

## Świnica / Svinica

**Page Type:** Mountain/Rock

**Location:** Poland, Slovakia, Europe

**Province:** Podhale

**County:** Małopolskie

**Activities:** Hiking, Mountaineering, Trad Climbing, Sport Climbing, Toprope, Ice Climbing, Aid Climbing, Big Wall, Mixed, Scrambling, Via Ferrata

**Season:** Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

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### Note

The initial Świnica page was made by the user [sokolxxx](#). Following discussions about improving the content of some Carpathian-related "abandoned" pages, and thanks to the Elves, I was granted the editing rights on Świnica.

I'll start with the tribute the previous author wrote about deceased SP member [Rahel Maria Liu](#) :

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The page is dedicated Rahel Maria Liu. She was very nice and helpfull person. I've got acquainted with her last year when I looked for information about the Weisshorn.

The page is currently under reconstruction. Given the importance of this peak, all suggestions are highly welcome !

### Overview

Lying on the main ridge of the Tatras, Świnica (Svinica in Slovak) is an emblematic mountain, and more precisely on the Polish side of the range.

A first explanation for that is that Świnica, beating the 2300 limit just by one meter, all of granite, is the very first high peak of the High Tatras, coming from west and the lower range of the [Western Tatras](#), from where its striking shape can be recognized everywhere. The mountain is composed of three summits, like a trident, a shape that we particularly see well from the rest of the ridge of Orla Percé, with Świnicka Szczerbina Niżnia (2278m), and Świnicka Kopa(2291m).

This prominence is enhanced by the majestuousness of its NW face, overlooking Dolina Gašienicowa by more than 700 meters. On the South, it ends the famous [Five Lakes Valley](#), while on the West, it overlooks the wild and unfrequented Ticha Dolina, Tatra's longest valley.

For this reason, and despite the top lies on the border, all marked official trails to ascend it are located on the Polish side (which explains the fame mostly in Poland).

A non authorized trail, but still in very good state, runs along the Slovak side on the mountain, from Przełęcz Liliowe (Laliové sedlo) to Závory (Zawory), making an obvious continuity between two green-marked trails. Gładka Przełęcz (Hladké sedlo), just under the peak, goes from Slovakia, but is not continued in Poland, despite a story of hundred meters would allow connecting it to the trail of the Five Lakes valley.

There are ongoing discussions about ending these absurdities, officially covered under the pretext of "nature conservation", but unofficially, as many know, for the reason the Slovak TANAP fears an invasion of Polish crowds.

Additionally, Świnica owns many unmarked rock-climbing routes on excellent granite rock. But these, one must be aware, according to the TPN, are authorized only to people owning a club licence, or guided, on both Slovak and Polish side.

The main red-marked official trail running to the top is usually considered as a part (and beginning) of the [Orla Perc](#) route, featured with fixed chains, like a via-ferrata. Since 2008, in order to avoid traffic jams and accidents, this route is allowed only from West to East after Zawrat, hence Świnica, despite not being in this one-way section, is the usual start and most likely to be visited.

More sadly, we can explain the popularity of Świnica, visited by crowds on nice sunny days, by a last factor. Few hundred meters on the West is located the not less famous [Kasprowy Wierch](#), served from Zakopane by the very famous cable-car. Many of the tourists, and most of them not equipped for such hike, decide to head in this direction, and Świnica becomes the goal, as obvious than improvised. Świnica is not really the place to enjoy quietness on the summits, unless one wakes up extremely early, which we can only recommend for many other reasons. Ironically, the name of the peak, means "pig mountain", and this meaning seems to have never been so up-to-date... (real meaning below)

Fortunately, Świnica is also a fine goal out of the season, during winter time and late spring, when ice and snow is covering it. It is then defended like a major high peak of the Alps, and provides a gorgeous satisfaction.

This area always used to be a kind of training centre for both TOPR rescuers, and famous Polish alpinists and himalayists. [Wanda Rutkiewicz](#), Jerzy Kukuczka and many others started their climbing adventure here, which belongs nowadays to the Polish Alpinism History.

As for the peak itself, Charles Yorke made a first unsuccessful attempt in 1805. Austrian geodesic officers reached the secondary top in 1822 to make measurements, despite not explicitly mentioned it is likely that they ventured to the main. The first recorded ascent occurred not earlier than in 1867 by Maciej Siczka, Eugeniusz Janota, Bronisław Gustawicz and Stanisław Librowski. The first winter ascent took place on the 30th December 1907, by Jerzy Maślanka, which was quite a feat at that time. More than 30 people lost their lives on fatal accidents on Świnica, the most notable being a storm lightning which killed 6 in 1939.

Świnica is called so only from the 19th century. Before, it was also called Dźwinią Skała, Szwinia Skała, Świnnica, which tends to mean "stupid mountain", and share a common meaning with [Hlúpy Vrch](#), for the reason the mountain was dangerous.

## Getting There

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Depending on which trailhead we choose, the drive is different.

Zakopane (and Kuźnice) are the usual places to start if we choose to reach it from the valley Dolina Gąsienicowa (despite a starting point also exists in Cyrla, via the [Sucha Woda](#) valley). Zakopane is also the simplest place to reach with public transports (bus, train from Cracow)

Łysa Polana is the start if we choose the [Five Lakes Valley](#) for the approach. From Cracow, it is reached very conveniently, much better than through Zakopane, using the shortcut of the Jurgów-Podspady border, like the map below shows.

From the Slovak side, despite it is very rarely done, the mouth of the Ticha valley, and trailhead, is located in Podbanské, in the middle of the south side of the Tatras.

[Agrandir le plan](#)

## Routes

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Three kind of loops are usually done to visit the summit. While the two from the Polish side are extremely popular, the third from Slovakia is rarely done for many reasons.

### **1: Loop from Dolina Gąsienicowa**

Given the proximity of the trailhead with Zakopane, this is perhaps the most done circuit. We need to reach first the Murowaniec hut, from Kuźnice or any other starting point (for example the [Sucha Woda](#) valley). Świnica is then reached the quickest way via the pass Świnicka Przełęcz, and an exposed ridge walk secured with chains, ending in spiral and taking back the top on the South side.

However, given the beauty and density of interesting features in the sector, it would be a pity to return by the same route. The Zawrat pass, reached by the trail of the lake Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy, is another gorgeous and well used route. A little longer variant is Kozia Przełęcz, or descending anywhere further on Orla Perć.

Those willing a more complete overview of the area can also combine in the loop the crossing the pass "Karb" just for fun, or even climbing [Kościelec](#) the same day.

### **2: Loop from Dolina Pięciu Stawów Polskich**

The other famous way to visit Świnica, equally with the previous. Dolina Pięciu Stawów Polskich, the valley of the Five Lakes, is reached via the green trail, located at the junction of the waterfall Wodogrzmoty Mickiewicza. Then, the blue trail leads to Zawrat, previously mentioned. The last portion is the red marked ridge trail, part of Orla Perć but not forbidden yet in both directions.

Descending via Walentkowy Wierch and Gładka Przełęcz looks very attractive as seen on the map, but the route is not allowed, and this portion of ridge would involve serious rock-climbing.

### **3: Loop from Ticha Dolina**

As the Ticha valley, Tatra's longest, doesn't have any hut, the most problematic is the length of the approach. But most of it is covered with asphalt, so using a bike (not too expensive), which we hide in the trees the time of the climb, can be a good solution.

The availability of official marked pathes is the second issue to deal with. "Swinica" can be reached by the Kasprow Vrch path, or by Hladké sedlo, using illegally the short missing part of trail under Gładka Przełęcz (early morning preferably, and

return made by Kasprov; a fine loop).

## Red Tape

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Unlike many other mountainous ranges and national parks, the regulations in both [Polish TNP](#) and [Slovak TANAP](#) are unusually strict for western visitors. Along with the bivouac interdiction, it is also forbidden to leave the marked trails. Exceptions are made for guided tourists, or mountaineers owning an UIAA affiliated club licence, thus except the Natura 2000 zones (in short...). If you are caught breaking these rules, you may be fined, and the rangers are particularly present during the summer, watching out for undelicate tourists. In order to maintain the trails and for the rescuing activity, there is also a small fee at every entrance of the park on the Polish side. Don't moan, given the amount of tourists this is a mandatory thing, and the fee is not high. And if you are a real mountaineer, you'll have started before 7am when there is nobody in the toll cabin.

## When To Climb

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All year long :

- In late spring, you'll need crampons and ice-axe because of patches of snow.
- No problems in summer, except the crowds...
- Autumn (September, October) is amongst the best seasons.
- Good winter skills required in winter, as well as sound knowledge of the kind of terrain. Watch out for the [avalanche risk level](#).

## Accommodation

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\* Official Mountain huts :

- For the first route, the mountain hut [Murowaniec](#)

Box 193, 34-500 Zakopane

phone: +48 018 20 12 633

open: all the year

An alternative, for UIAA affiliated club members, can be [Betlejemka](#) hut.

A bit off the route, but convenient near the starting point : [Hotel górski na Polanie Kalatówki](#)

- For the second route, the mountain hut [Schronisko Górskie Pięć Stawów](#) ("Five Lakes Valley hut")

Box 196, 34-500 Zakopane

phone: +48 018 20 77 607

open: all the year

\* Hotels : Hundreds in the [Zakopane](#) area. For any kind of general information about Zakopane, hotels, reservations, campings, guides, fares, transportation,

weather, etc., try the webs:

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

[www.zakopane.com.pl](http://www.zakopane.com.pl)

[www.cyf-kr.edu.pl/zakopane](http://www.cyf-kr.edu.pl/zakopane)

\* Campsites : Few touristic campsites in Zakopane. One more small campsite, off the road access and inside the park, is run by the Polish alpine club (PZA), and is located on the route to Świnica : [Rabaniska w Dolinie Suchej Wody](#).

For the Slovak side, one exists also near Podbanské : [Atc Rackova Dolina](#)

\* Bivouac : forbidden (see red tape)

\* Mountain emergency : [TOPR](#)

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