



Kraków The Host City: Stories - Episode 10: Tourist attractions of Kraków

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The term 'tourist attractions' was first used in 1972 by Erik Cohen, a travel sociologist, in his thesis *Towards a Sociology of International Tourism*, claiming that it is the visiting of tourist attractions that constitutes a basis for mass tourism. There are numerous definitions of the term itself; however, the simplest explanation is that it is anything that may be of interest to a tourist. Therefore, we can ask ourselves, what could have been interesting to tourists arriving in Kraków in recent centuries?

In the 2nd half of the 19th century, tourist traffic in Kraków was related to excursions of a patriotic nature. As part of the national pilgrimage, numerous grand celebrations were organised and attended by many tourists. Examples include organising the jubilee of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski in 1879, the 400th anniversary of the death and the reinterment of Jan Długosz in 1890, the 100th anniversary of the Kościuszko Uprising in 1894, or the 100th anniversary of the birth of Adam Mickiewicz, combined with the unveiling of his monument on the Main Square in 1898. It should be explained that patriotic trips were combined with pilgrimages to the places of religious devotion, which is why they were called the national pilgrimage. The pilgrimage to Kraków intensified in the years 1870-1914, resulting from the socially recognised role of the city as the centre of Polishness as well as from the political or national freedom prevalent in Galicia in the days of autonomy.

What is interesting is that the sites visited by foreigners were largely the same as those visited by Polish travellers. They included Wawel Hill, the Main Square, ruins of the fortification walls, university buildings and historic churches (in particular St. Mary's Basilica, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, the Church of the Dominican Order, the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Skalka Church of the Pauline Fathers). The places frequently visited outside the city borders included Bielany, Tyniec, Łobzów, Mogiła and Swoszowice. Just like visits to the Wieliczka Salt Mine are highly popular today, a detailed route of the underground trip was described by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz in his 1859 *Historic Travels Across Polish Lands from 1811 to 1828*.

Anniversary celebrations referring to the traditions from the time of the partitions were continued in the interwar period. The building of the Polish Bazaar became a new tourist attraction, later becoming the office of the 'Illustrated Daily Courier', which gave it its later name: the Press Palace. The building located at the junction of Wielopole and Starowiślna Streets was constructed in 1921 based on a plan by Tadeusz Stryjeński and Franciszek Mączyński. Tourists were attracted to the Polish Bazaar by the viewing terrace on the roof of the building, from which they could admire the panorama of Kraków.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the city was a host to 'Kraków Days', the idea of which came from Jerzy Dobrzycki, an art historian. The first edition of the celebration took place in June 1936, and it lasted for about a dozen days, bringing about 50 thousand people into the city. The programme of the event included: Lajkonik's parade, enthronement of the Fowler King, floating wreaths on the Vistula near Wawel, religious ceremonies and numerous theatre performances and musical concerts (e.g., a performance from Jan Kiepura) and artistic exhibitions. Interestingly, this event included illumination of historic buildings in the city centre.

In the initial years after the war, Kraków was visited by small numbers of tourists – about 20,000 per year. However, this number increased gradually, and at the beginning of the 1960s



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it exceeded one million. At the time, apart from the Old Town, the tourists eagerly visited Nowa Huta and Kombinat. The city extended its offer of culture and entertainment, which translated into the development of Kraków as a tourist destination. In the 1970s, international popularity of the city grew for two reasons: the addition of Kraków to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978, and the election of Karol Wojtyła as the pope in the same year. On the other hand, another place in Kraków which gained popularity among foreigners was Kazimierz, after the famous movie *Schindler's List*, depicting the fate of Jews from Kraków during the Second World War.

We cordially invite you to read the next episode, in which you will read about the forgotten guesthouses in Kraków!

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