Life SCIENCE OPEN SPACE

26–27 NOVEMBER 2026

KRAKÓW, POLAND

KRAKÓW

THE CITY OF LIFE SCIENCE

A simple guide to the city for guests of **Life Science Open Space 2026**.



WELCOME

Make time for Kraków.

At Life Science Open Space, some of the best ideas begin with a conversation. We hope your time in Kraków inspires a few discoveries beyond the conference as well. Wander through the historic centre, find a quiet courtyard, explore a museum or follow the Vistula after a day of meetings. Kraków is known for its royal heritage, but it is equally a city of universities, research, creativity and everyday neighbourhood life. This guide brings together places worth your time, with straightforward suggestions for exploring them.

THE LSOS 2026 VENUE

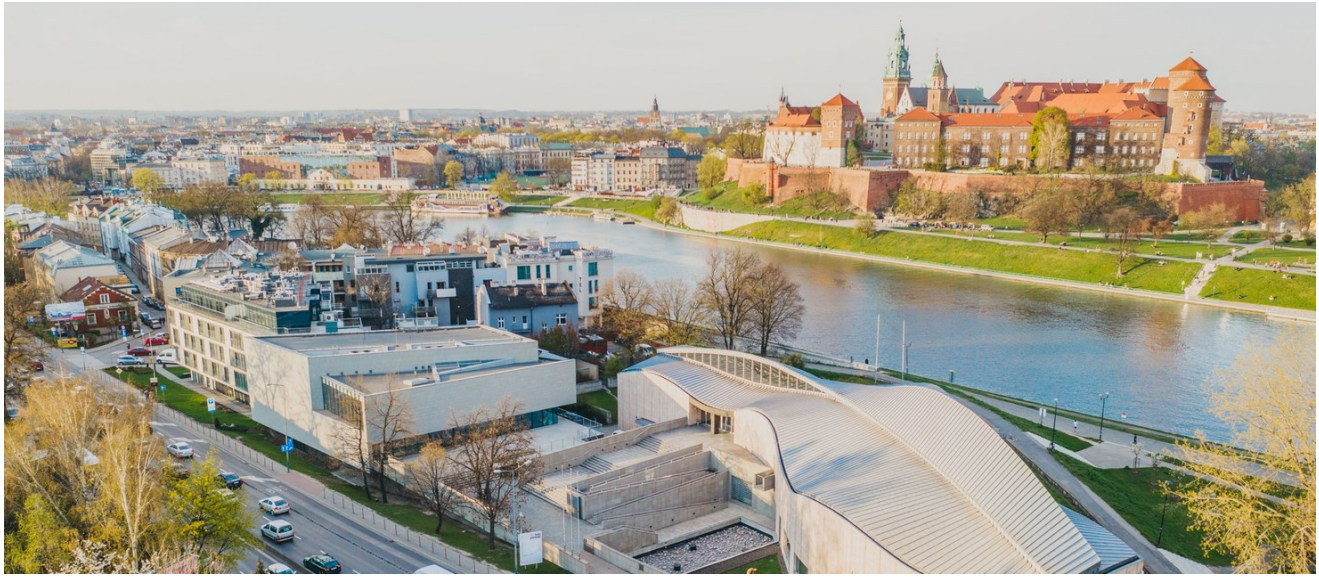
Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology

Set on the south bank of the Vistula, directly across from Wawel Hill, Manggha is both our conference venue and a cultural destination in its own right. Its contemporary architecture and Japanese-inspired perspective make it an apt setting for an event built around exchange, collaboration and new thinking. You can start a riverside walk directly from the museum, or head towards the historic centre when the sessions finish.

Marii Konopnickiej 26, 30-302 Kraków

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Official venue information



01 / THE HISTORIC CENTRE

Start with the Old Town

Two iconic stops that explain why Kraków is so memorable - and both are easy to enjoy on a short walk.

01 Main Market Square & Cloth Hall

Start at Rynek Główny, the vast square at the heart of Kraków's medieval street plan. The Renaissance Cloth Hall (Sukiennice) stretches through its centre; it was built for commerce and still hosts craft stalls today. Look for the Town Hall Tower and the elegant façades that frame the square, then take time to watch daily life unfold around the cafés. If you enjoy history, the Rynek Underground Museum below the paving reveals traces of earlier streets and market activity. The square is also the ideal starting point for exploring the Old Town on foot.

TIP The square has roughly 200-metre sides; see it again after dark for a different atmosphere.

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02 St. Mary's Basilica

The two unequal brick towers of St. Mary's Basilica are one of Kraków's best-known landmarks. Inside, the magnificent carved altarpiece by Veit Stoss is a highlight of late-Gothic art. Listen for the hejnał, the trumpet call played every hour from the taller tower towards the four sides of the city. The melody ends abruptly, echoing a familiar local legend about a watchman who sounded the alarm. Even if you have little time, the church and its surroundings offer a vivid introduction to Kraków's traditions, architecture and lively public spaces.

TIP The basilica stands just off the Market Square; check visitor access during services.

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02 / ROYAL & ACADEMIC

Kings, scholars, ideas

A short route from the river to a university courtyard connects Kraków's past with its intellectual life today.

03 Wawel Royal Castle & Cathedral

Rising above the Vistula River, Wawel Hill is a symbol of Polish statehood and a beautiful place to understand the city's royal past. The castle's Renaissance courtyard, historic interiors and collections recall centuries when Kraków was a centre of power. The neighbouring cathedral is associated with coronations and royal burials, giving the site a profound place in Polish cultural memory. You do not need to see every exhibition to enjoy the experience: the approach up the hill and views towards the river are rewarding in their own right. Allow extra time if you plan to visit the museums.

TIP From Manggha, cross the river and approach the hill on foot; book museum entries ahead.

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04 Collegium Maius

Tucked away near the Main Market Square, Collegium Maius is the historic heart of the Jagiellonian University, founded in 1364. Its arcaded courtyard offers a quiet change of pace from the busy streets outside. Inside the museum, scientific instruments, books and academic objects tell the story of teaching and discovery over many generations. Nicolaus Copernicus studied at the university, a reminder of Kraków's place in European intellectual history. For LSOS visitors interested in the relationship between knowledge, community and innovation, this is a particularly fitting stop - and an easy addition to an Old Town walk.

TIP The historic courtyard is worth seeing; confirm museum opening hours separately.

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03 / KAZIMIERZ

A neighbourhood with layers

Explore respectfully: Kazimierz is both an important centre of Jewish heritage and a lively part of today’s city.

05 Kazimierz & Szeroka Street

Kazimierz is a neighbourhood best explored slowly. Its streets, synagogues and courtyards preserve the memory of a community that shaped Kraków for centuries. Begin at Szeroka Street, where several historic Jewish sites are close together, and then wander towards smaller lanes, independent bookshops and cafés. The area is also known for an energetic food and cultural scene, especially in the evening. Yet it is more than a fashionable district: it remains a place where heritage, remembrance and contemporary life meet. A thoughtful walk here adds important depth to a visit focused on the Old Town alone.

TIP Kazimierz was once an independent town; allow time to explore on foot.

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06 Old Synagogue

Standing on Szeroka Street, the Old Synagogue is the oldest surviving synagogue building in Poland. Its architecture reflects Gothic origins and later Renaissance changes, while its museum exhibitions introduce visitors to Jewish religious life, traditions and the history of Kraków's Jewish community. The building has experienced periods of flourishing, destruction and restoration, making a visit both informative and moving. It is best approached as a place for learning rather than a quick sightseeing stop. Nearby, the Remuh Synagogue and its cemetery offer another perspective on the neighbourhood's long and complex story.

TIP Address: Szeroka 24. Allow additional time for nearby historic sites.

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04 / MEMORY & CONTEMPORARY ART

Two sides of Zabłocie

The same former industrial area offers a powerful encounter with history and a fresh look at art today.

07 Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory

The museum at Oskar Schindler's former enamel factory tells the story of Kraków under Nazi German occupation from 1939 to 1945. Rather than simply retelling the events of a well-known film, its exhibition uses historical objects, documents, photographs and reconstructed interiors to explore the lives of people in the occupied city. It is an important, sometimes difficult visit that deserves time and attention. The building stands in Zabłocie, a district that has changed considerably in recent years. Consider pairing the museum with nearby MOCAK for two very different perspectives on the same place.

TIP Advance tickets are recommended; this is a substantial museum visit.

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08 MOCAK - Museum of Contemporary Art

MOCAK offers an inventive contrast to Kraków's medieval landmarks. Located on part of the former Schindler factory site, its galleries combine renovated industrial spaces with contemporary architecture. The changing exhibitions invite visitors to think about society, culture and current questions through painting, photography, installations and other forms of art. You do not need specialist knowledge to enjoy it; curiosity is enough. The museum also gives a sense of how Kraków is reinventing former industrial areas as places for ideas and public life. Because MOCAK and Schindler's Factory share the same neighbourhood, they work well as one cultural outing.

TIP Find both museums around Lipowa 4; check exhibition dates before visiting.

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05 / ART & INVENTION

Culture that inspires

From a Renaissance masterpiece to aviation engineering, Kraków has museums for many different interests.

09 Princes Czartoryski Museum

This elegant museum in the Old Town houses one of Poland's most celebrated art collections. Its greatest attraction is Leonardo da Vinci's Lady with an Ermine, an extraordinary portrait notable for its subtle movement and psychological detail. The surrounding galleries also include paintings, sculpture, decorative arts and historical objects collected over generations. A visit offers a quieter, more contemplative side of Kraków and works particularly well in late November, when an indoor afternoon can be welcome. The museum is close to St. Florian's Gate, so it fits naturally into a walk through the northern part of the historic centre.

TIP Location: Pijarska 15. Check ticket availability and the current display before visiting.

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10 Polish Aviation Museum

A rewarding choice for people interested in technology, design and the history of innovation. Set on the site of the former Rakowice-Czyżyny airfield, the Polish Aviation Museum brings together historic aircraft, helicopters, engines and other exhibits that show how aviation developed over time. The collection ranges from early flying machines to more modern engineering achievements, so there is plenty to discover even for non-specialists. It is farther from the Old Town than most stops in this guide, but the change of setting is part of the appeal - especially if your interests at LSOS extend into engineering and applied science.

TIP Take public transport from the centre and check museum admission information.

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06 / A DIFFERENT KRAKÓW

Beyond the postcard

If you have a spare afternoon, these places reveal very different sides of the city.

11 Zakrzówek Park & Quarry Lake

Only a short distance from the historic centre, Zakrzówek offers a surprising landscape of steep limestone cliffs, wooded paths and bright turquoise water. The lake occupies a former quarry and is surrounded by a public park that has become a favourite escape for residents. In late November, the appeal is a refreshing walk and dramatic views rather than swimming or summer recreation. Choose comfortable shoes and take care on wet paths. Zakrzówek is a wonderful reminder that Kraków's identity is not limited to churches, museums and squares; nature is also part of the city's character.

TIP An outdoor stop: weather and path conditions matter, especially in November.

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12 Nowa Huta - Central Square

Travel east for a radically different chapter of Kraków's urban history. Nowa Huta was planned from 1949 as an industrial town, with broad boulevards, generous public spaces and monumental architecture associated with socialist realism. The original street plan remains easy to read around Central Square, but the district is not frozen in the past: it has its own cafés, theatres and everyday neighbourhood life. A walk here adds a twentieth-century perspective that the Old Town cannot provide. For visitors interested in cities, social change or design, Nowa Huta is one of Kraków's most distinctive and less expected excursions.

TIP Start at Central Square; a tram journey is the easiest way to reach the district.

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PLAN YOUR TIME

A little time goes a long way.

Three easy stops, two ready-made walks and a few local tips to help you enjoy the city around LSOS.

Planty Park

Walk this leafy ring around the Old Town along the former line of the city walls. A simple way to move between historic sights without rushing.

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Vistula Boulevards

Right outside Manggha, a walk along the river opens views of Wawel Hill, bridges and the city skyline. Particularly inviting around sunset.

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Stary Kleparz Market

An everyday food market near the Old Town. Browse the stalls and try an obwarzanek, Kraków's traditional ring-shaped bread.

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TWO SIMPLE WALKS

The classic introduction

Wawel Hill / Market Square / Collegium Maius

OPEN WALKING ROUTE ↗

After the conference

Manggha / Vistula riverfront / Kazimierz

OPEN WALKING ROUTE ↗

GOOD TO KNOW November is often chilly and daylight is limited. The Old Town is easy to explore on foot, while trams serve districts farther out. Check museum opening hours, ticket availability and any weather-dependent access before setting off.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Life Science Open Space 2026

Thank you for discovering Kraków with us.

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