Trek the Polish Tatra Mountains



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Guided Walking Holidays	Poland & Slovakia	6 & 9	745kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The impressive Tatra Mountains take centre stage on this walking holiday in Poland – and they're one challenge every walker wants to tick off the list. The crowning glory of the Carpathian Mountain range rises to heights of up to 2,000 metres and over 300 peaks form a formidable border with neighbouring Slovakia. You'll have the chance to ascend the scenic Boczan Ridge via the rugged Karb Pass and Black Lake, climb the popular summit of Giewont, and take a cable car ride over the borderlands. And given the park's status as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, there's the chance to spot chamois, wild lynx, and even Carpathian brown bears, too.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Exploring the best of the Tatra Mountains on foot
- Reaching the summit of Giewont in Tatra National Park
- Crossing the border to walk in neighbouring Slovakia
- A host of wildlife-spotting opportunities
- Sampling Polish food and drink in charming Zakopane
- Visiting rustic Polish villages

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow, including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' accommodation in Zakopane
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 **Arrival Day**

Welcome to the Zakopane. 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 - Boczan 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 Boczan 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 Bialegi, 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 Malolaczniak, 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.

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 Catherdral 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.

Day 6 **Five Lakes & Rusinowa Polana**

Option 1 - Rusinowa Polana

Distance: 7.5 miles (12km)

Ascent: 660 feet (220m)

In summary: After a bus ride to Wierch Poroniec, we'll enjoy a gentle walk through the woods to Rusinowa Polana, a clearing dotted with shepherds' huts and flocks of sheep. It's also bestowed with great views over the High Tatras. We'll visit a chapel in the Valley of Golden Creek and the Mickiewicz waterfalls, named after the great Polish romantic poet.

Highlight: The beautiful Mickiewicz waterfalls.

Option 2 - Five Polish Lakes

Distance: 11.5 miles (18km)

Ascent: 2 200 feet (670m)

In summary: A bus will take us to Palenica Białczańska before we make our way to the Mickiewicz waterfalls. Up in Roztoka Valley, we'll be able to admire the Siklawa waterfall, the biggest in the Tatras. Then, we'll head along Siklawa up to the Valley of Five Polish Lakes and visit the highest refuge in the Polish Tatras at 1,670 m for lunch. We'll return to the bottom of Roztoka valley via an alternative trail.

Highlight: Soaking up the atmosphere of the mountains while relaxing at the refuge.

Day 7 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 - Waterfalls of Cold Water

Distance: 6 miles (9.5km)

Ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

After an hour-long coach journey to Tatranska Lesna, we'll start our walk through the waterfall-splashed landscapes of Studený Potok. Two hours of walking will bring us to Rainerova chata, the oldest mountain refuge in the Tatras that now houses a small pottery museum. Crossing the Hrebienok Pass, we'll continue to a crossroads below Slavkovsky Peak and descend through a forest to the popular mountain resort of Stary Smokovec. Enjoy some free time to explore before our return transfer to the hotel.

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 8 Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Moderate walking grade 6

Longer full day walks with more ascent and varied terrain. Good fitness and agility are needed. Typically, 9-10 miles (15-16km) with around 1,500ft (460m) of ascent.



Challenging walking grade 9

Demanding full day walks with greater distance, ascent, and fewer stops. Best for very fit walkers. Typically, 13-14 miles (21-23km) with around 2,750ft (840m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Grand Hotel Stamary, Zakopane

With a spectacular setting in the eye-catching mountain town of Zakopane, the Grand Hotel Stamary is the perfect choice for a mountain getaway. Housed in a historic 1905 building, this 4-star hotel combines rustic charm with modern luxury. Beautifully appointed rooms featuring plush bedding, private bathrooms, flat-screen TVs, complimentary Wi-Fi, and stunning views of the Tatra Mountains. Guests can take advantage of the hotel's wellness spa and pool, savour local and international cuisine in the restaurant, and enjoy easy access to the town centre and ski lifts.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Itialian resorts)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags

- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

Useful information

On arrival day

We may have guests arriving from different UK airports. Guests arriving on any later evening flights may have a prepared plated dinner on this first evening, depending on the estimated arrival at the hotel. In this instance, our tour manager will leave details for guests to join the group the following morning.

Telephone Code for Tatra Mountains

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialing the number.
To dial a UK number 0044
To dial a Polish number 0048

To dial a Slovak number dial 00421

Language Information for Tatra Mountains

The local language is Slovak for the Slovakia side of the mountains and Polish for the Poland side and airport.

LOCAL CURRENCY

Local currency for Poland

The local currency is the Polish Zloty (Euro and Card payments are also accepted at the airport)

ELECTRICITY

Electricity information for Tatra Mountains

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

ATM AVAILABILITY

ATM availability for Tatra Mountains

There are several ATM machines in Zakopane for the polish side of the mountains where you can obtain Zloty, and currency exchange offices (Kantoors) where you can change a variety of currency.

There are ATM machines in Novy Smokevec for the Slovakia side of the mountains where you can obtain Euros.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

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.

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