = = =

The metropolitan city of Kraków is known as the city of churches . The abundance of landmark , historic temples along with the plenitude of monasteries and convents earned the city a countrywide reputation as the " Northern Rome " in the past . The churches of Kraków comprise over 120 places of worship ( 2007 ) of which over 65 were built in the 20th century . More are still being added . In addition to Roman Catholicism , other denominations present include Jehovah 's Witnesses , Mariavite Church , Polish Catholic Church , Polish Orthodox Church , Protestantism and Latter @- @ Day Saints .

Kraków contains also an outstanding collection of monuments of Jewish sacred architecture unmatched anywhere in Poland . Kraków was an influential centre of Jewish spiritual life before the outbreak of World War II , with all its manifestations of religious observance from Orthodox to Chasidic and Reform flourishing side by side . There were at least 90 synagogues in Kraków active before the Nazi German invasion of Poland , serving its burgeoning Jewish community of 60 @, @ 000 ? 80 @, @ 000 ( out of the city 's total population of 237 @, @ 000 ) , established since the early 12th century .

Most synagogues of Kraków were ruined during World War II by the Nazis who despoiled them of all ceremonial objects , and used them as storehouses for ammunition , firefighting equipment , as general storage facilities and stables . The post @- @ Holocaust Jewish population of the city had dwindled to about 5 @, @ 900 before the end of the 1940s . Poland was the only Eastern Bloc country to allow free Jewish aliyah without visas or exit permits upon the conclusion of World War II . By contrast , Stalin forcibly kept Soviet Jews in the USSR , as agreed to in the Yalta Conference . In recent time , thanks to efforts of the local Jewish and Polish organisations including foreign financial aid from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee , many synagogues underwent major restorations and serve religious and tourist purposes .

= = Education = =

Kraków is a major centre of education . Twenty @- @ four institutions of higher education offer courses in the city , with more than 200 @, @ 000 students . Jagiellonian University , the oldest university in Poland and ranked by the Times Higher Education Supplement as the second @- @ best university in the country , was founded in 1364 as the Cracow University and renamed in 1817 to commemorate the Jagiellonian dynasty of Polish @- @ Lithuanian kings . Its principal academic asset is the Jagiellonian Library , with more than 4 million volumes , including a large collection of medieval manuscripts like Copernicus ' De Revolutionibus and the Balthasar Behem Codex . With 42 @, @ 325 students ( 2005 ) and 3 @, @ 605 academic staff , the Jagiellonian University is also

one of the leading research centres in Poland . Famous historical figures connected with the University include Saint John Cantius , Jan D?ugosz , Nicolaus Copernicus , Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski , Jan Kochanowski , King John III Sobieski , Pope John Paul II and Nobel laureates Ivo Andri? and Wis?awa Szymborska .

AGH University of Science and Technology , established in 1919 , is the largest technical university in Poland , with more than 15 faculties and student enrollment exceeding 30 @, @ 000 . It was ranked by the Polish edition of Newsweek as the best technical university in the country in 2004 . During its 80 @- @ year history , more than 73 @, @ 000 students graduated from AGH with master 's or bachelor 's degrees . Some 3 @, @ 600 persons were granted the degree of Doctor of Science , and about 900 obtained the qualification of Habilitated Doctor .

Other institutions of higher learning include Academy of Music in Kraków first conceived as conservatory in 1888 , one of the oldest and most prestigious conservatories in Central Europe and a major concert venue ; Cracow University of Economics , established in 1925 ; Pedagogical University , in operation since 1946 ; Agricultural University of Cracow , offering courses since 1890 ( initially as a part of Jagiellonian University ) ; Academy of Fine Arts , the oldest Fine Arts Academy in Poland , founded by the Polish painter Jan Matejko ; Ludwik Solski Academy for the Dramatic Arts ; The Pontifical Academy of Theology ; and Cracow University of Technology , which has more than 37 @, @ 000 graduates .

Scientific societies and their branches in Kraków conduct scientific and educational work in local and countrywide scale . Academy of Learning , Cracow Scientific Society , Association of Law Students ' Library of the Jagiellonian University , Polish Copernicus Society of Naturalists , Polish Geological Society , Polish Theological Society in Kraków , Polish Section of Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and Polish Society for Synchrotron Radiation have in Kraków their main seats .

= = Culture = =

Kraków was named the official European Capital of Culture for the year 2000 by the European Union . It is a major attraction for both local and international tourists , attracting seven million visitors a year . Major landmarks include the Main Market Square with St. Mary 's Basilica and the Sukiennice Cloth Hall , the Wawel Castle , the National Art Museum , the Zygmunt Bell at the Wawel Cathedral , and the medieval St Florian 's Gate with the Barbican along the Royal Coronation Route . Kraków has 28 museums and public art galleries . Among them are the main branch of Poland 's National Museum and the Czartoryski Museum , the latter featuring works by Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt .

= = Museums and national art galleries = =

Kraków 's 28 museums are separated into the national and municipal museums ; the city also has a number of art collections and public art galleries . The National Museum established in 1879 , which is the main branch of Poland 's National Museum with permanent collections around the country , as well as the National Art Collection on Wawel Hill are all accessible to the general public and well patroned . Meanwhile , the Czartoryski Museum features works by Leonardo and Rembrandt .

The National Art Collection is located at the Wawel , the former residence of three dynasties of Polish monarchs . Royal Chambers feature art , period furniture , Polish and European paintings , collectibles , and an unsurpassed display of the 16th @- @ century monumental Flemish tapestries . Wawel Treasury and Armoury features Polish royal memorabilia , jewels , applied art , and 15th to 18th century arms . The Wawel Eastern Collection features Turkish tents and military accessories . The National Museum is the richest museum in the country with collections consisting of several hundred thousand items kept in big part in the Main Building at Ul . 3 Maja , although there are as many as eleven separate divisions of the museum in the city , one of the most popular being The Gallery of the 19th Century Polish Art in Sukiennice with the collection of some of the best known paintings and sculptures of the Young Poland movement . The latest division called Europeum with

Brueghel among a hundred Western European paintings was inaugurated in 2013 .

Other major museums of special interest in Kraków include the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology ( at M. Konopnickiej 26 ) , Stanisław Wyspiański Museum ( at 11 Szczepanska St ) , Jan Matejko Manor in Krzeszawice , ? a museum devoted to the master painter and his life , Emeryk Hutten Czapski Museum , and Józef Mehoffer Manor .

The Rynek Underground museum , under the main square , is an evocative modern display of Kraków 's 1000 + years of history through its streets , activities and artifacts . This followed the massively extended excavations which started in a small way in 2005 and , as more and more was found , ran on eventually to 2010 .

A half @-@ an @-@ hour tram @-@ ride takes you to the little @-@ heralded Polish Aviation Museum considered eighth world 's best aviation museum by CNN and featuring over 200 aircraft including a Sopwith Camel among other First World War biplanes ; a comprehensive display of aero engines ; and essentially a complete collection of airplane types developed by Poland after 1945 . Activities of small museums around Kraków and in the Lesser Poland region are promoted and supported by the Małopolska Institute of Culture ; the Institute organises annual Małopolska Heritage Days .

= = = Performing arts = = =

The city has several famous theatres , including the Narodowy Stary Teatr ( the National Old Theatre ) , the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre , the Bagatela Theatre , the Ludowy Theatre , and the Groteska Theatre of Puppetry , as well as the Opera Krakowska and Kraków Operetta . The city 's principal concert hall and the home of the Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra is the Kraków Philharmonic ( Filharmonia Krakowska ) built in 1931 .

Kraków hosts many annual and biannual artistic events , some of international significance such as the Misteria Paschalia ( Baroque music ) , Sacrum @-@ Profanum ( contemporary music ) , the Cracow Screen Festival ( popular music ) , the Festival of Polish Music ( classical music ) , Dedications ( theatre ) , the Kraków Film Festival ( one of Europe 's oldest short films events ) , Etiuda & Anima International Film Festival ( the oldest international art @-@ film event in Poland ) , Biennial of Graphic Arts , and the Jewish Culture Festival . Kraków was the residence of two Polish Nobel laureates in literature , Wisława Szymborska and Czesław Miłosz ; a third Nobel laureate , the Yugoslav writer Ivo Andrić , lived and studied in Kraków . Other former longtime residents include internationally renowned Polish film directors Andrzej Wajda and Roman Polanski , both of whom are Academy Award winners .

= = = Music = = =

Opera Krakowska one of the leading national opera companies , stages 200 performances each year including ballet , operettas and musicals . It has , in its main repertoire , the greatest world and Polish opera classics . The Opera moved into its first permanent House in the autumn of 2008 . It is in charge also of the Summer Festival of Opera and Operetta .

Kraków is home to two major Polish festivals of early music presenting forgotten Baroque oratorios and operas : Opera Rara , and Misteria Paschalia . Meanwhile , Capella Cracoviensis runs the Music in Old Cracow International Festival .

Academy of Music in Kraków , founded in 1888 , is known world @-@ wide as the alma mater of the contemporary Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki and it is also the only one in Poland to have two winners of the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw among its alumni . The Academy organises concerts of its students and guests throughout the whole year .

Music organisations and venues include : Kraków Philharmonic , Sinfonietta Cracovia ( a.k.a. the Orchestra of the Royal City of Kraków ) , the Polish Radio Choir of Kraków , Organum Academic Choir , the Mixed Mariański Choir ( Mieszany Chór Mariański ) , Kraków Academic Choir of the Jagiellonian University , the Kraków Chamber Choir , Amar Corde String Quartet , Consortium Iagellonicum Baroque Orchestra of the Jagiellonian University , Brass Band of T. Sendzimir

Steelworks , and Camerata Chamber Orchestra of Radio Kraków .

= = Tourism = =

According to statistics , in 2012 Kraków was visited by 7 @. @ 3 million tourists including 2 @. @ 1 million foreign travelers ( over 30 % of their grand total ) . The visitors spent over 2 @. @ 5 billion z?oty in the city ( without travel costs and pre @-@ booked accommodations ) . Most foreign tourists came from Great Britain ( over 25 % ) , with German , French , Spanish , Italian and American visitors closely following . The Kraków tour @-@ guide from the Lesser Poland Visitors Bureau indicated that not all statistics are recorded due to considerable number of those who come , staying in readily available private rooms paid by cash , especially from Eastern Europe .

The main reasons for visiting the city are : its historical monuments , recreation as well as relatives and friends ( placing third in the ranking ) , religion and business . There are 120 quality hotels in Kraków ( usually about half full ) offering 15 @, @ 485 overnight accommodations . The average stay last for about 4 to 7 nights . The survey conducted among the travelers showed that they enjoyed the city 's friendliness most , with 90 % of Polish tourists and 87 % foreigners stating that they would personally recommend visiting it . Notable points of interest outside the city include the Wieliczka salt mine , the Tatra Mountains 100 km ( 62 mi ) to the south , the historic city of Cz?stochowa ( north @-@ west ) , the well @-@ preserved former Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz , and Ojcowski National Park , which includes the Renaissance Castle at Pieskowa Ska?a . Kraków has been awarded a number of top international rankings such as the 1st place in the Top city @-@ break destinations 2014 survey conducted by the British Which ? .

= = Sports = =

Kraków is the host city of the 2014 FIVB Men 's Volleyball World Championship and 2016 European Men 's Handball Championship . It has also been selected as the European City of Sport for 2014 .

Football is one of the most popular sports in the city . The two teams with the largest following are thirteen @-@ time Polish champion Wis?a Kraków , and five @-@ time champion Cracovia , both founded in 1906 as the oldest in Poland . They have been involved in the most intense rivalry in the country and one of the most intense in all of Europe , known as the Holy War ( ?wi?ta Wojna ) . Other football clubs include Hutnik Kraków , Wawel Kraków , and one @-@ time Polish champion Garbarnia Kraków . There is also the first @-@ league rugby club Juvenia Kraków . Kraków has a number of additional , equally valued sports teams including nine @-@ time Polish ice hockey champion Cracovia Kraków and the twenty @-@ time women 's basketball champion Wis?a Kraków .

The Cracovia Marathon , with over a thousand participants from two dozen countries annually , has been held in the city since 2002 . Poland 's first F1 racing driver Robert Kubica was born and brought up in Kraków , as was former WWE tag team champion Ivan Putski , and Top 10 ranked women 's tennis player Agnieszka Radwa?ska .

The construction of the new Kraków Arena has started in May 2011 ; for concerts , indoor athletics , hockey , basketball , futsal , etc . The Arena will be ready in 2013 ; cost is estimated at 363 million Polish z?oty . It will accommodate up to 15 thousand viewers . In the case of a concert , when the stage is set on the lower arena , the facility will be able to seat up to 18 thousand people .

Kraków was bidding to host the 2022 Winter Olympics with Jasná but the bid was rejected in a local referendum on 25 May 2014 by a majority of 69 @. @ 72 % of the vote . The referendum was organised after a wave of criticism from citizens who believed that the Olympics would not promote the city . The organizing committee of " Krakow 2022 " spent almost \$ 40 @, @ 000 to pay for a citizen @-@ approved logo , but many citizens considered this a waste of public money . The committee was rumoured to have fraudulently used several million zloty 's for unknown expenses .

= = International relations = =

= = = Contemporary foreign names for the city = = =

Kraków is referred to by various names in different languages . The city is known in Czech and Slovak as Krakov , in Hungarian as Krakkó , in Lithuanian as Krokuva , in Finnish as " Krakova " , in German and Dutch as Krakau , in Latin , Spanish and Italian as Cracovia , in French as Cracovie , in Portuguese as Cracóvia and in Russian as ?????? . Ukrainian and Yiddish languages refer to it as Krakiv ( ?????? ) and Kroke ( ?????? ) respectively . Names of Kraków in different languages are also available .

= = = Twin towns and sister cities = = =

Kraków is twinned , or maintains close relations , with 34 cities around the world :