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**TEORIA I METODYKA REKREACJI  
RUCHOWEJ W ŚWIETLE AKTUALNYCH  
BADAŃ.**

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**RECREATIONAL AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF  
JURA KRAKOWSKO-CZĘSTOCHOWSKA.**

**WALORY TURYSTYCZNO REKREACYJNE JURY  
KRAKOWSKO – CZĘSTOCHOWSKIEJ.**

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## Summary

Picturesque hills with ruins of the once mighty castles, charming valleys, ravines, rocks and caves – these are all the attractions waiting for visitors coming to the upland area between Cracow and Częstochowa, commonly referred to as Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska. The most precious part of Jura is protected by the framework of its National Park, home to white rocks, hills covered with beautiful beech forests, topped with ruins of the Eagles' Nests, once guarding the border of the Crown.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the beauty of Krakowsko- Częstochowska Highland, to encourage its individual exploration, and outline wonderful old architecture, notable towns and other interesting sights. For hiking, climbing or horse riding enthusiast it is a perfect spot for resting and relaxing.

This publication also highlights general information regarding history and geography of the region, as well as its breathtaking nature, represented by the Ojcowski National Park and numerous landscape parks. Tourist appeal of the highland, castles, Jasna Góra sanctuary and charming caves have all been underscored. Significant amount of the paper is also devoted to chosen forms of recreation that may be taken advantage of by tourists.

The publication draws on literature which aims at emphasizing tourist attraction of Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska, guides describing the area of upland, source literature, magazines, as well as other information retrieved from the Internet.

## Introduction

If one wanted to find the reasons behind the creation of the Eagles' Nests, which is a system of castles and watchtowers, one would have to go back in history to the time of national disintegration. From the moment Boleslaw Krzywousty established his will, Silesia would gradually succumb to the influence of the Luxembourgs, often unfavorable towards its north - eastern neighbors. The policy of the Silesian princes was related to the need to establish a new transport route from Cracow to Wielkopolska. These conditions influenced the decision of the past rulers, in particular, Kazimierz the Great, to expand the existing castles and construct over 30 new ones, which would guard the borders of the state and ensure security for travelers. (Partyka 2004)

Until it gained its independence, Jura had been subject to many cultural influences arising from its location on the border between Silesia and

Małopolska. For centuries conflicting interests of the Crown, which depended on the Czech Republic and Silesia, would clash here, and later invaders would be engaged in practices designed to execute the destruction of the Polish territories of today's Jura. During the Second World War, westernmost places of Jura were incorporated into the Reich. The Germans who settled there had a significant influence on folk culture. One can also not forget about the extermination of Jewish community, which significantly disturbed the demographic and economic structure of Poland. (Zinkow 1983)

Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska is still under strong influences of Silesia and Małopolska; however, it is essentially conditioned by the direction of migration. Its specific location in the vicinity of large cities, attractive landscape and excellent recreational areas, are those qualities that played a decisive role in shaping its modern cultural layer. Many young people go away to look for work in Silesia or Cracow, and bring back with them elements of new culture, traditions, customs, and familiar places when they return. Increasingly common is the case of settlers coming from other regions with their own cultural baggage, and they either assimilate with the local culture or bring their native culture's elements to it. A peculiar mixture of tradition arises, one that is preserved by indigenous people but enriched with new elements borrowed from cultures of other regions. A notable example of the specificity of bordering countries is the lack of highly developed and cultivated elements of folklore. Current trend aimed at unification of behaviors continues to blur those regional cultural differences.

Today's picturesque ruins of the "eagle nests", as they are commonly known, due to the fact that they are hardly accessible, account for one of the symbols of Jura. Gradually, these castles are being rebuilt and made available to the public. Up until now, only one of the conventional Jura castles has preserved in its entirety. The Castle in Pieskowa Rock is known throughout the country and because of its unique picturesque silhouette is called the "pearl of Renaissance". (Kołodziejewski 1994)

In conclusion, Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska is one of the most beautiful tourist destinations in Poland. It owes its unrivaled charm to landscapes, which are further embellished by old monuments. The most characteristic of these are castles. Their location on inaccessible peaks resemble the location of the Eagles' Nests. Regrettably, only the ruins have preserved.

Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland is an area extending between the Silesian Upland in the west and the Nidziańska Basin in the east. Jura is divided into four smaller units otherwise known as mesoregions: Częstochowa Upland, Olkuska Upland, Krzeszowicki Trench, Tenczyński Hornbeam.

Częstochowa Upland extends between the valley of River Warta from Częstochowa to Mstów in the north and the so-called Wolbromska Gate and the valley of White Przemsza in the south, covering an area of about 1300 kilometers<sup>2</sup>. To the west it towers above the Upper Warta Reduction, which descends down to several dozen meters with uneven outline, and neighbors in the east with the Włoszczowska Basin and the Lelowski Bar. (Kondracki 2001)

Olkuska Upland is a compact plate block composed of upper Jurassic limestones bounded to the Krzeszowicki Trench in the south and dissected by

valleys. It neighbors with Miechowska Upland in the east, Częstochowska Upland in the north with a borderline that is marked by the valley of White Przemsza and the Wolbromska Gate, and Silesian Upland in the west. The Krzeszowicki Trench is located between Trzebinia and Cracow. Stretching over 30 kilometers, it is several kilometers wide and covers an area of 225 kilometers<sup>2</sup>. It separates Olkuska Upland in the north from the Tenczyński Hornbeam in the south.

The Tenczyński Hornbeam is a tectonic edge, with the highest elevation (415 meters above sea level) and is topped with the Tenczyn Castle. (Kraków i Jura Krakowsko – Częstochowska - Przewodnik Kieszonkowy 2006)

The Tenczyński Ridge is a forested range of hills from the valleys of Rudawa at the foot of Cracow to Chechła at the foot of Chrzanów.

### **Recreational attractions of Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska**

Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska is an ideal place for cycling; to make the outing even more attractive one may take a sleeping bag and a tent, or rent a house to stay for the night. Cycling trips are not expensive, and during summer time one may sleep rough, enjoying the view of open sky overshadowed by ruins of the castle. Numerous bike trails, narrow paths among trees and rocks, steep slopes going downhill, and myriad tourist attractions are all waiting here for cyclist. One of the longest bicycle trails in Poland is the Eagles' Nests Cycle Trail. Extending to about 190 kilometers, it connects Czestochowa with Cracow. It is a red trail which runs in the vicinity of many ruins of castles and other beautiful and picturesque corners of Jura.

Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska is an extremely attractive area for hiking tourism. Along the borderline of castles and watchtowers run numerous hiking trails. The most attractive, among other others, is the Eagles' Nests Trail, the Jurassic Strongholds Trail, and the Circular Trail around Cracow. There are also many other trails that allow people to enjoy attractive Jurassic landscapes such as the Sąspowska Valley Trail (8 km), the Falcon Mountains Trail (7 km), the Trail of Łokietek (3 km), and the Tenczyński Trail (4 km). Hiking trips do not require any special preparation or equipment and may be realized by everybody. The Eagles' Nests Trail measures 156 kilometers, and is the oldest of all trails. It takes its roots from the Wawel Hill and continues until it reaches Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. The Jurassic Strongholds Trail - tourists wandering along this trail may visit small watchtowers and castles, the Ojcowski National Park, landscape parks, nature reserves and caves. The trail runs from Mstów to Rudawa and is 152 kilometers long. ( Marzec et al. 1986)

Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland is a fantastic area for horseback riding. More and more horse stables and equestrian centers are being built. Tourists will also enjoy rides in a chaise or in a cart. Jura has a clearly defined 150-kilometer horse trail, which runs from Nielepie near Cracow to Czestochowa. (M., A. Kowalczyk 2006)

Due to favorable rocky landscape rock climbing attracts many enthusiasts of this sport to the area. Prevailing conditions have contributed to the establishment

of local climbing schools in Cracow, Podlesia, Rzędkowice and Ogrodzieniec. Favorable conditions for this sports will also be found in the Kobylanska Valley, Rzędkowickie Rocks and Będkowska Valley.

The area of Jura is characterized by water deficit; nevertheless, one will still find some water containers that are known all over the country. Sailing can be taken up in Poraj, Przeczyce, Pogoria and Chechło. (Pleszyniak 2008)

Jura is a suitable destination for thrill-seeking tourists. Paragliding is possible in several places such as Brzezinka, Klucze, Trzebinia, Żarki and Olsztyn. For beginners trainings are conducted by specialized paragliding schools.

### **Chosen tourist attractions of Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska**

The Łokietek Cave, located in the Ojcowski National Park, is one of the most popular caves in Poland. It is linked to the legend according to which it was where Władysław Łokietek was hiding from his pursuer, Czech king Waclaw II. The future Polish king was saved by a spider, which covered the entrance to the cave with its web, and that put a stop to the chase. The Łokietek Cave consists of three chambers: Łokietek's Bedroom, Kitchen and the Knights' hall. The temperature inside the cave that prevails throughout the year is around 7 – 8°C. It is available to the general public exclusively with a guide. ( Partyka 1988)

The Bat Cave, the largest caves in the Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska, has adopted the name due to the fact that there used to be very numerous colonies of bats in this area. It is located in the upper Błędowska Valley. Within the cave, traces of a camp put up by cave bear hunters have been found. 4000 cave bear fangs that have been spotted are testimony to the cave being occupied by hunters, who left behind fragments of pottery vessels, stone tools and animal remains of, among others, the mammoth, the cave hyena, and the cave lion. (Zinkow 1999)

The Mammoth Cave is located in the Kluczwody Valley. As the name implies remains of the mammoth and other animals cave have been found there. The cave consists of one chamber and two corridors. It is a spot for advanced rock climbing.

The Wierzchowska Hill Cave, which will only be available to tourists accompanied by a guide, is located near Cracow. It is inhabited by various species of bats and spiders. Dripstone in the cave was once very rich, but it is has been destroyed by the exploitation of calcite for glassworks and tourist industry. The bottom of corridors and rooms is filled with silt forming a real mine of information about the past ages. Exhibits found in the cave will also speak volumes about the past. ( Glinka et al. 2001)

The Dark Cave is made available to tourists, who hold candles in their hands while sightseeing. It is located in the Ojcowski National Park, in the picturesque Prądnik Valley. It is 230 meters long, and boasts opening up to 410 meters above sea level. (Kowalski 1951)

The cave begins with a huge pre-chamber, the largest of all known throughout Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland. Its length is 80 meters, its width exceeds 20 meters in the widest places, and its height goes up to 10 meters. It changes further into a narrowing corridor. The bottom of the cave is lined with thick slit.

In the middle of the hall one will see huge stalagmites reaching up to a meter high. The main chamber tapers in depth and turns at a right angle. At its end, the chamber tapers significantly and turns into a long narrow, hardly accessible final corridor. From here on it turns into a tunnel parallel to the chamber's axis, which creates a series of domed vortex boilers.

The Dragon's Cave is located right at the foot of the seat of the Polish kings – the Wawel Castle. There is a legend associated with this cave according to which the Wawel Dragon, whose statue can be seen at the cave's exit, resided in its corridors. Due to the popularity of the legend it is one of the most famous caves in Poland. Its corridor system is 276 meters long, 50 meters of which are designated for tourist exploration. The corridors are available to persistent cavers and will take them deep into the castle hill. The caves can be seen exclusively with a guide.

The Ojcowski National Park, whose origins date back to 14 January 1956, is the only national park that occurs within Jura Krakowsko- Częstochowska. Covering an area of 2146 hectares it is the smallest of all the 23 national parks in Poland. Its natural and cultural features make it an interesting spot . It is comprises several valleys including the Pradnik and the Sąspowska Valley, rich in all kinds of rock formations like, e.g., as the Hercules' Club and the Cracow Gate. (Pucek 2007)

In Ojcowski National Park one will also have the chance to visit the museum of Ojcowski National Park, the Kazimierz Castle, the Museum of Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Association (PTTK), the Chapel on Water, the Mill and the Boronia Sawmill, the Fortified Settlement, the Pieskowa Rock and a former spa park.

The idea of creating landscape parks within Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland was inspired in 1948 by Zygmunt Novak, who went on to become a professor at the Technical University of Cracow. His intention was to preserve the natural and cultural resources of Jura, which would be used in a commonsensical way to meet social, recreational and tourist needs of various communities. (Lijewski et al. 2002)

Landscape parks are composed of seven parks, which, together with their surrounding area and the Ojcowski National Park, rank as the largest protected area in Poland.

The Eagles' Nests Landscape Park is located in Małopolska and Silesia Province, and extends from the Warta at the foot of Mstów as far as Rabsztyn - Trzyciąż in the south, covering an area of 59 717 hectares. The Eagles' Nests Landscape Park comprises most of the ruins of medieval castles and fortresses of the so-called Eagles' Nests. It protects the Jurassic landscape of diverse vegetation and abundant animal world and the richness of karst forms of rocky island mountains, deep valleys and caves.

The Cracow Valleys Landscape Park is located in the greater part of Małopolska Province and in a smaller part of Silesia Province. It covers an area of Olkuska Upland. The Landscape of the Park are the elements of a vast plateau with numerous island mountains, valleys and karst ravines. The most popular valleys of the park are: Kluczwody, Bolechowicka, Będkowska, Kobylanska,

Raławski, Szklarki, Eliaszkówki. There are six nature reserves in the area: "Kluczowy Valley", "Bolechowski Gorge", "Greenhouse Valley", "Raławski Valley", "Tough Mountain" and "Eliaszkówka Valley".

The Tenczyński Landscape Park is situated in Malopolska Province, and covers an area of 12 582 hectares. In this park one may see ruins of castles Lipowiec and Tenczyn, a historic church and several palace complexes and palaces. There are 5 nature reserves in the area: "Kmita's Rock", "Mnikowska Valley", "Lipowiec", "Bukowice" and "Cold Ditch".

The Rudniański Landscape Park is located in the southern part of the Tenczyński Hornbeam, in Malopolska Province, and covers an area is 5560 hectares. It comprises the western part of the Cracow Gate, the Kajasówka Hill and the Rudno Stream Valley. The park boasts two nature reserves: "Rudno Stream Valley" and "Kajasówka". ( Pucek 2007)

Landscape Park "Stawki", located in Silesia Province, and covering an area of 1745 hectares, is home to damp meadows and ash and elm forests, the mainstay of firs, which are natural habitats of rare plants and animals. The most interesting communities, especially that of mountain plants, are protected by the Great Forest Reserve. And these are the chervil (*Anthriscus nitida*) and the claspleaf twistedstalk (*Streptopus amplexifolius*). ( Wieczorek 2006)

The Bielańsko- Tyniecki Landscape Park, which covers an area of 5067 hectares, is situated in Malopolska Province. Its area boasts natural monuments as well as 4 nature reserves: Maiden Rock, Bielańska Rocks, Przegorzalskie Rocks and Skołczanka.

The Dłubniański Landscape Park whose name derives from River Dłubin running across the region, covers an area of 10956.6 hectares. Situated in Malopolska Province, it is home to many monuments, predominantly churches and manor and park complexes. ( Pleszyniak 2008)

The Castle in Pieskowa Rock - a fortified brick wall castle located on the vertical rock slopes, was founded in the fourteenth century. It was built by King Kazimierz the Great. In the sixteenth century it was transformed into a Renaissance manor house, which was strengthened by two bastions. In 1655 and 1702 the castle was destroyed by the Swedes. After the Swedish invasion the manor house was ruled by the Wielkopolscy, who rebuilt the castle, and deprived it of all Renaissance features. Its subsequent owners renovated the castle after consecutive fires and the January uprising. (Raciborska 2006)

The castle is currently open to tourists, who are free to explore its museum and library. Access to the castle is only available from the eastern side, which is where one can also admire gates, turrets, a clock tower with a Baroque helmet and a well.

The castle in Ogrodzieniec, situated in the vicinity of town Ogrodzieniec, in Krakowsko-Częstochowska Upland, boasts ruins of one of the Polish castles. Cubic capacity of this famous fortified castle still arouses visitors' admiration. Its history dates back to the early fourteenth century, when it belonged to the knightly family Sulimczyk called Ogrodzienieccy. 200 years later it went into the hands of the Boners, who transformed the Gothic fortress into a Renaissance mansion. Filled with beautiful tapestries, Ogrodzieniec has even been compared

to the Wawel Castle. In 1655 it was destroyed by the Swedes, and during another Swedish invasion in 1702 all the strongholds were thoroughly looted and burnt down. (Fronczak 2005)

The Wawel Castle in Cracow, admired both by its residents and visitors, has invariably attracted people with its charm and history. The former seat of the dukes and kings, it bears testimony to the past glory of the state.

The Royal Castle is located on a limestone hill of the Wawel Hill. It used to be the manor house of the Piasts, Jagiellons and Wasas. The castle buildings surround a wonderful four-legged courtyard. The two lower floors are typical Renaissance cloisters with columns topped with decorative heads of various kinds. Conspicuous is the second floor with atypical significant height. The castle entrance is through a hallway, above its doorway a Latin inscription preaches: "When God is with us, who will dare to be against us?" (Nowiński et al. 2004)

The contemporary Wawel Castle, despite many tribulations in Polish history, is a great historical and artistic monument. Its architecture, craftsmanship of sculptured stone portals and window frames and architectural details never fail to amaze. Nowadays, castle halls host the State Art Collection, which is shown in four exhibitions.

The first of the four exhibitions are the Royal Chambers. Located on the second floor, they account for the greatest tourist attractions of the Wawel Castle. In these chambers visitors may appreciate paintings of the old masters. Noteworthy are also antique pieces of furniture, clocks, porcelain, textiles and handicraft products. The second of the four exhibitions is the Crown Treasury and Armory – occupying the ground-floor of the castle. The Treasury boasts historical artifacts left behind by the kings (a coronation sword, a ceremonial sword for appointing knights, a chalice), whilst the Armory, as indicated by its name, displays some fine items of weapon and firearms. The third exhibition, located on the first floor, comprises a collection of the Oriental Art, including oriental rugs, porcelain, guns, Turkish and Persian tents, and horse saddles. The fourth is the Lost Wawel exhibition - occupying the ground floor and the basement of the past royal kitchens. Part of the exhibition is the Virgin Mary's Rotunda; it also consist of fragments of the defense walls and numerous architectural details of the old stonework. Due to the interesting nature of exhibits and attractions, they have been divided into thematic sections, each having its separate entrance fee. Such division allows for better organization more insightful exploration.

The Castle in Ojców was raised in the Prądnik Valley by Kazimierz the Great, who, to honor his father's memory, called it "Ociec", and the name of the village follows from it as well. It was the seat of the royal county townships. The castle was destroyed by the Swedish troops. (Glinka et al. 2001)

What preserved to the present day is the entrance gate and an octagonal tower. In the courtyard tourists will see the remains of the castle chapel's walls and a well which draws level with River Prądnik. The castle is on the premises of the Ojcowski National Park and is made available to the public.

The Rabsztyn Castle was rebuilt and turned into a Renaissance mansion in the seventeenth century but was swept off the ground during the Swedish invasion and was never reconstructed (Pucek 2007)



The ruins of the castle can be reached from the north by means of a drawbridge that leads to the entrance gate. To the east one will see the remnants of walls once sectioning off the castle chambers.

The Castle in Olsztyn, whose construction was initiated by Kazimierz the Great, boasts a stronghold that is so integrated into the site that it is difficult to distinguish where the rock ends and the wall begins. It is one of the most important strongholds on the border of Silesia and Małopolska. (Glinka et al. 2001)

Like other strongholds in Jura it fell into ruin in the aftermath of the Swedish invasion. The castle consisted of three parts separated by walls. The first part was the upper castle with its round tower and chapel, the second part was the medium castle, the third – the lower castle. Fragments of smithy have been found nearby the Lower Castle; here was once a residential building and an entrance gate. ([www.zamekolsztyn.pl](http://www.zamekolsztyn.pl))

The castle is a place often frequented by tourists. Laser and fireworks shows with live rock bands are held here every year in September.

The Bobolice and the Mirow Castle - two twin castles, 1.5 kilometers away from each other, were once connected by means of an underground passage. The Bobolice Castle consisted of a residential part, castle boroughs with a defense tower, accessible by a drawbridge. The Mirow Castle was a royal outpost under Kazimierz the Great and it consisted of the upper and the lower castle. It was once surrounded by a defensive wall with an entrance gate that was led to by a drawbridge. Both castles were destroyed by the Swedes during their invasion.

Jasna Góra – the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a special place for Catholics, who throng in from all the corners in the world. It is estimated that about 5 million pilgrims visit the Sanctuary annually. The main attraction of Jasna Góra is the Pauline Monastery with a miraculous painting of Black Madonna. Monastery buildings with a knights' hall, a library, a basilica church, a museum with an exhibition of the beginnings of Jasna Góra, an arsenal, bastion frames with gates and one of the richest church treasuries in Poland will also be found on the premises. (Wieczorek 2006)

## **Conclusions**

Varied lay of the land and the diversity of flora and fauna make Jura Krakowsko-Częstochowska one of the most beautiful corners of our country. From a tourist point of view, its most attractive part is the Ojcowski National Park. Jura is a land of rocky hills, caves, gorges, unique in terms of sightseeing, nature and history. Jurassic landscape is a combination of mountain elements (mountains, valleys, waterfalls, rivers source) and elements of lowland (vast panoramas, wetlands).

Places renowned in Poland have been described in this publication, like the Renaissance castle in Pieskowa Rock and Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. Other noteworthy spots of the region include ruins of castles, numerous caves and nature reserves. The paper also mentions cycling routes as well as quotes practical information on how to get to Jura. Jura's charm encourages visitors to

hiking trips and excursions, because it is only the direct contact with this particularly beautiful corner of Poland that gives people real satisfaction. A land of ancient castles, enchanted rocks, mysterious caves and picturesque landscape is surely unforgettable to those who have decided to explore it.

Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland is little known an area, its popularity pales in comparison to that of the land of Masuria, Podhale or the coast. The upland is a region that will be remembered for its incredible powers with which it influences visitors' imagination. And these are immense - exploring Jura's nature one is quick to perceive its wealth, hear the sound of silence and get accustomed to the local traditions. Within easy reach is also a sense of distant prehistory, embedded in the monuments of defensive architecture. The best way to broaden horizons for tourists is its promotion, among others through local press, television, radio, and brochures outlining outdoor events which take place in the region of Jura.

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ŹRÓDŁA INTERNETOWE:

[www.zamekolsztyn.pl](http://www.zamekolsztyn.pl)