



Tourism Department Activities in 2025

2026-02-25

The year 2025 marked another important stage in Kraków's development of sustainable tourism, combining the city's high attractiveness with responsible management of tourist traffic. Tourism in 2025 was treated as an integral part of urban policy—connected with residents' quality of life, cultural heritage protection, climate, mobility, and economic development.

Activities focused on continuing the implementation of a data-driven approach supported by research and dialogue with stakeholders. Particular attention was paid to sustainable development, dispersing tourist traffic by creating new products, and strengthening responsible behaviour among both visitors and the tourism industry. Kraków also actively participated in international knowledge exchange, using its position as a historic city to initiate and co-create the debate on the future of urban tourism in Europe.

Tourist Traffic and Its Structure

In 2025 Kraków maintained a high dynamic of tourist arrivals. During the peak season, the city welcomed around 3 million domestic visitors and nearly 700,000 international guests. Mobile data analysis confirmed a stable increase in interest in Kraków. An increasingly clear trend was the more even distribution of visits throughout the year—one of the goals of sustainable tourism management.

Among international visitors, the largest groups came from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. At the same time, there was a noticeable increase in arrivals from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Israel, and Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates.

Research and Data-Driven Management

The year 2025 saw further development of systematic research on tourist traffic and analyses of its impact on city operations. Kraków used traditional surveys and gathered data from mobile applications and payment cards—these will be used to prepare detailed insights into tourism for 2025.

An important component of the research was the analysis of residents' attitudes towards tourism, launched in December 2025, partly based on Doxey's Irritation Index. Studies on Kraków's night-time economy were also conducted, serving as a foundation for deeper analyses of this aspect of urban life.

In cooperation with the Małopolska Tourist Organization, research was carried out to determine the economic significance of tourism and the meetings industry for Kraków's economy. The findings will be published in 2026 and will support strategic decision-making in the tourism sector.

Sustainability and the GDS Index

One of the key achievements of 2025 was Kraków's significant improvement in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS Index). This international ranking compares cities based on approximately



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70 indicators covering environmental actions, social issues, engagement of local suppliers, and destination management.

Kraków scored 62.2%, improving by 12.9 percentage points, and advanced from 72nd to 53rd place among 81 destinations worldwide. The city ranked 2nd in the “Most Improved Destinations” category, confirming the effectiveness of its long-term sustainability strategy.

The ranking highlighted both strong areas and those needing further work. The greatest progress was recorded in cooperation with the local tourism industry, social initiatives, and environmental actions. The number of certified accommodation facilities increased, urban space accessibility improved, and issues such as responsible short-term rental management and climate protection were more strongly integrated into strategic city documents.

Respect Kraków - Responsible Tourism in Practice

Kraków has been running the Respect Kraków program for several years, encouraging visitors to explore the city while respecting the needs of residents. In 2025 the program was expanded with a new formula. Its online campaign in Polish and English reached domestic and international visitors as well as residents.

A large-scale outdoor campaign ran in parallel. In addition to standard channels such as Bus TV, Kraków City Card machines, and citylights, ads appeared on buses, tram seat backs, and at the Main Railway Station. Campaign messages were also displayed in the airport baggage claim area, and leaflets were distributed at MPK stops. Key materials were placed in short-term rental accommodations, and local businesses and residents helped spread them.

Program ambassadors, the City Helpers, patrolled the Old Town, Kazimierz, and the Vistula Boulevards from mid-June to mid-September. They worked daily from 18:00 to 1:00, and on weekends until 2:00. They assisted visitors, responded to inappropriate behaviour, measured noise levels, and conducted observations among tourists and residents—collecting valuable data for shaping Kraków’s night-time policies.

For over a year, Kraków has also had a Night Mayor, responsible for balancing the interests of residents, businesses, and tourists. During the 2025 season, he joined City Helpers on night patrols, observing the situation firsthand and engaging with stakeholders. Together with the Night-Time Economy Commission, he worked on issues related to night-time tourism, safety, entrepreneurship, culture, and transport. His efforts included promoting good practices for hospitality venues, negotiating with the entertainment sector, and developing rules for pub crawls to minimize residents’ discomfort.

Historic Cities 3.0 - International Cooperation

In April 2025 Kraków hosted the 4th edition of the Historic Cities 3.0 conference, devoted to the sustainable