

TOP 10 ATTRACTIONS



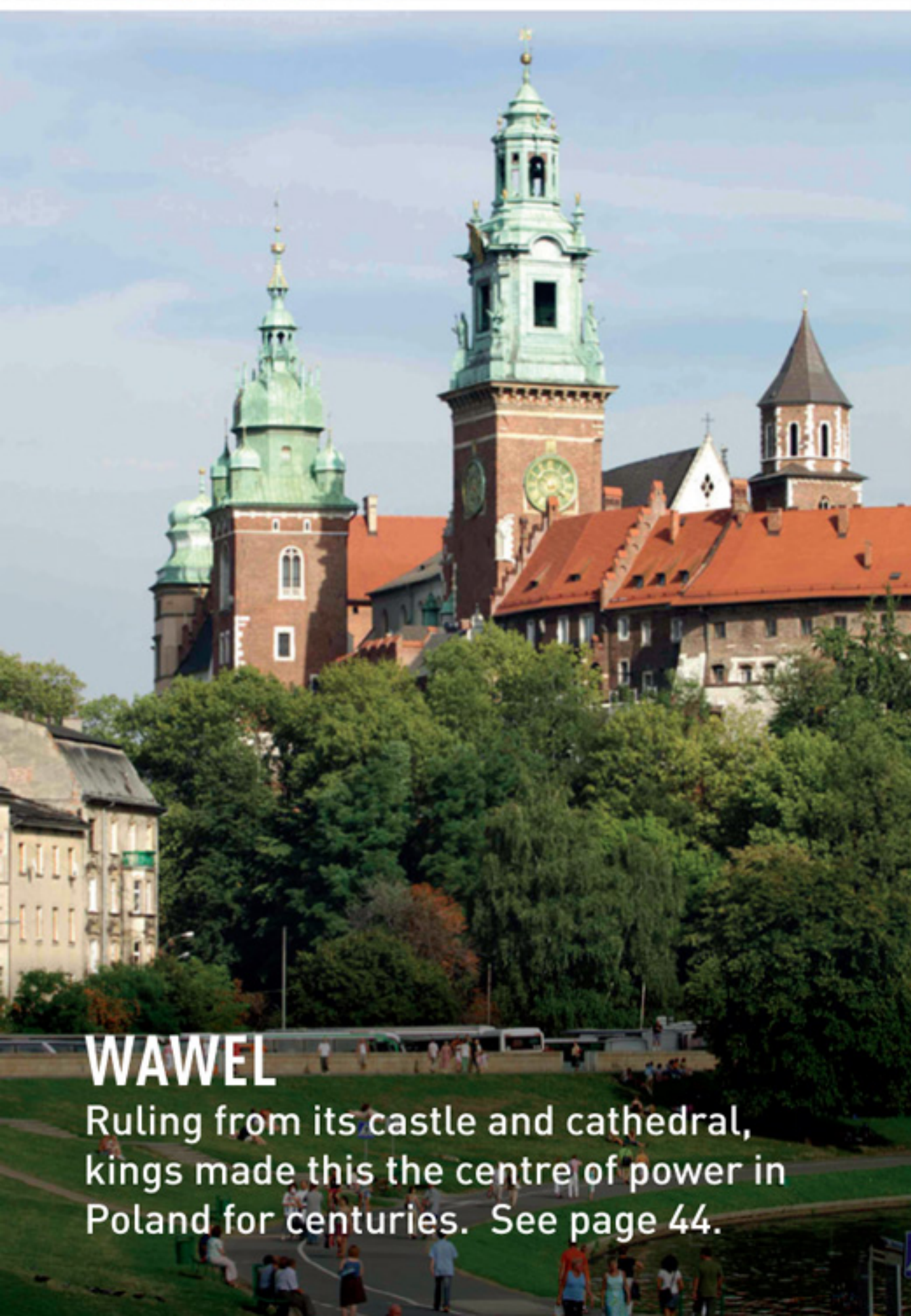
RYNEK GŁÓWNY

The medieval market square is Kraków's lively heart. See page 27.



NATIONAL MUSEUM

Where the best in Polish fine art, decorative arts and arms and armour can be seen. See page 69.



WAWEL

Ruling from its castle and cathedral, kings made this the centre of power in Poland for centuries. See page 44.



THE PLANTY

A restful ring of parkland surrounding the busy Old Town. See page 35.



ST MARY'S BASILICA

This medieval church is impressive inside and out. See page 28.



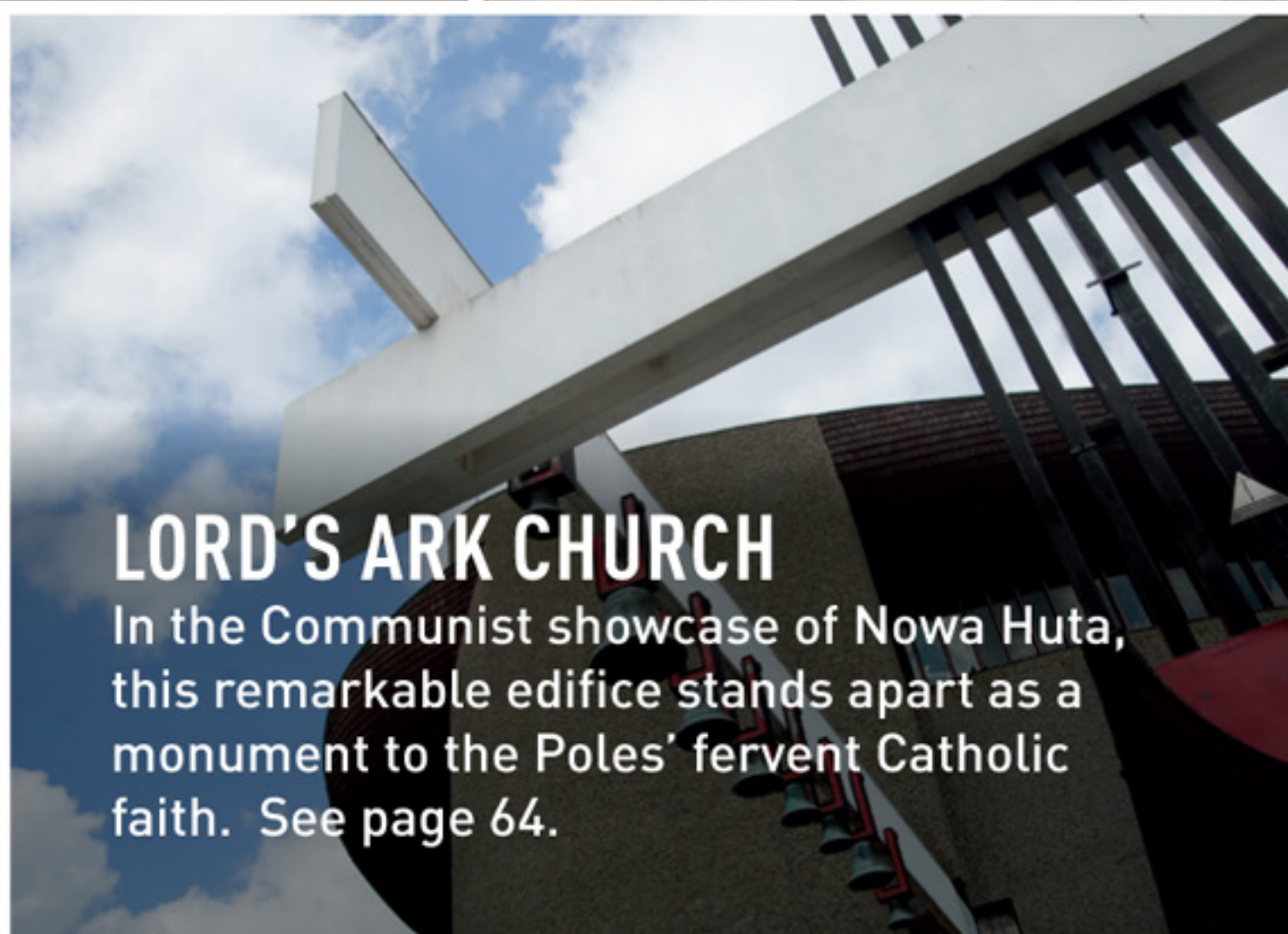
KAZIMIERZ

This cutting-edge district also offers a wealth of Jewish heritage. See page 50.



MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MOCAK)

See the best of Polish and international contemporary art in this stylish modern cultural centre. See page 60.



LORD'S ARK CHURCH

In the Communist showcase of Nowa Huta, this remarkable edifice stands apart as a monument to the Poles' fervent Catholic faith. See page 64.



AUSCHWITZ

Confront the face of evil at its two death camps. See page 72.



TARNÓW

A perfectly preserved Galician gem. See page 75.

A PERFECT DAY



9.00am

Breakfast

Start the day with breakfast at one of the numerous cafés (see page 101) in Rynek Główny. Look out for the carved animals – lizards, eagles, rams, even a rhinoceros – that give the merchant houses their names. The hourly Hejnał bugle call from the highest tower of St Mary's Basilica is your signal to get up and go.

10.00am

Royal Route

Walk north up ul. Floriańska to the gate through which the kings of Poland entered the city to be crowned at Wawel. Leave behind the medieval Barbican and ul. św. Jana, to wander south through the leafy Planty.



11.00am

Back to college

At Kościół św. Anny, cut back into the city streets. At 11am in the courtyard of Collegium Maius, the ancient clock chimes the university tune (also 9am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm).

11.30am

St Mary's Basilica

Back across the Rynek, peek inside the cathedral, to see the magnificent 15th-century altar carved by the 'Master of Nuremberg' Wit Stwosz.

Noon

Cloth Hall

Enjoy retail relief at the Sukiennice, otherwise known as the Cloth Hall, Kraków's main trading place since medieval times. Today it is as good a place as any to find amber jewellery, leather goods and traditional embroidery.

IN KRAKÓW



2.00pm

Apostle alley

Crossing the Rynek past the tiny, ancient St Adalbert's church, rejoin the Royal Route on ul. Grodzka. At the line of apostles flanking the church of SS Peter and Paul, detour into ul. Kanonicza, Kraków's oldest and most beautifully preserved street.

1.00pm

Lunch

The streets to the west of Rynek Główny are crammed with a fantastic array of eateries to suit all pockets. Locals throng to Chimera Salad Bar (see page 107), located in a cheerful cellar off ul. św. Anny.

3.00pm

Wawel's glory

It would take all day to see all the treasures on show at the castle and cathedral, but don't forget to climb the cathedral tower to touch the clapper of the huge 16th-century Zygmunt Bell – your wish will come true, so the story goes. Say goodbye to Wawel at the fire-breathing dragon statue which guards his cave on the riverbank.

10.30pm

Cool nightlife

If the food and music has revived you, make for Plac Nowy, centre of Kazimierz nightlife, begin barhopping with a drink at Alchemia on the corner of ul. Estery, and continue for as long as your energy and wallet allow.

7.00pm

Wild violins

Stroll down to ul. Szeroka, once the centre of Jewish Kazimierz. Book a table at Klezmer Hois (see page 111) or one of the other traditional restaurants around the square for an evening of Jewish food and lively klezmer music.

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INTRODUCTION

Kraków is considerably more than just cabbages and kings. Poland's magnificent cultural capital and ancient seat of royalty has been mesmerising visitors since the founding of the bishopric of Kraków on Wawel Hill in AD 1000. Located in the deep south of Poland, an hour or so north of the spectacular Tatra Mountains and just 100km (62 miles) from the Slovakian border, Kraków has a perfectly preserved Unesco-listed Old Town, an extraordinary Jewish heritage, bars and clubs in abundance and arguably the best selection of museums and galleries in the country. With attractions like these, it's not

hard to see why the city plays host to almost 10 million visitors a year.

KrakowCard

While visiting Kraków is hardly expensive, the KrakowCard (www.krakowcard.com) is still a good deal. Valid for two days (100zł) or three (120zł), it gives free access to museums as well as unlimited travel on public transport. It's available online at www.krakowcard.com and can be collected at the DiscoverCracow tourist information points at ul. Św. Jana 2, ul. Rynek Główny 30, ul. Św. Józefa 7, pl. Szczepański 8 and at the airport.

OLD TOWN TREASURES

Poland's second city, with just over 760,000 inhabitants, Kraków is one of the main urban areas in the Małopolska (Little Poland) region. At its centre is the only old town in a major Polish city to have escaped complete destruction during World War II. The Old Town's vast market square (Rynek Główny) has a dazzling array of glorious buildings. The Renaissance-style Cloth

Hall takes pride of place at the centre. The surrounding ensemble of buildings includes the twin-towered St Mary's Basilica, built during the 14th–16th centuries.

Leading away from the market square is a beguiling latticework of narrow streets. There are excellent museums and art galleries here; among them, the National Museum, a gallery of fine art with a collection that includes a

rare painting by Leonardo da Vinci, *Lady with an Ermine*. With deep Catholic traditions, Kraków is the city whose archbishop went on to become Pope John Paul II. The house in which he lived as a young bishop is now the city's Archdiocesan Museum, located along ul. Kanonicza, the Old Town's only street to have been perfectly preserved as it was hundreds of years ago. Encircling the historic centre is the Planty, a delightful wooded park that marks the former location of the medieval city walls.

The Old Town is by no means the only reason to visit Kraków. Wawel, where the country's kings and queens were once crowned and now lie in state in the crypt of the cathedral, is a captivating primer in Polish history. The complex of buildings also includes medieval defensive walls and towers, the royal castle, treasury and armoury.

The nearby district of Kazimierz throws the horrors of World War II into sharp relief. A Jewish community that had thrived for



Facades on Kanonicza Street