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Wieliczka Salt Mine, located just outside Krakow, Poland, is a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its rich history and stunning underground chambers. For travelers seeking an immersive experience, Prime Tours Krakow offers a variety of guided tours that provide convenient transportation and expert insights into this subterranean marvel.Overview of the Wieliczka Salt MineEstablished in the 13th century, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is one of the oldest operating salt mines in the world. Over the centuries, it has expanded to include a labyrinth of tunnels, chambers, and chapels, all carved from rock salt. Visitors can explore these underground wonders, including the magnificent St. Kinga's Chapel, which features intricate salt sculptures and chandeliers. The mine reaches depths of up to 327 meters and stretches over 287 kilometers, though only a portion is accessible to the public. citurnumSearch10Prime Tours Krakow: Your Gateway to the Salt MinePrime Tours Krakw specializes in providing comprehensive tours to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, ensuring a seamless and informative experience for visitors. Their services include:- Private Transportation: Enjoy door-to-door service with private car or minivan transfers from your accommodation in Krakw to the mine, typically a 30-minute drive.- Expert Guides: Upon arrival, you'll be met by a local, English-speaking guide who will lead you through the mine's highlights, sharing historical context and fascinating anecdotes.- Flexible Scheduling: Prime Tours offers various tour options, including half-day and full-day excursions, allowing you to tailor your visit to your schedule. Tour Options Offered by Prime Tours KrakowPrime Tours Krakow provides several tour packages to Wieliczka Salt Mine, each designed to cater to different interests and time constraints. Standard Salt Mine Tour: This half-day tour includes private transportation, an English-speaking driver, and a guided tour of the mine. The visit typically lasts around 2.5 hours, covering approximately 2.5 kilometers of the mine's corridors and chambers. citurnumSearch20. Salt Mine & Krakw City Tour: Combine your visit to the salt mine with a guided tour of Krakw's historic Old Town. This full-day excursion offers a comprehensive overview of the city's cultural and architectural landmarks.3. *Salt Mine & Schindler's Factory Tour*: Explore the Wieliczka Salt Mine alongside a visit to Schindler's Factory, a museum dedicated to the history of Krakow during World War II. This tour provides a poignant look into the city's wartime history.4. **Auschwitz-Birkenau & Salt Mine Tour***: For those interested in a more extensive historical experience, this full-day tour includes visits to both the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum and the Wieliczka Salt Mine. It's a profound journey through two of Poland's most significant historical sites.**Booking and Additional Information**To book a tour or inquire further, you can contact Prime Tours Krakow via email or phone. Detailed information about each tour, including pricing and availability, is available on their official website.Visiting the Wieliczka Salt Mine with Prime Tours Krakow offers a convenient and enriching experience, combining expert guidance with comfortable transportation. Whether you're a history enthusiast, an architecture admirer, or simply seeking a unique adventure, the Wieliczka Salt Mine promises an unforgettable journey into the depths of Poland's cultural heritage. Admire mysterious underground lakes, chapels, shafts, dozens of chambers, labyrinth of corridors, statues and sculptures all carved out of the salt rock by the miners in the past 600 years. We invite you to the real world of wonders!The Wieliczka Salt Mine was inscribed onto the First UNESCO World National and Cultural Heritage List in 1978. It reaches a depth of 327 meters and the mine passages, is almost 300 km long! The Salt Mine continuously produced kitchen salt from the 13th century until 1996, being one of the world's oldest operating salt mines. Every year it is visited by over one million tourists, being undoubtedly one of the most frequently visited sites in Poland. There are no appropriate words to express the mystery and beauty of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, you have to see it!Rzeźba w KrakowieThe traveler Frenchman observed in the 18th century the Krakow's Wieliczka salt mine was no less magnificently an Egyptian pyramid. Millions of visitors, the crowded hands and such celebrities as Goethe and Sarah Bernhardt among them, have appeared to share his enthusiasm when exploring the subterranean world of labyrinthine passages, giant caverns, underground lakes and chapels with sculptures in the crystalline salt and rich ornamentation carved in the rock. They have also marveled at the ingenuity of the ancient mining equipment in the Wieliczka salt mine. And the unique acoustics of the place have made hearing music here an exceptional experience. The Wieliczka Salt Mine, nowadays practically on the southeast outskirts of Krakow, has been worked for 900 years. It used to be one of the world's biggest and most profitable industrial establishments when common salt was commercially a medieval equivalent of today's oil. Always a magnet, since the mid-18th century Krakow's Wieliczka salt mine has become increasingly a tourist attraction in the first place. Today visitors walk underground for about 2,000 m in the oldest part of the salt mine and see its subterranean museum, which takes three hours or so. Nine centuries of mining in Wieliczka produced a total of some 200 kilometers of passages as well as 2,040 caverns of varied size. The tourist route starts 64 m deep, includes twenty chambers, and ends 135 m below the earth surface, where the world's biggest museum of mining is located with the unique centuries-old equipment among its exhibits. Occasionally concerts and other events take place in the Wieliczka mines biggest chambers. There is a sanatorium for those suffering from asthma and allergy situated 135 meters deep underground in the Wieliczka Salt Mine. UNESCO has entered the Wieliczka Salt Mine in its World Heritage Register in 1978. In June 2013 the 800-year-old Bochnia Salt Mine, 50 kilometers east of Krakow, has been added, the two World Heritage Sites to be listed together as The Royal Salt Mines of Wieliczka and Bochnia. . the largest among underground chapels in the Wieliczka Salt mine, is actually a sizable subterranean church carved in rock salt and embellished with salty sculptures and bas-reliefs.

Wieliczka Salt Mine is accessible all year round. Except it's closed on January 1, Easter Sunday, November 1, and Christmas Eve (i.e. December 24-25). April through October visitors may see the Wieliczka Salt Mine between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., and November through March from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. On Easter Saturday and December 31st closing time is 3:30 pm and 4 pm respectively. All visitors need to join a guided tour. Groups should book the tour in advance by phone at (+48) 122787302 or fax at (+48) 122787333 or email at turystyka@kopalinia.pl English tours for individual visitors take place every thirty minutes between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. In June and in September they start at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., half past noon, 1:45 p.m., 3 p.m., 4 p.m., and 5 p.m. In October through May the English tours are available at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., half past noon, 1:45 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. German tours for individual visitors start in July through September at 10:45 a.m., 2:15 p.m., and 4 p.m. In October through June the German tours take place at 10:45 a.m. and 4 p.m. Nightly tours take roughly 1h30, and they are available via advance booking by phone at (+48) 122787302 Note: Temperature in the Wieliczka Salt Mine stays uniform 15 degrees Celsius, i.e. 59 Fahrenheit, round the year. Travel Salt Mine in Wieliczka is situated some ten kilometers from the center of Krakow. One may get there easily by car or taxi. Also, you can take a commuter train from the city's central Krakow Główny rail station, a bus, or one of numerous minibuses that cruise Krakow's streets. Note: Bus 304 from Krakow to Wieliczka leaves from Dworzec Główny Zachod stop by Galeria Krakowska shopping mall at Pawia street. Visitors to the salt mine should get off at Wieliczka Kopalinia stop. Yellow buses operated by Mobilis company run every 20 minutes or so. The fare is an equivalent of under one euro. Tickets to the Wieliczka Salt Mine are available at the entrance in the Szyb Damiłowska pithead building at 10 Damiłowska street. Regular ticket for Polish tour costs 59 PLN (Polish zloty) in July and August, otherwise 55 PLN. Reduced-rate ticket for Polish tour (e.g. schoolchildren) costs 43 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 39 PLN. Family ticket for Polish tour (2 adults plus 2 minors) costs 161 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 149 PLN. Regular ticket for a guided tour in a foreign language costs 89 PLN (Polish zloty) in July and August, otherwise 84 PLN. Reduced-rate ticket for a guided tour in a foreign language costs 69 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 64 PLN. Family ticket for English or German tour (2 adults plus 2 minors) costs 247 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 232 PLN. Tours of the Wieliczka Salt Minefor the disabled. The handicapped in wheelchairs can tour the most popular parts of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, in that number two of its subterranean lakes, underground churches of St. Kunegundes and of the Cross, the Dwarfs Cave, etc. It's advisable to arrange the visit in advance through a phone call up at (+48) 122787302 or fax at (+48) 122787333. Other UNESCO World Heritage sites in Krakow and the Malopolska Province Krakow's Old Town historic district Auschwitz concentration camp The Calvary sanctuary of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska Malopolska's wooden churches Page 2 The 12th edition, updated. Published June 2019. Copyright 2006-2019 Marek Strzala The Best of Krakow 2019 Krakow to ko najlepsze See more of The Best of Krakow 2019 Also the best weather in Krakow, its gems of architecture from prehistoric to modern, and outlines of the city's rich history and Krakow's cooking at its best. Plus maps, hundreds of photos, and bilingual text in English and Polish. 96 pages of the best in Krakow. Price 10 euro per copy inclusive of postage and packing. Yes, I want to buy The Best of Krakow 2019 guide. This guidebook is also available in Krakow's bookshops. The Best of Krakow 2019 ebook in English may be bought online from Amazon.com Printing in Krakow Page 3 Krakow Info as an independent information service provided by Krakows journalists maintains professional standards at as high a level as possible. At the same time, we apply a rigid interpretation of Poland's strict privacy law. We'll be glad to answer all questions regarding our privacy policy and practice via Questions Answered page at Your personal information. The only personal information we collect are voluntarily provided names and email addresses of the Internet surfers who seek a reply from us, notably an answer to a query put through the above mentioned web page. We dont send any advertisements or commercial messages or promotional materials. We dont compile any mailing lists. And we dont allow voluntarily access to such data to any third party, including other companies and individuals. Your messages We may retain messages sent via email and other means. For one thing, we store communications to process your inquiries and answer your requests. For another, we may use them to improve our service. Server logs Our server records automatically information sent from a browser when anybody visits a web page, for instance IP address, type of the browser, browser language, and the date and time of the visit. We use the data solely for statistical analysis. Cookies We dont employ cookies ourselves but our partners and advertisers as well as services providers may do it. External Links Our privacy policy covers the Krakow Info website and services it provides. Links on our various web pages, in other documents available online, and in our email messages may lead to other sites that adhere to their own privacy policies. Possible revisions of our privacy policy We dont ponder any significant revisions now but the privacy policy of Krakow Info may change with time. All changes will be posted on this page. Explore the underground splendour of Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland that transports you to a mystifying world of salt beneath the Earths surface. Situated near the city of Krakow in southern Poland, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is a bewildering labyrinth with infinite corridors, tunnels, walkways and chambers. It is a huge empire with 2500 chambers, nine levels of mining and galleries that run for 245 kilometres till a depth of 327 metres. It is even home to the largest underground St. Kinga's chapel. Our Wieliczka Salt Mine tours will edify your knowledge about the mining techniques, tools, extraction and transportation of salt as it take you inside the mine and Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration camp. You can see 300-year old statues made of salt by the miners at the St. Anthony, Janowice, and Holy Cross Chapels. This 700-year old salt mine had continuously been in operation from the 13th century to the 20th century and is now a world-renowned tourist attraction. The famous St. Kingas Chapel is sure to enthral you with its captivating atmosphere, sculptures of illustrious people like Pope John Paul II and a model of Leonardo da Vincis Last Supper made of salt. The rich history and unique geology of Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland together make it a UNESCO Natural Heritage Site and the National Historic Landmark of Poland. It is listed in UNESCO World Heritage Site. The history of Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland dates back to as early as the 13th century when the first excavation was made. By then, the mine was proudly called Magnun Sal the Great Sal as it was the largest source of salt in Poland. Today, the mine is one of the oldest salt mining sites in the world and a popular tourist attraction that has seen incredible developments in the mining techniques over the past 700 years.PrehistoryBrine from salt water springs was boiled in clay pots to extract pure salt during Neolithic times. Old saltworking tools discovered in Barycz village in Central Europe near Wieliczka belong to the prehistoric period. The salt extracted was used as a preservative for meat and it later became a means of payment in trade to those who did not own this valuable substance. This secret of salt production by evaporation was passed on to the next generations in the following centuries.11th To 13th CenturyDuring the 11th and 12th centuries, when salt water springs began to disappear, the search for brine started. Wells were constructed and saline water was brought to the surface after which it was boiled in pans to get pure evaporated salt. In the 13th century, lumps of rock salt were found for the first time while digging wells which instigated the idea of obtaining salt by mining. The first mining was done in the second half of the 13th century by local specialists with technical knowledge from Western Europe. 14th To 15th CenturyDuring this period, the revenue from salt extraction played a crucial part in the wealth of the nations treasury. Casimir III, who was the Polish king then, founded the Krakow Academy and Saltworks Statue from the high profits of salt mining. Around 350 people worked in Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland and the annual production of salt was 7000-8000 tonnes then. However, mining was still seasonal and was done only when agricultural works were not carried out. Visitors were allowed to enter the mine and Nicolaus Copernicus was the first tourist in 1493.16th To 18th CenturyThe period from the 16th to 18th centuries marked a dynamic development in the mining of rock salt as it was put up in the underground mine while the existing chambers and chapels were renovated. The crystallisation is associated with brine leaks and hence depending on the location of the leak, it can take a variety of forms. You can see spongy growths of salt called salt cauliflowers, narrow dripstone tubes known as salt pasta and the less common salt stains and stalagmites.Essential Informatio Location: Danilowicz 10, 32-020 Wieliczka, PolandTimings: 8:30 AM 5:30 PM on all days of the weekBest Time To Visit : The best time to visit Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland is during the spring season from March to May or during the autumn months of September to November as the weather is pleasant and favorable for exploring the mine. Since the mine gets colder during winter, it is better to visit the mine during summer, spring or autumn.How To Reach : By Train: Board a train at Krakow Główny Station and a light at Wieliczka Rynek Kopalinia station from where the mine is just 500 metres away. By Bus: Take the bus on line 304 from Dworzec Gwny Zachod stop to Wieliczka Kopalinia Sól stop from where you can walk to the mine entrance in a few minutes.Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland is the oldest mine of its kind in Europe and boasts of housing 327 kilometres of tunnels spread over nine levels. The underground chapels adorned with church iconography, statues sculpted in salt and art galleries are the eye-catchy highlights of the Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland. Chapel of St. Kinga, which is located 101 metres below the Earths surface, is the worlds biggest church built underground. Yes, you can book tickets to Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland online while enjoying the comfort of your home rather than waiting in long queues at the entrance of the mine. You can select the date and time of your visit as per convenience depending on the availability of the tickets. The best time to explore Wieliczka SaltMine Poland is during early in the morning when the mine has just opened considering how long the tour around the mine takes. The Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland holds such a significance that it has helped shape the legacy of the Krakow region and the people who reside there. The discovery of rock salt was a huge development for the kingdom of Poland since it helped stabilize the economy of the country. The salt mine operated incessantly for 700 years and produced table salt continuously until 2007. It is a portrayal of the growth in mining techniques of Europe from the 13th to the 20th century.Children below 4 years of age are allowed to enter the Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland for free. However, other visitors are not allowed without the tickets. 2025 www.visitwieliczka.com All rights reserved. Have you ever wondered what its like to visit an underground salt kingdom? If youre in Poland, you can easily do so at the Wieliczka Salt Mine the biggest salt mine in Poland and one of Krakows top tourist attractions! Wieliczka Salt Mine (or its more simple nickname, the Krakow Salt Mine) is a UNESCO-listed site that spans 9 levels and covers more than 250 kilometers (155 miles) of tunnels. In fact, the mine is so huge that tourists can explore only 2% of its total area! Wieliczka isnt just some sort of boring salt mine, though its home to underground lakes, magnificent chapels, intricate salt-carved statues, a grand ballroom, and so much more. Its a must-visit, especially if youre a fan of unique experiences and/or natural beauty. Since Wieliczka Salt Mine is located just outside of Krakow, its also one of the easiest and most popular day trips from Krakow. In this guide, Ill cover everything that you need to know before visiting, including how to get to the salt mines, the different tours available, and even an entire walkthrough of the Wieliczka Salt Mine! Wieliczka Salt Mine Travel Tips Before we go 100+ some meters underground and start our tour, here are some practical travel tips that will help you make the most out of your visit: 1. The best time to visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine is "drumroll" any time! Seriously Thanks to a stable underground climate, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is always kept at a pleasant temperature of around 17 C (63 F) year round. That being said, summer is the most popular time to visit (its the busiest season), so be sure to book your tickets well in advance. We visited in winter (mid-February) and it was a fantastic time to go! Despite going on a sold-out tour (they cap the maximum guests at 35 per group), the mine wasnt crowded at all and we didnt have to deal with long lines. Literally speaking, the best time to visit the mine is as early as possible before noon is ideal. Our tour started at 10 am, which, in my humble opinion, was optimal. We could have breakfast, get to the mines, enjoy the tour (without crowding), and be out by 1 pm with half of the day to spare.) 2. Visiting Independently If youre one of the most popular questions is Can you visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine independently? Nope! Since the mine has nine levels and over 250 km (155 mi) of tunnels, its incredibly easy to get lost which is why Wieliczka Salt mine self-guided tours are not allowed. Instead, the entry ticket includes a guided tour, which is honestly a good thing! The guides are very knowledgeable, and having someone walk you through the history, landmarks, and unique rock formations makes the experience much more enjoyable than wandering alone and trying to figure out who this dude named Chopin is. (Just kidding, he wrote one of my favorite pieces, Minute Waltz).3. How Long Do You Need in Wieliczka Salt Mine?If you plan to do Wieliczka from start to finish, plan to give yourself at least 4 hours: 1 hour to get there and back to Krakow, 1.5 hours for the main tour (Tourist Route), another hour for the museum tour, and 30 minutes for a quick snack or shopping break. Fun fact: Hundreds of years ago, the first tours around the Wieliczka Salt Mine used to take between 6 to 8 hours! Thankfully, theyve condensed it a bit since then.) 4. Be sure to book your tickets in advance!To give you an idea, more than 1.5 million people visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine every year, so you can imagine how popular it gets! You can book via the website or on sites like GetYourGuide or Viator: 5. Is the Wieliczka Salt Mine worth visiting?To be honest, I didnt really care for salt mines thereyre not something I think about a lot, you know what I mean? However, after visiting Wieliczka, I can wholeheartedly recommend it! Despite being 3 hours long, the tour was very interesting and kept me engaged the whole time. The rock formations and underground pools were especially beautiful. As a nice bonus, the salt air is good for your respiratory health, so youll feel refreshed too.) Wieliczka Salt Mine Tickets Before visiting the Wieliczka Salt Mine, I was slightly confused about all of the tour options Whats the difference between the Tourist Route and the Miners Route? Is one better than the other? Whats the Graduation Tower (and do graduates actually go there for final exams)? If youre wondering the same thing, dont worry thats exactly the kind of section I'll break down for you in the tickets options below for the Wieliczka Salt mine, so you can easily decide which tour is right for you. There are 3 tours offered at the Wieliczka Salt Mine: the Tourist Route, the Miners Route, and the Graduation Tower (Faith Focus) Finally, the mine also offers a special Pilgrims Route tour for those who want to learn more about how the miners kept their faith underground, marvel at religious sculptures and see places of worship. At the end, there is also the option to hold a mass at one of the underground chapels. However, this tour is usually reserved for private groups (minimum 20 people), so youll need to organize it in advance. Besides the three tours mentioned above, the mine also sells tickets to the Graduation Tower. The Graduation Tower (Not a Tour But Still Cool) Finally, you might have noticed an option called the Graduation Tower. Despite its name, it has nothing to do with graduating students (like I originally thought). The tower got its name from the graduation process, which is used to extract salt. Back in the day, salt production involved gradually increasing the concentration of salt in water by letting it flow over blackthorn branches, where wind and sun naturally evaporated the water, leaving behind more concentrated salt deposits. The Wieliczka Graduation Tower still follows the same principle: instead of producing salt, it releases salt-infused mist into the air via the branches, which creates a natural inhalation therapy beneficial for the respiratory system. As you walk around and breathe in the mineral-rich air, your respiratory system gets a natural cleanse kind of like a spa day for your lungs.) When I asked our tour guide, she mentioned that the tower is especially recommended for those who suffer from allergies or asthma; those who want to give a boost to their immune system; or just anyone who wants to try salt therapy (without necessarily going down underground). Its a nice add-on to your visit if you have some extra time or want a relaxing way to end your Wieliczka Salt Mine experience. The official Wieliczka website mentions that to get the maximum benefits from the tower, your visit should be at least 30 minutes. You can book tickets on the Wieliczka website or check out one of these top-rated tours below: How to Get to the Wieliczka Salt Mine The Wieliczka Salt Mine may be just outside of Krakow, but dont let that put you off getting there its very easy! At first, we were hesitant about taking this day trip because of the logistics, but we worried for nothing.) The distance from Krakow to the Wieliczka Salt Mine is only about 12 km (7.5 mi), and there are multiple options to get to the mine. Here is how to reach the Wieliczka Salt Mine from Krakow: By Tour (Easiest & Most Convenient) The easiest way to travel to the Wieliczka Salt Mine is by tour, since you dont need to stress about where to find the bus/train/taxi, waiting in line for tickets, or figuring out logistics. Since everything is taken care of, all you need to do is show up and enjoy the trip! I recommend this tour, which includes hotel pick-up (+) and is top rated. By Car & Taxi (Fast) If you prefer flexibility, traveling by car is another straightforward option. Whether you rent a car or take a taxi, the journey takes about 20-30 minutes (depending on traffic). We hailed an Uber and found it easy to use in Krakow and on the way back. A typical trip costs 45 PLN for the basic UberX, around 80 PLN for UberXL (for groups up to 6), or 100 PLN for Uber Black (for a luxury ride). Theres also paid parking available near the mine if youre driving there yourself. By Bus (Budget-Friendly) Another easy way to reach Wieliczka Salt Mine is by taking the 304 bus, which goes directly to the entrance. It has multiple departures every hour and takes about 30 minutes to reach the mine. You can buy a ticket at the kiosk or via the Jakkodaje app, but be sure to buy a Zone I +1 ticket, since Wieliczka is in zone III! If youre staying near the main train station (Krakw Gwny), go to the Dworzec Gwny Zachod and youll see the stop (and timetables for the 304 bus). Likewise, the 304 bus also circles around the Old Town, so you can hop on the bus at the Nowy Kieparz, Plac Inwalidw, Muzeum Narodowe, or Jubilat stops. You can check out the full route here by Train If youre staying near Krakw Gwny, taking the train is another option. Youll need to go to the main station and look for the train operated by Koleje Maopolskie (the company that goes between Krakow and Wieliczka). The train leaves twice an hour and the journey takes about 20 minutes. The Wieliczka Salt Mine Tour Now for the fun part: lets talk about what youll see on the tour! This next section is a full walkthrough of the Wieliczka Salt Mine experience. We did the Tourist Route, which is the most popular tour at Wieliczka and what most people usually start with. On this tour, youll get a comprehensive overview of the mine and walk through its most famous highlights, like underground chapels, lakes, chambers, salt sculptures, and more. The tour is divided into two parts: The main tour takes about 1.5 to 2 hours and covers about 2 km (1.2 mi). At the end, you can extend your visit and take an optional tour of the museum, which is another hour and 1.25 km (0.77 mi). If you do both, you can expect to spend about 2.5 to 3.5 hours total. The maximum number of people in each tour group is 35. Tours are conducted in 8 languages: English, Polish, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Ukrainian, and russian. The Polish and English tours have multiple departures every day, while the other languages have fewer tours (i.e. only twice or three times a day). If youre planning to take a tour in another language, be sure to check the timetables (and book a ticket!) before you visit. The Miners Route (Interactive Experience) For something a little more hands-on, theres also the Miners Route. This is more of an activity than an actual tour, since youll dress up like miners (including hard hats and costume!) and carry out all sorts of mining tasks. The tour is led by the Foreman, who also teaches the group aspiring miners tasks like weaving ropes, checking for gas, mining for salt, and much more. At the end of the tour, everyone will receive a certificate and become an honorary miner.) Everyone aged 10+ or older can participate. The duration, walking distance, and price is similar to the Tourist Route above about 2.5 to 3.5 hours, and about 2 km (1.2 mi). However, youll be covering different parts of the mine (i.e. other levels and areas that are not part of the Tourist Route). This tour is also smaller, since the maximum group size is only 20 people. Tours are available in English and Polish. Travel Tip! If youre interested in doing both tours, I recommend getting with the same guide, so you can get a solid introduction to the mine and then going on the Miners Route for more hands-on experience.) If you have any questions about the tours, feel free to reach out to me via email or on my social media.) Map of the underground salt mine Safety in the Wieliczka Salt Mine During the first few minutes, you might feel a little uneasy (I definitely had a moment where it hit me how far underground we were), but it goes away quickly. On that note, Id like to point out that the Wieliczka Salt Mine is completely safe! The tour guide mentioned that, thanks to the infrastructure and maintenance, there are no sudden collapses. The beams that prop up the chambers have been soaked in salty air for such a long time that theyve hardened and become almost rock-like. The mine also employs around 400 workers, who constantly monitor conditions and conduct safety checks. With that out of the way, lets continue the tour! The Wieliczka Salt Sculptures The first stop along the Wieliczka Salt Mine tour is a salt statue of one of the most famous Polish people (no, not Chopin, although well see him in a little bit). Im talking about Nicolaus Copernicus! This particular statue of Copernicus was created for the 500th anniversary of his birth. Choosing Copernicus as the subject wasnt coincidental, but was one of the first guests to visit the salt mine, which during the tour, youll see a couple of statues carved entirely out of salt. Whats even more interesting is that the salt sculptures were made by regular miners that is, they didnt have any formal training in arts or sculpting! How cool is that? The Legend of Princess Kinga The next chamber tells us a brief story about the legend of how the Wieliczka Salt Mine came to be. Many many years ago (around the 1200s, to be precise), a Hungarian princess called Kinga was set to be married to Bolesaw V, the prince of Krakow. As part of her dowry, Kinga asked her father, the King of Hungary, for a lump of salt something that was so valuable that it cost more than gold! Kingas father took her to a salt mine in Hungary to fulfill her wish. Although she was pleased, Kinga was also worried because she had no idea how to move the entire mine to Poland. After a while, she had an idea and threw her engagement ring into one of the mining shafts. After Kinga arrived in Krakow, she was met with a grand celebration, but she hadnt forgotten about her unusual dowry. Determined to bring the gift of salt to her new homeland, she stopped near the (present-day) town of Wieliczka and asked her attendants to start digging. To everyones astonishment, they uncovered a rich salt deposit buried deep in the ground and, in one of the rocks, was Kingas engagement ring! From that day, Kinga became the patron saint of salt miners in Poland. A Day in the Life of a Miner In the next chamber, theres another theatrical story about one of the most dangerous aspects of early mining: methane gas. While were on the topic, it was interesting to learn that working at the Wieliczka Salt Mine was a privilege. The working conditions were fairly good, and the miners worked a maximum of 8 hours a day. In fact, many preferred working at the Wieliczka Salt Mine over other mining places (such as coal, which was bad for the lungs!) Over in the next room, theres a short story of how supplies and salt blocks were transported by horses. At one time, as many as 80 horses worked in the mines, and there was even an entire chamber dedicated to their stables! Early Salt Production Moving a bit further is another room of a diorama of how early settlers found salt bad for 6,000 years ago (before the salt mines existed) In the final room, theres a statue of one of Polands greatest leaders, King Casimir the Great (fun fact: the Kazimierz neighborhood in Krakow is named after him!). Casimir inherited a kingdom weakened by war and, during his 30+ year reign, turned it into a powerful state. In fact, theres even a popular saying that goes, [Casimir] found a Poland made of wood and left it made of stone. However, you might wonder, where did he get the money to afford such a grand development? The answer is the Wieliczka Salt Mine!) About 33% of the countrys income came from salt mining in those days, which is pretty amazing when you think about it. It wasnt a one-way street, either Casimir also greatly helped the salt mine by building a hospital for the miners and granting it special privileges. Wieliczka Salt Mine Chapels From this room, youll walk downstairs to one level below about 153 steps and walk a bit to the next chamber. On the way there, youll meet some cute locals (gnome statues!) who sometimes come alive and work in the mines when nobodys looking. The next stop is the first underground chapel on the tour, called the Holy Cross Chapel. It was built in the 1860s by the miners, who came to pray before and during their shift. In the next hallway, the tour typically stops for a very quick bathroom break. This is also around the halfway point of the Tourist Route tour. After the break, youll visit the most famous landmark in the entire Wieliczka Salt Mine: the St. Kingas Chapel! As you might remember from a few paragraphs ago, Kinga was the Hungarian princess who threw her engagement ring into a salt mine and later became the patron saint of miners. If youre already read or researched about the salt mine, you might notice that most of the cover photos for Wieliczka Salt Mine tours and travel brochures are from this chapel. I dont blame them, its absolutely stunning here! St. Kingas Chapel is located some 100 meters underground and is especially famous for its salt paintings, which are bas-relief images of the Last Supper, famous events in Polish history, and so on. Interestingly, half of the paintings here are modern (i.e. they were only created a few years ago by local artists)! If you want to tie the knot with your loved one, you can also rent out this chapel for your wedding. (And in fact, miners used the chapel for their weddings over a century ago!) The Erazm Barcz Chamber The Michalowski Chamber After a quick break in the chapel, the tour continues to the Erazm Barcz Chamber, which is actually an underground lake! The water here is very, very, very salty in fact, its about 32% saltier than the Dead Sea. Thanks to this high concentration of salt, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is a popular place for health tourism in Poland. Our guide mentioned that people come here for 2 to 3 weeks at a time to heal their respiratory ailments, such as asthma the salt mine even works with a local hotel to offer packages. From the lake, youll walk a bit to get to the next area: the Michalowski Chamber. This is a huge room so huge, in fact, that the chamber is 36 meters tall! The main feature of the room are the huge wooden pillars that hold up the chamber, which took miners over 100 years to build. It also holds the mines biggest chandelier and is sometimes used for banquets, meetings, and concerts (could you imagine the amazing acoustics)? If your head is spinning from the sheer proportions of the Michalowski Chamber, no worries the next stop is the break room! The break area Mini Break This area has a small cafe with snacks and water; a mini gift shop; benches to sit down and relax; and even bathrooms. Heck, theres even an internet connection in this area! We were given about 10 minutes to relax before we moved onto the final part of the tour. Stanislaw Staszic chamber The underground restaurant The Final Stretch The last section of the tour visits the Weimar Chamber, which features a statue of Chopin near the entrance. Thats not a coincidence, since the next room features a large pool and a short light show with Chopins music playing in the background.) After the show, youll descend a few more steps to get to the Jzef Pisudski Chamber, which features his statue, and the Jzef Pisudski Grotto, which is a small river that used to offer boat rides through the mines. The Stanisaw Staszic chamber is the final room and the place where youll finish the first part of the tour. The room itself is very impressive its 36 meters tall and was even used for hot air balloon rides and bungee jumping! Theres also a small gift shop, toilets, and elevator (if you wish to finish the tour here and go back up to civilization). Hungry? You can eat like a miner at the nearby cafeteria (Witold Budzka chamber), which features Polish and European dishes for a surprisingly good price. If youd like to continue your trip and take the optional museum tour, follow the hallway until you get to the next room. The museum tour departs every hour or so (depending on the day of the tour). We lucked out and finished our first tour around 2:52, which meant we had about 90 minutes left to explore the museum. We had to wait about 8 minutes until the English-language museum tour began to start.) If you want to end the tour here, youll have to go to the next room and wait in line for the elevator. I recommend timing your exit, since you might be waiting for a long time in the elevator queue (the elevator only holds a maximum of 9 people at a time)! The Museum Tour This section will be a lot shorter, since the museum tour focuses exclusively on objects and artifacts that relate to salt mining. The tour took about 50 minutes and was about 1.25 km (0.77 mi) in length. The guide walks you through a few rooms and explains each object, such as the workers uniforms, weapons (yes, really! They had weapons in the mines!), salt rock formations, paintings, maps, and tools. My favorite item was the horse-drawn tourist railway carriage (see above), which was used in the 19th century and had three (three!) classes first class, business, and economy.) After the museum tour, youll be led to the elevator and sent back up to the surface. If you have time, I recommend doing the museum tour besides learning new things, youll be taken to the second elevator, which has a much shorter waiting time. It goes up 4 meters per second how cool! When you arrive at the surface, youll exit through the gift shop. Voila! What Else To Do In Wieliczka While the salt mine is the star attraction, there are a few other things to do in Wieliczka if you have an extra hour or two. St. Clements Church Located near the mines entrance, this historic church dates back to the 14th century and is dedicated to St. Clement, the patron saint of miners. The interior features beautiful Baroque altars and artworks related to salt mining. Wieliczka Saltworks Museum Located in uppy Castle, this neat museum has historical artifacts and a large collection of saltshakers. Wieliczka Market Square A cute square with restaurants and shops. The creperes and pierogi spots are both excellent.) Winnica Wieliczka (Wieliczka Vineyard) Did you know Wieliczka has its own vineyard? Thats not all its also Polands most eco-friendly vineyards! If you want to learn more, you can reserve a Winnica Wieliczka Wine Tasting and Tour, which includes 4 glasses, a meat and cheese platter, and a guided tour through the vineyard click here to book! Where to Stay In Wieliczka While most visitors explore Wieliczka Salt Mine on a day trip from Krakow, staying overnight can be a great option if you want to explore the town at a more relaxed pace or enjoy health-focused activities like salt therapy. Here are some of the best places to stay in Wieliczka: Grand Sal Hotel If you want to stay as close as possible to the salt mine, the Grand Sal is an excellent choice (its located right above the Danilowicz entrance!). This 4-star hotel has elegant yet modern rooms, an outdoor terrace, and even a spa. Book via Booking.com | Agoda Turka Hotel & Spa A chic European-style hotel with a full-service spa (including a salt cave, of course!). Its an excellent choice if youre looking for a wellness retreat.Book via Booking.com | Agoda Crystal Cave Apartment Prefer an apartment instead? Crystal Cave is a spacious and modern one-bedroom apartment that can hold up to 4 guests. Best of all, its located just a short walk from the salt mine! Book via Booking.com | Agoda Welcome to the Mine of Mysteries! See the priceless monument of world material culture, entered in 1978 on the First UNESCO World Heritage List. Tourist Route TouristRoute Miners Route MinersRouteOver more than 700 years, 26 shafts were struck in Wieliczka and 9 million m of post-excitation voids were drilled

Wieliczka Salt Mine is accessible all year round. Except it's closed on January 1, Easter Sunday, November 1, and Christmas Eve (i.e. December 24-25). April through October visitors may see the Wieliczka Salt Mine between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., and November through March from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. On Easter Saturday and December 31st closing time is 3:30 pm and 4 pm respectively. All visitors need to join a guided tour. Groups should book the tour in advance by phone at (+48) 122787302 or fax at (+48) 122787333 or email at turystyka@kopalinia.pl English tours for individual visitors take place every thirty minutes between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. In June and in September they start at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., half past noon, 1:45 p.m., 3 p.m., 4 p.m., and 5 p.m. In October through May the English tours are available at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., half past noon, 1:45 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. German tours for individual visitors start in July through September at 10:45 a.m., 2:15 p.m., and 4 p.m. In October through June the German tours take place at 10:45 a.m. and 4 p.m. Nightly tours take roughly 1h30, and they are available via advance booking by phone at (+48) 122787302 Note: Temperature in the Wieliczka Salt Mine stays uniform 15 degrees Celsius, i.e. 59 Fahrenheit, round the year. Travel Salt Mine in Wieliczka is situated some ten kilometers from the center of Krakow. One may get there easily by car or taxi. Also, you can take a commuter train from the city's central Krakow Główny rail station, a bus, or one of numerous minibuses that cruise Krakow's streets. Note: Bus 304 from Krakow to Wieliczka leaves from Dworzec Główny Zachod stop by Galeria Krakowska shopping mall at Pawia street. Visitors to the salt mine should get off at Wieliczka Kopalinia stop. Yellow buses operated by Mobilis company run every 20 minutes or so. The fare is an equivalent of under one euro. Tickets to the Wieliczka Salt Mine are available at the entrance in the Szyb Damiłowska pithead building at 10 Damiłowska street. Regular ticket for Polish tour costs 59 PLN (Polish zloty) in July and August, otherwise 55 PLN. Reduced-rate ticket for Polish tour (e.g. schoolchildren) costs 43 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 39 PLN. Family ticket for Polish tour (2 adults plus 2 minors) costs 161 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 149 PLN. Regular ticket for a guided tour in a foreign language costs 89 PLN (Polish zloty) in July and August, otherwise 84 PLN. Reduced-rate ticket for a guided tour in a foreign language costs 69 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 64 PLN. Family ticket for English or German tour (2 adults plus 2 minors) costs 247 zlotys in July and August, otherwise 232 PLN. Tours of the Wieliczka Salt Minefor the disabled. The handicapped in wheelchairs can tour the most popular parts of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, in that number two of its subterranean lakes, underground churches of St. Kunegundes and of the Cross, the Dwarfs Cave, etc. It's advisable to arrange the visit in advance through a phone call up at (+48) 122787302 or fax at (+48) 122787333. Other UNESCO World Heritage sites in Krakow and the Malopolska Province Krakow's Old Town historic district Auschwitz concentration camp The Calvary sanctuary of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska Malopolska's wooden churches Page 2 The 12th edition, updated. 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We'll be glad to answer all questions regarding our privacy policy and practice via Questions Answered page at Your personal information. The only personal information we collect are voluntarily provided names and email addresses of the Internet surfers who seek a reply from us, notably an answer to a query put through the above mentioned web page. We dont send any advertisements or commercial messages or promotional materials. We dont compile any mailing lists. And we dont allow voluntarily access to such data to any third party, including other companies and individuals. Your messages We may retain messages sent via email and other means. For one thing, we store communications to process your inquiries and answer your requests. For another, we may use them to improve our service. Server logs Our server records automatically information sent from a browser when anybody visits a web page, for instance IP address, type of the browser, browser language, and the date and time of the visit. We use the data solely for statistical analysis. Cookies We dont employ cookies ourselves but our partners and advertisers as well as services providers may do it. External Links Our privacy policy covers the Krakow Info website and services it provides. Links on our various web pages, in other documents available online, and in our email messages may lead to other sites that adhere to their own privacy policies. Possible revisions of our privacy policy We dont ponder any significant revisions now but the privacy policy of Krakow Info may change with time. All changes will be posted on this page. Explore the underground splendour of Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland that transports you to a mystifying world of salt beneath the Earths surface. Situated near the city of Krakow in southern Poland, the Wieliczka Salt Mine is a bewildering labyrinth with infinite corridors, tunnels, walkways and chambers. It is a huge empire with 2500 chambers, nine levels of mining and galleries that run for 245 kilometres till a depth of 327 metres. It is even home to the largest underground St. Kinga's chapel. Our Wieliczka Salt Mine tours will edify your knowledge about the mining techniques, tools, extraction and transportation of salt as it take you inside the mine and Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration camp. You can see 300-year old statues made of salt by the miners at the St. Anthony, Janowice, and Holy Cross Chapels. This 700-year old salt mine had continuously been in operation from the 13th century to the 20th century and is now a world-renowned tourist attraction. The famous St. Kingas Chapel is sure to enthral you with its captivating atmosphere, sculptures of illustrious people like Pope John Paul II and a model of Leonardo da Vincis Last Supper made of salt. The rich history and unique geology of Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland together make it a UNESCO Natural Heritage Site and the National Historic Landmark of Poland. It is listed in UNESCO World Heritage Site. The history of Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland dates back to as early as the 13th century when the first excavation was made. By then, the mine was proudly called Magnun Sal the Great Sal as it was the largest source of salt in Poland. Today, the mine is one of the oldest salt mining sites in the world and a popular tourist attraction that has seen incredible developments in the mining techniques over the past 700 years.PrehistoryBrine from salt water springs was boiled in clay pots to extract pure salt during Neolithic times. Old saltworking tools discovered in Barycz village in Central Europe near Wieliczka belong to the prehistoric period. The salt extracted was used as a preservative for meat and it later became a means of payment in trade to those who did not own this valuable substance. This secret of salt production by evaporation was passed on to the next generations in the following centuries.11th To 13th CenturyDuring the 11th and 12th centuries, when salt water springs began to disappear, the search for brine started. Wells were constructed and saline water was brought to the surface after which it was boiled in pans to get pure evaporated salt. In the 13th century, lumps of rock salt were found for the first time while digging wells which instigated the idea of obtaining salt by mining. The first mining was done in the second half of the 13th century by local specialists with technical knowledge from Western Europe. 14th To 15th CenturyDuring this period, the revenue from salt extraction played a crucial part in the wealth of the nations treasury. Casimir III, who was the Polish king then, founded the Krakow Academy and Saltworks Statue from the high profits of salt mining. Around 350 people worked in Wieliczka Salt Mine Poland and the annual production of salt was 7000-8000 tonnes then. However, mining was still seasonal and was done only when agricultural works were not carried out. Visitors were allowed to enter the mine and Nicolaus Copernicus was the first tourist in 1493.16th To 18th CenturyThe period from the 16th to 18th centuries marked a dynamic development in the mining of rock salt as it was put up in the underground mine while the existing chambers and chapels were renovated. The crystallisation is associated with brine leaks and hence depending on the location of the leak, it can take a variety of forms. You can see spongy growths of salt called salt cauliflowers, narrow dripstone tubes known as salt pasta and the less common salt stains and stalagmites.Essential Informatio Location: Danilowicz 10, 32-020 Wieliczka, PolandTimings: 8:30 AM 5:30 PM on all days of the weekBest Time To Visit : The best time to visit Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland is during the spring season from March to May or during the autumn months of September to November as the weather is pleasant and favorable for exploring the mine. Since the mine gets colder during winter, it is better to visit the mine during summer, spring or autumn.How To Reach : By Train: Board a train at Krakow Główny Station and a light at Wieliczka Rynek Kopalinia station from where the mine is just 500 metres away. By Bus: Take the bus on line 304 from Dworzec Gwny Zachod stop to Wieliczka Kopalinia Sól stop from where you can walk to the mine entrance in a few minutes.Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland is the oldest mine of its kind in Europe and