

## Come flying to Małopolska to walk, cycle, swim, sail, ride, and ski

The area around Kraków offers plentiful opportunities for active leisure whether you're after laidback cycling or opt for downhill mountainbiking, choose swimming and sunbathing or the adrenaline rush of water sports, just go hiking in the hills or dare to climb high cliffs. And we constantly expand our rich recreation infrastructure to encourage you to be active outdoors. After physical activity, we invite you to take a dip in the thermal baths operating at the foot of the Tatra Mountains in all seasons. And that is only the start!

**Zakopane** is more than just the winter capital of Poland: it is where you set off from to explore them but also where you can leisurely stroll enjoying the imposing panorama of the lofty peaks from their foot. Needless to say, you find world-class accommodation in hotels and B&Bs. Most have been designed with families in mind and have facilities for children. A great option while staying around the Tatra foothills is a visit (or two) to the nearby thermal baths.

### *The Valley of Five Lakes in the Tatra Mountains © Małopolska*

Another one is to bring your bike, or rent one. There are abundant cycle paths of various difficulty in the region, and **the Velo Małopolska**, the Polish section of the Tatra Loop, and the VeloKrynica are very conveniently signposted, and long enough to satisfy the most enduring cyclists, as the total length of bike trails in the region exceeds 2000 miles.

Many four- and five-star **hotels** providing accommodation to active tourists in Małopolska offer more than just fantastic landscapes as they run their own spa centres. The prices are affordable, and the range of services (including the bars) and service extremely inviting.

When it comes to **hiking in the mountains**, the Tatras are your opportunity to meet the chamois and the marmot. Watch out for the brown bears though, as they also live in the Tatras, and can sometimes be spotted from the perfectly signposted tourist trails of the Tatra National Park operating for nearly a century.

### *Bolechowicka Gate © Małopolska*

There are other (bear-free) mountains to walk among and admire in the north of Małopolska. Simply called Jura, the Jurassic plateau that extends far beyond the northern border of the region boasts not only **Ojcowski National Park** with its magnificent standing rocks but also plentiful watchtowers and ruined castles standing on rocky promontories by waymarked trails. They are a perfect option for a family's day in the open, as they are easily accessible on foot and by bike, and have pleasant hotels with plenty of parking space in the vicinity.

Speaking of unforgettable and enjoyable moments for the whole family, **rafting down the Dunajec** is an unforgettable experience, quite unlike white-water adventures elsewhere. You spend two hours between nearly vertical white cliffs of the Pieniny on a raft on fast flowing river listening to the tales of your two punters wearing local costumes, who at the same time make sure your vessel does not get caught by the swirling currents, runs aground, or collides with one of the banks.

The region draws part of its energy from hydropower plants, and the reservoirs built for those are perfect locations for **practicing assorted water sports**. The Czorszyński Reservoir offers particularly breath-taking views, as its waters mirror the Czorsztyn and the Niedzica castles rising high above its opposite banks.

A great idea to become familiar with scenic landscape away from the beaten tracks are **horseback trips** organised along the region's numerous trails and routes, very well known to the owners of small stables and agritourism farms. The Małopolska section of the 400-mile-long Transbeskidzki Horseback Trail (Bridleway) that takes you from the Podhale plain, to the mountains of the Pieniny, the Beskid Sądecki, and the Beskid Niski. In turn the 100-kilometre-long Starosądecki Bridleway offers a tour of the Beskid Sądecki mountains. A visit to a horse stud is a memorable adventure not only for children. By the way, have we mentioned that some alpaca farms welcoming visitors have opened recently? And there's certainly more to come.

- We all communicate in English in the tourist business in Małopolska. It is not necessarily the Queen's English, and hand gestures may be involved, but come, we're no royalty! Just humble waitresses, raftsmen, skiing instructors, spa attendants, and so forth, and so fifth.
- Once you are in the Tatras, follow the waymarked trails to see some of the stunning blue tarns – lakes left by glaciers among the high mountains.
- Poland has for centuries been famous throughout Europe for its cavalry, and equestrian traditions are cherished in Małopolska around the Royal Capital City of Kraków. The region's breeds include Małopolski, bred for Polish heavy cavalry since the 16th century, and the lithe Hucul horses perfect for hauling goods over the mountains.

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