



The Lira Ensemble

*Artist-in-Residence at Loyola University Chicago
renowned for its superb performances of Polish music, song & dance
and its excellent cultural tours of Poland*

**THE LIRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
invites you to be part of its**

2017 TOUR OF NORTHERN/CENTRAL POLAND & LITHUANIA THURSDAY, JULY 13th – THURSDAY, JULY 27th

featuring music, culture, history architecture, cuisine and lots of fun

personally escorted by LUCYNA MIGALA

Artistic Director/General Manager of the Lira Ensemble & an Experienced Tour Director

**Lira will show you the Poland of your dreams during this 15-day tour of
WARSAW * GDANSK/GDYNIA/SOPOT * POZNAN * GNIEZNO
CHOPIN'S BIRTHPLACE * MALBORK CASTLE * TORUN
VILNIUS & TRAKAI in LITHUANIA * AND MUCH MORE**

Our tour flies non-stop to & from Warsaw on LOT Polish Airlines Boeing Dreamliner jets. We travel in Poland on an ultra-modern, air-conditioned motor coach with a bathroom on board.

THIS TOUR INCLUDES:

**FIRST CLASS HOTELS * ALL TOURS & TRANSPORTATION *
ADMISSIONS TO CONCERTS & OTHER PERFORMANCES
ALL BAGGAGE HANDLING * MOST TIPS * THREE MEALS A DAY
EXCEPT FOR FOUR LUNCHES AND ONE DINNER ON YOUR OWN
AS INDICATED BELOW**

Thursday July 13	The tour departs from O'Hare Airport on a LOT Airlines Boeing Dreamliner. Enjoy dinner over the Atlantic. All meals/refreshments onboard, including wine and beer (should you want them), are covered in your tour price. Other alcohol is also available at reasonable prices. We nap/sleep or watch a movie or two, then have breakfast over Europe. The Dreamliner has lots of electronic "toys" and services, so you may not want to nap. We land at Chopin Airport in Warsaw, Poland's heroic capital city, on Friday morning.
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Friday
July 14

The tour arrives in Warsaw about 10am and immediately tour the magnificent, restored Royal Castle. Meanwhile, our bags are taken to our hotel – the Sofitel Victoria, one of Warsaw’s best. (For those who have been to Warsaw, we can offer an alternate itinerary if you like.) After a light lunch, we tour Warsaw's Old Town, New Town Market, and see the Chopin monument, grand buildings and churches in the capital city. We view a film about the tragic history of Warsaw. We attend a concert of Chopin piano music in one of Warsaw’s many palaces. Our welcoming dinner is at one of Warsaw's most exclusive and interesting restaurants – then overnight at our hotel.

Saturday
July 15

We enjoy a breakfast buffet at our hotel, with a large choice of Polish, continental, and American dishes, then visit the Polish Parliament and learn about Poland’s democratic government which replaced communist rule. We visit the National Museum to view its magnificent collection of historic Polish paintings. We view the panorama of the city from atop the infamous, communist-era Palace of Culture. We have lunch at another of the city’s fine restaurants. Then we drive to Wilanow, known as the Polish Versailles, to tour the summer residence of King Jan III Sobieski, who saved Europe from a Turkish invasion at the Battle of Vienna in 1683. If you have seen the palace, we suggest Warsaw’s famed Museum of Poster Art. (Poland is a world leader in poster art.) We return to Warsaw for dinner and to enjoy a Mozart opera at the Chamber Opera House just as Amadeus would have presented it himself (except we’ll have electricity) as part of Warsaw’s critically acclaimed annual Mozart Festival. Then back to our hotel.

Sunday
July 16

We attend Mass (if you like) at Holy Cross Church where Chopin’s heart is buried. Then back to our hotel for breakfast. Then we leave Warsaw, driving northeast into the countryside. We lunch at a charming country inn, then continue our drive east to the city of Bialystok, where we tour the Branicki Palace. We check into the rustic Zubrowka Hotel and enjoy dinner at the Carska Restaurant. After dinner, Lucyna offer a quick review of Polish and Lithuanian history, so you can better understand what you are visiting.

Monday
July 17

After breakfast at our hotel, we tour the world famous Bialowieza National Park, which includes one of last primeval forests in Europe and is included in the UNESCO list of World Natural Heritage Sites. It is home to the zubry – Poland’s buffalos. A walk through this silent, haunting woodland is refreshing and memorable. We enjoy a picnic lunch by a lake near the forest, then drive to the village of Hajnowka to visit the Orthodox Church there to learn about Poland’s surprising religious diversity. Dinner includes an introduction to Zubrowka, the delicious vodka created in this region.

Tuesday July 18	Following breakfast at the hotel, we drive farther northeast toward Lithuania. We stop at Czarna Wies Koscielna, a village known for its folk art, to meet with a local artist who will demonstrate his skills. Our next stop is Suprasl with its 17 th century bishop's palace. We see a small but significant collection of original frescos and icons. We have lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius (formerly known as Wilno in Polish). We check into our hotel, the Ramada in the center of town, and enjoy a dinner of local specialties.
Wednesday July 19	After breakfast, we tour Vilnius, including the Old Town's with its Baroque Peter and Paul Church with 2,000 statues, Upper Town with the Gedimas Tower and Vilnius Castle. We see the wide boulevards and the main square of this city beautifully restored after communist domination. Following our tour, we will have free time for shopping/resting/private touring followed by <i>lunch on your own</i> . We will make restaurant suggestions in various price ranges. We re-group for dinner at one of Vilnius landmark restaurants for a taste of Lithuanian folklore with our meal. Then to our hotel for the night.
Thursday July 20	After breakfast at the hotel, we bus west to Trakai, the castle that was the ancient capital of Lithuania with its Vytautas Fortress surrounded by five lakes - the former residence of the Lithuanian grand dukes. We continue west, crossing the border near the town of Sejny, known for its unusual and delicious "sekacz" pastry, where we have lunch. And guess what's for dessert? We check into the St. Bruno Hotel in the city of Gizycko. There, Lucyna will give you a one-hour Polish lesson which will help orient you a bit to what you are hearing and seeing around you. Dinner will be at the hotel.
Friday July 21	After breakfast, we drive farther west through the Pojezierze region - Poland's "land of a thousand crystal-clear lakes" created by glaciers eons ago. We stop at Sw. Lipka to see its remarkable, huge Baroque Jesuit church in this tiniest of towns. Next is lunch featuring local favorites before our afternoon drive to the Polish seashore. We arrive in Gdansk and dine at one of the city's many fine restaurants. Our overnight is at the Hotel Hanza, near everything you want to see and do.
Saturday July 22	After breakfast at the hotel, we spend the day touring the Tri-City: Gdynia, Gdansk and Sopot. We start in Gdansk. We visit the shipyard where Solidarity was born, the Solidarity monument and museum. We see Mariacka Street in Gdansk, the largest amber market in the world. Do plan on buying some Polish amber. The selection will amaze you and the prices are so much more reasonable than in the US. There will be free time for shopping/resting/private touring and <i>lunch on your own</i> . Poles excel at preparing fish dishes and Gdansk is the fish capital of Poland. Enjoy! Later, we see Sopot, Poland's seashore resort town with its longest pier in Europe and the port at Gdynia. We stop in the suburb of Oliwa with its famous cathedral organ - one of the best in Europe. Dinner is at the wonderful "Pod Lososiem" (Under the Sign of the Salmon) restaurant – a tradition in Gdansk. Then back to the hotel.

Sunday July 23	We attend Mass at St. Brygida Church (if you like) – which became famous worldwide as the Solidarity church. Then breakfast at the hotel and we drive to Malbork Castle, former seat of the Teutonic Knights, where we tour this remarkable castle - one of the largest left standing in Europe. Lunch is at a local restaurant, then we drive to Kaszubia, a beautiful region of Northern Poland with German, Scandinavian, Dutch and Lithuanian cultural influences. We visit the “skansen” (outdoor museum) in the Kaszubian Ethnographic Park and then enjoy local specialties for dinner followed by Kaszubian songs and dances in the town of Zukowo, where Kaszubian folk items will be available for sale. Then back to our hotel for the night.
Monday July 24	Breakfast at our hotel is followed by our drive to Torun, home town of Nicholas Copernicus, the great Polish astronomer, where we tour his museum. Torun is also home of Polish gingerbread, which you can munch on as we make a short tour of this lovely, historic town. Torun’s Old Town is on the UNESCO list of world treasures. Several Polish cities made the list. You will have time for shopping and/or <i>lunch on your own</i> and there are many cute spots to eat. Then we drive to Gniezno, the first capital of Poland, with its Gothic Cathedral with bronze doors that date back to the 12 th century - one of the best examples of Romanesque art in Europe. We continue on to Poznan, one of major cities in Poland, a business center that is the capital of Greater Poland. We check into the Sheraton Hotel. Our dinner includes local treats, then back to the hotel for the night.
Tuesday July 25	After breakfast at the hotel, we tour Poznan, including its Renaissance Town Hall and bustling town square. We’ll watch the Poznan goats butt heads at the strike of noon - an old tradition. We see an example of how Poland is updating without losing its heritage – a modern shopping mall in an historic brewery. Then, free time for shopping/resting/private touring followed by <i>lunch on your own</i> . You have been very good travelers, so you deserve a night off. There are many restaurants to choose from for <i>dinner on your own</i> and just sitting in the square and people watching is enjoyable.
Wednesday July 26	Breakfast is at the hotel before we drive toward Warsaw. On the way, we stop at Lichen, called the “Czestochowa of the North” because it has become a major place of pilgrimage. Its huge basilica was built as Poland’s thanks to the Blessed Virgin for freeing the country of communism. We stop at Zelazowa Wola, the birthplace of Frederick Chopin. We have lunch at a country inn and then drive to the suburbs of Warsaw, to the elegant Mazurkas Hotel where a farewell dinner awaits us with a last taste of Polish folklore. Do get a good night’s sleep before your return flight.
Thursday July 27	Today is one of the longest days of your life, because of your trans-Atlantic flight. You may want to sleep in and enjoy a quiet breakfast before our departure for the airport. There will be an opportunity to do some shopping at the duty-free shops at Chopin Airport and it is recommended. As before, all food and drinks onboard your flight (including wine and beer) are covered by your tour price. When you arrive in Chicago, it will be 10 hours later, but it will still be Thursday afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE: The tour itinerary is subject to change. And there will be some surprises

2017 TOUR OF NORTHERN/ CENTRAL POLAND & LITHUANIA

Tour prices and important notes

- **\$5,719.00** base charge per person, double occupancy, departing from Chicago
 - **\$725.00** single room supplement
 - Plus **\$375.66** airline tax (which is subject to change and has changed in the past)
 - The first deposit of **\$2,000.00** is due as soon as possible upon registration
 - A second payment of **\$1,500.00** on April 1, 2017
 - **The balance is due on May 1, 2017**
 - Tour payments may be made by check only. Sorry, no credit cards.
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- We can arrange departures from the New York area at an adjusted price. You may also upgrade your seat from Economy Class to Premium Economy or Business Class (the LOT equivalent of First Class); ask us about availability and charges.
- PLEASE NOTE: A minimum of 10 adults must register for this tour, or the price will be several hundred dollars higher.
- Our prices are closely tied to value of the dollar abroad; if the dollar falls steeply, there may be an additional charge.
- A portion of the tour price is deductible from your federal taxes. A tax receipt will be issued after the tour.
- U.S. and Canadian citizens need only a valid passport to visit Poland; no visa is required. If you do not have a valid passport, please apply for one as soon as possible - the closer to summer, the longer the lines at the passport office and the longer it takes to get your passport.
- IMPORANT: Your passport expiration date must be at least six months after your return to the United States.

*If you wish to remain in Poland after the tour, **there is an additional airfare charge** and you must send \$2,500 as your first payment. Lira can help arrange **HOTELS, TRANSPORTATION** and **TOURS** for your extended stay. If you want to find your family, your ancestral city, town or village in Poland, Lira can suggest a trusted specialist in Poland with excellent English.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 773-508-7040 - OUTSIDE OF ILLINOIS, CALL 1-800-547-LIRA

Ask us about taking both the Southern and Northern Tours this year!

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

HOTELS: Twin-bedded or double-bedded rooms with bath or shower in first class or deluxe hotels. A limited number of single rooms are available at the supplementary charge. Hotels are subject to change.

TIPS & TAXES: Service charges, as imposed by hotels and taxes by local administrations and government authorities on accommodations, meals, and transportation, are included. Tips to local guides and baggage handlers at the airport and at hotels are included. It is customary for tour members to tip the tour guide ("pilot") and driver who travel with the tour, on the last day of the tour. These tips are not included.

SIGHTSEEING & TRANSFERS: Sightseeing is as specified in the itinerary, including entrance fees, and subject to change. Transfer upon arrival and departure overseas by motor coach between airport and hotel and vice versa if traveling with the tour group.

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENT: A deposit of \$2,000.00 per person is required at the time of booking. A second installment of \$1,500.00 is due April 1, 2017 and the balance is due on May 1, 2017. ***Reservations and payments are accepted with personal or bank checks only. Sorry, credit cards are not accepted for tour deposits or payments.***

TRIP CANCELLATION, BAGGAGE AND MEDICAL INSURANCE: It is advisable to purchase insurance coverage for cancellation due to illness or accident. Applications for suggested insurance as well as baggage and travel insurance will be provided once tour deposits are received.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS: Cancellations must be in writing. Cancellation charges will apply: *Within 90 days prior to departure - 30% of the cost; within 60 days prior to departure - 50% of the cost; within 30 days prior to departure – no refunds.*

YOUR RATE DOES NOT INCLUDE: Passport fees, taxes or tips on services not included in the itinerary; laundry or valet service; excess baggage charges; insurance of any kind; wines, beers, liquors, soft drinks or any food and beverages not on regular menus of included meals.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: A valid passport is required for all U.S. and Canadian citizens traveling to Poland. ***Your passport expiration date must be at least six months after your return date to the US.***

RESPONSIBILITY: The Lira Ensemble acts only as an agent for the hotels, airlines, bus companies or owners, operators or contractors providing accommodations, transportation, meals, tours, or other services. All vouchers, coupons, contracts and tickets issued are subject to any and all tariffs, terms and conditions under which the foregoing or any services whatsoever are provided by such hotels, airlines, bus companies or owners, operators or contractors. By the acceptance of the above, the tour member agrees to the foregoing and also agrees that the Lira Ensemble shall not be or become liable or responsible for any loss, injury or damage to person, property or otherwise in connection with any transportation, accommodation, meals, tour or other services referred to herein, or resulting from neglect or default of any person, corporation or other entity engaged to supply the same. The tour operator reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary, whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant; or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the passengers. They can accept no responsibility for losses of additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine or other causes. All such losses must be borne by the passenger as tour rate provides for arrangement only for the specified. All alterations may be made without penalty to the tour operator. The airline concerned is not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not aboard their planes or conveyance. The passenger contract in use by the airline concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and purchaser of this tour and/or passage.

**THE LIRA ENSEMBLE 2017 TOUR
OF NORTHERN/CENTRAL POLAND & LITHUANIA
TOUR REGISTRATION FORM
July 13 – July 27, 2017**

Please use a separate form for each individual joining the tour. Each individual must sign personally.
Please print or type. This form may be duplicated.

NAME (*exactly as it appears on your passport*) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIPCODE _____

HOME TELEPHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ *Please send all future tour information by e-mail* _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ CITIZENSHIP _____

PASSPORT NUMBER _____ PASSPORT EXPIRATION DATE _____

I PLAN TO DEPART FROM: CHICAGO _____ NEW YORK _____ OTHER _____

If you are not departing from Chicago, please contact us so that we can coordinate your transportation.

Would you like a single room throughout the tour? (Extra cost of \$725.00) _____

If not, with whom are you sharing a room? _____

Do you want us to find a roommate for you? _____ Do you smoke? _____

If you are traveling with your spouse, do you prefer twin beds? _____ Or a double bed? _____

Will you return with the tour on July 27th? _____ If not, what is your return date? _____

Note: An extended stay, past July 27th requires an additional airfare charge and a deposit of \$2,500.00 (rather than \$2,000). If you are planning an extended stay, please call the Lira office as soon as possible.

Would you like us to book hotels or arrange travel or tours for you in Poland after the tour? _____

Would you like us to contact an expert to do research for you in Poland, for a fee? _____

How did you learn of the Lira Tour? _____

DISCLAIMER: By making application for the above captioned trip sponsored by the Lira Ensemble, I hereby acknowledge that the Lira Ensemble (including its directors, officers, volunteers and employees) have no connection or responsibility with regard to the transportation or other facilities offered by the tour operator and airline making arrangements for the trip, and that the Lira Ensemble is not contracting parties with regard to any of the arrangements made or to be made. I understand that by signing this document I have contracted directly with the tour operator (Mazurkas Travel of Warsaw) and LOT Polish Airlines or other airline concerned and that contractual responsibilities, if any, are directly between Mazurkas Travel, the airlines, and me. I am fully cognizant of all risks of travel and arrangements for trip of this nature and fully disclaim, waive, and discharge the Lira Ensemble (including its directors, officers, volunteers, and employees) from any and all liability, claims, or responsibilities with regard to the proposed trip and arrangements made with respect thereto, even if caused by the negligence or purported negligence of the Lira Ensemble (including directors, officers, volunteers, and employees). **I certify that I have read and understand the Terms & Conditions of this tour.**

SIGNATURE OF TRAVELER _____ DATE _____

Please send this completed form, with a \$2,000.00 deposit (or \$2,500 if you are staying beyond July 27th) as a check payable to the Lira Ensemble, as soon as possible, to:
The Lira Ensemble, 6525 N. Sheridan Road #CH-052, Chicago, Illinois 60626

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