



**Magiczny  
Kraków**

## **Obwarzanek Museum in 'Wide open for sustainable meetings' series**

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**The Living Bagel Museum was the first of its kind in Krakow to be certified by Good Travelseal. Until now there has been no museum or tourist attraction in Krakow with the certificate. We sincerely congratulate you - this is an important and pioneering achievement. What motivated you to embark on the process itself?**

Thank you very much! I'm proud that we've made it happen, and I hope soon there will be more sustainable certified companies in Krakow. I believe that even small actions make sense. That's why I was keen from the very beginning to make the Living Bagel Museum a place that has a positive impact on the environment.

Long before regulations on single-use packaging were introduced, we gave up plastic. We sell drinks in glass bottles, and bagels in paper bags. We send invoices electronically, and we make it clear to guests who purchase tickets online that we do not require a printed ticket.

We operate in the spirit of less waste and don't waste food - if we have unsold bagels left at the end of the day (it's a product that is fresh for only one day) we distribute them to our guests, neighbors or the homeless.

Sustainability is not only about environmental issues - although ecology is particularly important to me on a daily basis. It's also a responsible and ethical approach to doing business. This is especially important in the context of young people - students, for whom we are often the first place to work. I am keen for them to gain not only experience with us, but also good role models and the feeling that they are treated with respect.

In addition, we engage in social and charitable actions. With all our activities we try to emphasize the importance of obwarzanek for the city of Krakow. Hence, among other things, the decorations and ornaments referring to local history and folklore. With obwarzanek we promote the city. We also do this by going beyond the walls of our museum - during national and international events, such as fairs or events dedicated to promoting Malopolska. Our souvenir store is slightly different from those in the Old Town. First of all, because with us all things come from local artists, including social enterprises. Until recently, there was a café next to the museum, where you could eat sandwiches based on obwarzanek, with toppings associated with our region - bryndza, oscypek, krakowska kiełbasa or ojcowski trout. Now we have moved away from this concept, but we still serve events with "obwarzanek catering." We even bought two original obwarzanek carts, which we refurbished and are an attraction at various events.

The starting point for moving toward certification was a survey, which allowed me to see how much good we are already doing. I think it's worthwhile to undergo such a self-assessment and notice the positive impact that our activities can have - not only on guests, but also on the surroundings, the environment and the local community.



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**What does the Good Travelseal certification give you? For what reason did you decide on this particular type of certification?**

The purpose of the Good Travelseal certificate is to promote places and companies that take action to protect the environment, support local communities and conduct business in an ethical and responsible manner.

The certificate confirms that our actions make sense and are heading in the right direction, but also allows us to stand out from the competition. Nowadays, when customers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact they have on the environment and the community, having such a certificate can become a key asset.

**Companies, especially smaller ones, are concerned that the certification process is time-consuming, requiring the preparation of many documents, policies and strategies. How do you assess it? Is it a job for one dedicated employee or a whole team?**

It's true - the whole process is time-consuming. In our case, it took almost a year, although it can probably be done faster. It all depends on the number of people involved in the certification and the



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type of business we run.

In our case, it all started with a three-month training course we took part in at the invitation of the Krakow City Hall. It was conducted by Anula Galewska from Travindy, an international expert in sustainable management. The training is not mandatory, but for me personally it gave a solid dose of knowledge, helped me decide to join the certification process, and provided an opportunity to exchange experiences with other companies from Poland. After the training, we started completing the application and preparing for the audit. This stage took us a long time - more than half a year, mainly because I decided to carry out the whole process on my own. I recognized that no one knows my company better than I do.

It is worth bearing in mind that some of the documents have to be created from scratch if they have not been developed before. In retrospect, however, I think it's a good opportunity to organize the company's operations. In our case, many things were being implemented, but we didn't have them formally written down. You also need to learn to clearly communicate your activities, avoid greenwashing and be reliable. Transparency is a must.

### **What is the process itself like? What surprised you the most during it?**

The certification process largely depends on the size of the company and the complexity of the activities carried out. This translates, among other things, into the degree of complexity of the application form, the number of documents required and the duration of the audit. In the case of a tourist attraction such as ours, it is less complicated than, for example, in a hotel, where the number of operational processes is much greater. In comparison - to us, calculating the carbon footprint did not cause much difficulty, but in the case of a large event organizer, it requires a much more sophisticated analysis and more data.

### **Do customers expect your company to have sustainable solutions or certifications?**

Certifications such as the Good Travel Seal are intended to support travel companies in building a positive image and attracting tourists who pay attention to environmental issues and ethical aspects of travel.

It seems to me that in the case of a tourist attraction, customers don't expect to be certified as much. Nonetheless, there is a group of conscious consumers who appreciate small but meaningful gestures - such as paper bags, the ability to buy coffee for your own mug, or local souvenirs that were really made in Malopolska and not mass-produced in China. I myself am a person who pays attention to these kinds of issues when traveling.

### **Looking a little more broadly at policy, what activities in line with the Sustainable Development Goals are implemented or in your company?**

We have divided our activities into 3 areas, according to ESG standards. These are three aspects - environmental, social and business.



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Eco-friendly activities are very important to us, so we make every effort to minimize our environmental footprint. We operate according to the idea of less waste, shorten our supply chain to support local producers, save water and electricity, and encourage our guests and partners to take similar actions. We plant trees, donating a portion of our profits to reforestation campaigns organized by Posadzimy.pl. We are a partner of Krakow Waterworks, supporting a campaign promoting drinking tap water.

We also contribute to the promotion of the region through activities to protect and promote Krakow's cultural heritage. We actively popularize knowledge about the obwarzanek krakowski - one of the most recognizable symbols of our city. We also engage in charitable activities and support social enterprises. For years, we have been cooperating with the Association of Parents and Children with Down Syndrome "Rainbow" and Social Enterprise Social 21, established by them.

Our entire team actively participates in sustainability efforts. We also urge our customers and business partners to be conscious of ecology and localism with us. Personally, I attach great importance to the well-being of employees - ensuring a good atmosphere and providing financial stability that allows them to study and grow. When making business decisions, I am guided not only by profit generation, but first and foremost by the tenets of the sustainable development policy we have adopted. I believe that even small companies can have a real impact on the world around them. It's worth doing more than just what is implied by the PAC or the company's current operations. Involvement - whether for the environment, the local community or culture - gives me great satisfaction and true joy.

### **What trends in event organization have you observed recently?**

When it comes to organizing events, you can see more concern for the environment. More and more companies are betting on eco-solutions, such as e-tickets or abandoning single-use plastic. I think that participants themselves increasingly expect events to be organized in the spirit of sustainability.

Personally, I am very happy to see any example of a conscious choice of localism. For example, if bottled water is served at an event held in Malopolska, let it come from a local source, not from a foreign manufacturer. Necessarily in a glass bottle! Promote a short supply chain - bet on seasonality, reach for regional products and support local farmers and producers. These are small decisions that make a real difference, both to the environment and the economy.

### **After a time-consuming certification process, what goals do you want to achieve in 2025?**

Our plans for 2025 focus primarily on making our offerings more accessible to people with disabilities. I am committed to ensuring that my team feels confident and competent in dealing with every visitor, and that our visitors feel comfortable and understood.

Also ahead of us is the next edition of Obwarzanek Day, a holiday we will hold for the third time. It's sort of the Krakow equivalent of "Fat Thursday" - a day when we all eat bagels! ☐ It's also a great opportunity to remind us of the importance of this small "circle of yeast dough", which has been inextricably linked to our city for centuries.



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