

Tatra Mountains Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Centre Based
Destinations: Poland & Slovakia
Trip code: HTLCL
2 & 5



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Discover the beautiful Tatras National Park and enjoy attractive walks in the Chochołowska valley. Ascend Giewont, which towers over Zakopane. Explore summits in both Poland and Slovakia, crossing the border for spectacular vistas. These impressive mountains rise to over 2,000m, with a mixture of open country, forest, and lakes. Part of the main ridge of the Tatra Mountains forms the border between Poland and Slovakia, which we can explore. Situated in the south of Poland a short distance from the Slovakian border, at an altitude of around 840m above sea level, Zakopane provides an ideal base, with easy access to the Tatra National Park, and the surrounding area. Zakopane has a busy shopping centre, with a good selection of shops, restaurants and bars. Many small museums hope to entice visitors, and the streets are full of culture brought to the town by the Podhale Highlanders, the original mountain folk of the Tatra area. Immediately to the south of the town, the Tatra National Park covers a vast area, with a multitude of marked trails, which form the bulk of our walks. There are long valleys rising gently, with steep tracks heading up, out of the forestry, to the grassy ridges and peaks. The easier walks take advantage of an assortment of transportation, including gondolas, which add to the enjoyment. The harder walks strike up the sides of the mountains through the forest, on well used paths to gain the high ground and some spectacular ridges and views. Away from the national park, there are several options for sightseeing trips, with the most popular being the river rafting on the Dunajec River.

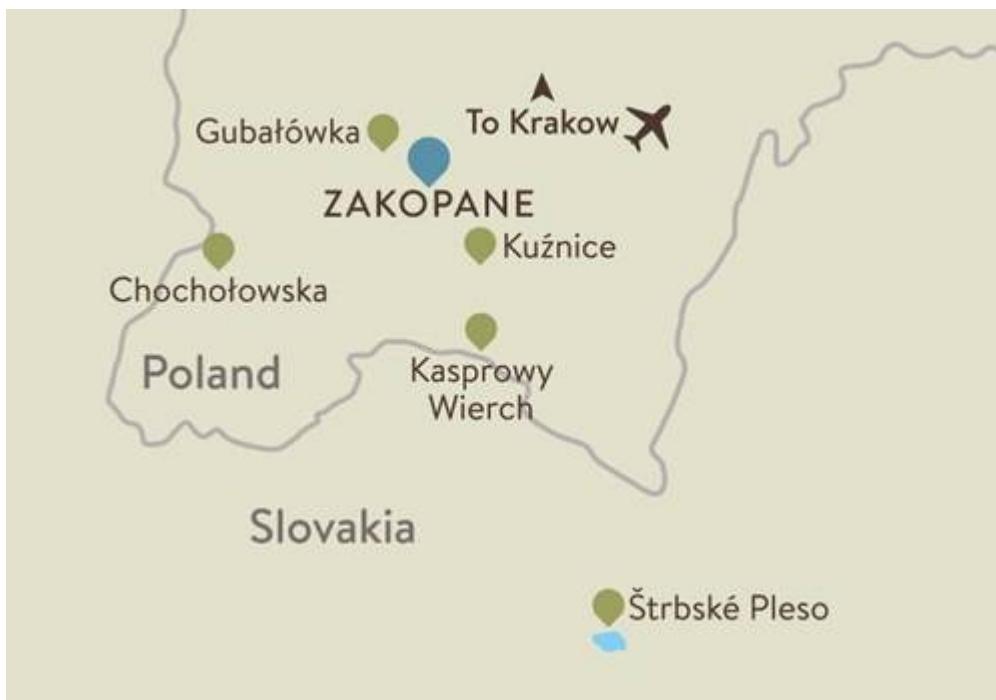
WHAT'S INCLUDED

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Reach the summit of Wolowiec in the beautiful Tatras National Park
- Cross the border to walk in Slovakia
- Sample Polish beers in the vibrant town of Zakopane
- Visit rustic Polish villages

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 2 and level 5 graded Activity, Easier walks: 6 to 9 miles (9½ to 14½km) generally on good but rough paths, with some steeper sections. Up to 1,600 feet (480m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 9 to 13 miles (14½ to 21km) crossing rough mountainous terrain with steep gradients. Up to 3,500 feet (1,050m) of ascent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Belvedere. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: The First Views Of The Tatras

These introductory walks both start with a visit to Kuznice, the main gateway to the national park, only a short minibus ride from the hotel. The walks explore high ground close to the park boundary with good views back over the town. We will see a mixture of the modern world and the culture of the Highlanders, and start to get a feel for the flora and geology of the area as both walks aim for superb viewpoints.

Option 1 - Gesia Szyja

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,600 feet (480m)

In summary: Our walk, on forest paths, takes us to the viewpoint of Gesia Szyja and the glade at Rusinowa Polana where we can see traditional sheep farming and an interesting forest chapel. We return to the road by a different gradually descending, forest path.

Highlight: The visit to an exceptional 'Zakopane style' wooden church deep in the woods.

Option 2 - Boznan Ridge

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 3,200 feet (960m)

In summary: This high-level circular walk provides a great introduction to the Tatras, ascending to the Boznan Ridge and taking in lakes and valleys on the return to Kuznice via the Karb Pass.

Highlight: The Black Lake (Czarny Staw Gasienicowy)

Day 3: Kiri And Giewont

The walks today take in the valleys of the Tatras to the south of Zakopane.

Option 1 - Kiri

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (400m)

In summary: This walk starts at Kiri, a park entrance to the west of the town. We takes in two valleys, crossing a low pass with attractive mountain pasture in between. We walk back to the hotel along the track on the edge of the National Park with extensive views towards the town.

Highlight: Enjoy stunning mountain scenery.

Option 2 - Giewont

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total ascent: 2,300 feet (690m)

Total descent: 3,400 feet (1,020m)

In summary: An early start allows us to reach this popular summit before the crowds. The walk ascends via the Kondratowej hut before reaching the summit with its large steel cross. We return to the hotel via the national park boundary path.

Highlight: The final scramble to the summit using fixed chains - exciting but achievable!

Day 4: The Kasprowy Wierch Cable Car And Border Ridge

Both groups have an early start to Kuznice and the cable car which is a popular route for hikes to the mountains. The cable car will take us onto the main ridgeline at Kasprowy Wierch at 1,987m, marking the border between Poland and Slovakia. Outstanding views of Poland and Slovakia will open up as both groups

walk the short distance to the summit of Beskid (2,012m).

Option 1 - Kasprowy Wierch

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 1,500 feet (450m)

Total descent: 2,000 feet (600m)

In summary: We start the day with a cable car ride up to the Poland-Slovakia border at Kasprowy Wierch, returning to Kuznice to walk through Dolina Bialej, a wooded valley, winding our way back to the start point and on to the hotel.

Highlight: The cable car ride, enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year, that heads high into the mountains.

Option 2 - Along The Border Ridge

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

Total descent: 5,100 feet (1,530m)

In summary: We start the day with the other group, ascending to Kasprowy Wierch but rather than returning to Kuznice we turn along the undulating ridge and head for the summit of Malolacznik, before descending to Kuznice.

Highlight: Outstanding views from the border summit of Beskid and all along the ridge.

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. Some options for your free day may include:

Hotel: Relax in the hotel and surrounds. The hotel has a wellness complex with a heated indoor pool.

Zakopane: Visit the old cemetery where all the prominent people of the area are buried including artists and writers, plus the Tatra Museum which was founded in 1875 and is one of the oldest regional museums in Poland. Have lunch in the centre of town and then visit the bustling street market and taste the traditional smoked cheese. The Zakopane-style timber architecture is very interesting, including several wooden churches.

Dunajec River rafting: Spend the day rafting on the Dunajec River. This will give you a chance to view the mighty limestone cliffs while sailing down the river. You may have a chance to spot some rare bird species, such as the Black Stork. Packages can be booked including the transport from the hotel and rafting fees. There are some sightseeing opportunities to the Niedzica dam and castle on the journey.

Krakow: Visit the oldest city in Poland, and the capital from 1038 to 1569. Its architecture extends across Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque, including the Wawel Cathedral and the Royal Castle on the banks of the Vistula River. It has the largest medieval market square in Europe and also is home to one of the oldest universities in Europe. You can go by train (3½ hours) but the quickest journey is by bus (2 hours). English speaking tours are available in the city.

Local information website: For information on Zakopane please visit www.zakopane-life.com

Day 6: Slovakia

Both groups take a bus to the Slovakian side of the Tatras to enjoy the quiet valleys and spectacular scenery.

You may require some Euros for this day; your leaders will advise you where currency can be exchanged.

Option 1 - Strebske Pleso

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (390m)

In summary: Today we head to the Slovakian side of the Tatras, with this option circuiting two beautiful lakes. We walk up to the higher lake via a wonderful balcony path, and return via a peaceful valley.

Highlight: The unique climber's cemetery with its fascinating history and intricate memorial posts.

Option 2 - High In The Slovakian Tatras

Distance: 12 miles (19km)

Total ascent: 3,000 feet (900m)

In summary: This option showcases the best of the Slovakian Tatras - we experience two fine valleys either side of the high col of Predne Kopske Sedlo, enjoying this quieter side of the mountains.

Highlight: The hut at Chata pri Zelenom, dating from 1895, is a great spot for a refreshing coffee and cake.

Day 7: The Chochołowska Valley

Our final day of walking takes us by bus to Siwa Polana, the western entrance to the park, but before walking we catch the road train for a short ride up the Chochołowska valley, passing the smoking houses for sheep's cheese. After leaving the road train both parties continue up the valley.

Option 1 - Chochołowka Valley

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 1,600 feet (480m)

In summary: Heading to the Western part of the National Park both groups take a road train into the Chocholowka valley. Our group then heads into a neighbouring valley via a high pass with spectacular views of towering cliffs.

Highlight: Take a look inside the traditional sheep cheese smokehouses on the valley floor.

Option 2 - Rakon

Distance: 12miles (19km)

Total ascent: 3,300 feet (990m)

In summary: After alighting the road train we climb out of the valley to the ridge path at Grzes. Our walk follows the ridge line to the high point of Rakon at 1,879m before returning to the valley.

Highlight: Views from the ridgeline across Slovakia on one side and into Poland on the other.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Belvedere - Tatra Mountains

The 4-star Hotel Belvedere, whilst modern built, reflects the local 1920's style and is located just a few minutes walk from the centre of Zakopane on a quiet residential street, close to the border of the Tatras National Park; an excellent base for walkers to enjoy the surrounding area. The hotel features a large indoor swimming pool, a bowling alley, wellness centre and gym. Free WIFI available throughout.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

The hotel has 172 comfortable en-suite bedrooms, some with balconies.

All rooms have:

- mini-bar (stocked with bottles of water for guest's use)
- TV
- room safe (free)
- hairdryer
- tea/coffee making facilities.

Facilities

There are 3 restaurants, several bars and lounge areas as well as:

- library
- 24-hour reception
- garden areas with seating
- squash courts
- snooker, pool tables and bowling alley

There is a wellness centre with spa bath, sauna and steam room and the guests have free access to a large indoor pool.

Food & Drink

Our holidays at Hotel Belvedere are on a Half Board basis and include breakfast and evening meal.

Breakfast

The hotel offers a buffet including fruit juices, fruit, selection of breads & cakes, cereal, tea and coffee and a hot selection.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

You can buy picnic lunches from the hotel (ordered the night before). Alternatively, you can buy ingredients from the shops in town. On certain days it may be possible to eat in a local café. Your leader will advise.

Evening Meal

Dinner is served buffet style in the Wieniawa restaurant and on two evenings, we will be dining in the rooftop restaurant, Pod Aniolem (translated as "under the angels") which has delightful views of the mountains.

Drinks

The hotel's bars serve a selection of wines, beers and other refreshing drinks.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our holidays continues into the evening.

Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer before hearing about the next day's activities. Your evening meal is the main focus of the evening. However you may like to join your leader for a stroll into town.

Your leader will check for any local events going on nearby or you may like to relax at the bar, with a drink and chat to your fellow guests.

TRAVEL DETAILS

THE HASSLE FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' from Gatwick to Krakow airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 2 hours to the Hotel Belvedere.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, we can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Krakow airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flight* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £13.50

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

What To Bring

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).

- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

Language: Polish (Slovak in Slovakia)

Currency: Polish Zloty (Euros for the day in Slovakia)

Changing money: There are several ATM machines in Zakopane where you can obtain Zloty, and currency exchange offices (Kantoor) where you can change a variety of currency.

Electricity: 220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

Tap water: Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

Telephone code: If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Polish number 0048

The local language is Polish (Slovak for the day in Slovakia).

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Polish number 0048

Local Currency

The local currency is the Polish Zloty (Euros for the day in Slovakia).

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in Zakopane where you can obtain Zloty, and currency exchange offices (Kantoor) where you can change a variety of currency.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

Document produced: 17-02-2020

