

# POLAND

Cities



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# Cities

# Polish Cities

## Have Character and Soul

Every Polish city has its own particular history. Some of them are full of treasures from the past; others have been building their identity in more recent times. A walk along the streets of any town or city in Poland is like a walk through the ages.

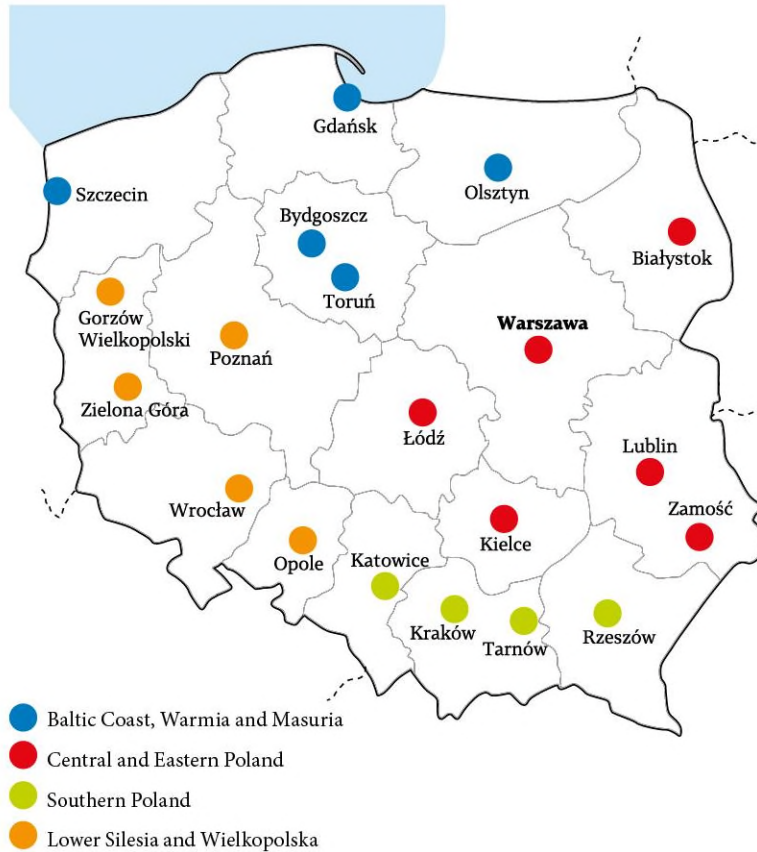
**P**olish cities welcome tourists with a panoply of things to see and do, offering distinctive sights and rich cultural programmes. Whether it's a film festival, a music competition, a theatrical performance, a sporting event, or a sound and light show, every town has its own trademark event during the calendar year. State-of-the-art concert venues and stadiums stage critically acclaimed performances by the world's biggest names in entertainment, while philharmonic halls host classically trained virtuosos who play more than just Fryderyk Chopin's music. And there's much, much more. ►

**A growing number of cities tempt future visitors online by showing live webcam images, offering virtual walks and displaying 360-degree panoramic views.**



[www.poland.travel/en](http://www.poland.travel/en)





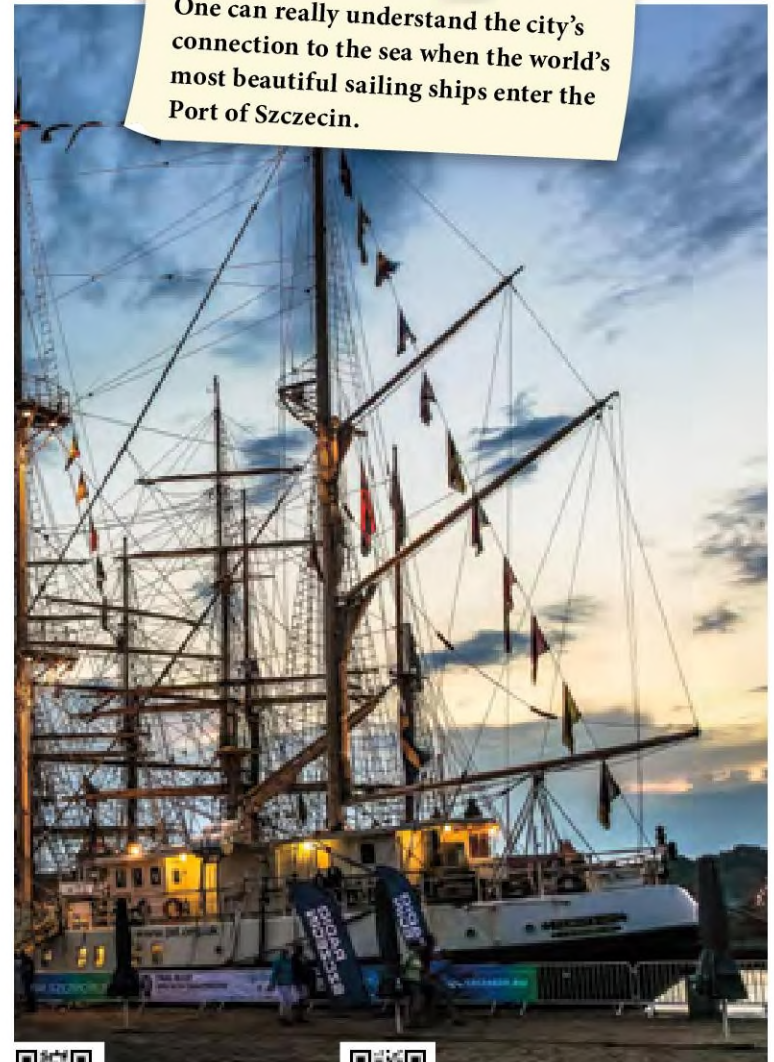
► Museums are a must-see for visitors, offering a varied, enriching programme and interactive multimedia exhibits. Old town squares, passageways and boulevards tempt passers-by with their charming cafes and restaurants, some serving traditional Polish dishes, others skilled in different cuisines of the world. Shopping centres and malls are not only places where tourists can purchase souvenirs, works of local artisans or folk handicraft, but where keen shoppers can explore a huge selection of shops and designer boutiques. Numerous art galleries are also definitely worth visiting to see paintings, drawings, sculptures and jewellery created by top contemporary artists.



## Szczecin: Sailing Ship Parades and White Philharmonic Hall

Despite being located 100 kilometres away from the Baltic coast, the city is one of Poland's two most crucial gateways to the sea.

**S**zczecin is known for its maritime traditions. Even the popular, locally produced gingerbread biscuits, baked here for over 100 years, reflect the symbolism of the sea in their shapes. One can really understand the city's connection to the sea when the world's most beautiful sailing ships enter the Port of Szczecin. The city has already twice hosted the Tall Ships Races, an international racing event with a tradition dating back to 1927. Szczecin is actually closer to Berlin than to Warsaw, which is perhaps why it has so many architectural and urban accents linking it to Western Europe. One spectacular example of this is the urban pattern in which streets radiate from Grunwald Square (Plac Grunwaldzki). It was modelled on Georges Haussmann's design which was carried out in Paris in the 19th century. The graceful edifice of the Philharmonic Hall is a sign of the new times.



One can really understand the city's connection to the sea when the world's most beautiful sailing ships enter the Port of Szczecin.



[www.szczecin.eu/en](http://www.szczecin.eu/en)



[www.seaofadventure.eu](http://www.seaofadventure.eu)



## Gdańsk, Sopot, Gdynia: The Tri-City

Three cities, each with a different history and character, form one flourishing metropolitan area known as the Tri-City.

Although they are closely interconnected, Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot each have a different character. **Gdańsk** is the business and cultural capital of the Pomerania (Pomorze) region, imbued with a history spanning a thousand years. The Old Town boasts splendid townhouses, Gothic churches, the Neptune Fountain and the Artus Court (Dwór Artusa) which used to be the seat of the guild of merchants at the time when Gdańsk belonged to the Hanseatic League. The trademark of the city is the medieval port crane called the Żuraw, which was used for loading and unloading goods. The new football stadium, built in 2011, is a new landmark and a source of pride. ►



**The cathedral in Gdańsk-Oliwa is home to a rare 18th-century pipe organ. It is one of the largest such instruments in the world.**



► **Sopot** is a luxury seaside resort, a venue for mass events and a trendy shopping area. Its most recognisable symbol is its pier. Jutting out half a kilometre into the sea, it is the longest pier in Europe. At its end the concentration of iodine is twice the amount recorded on the shoreline, which means that walks along the pier are good for your health. More than 100 yachts can be moored along the pier at any given time. Plac Zdrojowy, the town's central square, is an extension of the pier on land. The lighthouse towering over the square offers a panoramic view of the area, while the nearby outdoor concert hall is alive with music all summer. In winter the square becomes an ice-skating rink.

**Gdynia** is a distinctive, special place. It was founded in the 1920s as a base for the freshly built modern seaport. To this day, the harbour area with its long promenade is the most distinctive part of the city. It is here that historical ships are docked: the *ORP Blyskawica*, a 1930s destroyer, which is the oldest preserved ship of its kind in the world, and the famous sailing frigate *Dar Pomorza*. The Naval Museum proudly shows the history of the Polish navy, while the Gdynia Aquarium allows you to discover fascinating secrets of underwater life.



[www.guide.trojmiasto.pl](http://www.guide.trojmiasto.pl)



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



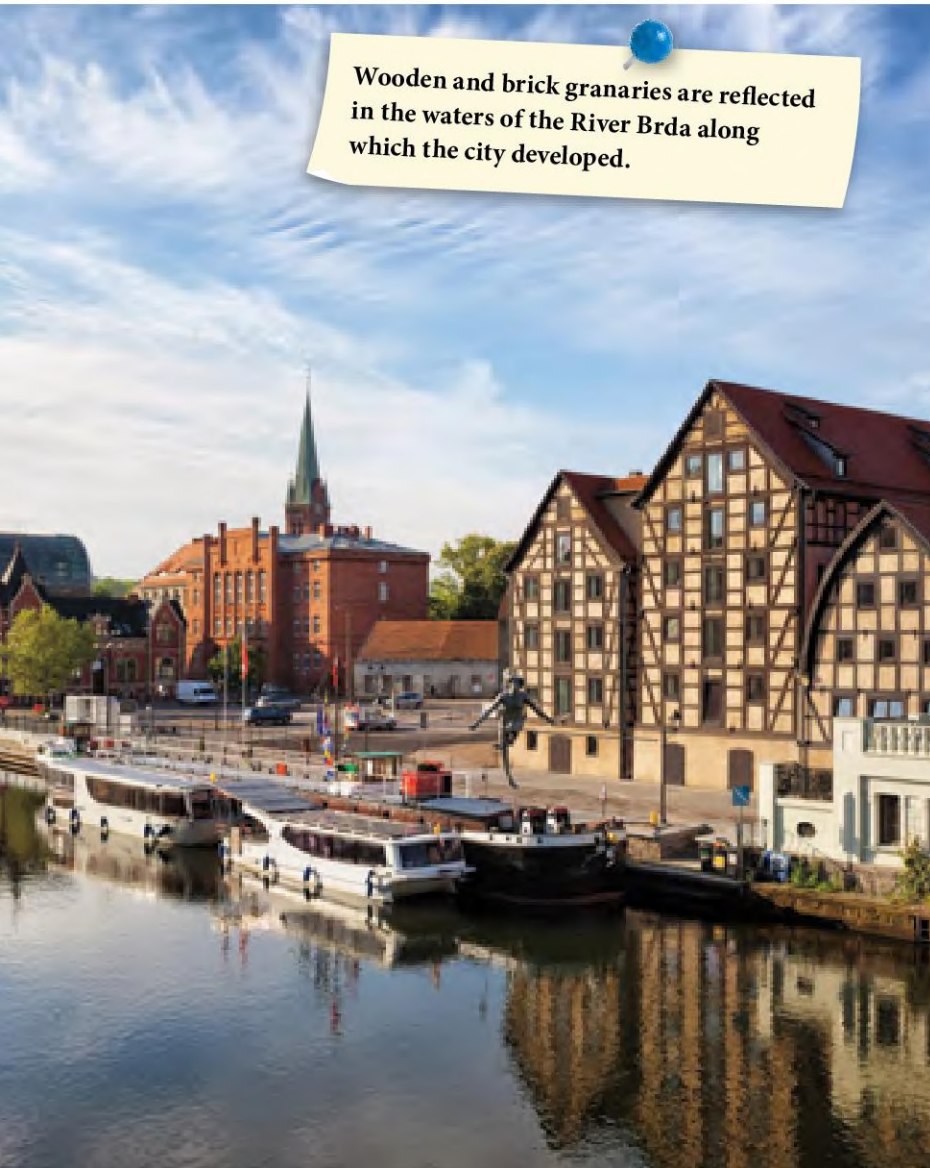
[www.akwarium.gdynia.pl](http://www.akwarium.gdynia.pl)



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



Wooden and brick granaries are reflected in the waters of the River Brda along which the city developed.



## Bydgoszcz: Fascinating Glimpse of Local Modernity

A city where modernity goes hand in hand with the past.

**B**uilt hundreds of years ago, wooden and brick granaries are reflected in the waters of the River Brda along which the city developed. The late 19th-century bridge spanning the Brda's banks is an example of daring, avant-garde architecture. Today its truss structure is a symbol of the city. So is the Opera NOVA, an opera house built during the first decade of the 21st century. It is one of the most versatile music theatres in Poland, with a team of talented artists famous for daring performances of world-class repertoire. Bydgoszcz is also the only place in Europe which has a Museum of Soap and the History of Dirt (Muzeum Mydła i Historii Brudu). Major events held in Bydgoszcz include the Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis music festival and musicology congress and the prestigious FIM Speedway Grand Prix motorcycle races.



[www.visitbydgoszcz.pl/index.php/en/](http://www.visitbydgoszcz.pl/index.php/en/)



[www.kujawsko-pomorskie.pl](http://www.kujawsko-pomorskie.pl)



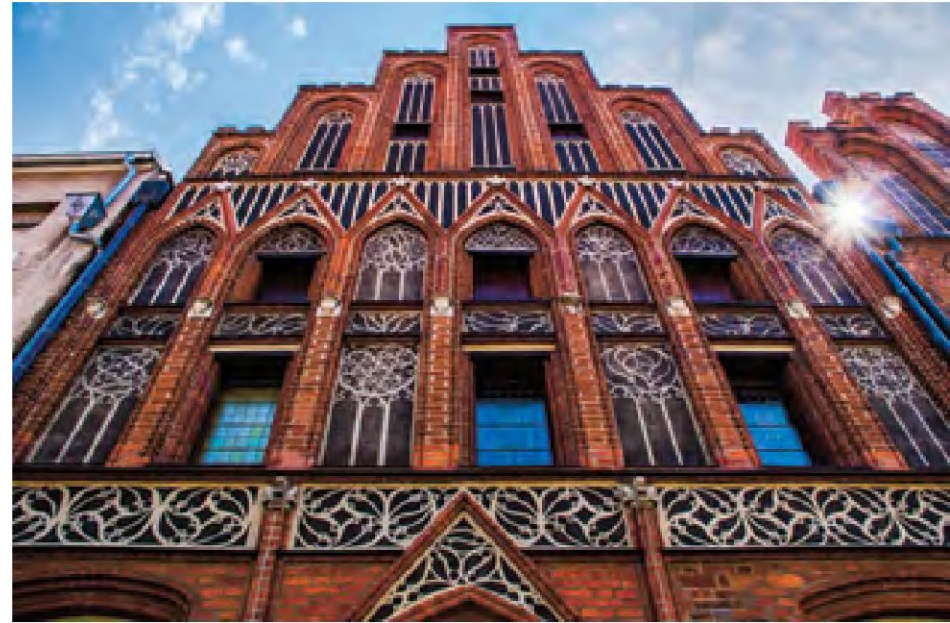
# Toruń:

## Hometown of Copernicus

UNESCO Heritage gem, gingerbread capital of the world, birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus: what more can you ask for?

One of the oldest cities in Poland, Toruń amazes visitors with its medieval layout of streets and squares and thousands of red brick houses. It's a place where tradition is very much alive. Actors dressed in 16th-century period costumes walk along the Old Town streets in the evening, calling for people to turn off their lights, as was the custom in olden times. Of course the pivotal personage for Toruń is the venerable astronomer, Copernicus. His family home has been turned into a museum. The Planetarium, situated in an old, 19th-century gasworks complex, offers audiences outstanding shows explaining the mysteries of our vast, incredible universe. The multimedia Cosmopolis Fountain, controlled electronically, alludes to Copernicus' famous work, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. In the Old Town square, on the Gingerbread Walk of Fame (Piernikowa Aleja Gwiazd), one can find brass plaques shaped like gingerbread biscuits.

**Gingerbread biscuits are the most delicious souvenir to bring home from Toruń. Visitors can even make them themselves during workshops organised inside a 16th-century gingerbread bakery.**





## Olsztyn: Capital of a Thousand Lakes

The heart of the Warmia and Masuria region and a perfect base for wildlife lovers and fans of water sports.

Olsztyn boasts an amazing location in the middle of wild nature. As is fitting, the capital of the Warmia and Masuria region has several lakes and a large forest complex, all within the municipality. The omnipresent greenery surrounds Gothic and Art Nouveau buildings and provides a pleasing contrast to the colours of the town. Towering over Olsztyn is St. James' Basilica, an impressive brick edifice worthy of the seat of a bishopric, which the town has been for over 600 years. The Basilica has amazing acoustics which one can appreciate especially during the Olsztyn Organ Concerts. The city, which grew around a 14th-century Teutonic Knights' watchtower, has close links to the history of the great Polish astronomer, Copernicus, who lived here for many years as a high-ranking church official. His astronomical instruments are kept in the castle. Visitors can also see the Planetarium and the Astronomical Observatory.



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[www.olsztyn.eu](http://www.olsztyn.eu)
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[www.planetarium.olsztyn.pl/en](http://www.planetarium.olsztyn.pl/en)
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[www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl](http://www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl)
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[www.muzeumolsztynek.com.pl](http://www.muzeumolsztynek.com.pl)



As is fitting, the capital of the Warmia and Masuria region has several lakes and a large forest complex, all within the municipality.

# Białystok:

## Multicultural Melting Pot

This metropolis in north-eastern Poland is situated in an area of pristine natural environment known as the “Green Lungs” of Poland.

For centuries, the city’s inhabitants have formed a lively mosaic of religions and languages. Like nowhere else in the world, the domes of Orthodox churches harmoniously co-exist with Roman Catholic church spires. Living next to one another, Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, Tartars and the Romani peoples provided inspiration for Ludwik Zamenhof, the inventor of the universal language Esperanto. The Branicki Palace, one of the most stunning Baroque residences in Central Europe, is considered the gem of the town’s historical heritage. The gardens which surround the palace are among the best-preserved garden complexes in Poland. Białystok’s setting brings to mind ancient Rome, as it, too, was founded on seven hills. The city hosts many music festivals, for example an open-air event called Pozytywne Wibracje (Good Vibrations).



There is a reference in the heavens to Białystok. The asteroid 19981 was named after the city in 2007.



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



[www.wrotapodlasia.pl/en](http://www.wrotapodlasia.pl/en)



# Lublin:

## Centre of Academia and Gateway to the East

A vibrant university, business and cultural centre in eastern Poland.

For centuries, Lublin was a town of key importance for relations between Poland and Lithuania, which were joined in the late 16th century to form a commonwealth. The Roman Catholic chapel in the castle, with its opulent frescos in the Byzantine style, symbolises this unification. Before World War II the city was also home to the largest Jewish community in Poland. Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer immortalised the erstwhile atmosphere of his hometown in the novel *The Magician of Lublin*. The Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva, active until 1939, was considered the best Talmudic school in the world. Today academic traditions are upheld by the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University and the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, with a robust student community of 100,000 defining the character of the town.

Every year, Lublin hosts an unusual festival called **Carnaval Sztuk-Mistrzów** during which circus artists, conjurers, jugglers, musicians and dancers show off their skills. The organisers guarantee a “frighteningly funny” time.



[www.lublin.eu/en/culture](http://www.lublin.eu/en/culture)



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



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





## Warsaw: Invincible City

Poland's capital and the seat of the highest governing bodies. Razed to the ground during World War II, it was rebuilt and has been developing rapidly ever since.

**F**or centuries, the landscape of this city on the River Vistula was dominated by the Royal Castle and the palaces of mighty magnate families. Aristocrats held the highest offices in the country and tried to maintain a close affiliation with the royal court. Today's Presidential Palace used to be the seat of the Viceroy (Namiestnik), the deputy of the Russian Tsar. Other palaces are now home to the University of Warsaw and the Polish Academy of Sciences. The most interesting historical buildings are situated along the top of the lofty escarpment which circumscribes the Vistula valley from the west. Amidst the palaces and parks there is also the Sejm (the lower chamber of the parliament). The most picturesque tourist route in the capital, known as the Royal Route, runs from the Royal Castle, located at the edge of the Old Town, towards Wilanów Palace. ►



► Warsaw is characterised by polycentrism. It offers a large number of places intended for leisure, social life and business meetings. As far as popularity is concerned, the Old Town has strong rivals, to mention the trendy main artery Krakowskie Przedmieście, the Nowy Świat thoroughfare, Three Crosses Square (Plac Trzech Krzyży) and the Saska Kępa neighbourhood. The Polish capital is full of greenery: wild sections of the riverbank are lined with riparian thickets, and there are numerous parks even in the central part of the city. Warsaw is known for its ultra-modern museums: the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. A more traditional but no less captivating exhibition can be seen at the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum dedicated to the Polish Nobel Prize-winning chemist and the first woman to have studied at the Sorbonne. ►



► The Polish capital is a paradise for music lovers. Every five years it hosts the International Chopin Piano Competition. You can listen to the music of the great composer every summer weekend in Łazienki Park, considered Warsaw's most attractive green area. Concerts of the Warsaw Autumn (Warszawska Jesień) International Festival of Contemporary Music fill rooms in the Philharmonic Hall. Open-air events such as the summertime Jazz in the Old Town (Jazz na Starówce), the Night of Praga (Noc Pragi) held in May, or the Saska Kępa Festival (Święto Saskiej Kępy) also in May, have a magical atmosphere. The city's largest multi-purpose venue, the National Stadium, can hold an audience of 50,000 and its majestic silhouette towers over the cityscape.



[www.warsawtour.pl/en](http://www.warsawtour.pl/en)



[www.1944.pl/en](http://www.1944.pl/en)



[www.kopernik.org.pl/en](http://www.kopernik.org.pl/en)





## Łódź: City of Filmmakers, or Polish Hollywood

Formerly the capital of Poland's weaving and textile industry, today it is a busy centre well respected for its arts and film activity.

Łódź flourished during the industrial boom of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thanks to extensive investments and the hard labour of Jews, Germans, Russians and Poles, it became the leading manufacturer of textiles in Europe. Entrepreneurs had their handsome residences built close to their factories. These elegant palaces are now part of Piotrkowska Street, the city's busiest commercial artery with its inimitable atmosphere formed by boutiques, clubs, pubs and monuments commemorating famous Polish artists. Every May, the backyards in Piotrkowska Street become the venue for artistic events of the Łódź of Four Cultures Festival (Festiwal Łódź Czterech Kultur). The organisers allude to the mixture of ethnicities, languages and religions in the old Łódź. The most important annual event for the Polish film industry is the International Film and Television Schools' Festival. ▶



► Łódź is home to a film and theatre academy whose famous graduates such as Roman Polański, Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieślowski have become part of the history of cinematography. Just as in Hollywood, Piotrkowska Street has its own Walk of Fame honouring distinguished Polish actors and filmmakers. The streets of Łódź have so far provided the setting for over 200 films and television series. Łódź is also home to the Se-ma-for animation studio specialising in animated cartoons for children. Two films produced by the studio went on to win Oscars. The museums of Cinematography and Animation provide an insight into the local filmmaking tradition. Łódź is also a trend-setting city when it comes to fashion. Polish designers and stylists present their works in competition with the designs of such top fashion houses as Kenzo, Prada or Gucci. During Fashion Week Poland, held twice a year, the eyes of all media are focused on the self-named Designers Avenue (Aleja Projektantów).

**Manufaktura is one of the exemplary landmarks of Łódź. It is a 19th-century textile factory turned into a shopping and leisure centre with cinemas, a theatre, museums and restaurants, the biggest such complex in Poland and one of the largest in Europe.**



[www.expo2022.uml.lodz.pl/en](http://www.expo2022.uml.lodz.pl/en)



[www.lodzkie.travel](http://www.lodzkie.travel)





## Zamość: Original Pearl of the Renaissance

Built far from major cities, Zamość became an incarnation of the Renaissance concept of the “ideal town”.

The complex of the Old Town has been recognised and distinguished as a UNESCO Heritage Site. The urban landscape is composed of colourful townhouses overlooked by the high towers of the Town Hall and the collegiate church. The town is surrounded by massive defensive walls. Meticulously restored buildings are a feast for the eye, making each walk in Zamość a live history lesson. But Zamość is not only about history; it is also a dynamic centre of culture and industry. The Old Town’s beautiful scenery becomes a venue for many different events: music concerts, open-air theatre performances, film festivals and historical re-enactments. Cosy side streets which are home to pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants, teem with social life. The city is also a perfect starting point for trips to the nearby region of Roztocze, a land of breathtaking natural landscapes.



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



[www.lubelskietravel.pl/index.php?lang=en](http://www.lubelskietravel.pl/index.php?lang=en)

# Kielce:

## City in the Very Heart of Poland

Mysteries and treasures of the prehistoric past are waiting to be uncovered.



[www.um.kielce.pl/en/](http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/)



For four centuries, Kielce belonged to the Cracovian bishops. The Baroque Bishop's Palace remains one of the town's most attractive landmarks. The main commercial artery in Kielce was named after Henryk Sienkiewicz, the distinguished writer recognised with a Nobel Prize for his novel *Quo Vadis*. Nowadays there are countless bustling shops, pubs and restaurants along this long street which takes pedestrians down to the 19th-century market halls housing the Museum of Toys and Play (Muzeum Zabawek i Zabawy). The exhibition here will entertain not only the young ones. The Kielce Geopark offers a multimedia exhibition thanks to which you can witness the history of our planet displayed before your eyes. A modern amphitheatre has been integrated into the limestone landscape of a former quarry.



[www.swietokrzyskie.travel/en/](http://www.swietokrzyskie.travel/en/)

In 2009 in one of the quarries near Kielce, archaeologists found remnants of a tetrapod, i.e. a specimen of a species which marked the beginning of life on dry land 400 million years ago. The discovery started a revolution in world palaeontology.



## Kraków: Poland's Most Recognisable City

Once the seat of Polish kings, it is by far the most visited city in Poland today.

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The Old Town surrounded by the green belt of Planty Park, the Jagiellonian University and the Wawel Royal Castle and Cathedral: these sights are the most strongly associated with Poland. All walking tours begin or end in the Main Market Square, near the Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), a 16th-century market hall continuing the tradition of trade to this day. The upper floor of the Cloth Hall houses the Gallery of 19th-Century Polish Art. Under the square, preserved vaults are a priceless repository of knowledge about the city's history and its connections to Europe. Centuries-old artefacts are on display as part of this extraordinary archaeological multimedia exhibition. During the most momentous events and ceremonies, the Sigismund Bell tolls and its sound carries from the Wawel Cathedral over the Old Town. ►

**The stalls in the Cloth Hall, a 16th-century market hall, continue the tradition of trade to this day.**



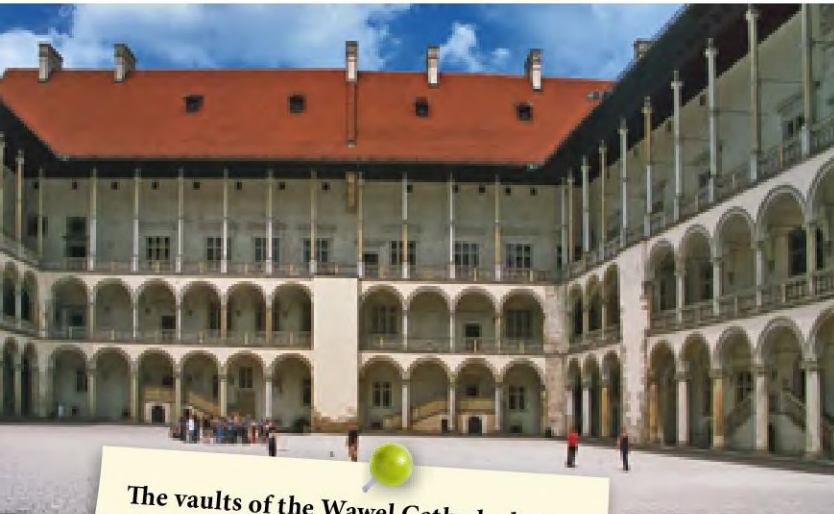


► The vaults of the Wawel Cathedral are the burial site of Polish kings, saints, poets and distinguished military leaders. The last kings from the Jagiellonian dynasty lie interred beneath the golden dome of the Sigismund Chapel. The cathedral vaults are also where many other influential people are buried. In 2013 the Cathedral saw the funeral of one of Poland's most distinguished writers, Sławomir Mrożek, who had returned home after 33 years of emigration. A few steps away from the Old Town, Kazimierz begins. Nowadays a district of the city, it was once a separate town, inhabited mostly by Jews between the 14th and 19th centuries. Orthodox Jews from all over the globe come here to pay homage to distinguished rabbis buried in the old cemetery in Kazimierz. For locals and tourists, Kazimierz is chiefly synonymous with clubs, pubs and restaurants and a tremendous nightlife. ►

**On a corner of the Main Square, the largest medieval square in Europe, St. Mary's Basilica stands. Every hour on the hour, a trumpeter plays a bugle call from the windows of its higher tower. Suddenly the melody cuts off, just like hundreds of years ago when the trumpeter was shot with an arrow during a Tartar attack.**



► Greenery is no less vital to Kraków's cityscape than its historical monuments. Kraków's Old Town is surrounded by an impressive four kilometre-long ring of greenery called Planty. This park was constructed on the site of the city's medieval moats, which were drained early in the 19th century. Forty species of trees and shrubs were planted in their place. The most magnificent specimens, such as the 130-year-old plane tree at the end of Wiślna Street, are natural monuments. Kraków is also home to Europe's largest urban meadow. Drained in the 19th century, today Błonia is a favourite place for walking, jogging and cycling. In the past the meadow was used for military exercises and served as a venue for momentous events. Today it regularly hosts largescale cultural and sporting events drawing crowds of many thousands. Among other green areas beloved by the locals, one has to mention the two mounds overlooking Kraków. They were built to commemorate Poland's national heroes, Tadeusz Kościuszko and Józef Piłsudski.



The vaults of the Wawel Cathedral are the burial site of Polish kings, saints, poets and distinguished military leaders.



[www.muzeum.krakow.pl/?L=1](http://www.muzeum.krakow.pl/?L=1) [www.katedra-wawelska.pl/en](http://www.katedra-wawelska.pl/en)



[www.krakow.travel/en](http://www.krakow.travel/en)



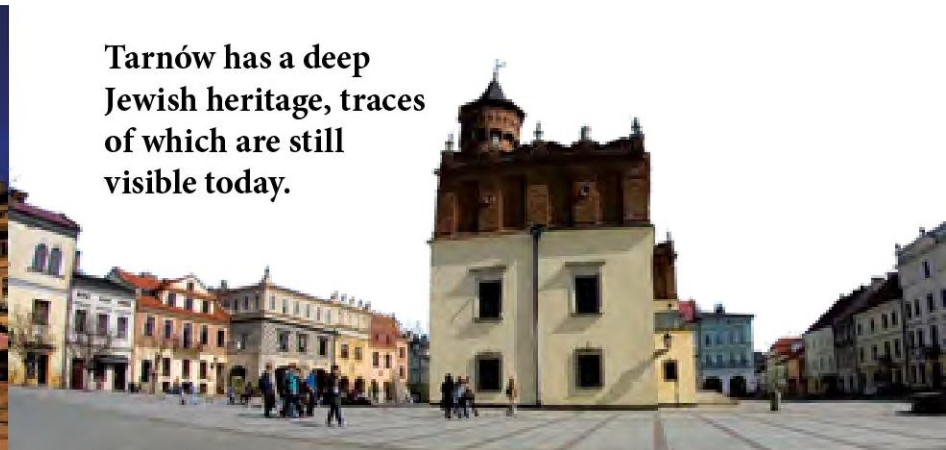


## Tarnów: Historical Beauty on a Mini Scale

Known for being the warmest city in Poland, Tarnów has a friendly atmosphere where tradition is intertwined with bustling modernity.

**T**arnów wins hearts with its narrow streets which follow the same layout they did during the Middle Ages, with its intriguing townhouse architecture, its fairy-tale Town Hall and remnants of defensive walls. Poles and Jews together with settlers from Hungary, Ukraine, Germany, Scotland, Austria and Bohemia wrote the town's history, giving it a multicultural dimension. There are many different ways to go about sightseeing here. For example, you can follow traces of Italian Renaissance architecture or monuments recounting Jewish history. Why not pay a visit to the local Ethnographic Museum, as it has the only exhibition in Europe devoted to the history and culture of the Romani people? Near Tarnów, the village of Zalipie is worth seeing, famous for subtle ceramics and quaint cottages painted with flower motifs.

**Tarnów has a deep  
Jewish heritage, traces  
of which are still  
visible today.**



## Rzeszów: Frontier of Poland

A metropolis in south-eastern Poland, Rzeszów is the business, culture and technology hub of the Podkarpacie region.

The heyday of the city's growth was during the 16th and 17th centuries, when Rzeszów belonged to the Ligęza and Lubomirski aristocratic families. That was when the most beautiful churches and synagogues were built, along with the castle, the Piarist convent and the Town Hall. Ever since, the main square has been the centre of trade, business and entertainment. Under the square there are vast cellars which used to serve as storage rooms for merchants. Their deepest levels provided shelter during the Tartar attacks of the 16th and 17th centuries. Today visitors can enjoy the Rzeszów Cellars (Rzeszowskie Piwnice) underground tourist route. The city is also the heart of the Aviation Valley (Dolina Lotnicza), a region with a 70-year tradition and a high concentration of aviation companies, research institutes and pilot training centres.



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



[www.podkarpacie.travel/en](http://www.podkarpacie.travel/en)



**Rzeszów is home to the Museum of Bedtime Cartoons (Muzeum Dobranoczek), dedicated to cartoons and animated films for children, traditionally shown on TV in the evening.**





## Katowice: Good Place to Live

Katowice, a city which has seen a lot of modernisation in recent years, more and more often finds itself ranking high among the most beautiful cities in Europe.

The landmark symbolising Katowice is the Spodek, Poland's largest multi-purpose venue. The city boasts the largest urban park in Poland. It was built during the 1950s on an industrially devastated area of slag heaps, in a pioneering move for a European country when it comes to environmental renewal projects.

The park in Katowice can only be rivalled by the hugely popular Silesian Culture and Recreation Park (Park Kultury i Wypoczynku) in the neighbouring city of Chorzów. Katowice is the capital city of the Silesian region, the centre of the mining area and the heart of the gigantic Silesia Metropolis formed by 14 adjacent towns connected through their common industrial past.

The Industrial Monuments Route (Szlak Zabytków Techniki) runs through each town of the Silesia Metropolis, marking places of interest related to coal mining. It was the extraction of coal that brought about the development of a very exceptional culture, characteristic perhaps of this region alone. There is always plenty to do here. In Zabrze, you can visit the Guido Historical Coal Mine. Katowice hosts the biggest blues festival in the world, known as the Rawa Blues Festival, as well as an open-air event called OFF Festival Katowice, one of the best alternative music festivals in the world. An interesting fact, the town of Gliwice has a Palm House open to visitors, a real tropical oasis amid the industrial landscape.



[www.katowice.eu/en](http://www.katowice.eu/en)



[www.slaskie.travel/en-US](http://www.slaskie.travel/en-US)



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

The town of Gliwice has a Palm House open to visitors, a real tropical oasis amid the industrial landscape.





## Opole: Capital of Polish Pop Culture

A gem of the region stretching between Upper and Lower Silesia, Opole lives and breathes music.

The Old Town in Opole dates back to the Middle Ages, when it lay under the rule of Polish princes from the Piast dynasty. The oldest buildings are Gothic churches which were later redecorated in the Baroque style. The Piast Tower, the only remaining fortified tower of the dismantled medieval castle, is the town's most famous landmark. The viewing platform at the top offers a marvellous panoramic view of Opole, with its Old Town and riverside promenade. Together with the Millennium Amphitheatre (Amfiteatr Tysiąclecia), an open-air music venue, they symbolise the past meeting modernity. Without a doubt, the city is the Polish capital of pop music. The National Festival of Polish Song, with a tradition going back 50 years, is a huge celebration with lots of fanfare. Many rare species of plants can be found within the municipal area, including 23 protected by law. Their largest concentration can be found on Bolko Island.

**The town's most famous landmark, the Piast Tower, offers a panoramic view of Opole from its viewing platform.**



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



[www.muzeum.opole.pl](http://www.muzeum.opole.pl)



## Wrocław: European Capital of Culture in 2016

Wrocław has overlooked the waters of the River Oder for over a thousand years. Bearing traces of Czech, German and Polish rule, the present-day city of Wrocław is a true European melting pot.

**M**agnificent townhouses, churches, the university and a whole gamut of Nobel Prize winners all testify to the city's former splendour. Ostrów Tumski, once an island on the Oder, recalls the earliest period of Wrocław's history. Its soaring medieval churches tower over the Old Town which stretches on the other side of the river. The Old Town is the focal point of city life, with the busy Market Hall (Hala Targowa), the New Stock Exchange (Nowa Gielda), countless banks and office buildings and, amid all of them, the splendid Wrocław Opera. The Centennial Hall (Hala Stulecia) often serves as a venue for the Opera, as it enables large-scale shows with top performers to be staged. ►



During the T-Mobile New Horizons Film Festival, held in July, the Main Square turns into a huge open-air cinema.



Boasting magnificent townhouses and historical market halls, the Old Town is the focal point of city life.

► Built of reinforced concrete, the Centennial Hall is a ground-breaking project in the history of world architecture. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is a well-deserved object of local pride. Its dome, rising 23 metres high, is topped by a lantern whose lighthouse-like housing is made out of steel and glass. Since 2009 the Hall has had an extraordinary neighbour: Europe's largest fountain with synchronised projections of water, sound and light. Another exceptional site is the Raclawice Panorama, a monumental cycloramic painting depicting the 1794 battle between Poles and Russians. The decorations and lighting effects used in the oval room where the 114 by 15 metre painting is exhibited create a 3D ambiance. Small figurines of dwarves are a charming decorative landmark of Wrocław. Their number has been continually growing. Special tours are organised to see them all, and even guidebooks are devoted to the phenomenon.



[www.wroclaw.pl/en](http://www.wroclaw.pl/en)



[www.muzeum.miejskie.wroclaw.pl](http://www.muzeum.miejskie.wroclaw.pl)





When visiting this city,  
tasting the local wine  
is an absolute must.

## Zielona Góra: Capital of Polish Winemaking

The patron saint of Zielona Góra is St. Urban of Langres. It is a European tradition for people working in the wine industry to place their fate in his hands.

The climate around Zielona Góra is favourable for the cultivation of vines. When visiting this city, tasting the local wine is an absolute must. Vines were cultivated in the region as early as the Middle Ages. The traditions related to winemaking in this part of Europe are presented in the Museum of Wine (Muzeum Wina). The highlight of its exhibition is a large collection of wine glasses and decanters. The museum is also a venue for winemakers' conferences as well as hosting wine-tasting events. Indeed, vines complete the look of the city, reflecting its Polish name: Zielona Góra, meaning Green Hill, is really green. More than half of the metropolitan area consists of woods. There is a captivating Botanical Garden here, and the neighbouring locality of Nietków boasts an arboretum. Every September, Zielona Góra becomes the setting of a sumptuous wine harvest festival called Winobranie, with a tradition dating back to 1862.



[www.cit.zielona-gora.pl/home,en.html](http://www.cit.zielona-gora.pl/home,en.html)



[www.lubuskie.pl/lang/en/](http://www.lubuskie.pl/lang/en/)



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

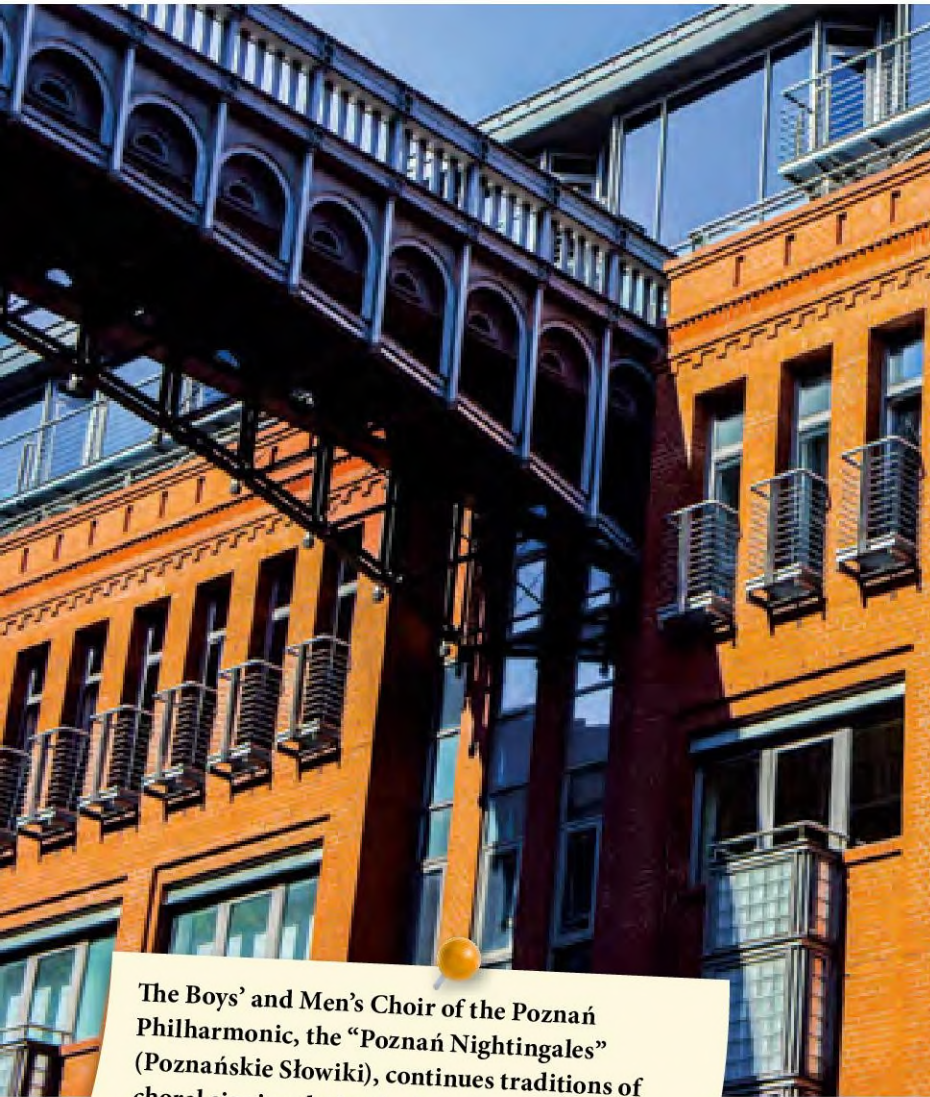
# Poznań:

## Home of the Poznań International Fair

This multicultural city attracts people from all over the globe. Poznań is the Polish capital of commerce.

The most momentous event all year is the Poznań International Fair, held since 1921. Many cultural events are organised in the Stary Browar (Old Brewery) shopping, arts and business centre located in a meticulously restored brewery complex from the 19th century. The modern look of the city is largely due to the trade fair premises which comprise 16 exhibition halls. The crowning piece of the complex is the Eastern Entrance (Hol Wschodni), referred to by the locals as the “aquarium”, with the modernist Spire from the 1950s visible through the glass walls. The Spire is the trade fair’s symbol as well as Poznań’s most recognisable landmark. More than 80 different events take place here every year. ►





The Boys' and Men's Choir of the Poznań Philharmonic, the "Poznań Nightingales" (Poznańskie Słowiki), continues traditions of choral singing dating back to the 15th century.

► Poznań also has a charming Old Town. The streets all meet in the Old Square where the Renaissance Town Hall proudly overlooks the area. It is one of the most beautiful examples of Renaissance culture. A bugle call sounds from its tower every day and the clock installed in 1551 delights tourists with figurines of mechanical goats which emerge and butt heads. Another interesting sight in the square is the fountain with a statue of a woman in traditional garb carrying water. Unveiled in 1915, it is an acknowledgement of the unique culture developed by German settlers who came here in the 18th century. The old Poznań was a city of many cultures where Poles, Germans and Jews lived in harmony. The oldest section of the city is Ostrów Tumski with a Romanesque cathedral and an archaeological reserve. The route running from the Old Town to Ostrów Tumski is a popular tourist walk known as the Royal-Imperial Route.



[www.poznan.pl/mim/main/en/](http://www.poznan.pl/mim/main/en/)



[www.mnp.art.pl/en](http://www.mnp.art.pl/en)



<http://www.wielkopolska.travel>

# Gorzów Wielkopolski

## Embracing the River

This small city on the River Warta is famous for its hospitality.

For 700 years, the history of Gorzów Wielkopolski was connected with Germany. After World War II the city ended up in Polish territory and got its current name. Gorzów is a mid-sized city which proclaims its fondness for the river it lies on. The picturesque river promenade boasts a city beach which becomes a venue for various events during the summer. The Granary Museum (Spichlerz) hosts a very popular event on its grounds each summer, the St. James Honey Fair (Jarmark Miodny św. Jakuba). Also worth visiting are the modernist town baths from the 1930s. They used to be the largest sport and recreation complex between the cities of Wrocław and Szczecin. Their open structure made of concrete and steel, along with a glass-paned cupola, is indeed an extraordinary sight.



[www.gorzow24.pl](http://www.gorzow24.pl)



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



The river promenade in Gorzów Wielkopolski boasts a city beach which becomes a venue for various events during the summer.

