



Cloth Hall

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The city's trademark, Krakow's oldest "shopping centre", pearl of Renaissance architecture and the headquarters of the first Polish National Museum - the Cloth Hall is one of the city's most important buildings. The first stone market hall stood here just after the city's foundation charter in 1257. The next Gothic building burned down in the mid-16th century, and its remains can still be seen in the underground tourist route below the Market Square. The reconstruction gave the Cloth Hall a renaissance form, making it one of the grander examples of this style in Krakow. The distinctive arcaded parapet and the Mannerist gargoyle sculptures are recognisable "Cracow" motives. The Cloth Hall received its current form in a reconstruction in the years 1875-1879. It was then that the arcades with shops and cafes arose, including the famous Art Nouveau café of Jan Noworolski. In 1879 in the renovated rooms on the first floor of the Cloth Hall, the National Museum was created "for the benefit of the whole nation" (now a branch of the Polish Gallery of 19th-century Art).

[Back](#)