

POLAND

Castles and Palaces



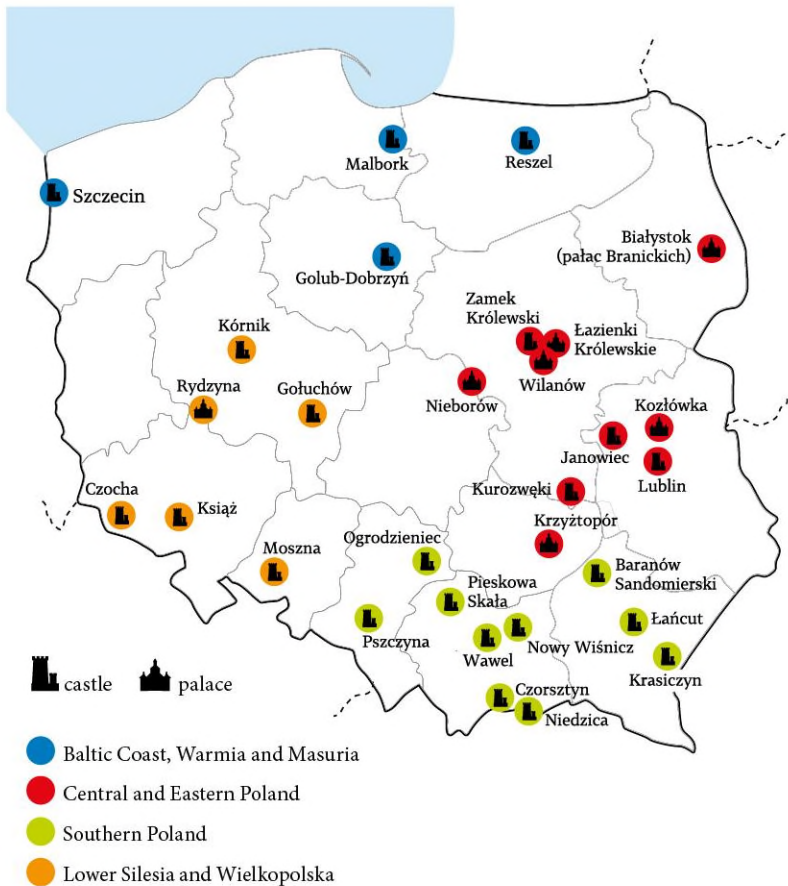
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www.poland.travel



Castles and Palaces



Chivalrous Past and Aristocratic Luxuries

Visiting castles and palaces in Poland is a fascinating journey through the ages. They witnessed the country's complicated past and its many transformations.

After countless wars, partitions and other political and social turbulence, preserved and restored castles and palaces are now part of Poland's historical heritage. Despite wartime destruction, priceless monuments of the past remained untouched in many places. Others were restored or reconstructed with such meticulous care that they became works of art no less important than the original structures. By far the boldest such undertaking was the reconstruction of the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Whether preserved or restored, castles and palaces are full of life these days. They are home to museums and/or education centres. They serve as venues for cultural events or outdoor sound and light shows. They function as luxury hotels with spa facilities, while restaurants in castles and palaces take diners on journeys to the times of hunters' parties and opulent feasts of the Polish nobility of olden days. ►



► Many layers of history are still waiting to be discovered. They are hidden in medieval strongholds made of earth, stones and wood, or in ruined but still impressive fortifications, or castles of the Teutonic Knights, or castles remodelled by aristocrats to become family residences, each more opulent than the last.

Mysteries also remain to be uncovered in royal castles, late Renaissance family residences and exuberant palaces copying Europe's most exquisite designs. All these buildings withstood changing times, fashions, philosophies, trends in interior design. The interiors are just as spectacular as the collections displayed within them. Palaces were often surrounded by sumptuous parks, French or English gardens, often with romantic or downright fairy-tale gazebos and pavilions. They would become art salons, oases of peace and reverie. And so they remain to this day.





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are still waiting to be
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Castle of the Pomeranian Dukes in Szczecin: Kingdom of Clocks

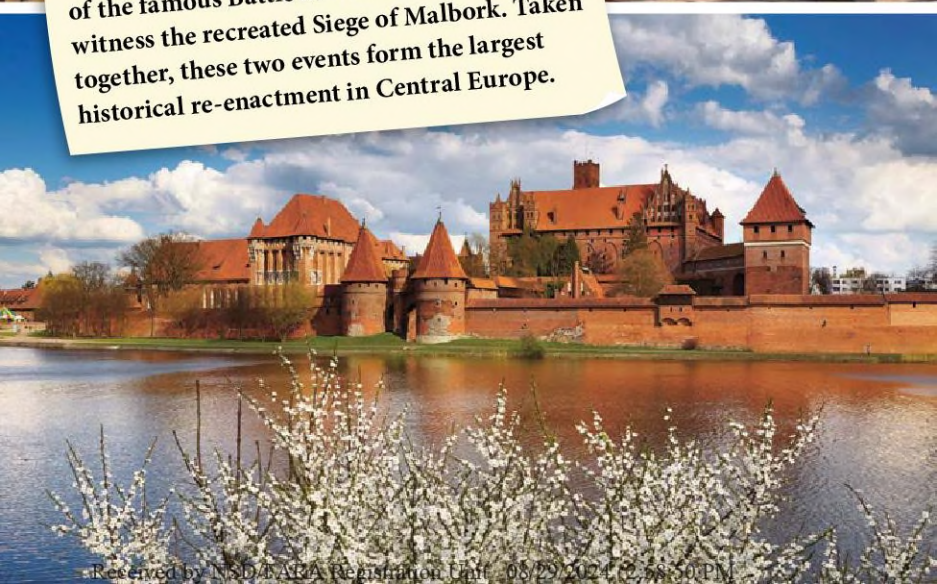
The main attraction here is a collection of timekeeping pieces, and in particular a clock whose face is a green man mask.

The light grey, exquisite outline of a Renaissance castle with green cupolas on its towers can't be missed by anyone entering the centre of Szczecin via the bridges over the River Oder. This is the ancient seat of the dukes of the Pomeranian House of Griffins dynasty. For more than 500 years, they ruled over the southern Baltic and lands lying between the island of Rugia and the towns of Lębork and Pyrzyce. Works of art associated with the House of Griffins which survived the numerous wars in the region can be admired at a permanent exhibition at the castle entitled *At the Court of the Pomeranian Dukes*. The courtyard is graced by a 17th-century astronomical clock, while another timepiece adorns the clock tower. It was quite a curiosity at the time it was created, in the late 17th century. The green man mask's moving eyes which follow the hour hand, the current date showing in the mask's open mouth, the jester beating out the hours with his left hand and quarter-hours with his right, all the while snapping his jaws and rolling his eyes, and a ball which shows the current moon phase above the clock face, were always the high point of a visit to the castle. And so they are today, as fortunately the castle was reconstructed after the devastation of the last war. In addition to exhibitions, the castle also hosts film screenings, theatrical presentations and lectures.





Every July, a week after the re-enactment of the famous Battle of Grunwald, you can witness the recreated Siege of Malbork. Taken together, these two events form the largest historical re-enactment in Central Europe.



Malbork:

The World's Largest Brick Stronghold

This imposing fortress was built on Polish lands by the Teutonic Knights.

Malbork was the headquarters of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. Built with considerable ostentation, the castle inspired both awe and fear in the folk of its day. Its core is the Upper Castle, built of 4.5 million bricks, the production of which was an immense undertaking in the 13th century. Mighty defensive walls, moats, drawbridges and iron portcullises, cannon stands, stone-throwing machines and storehouses: all those elements together form a monumental work of Gothic architecture, and are the reason this fortress has now been placed on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Visitors can also admire the chapel and the Grand Masters' Palace, the chambers of the monastic knights, as well as military barracks. From April to August, you can watch stunning sound and light shows in the castle grounds.

www.zamek.malbork.pl



Golub-Dobrzyń: Where Knights Cross Swords

The castle is situated on a verdant escarpment above the River Drwęca.

Built in the late 13th century by the Teutonic Knights, the castle owes its current appearance, with its Renaissance accents and corner turrets, to a remodelling carried out 400 years later. Today this is a museum and a living cultural centre, hosting spectacular events during the largest knights' tournament in Central Europe. Spectators can watch knights jousting on horseback and their combat on foot, archery competitions, shows by historical re-enactment groups and stuntmen's acrobatics. The tournament is always accompanied by concerts and a fair with handicrafts inspired by the culture of the Middle Ages. The castle's former kitchens are now restaurants, and some of the living quarters have been arranged to accommodate guests. There is also an equestrian facility nearby with an indoor riding hall. In summer, the castle attracts fans of tournaments not only from Poland but from all over the globe.

www.zamekgolub.pl





In 1811 the nearby town saw the last recorded burning at the stake in Europe. Usually people condemned to this type of execution were considered witches, but in this case, as legend has it, the woman was executed for setting fire to the castle.



Reszel:

Art and Leisure in a Mighty Old Castle

Mysterious Gothic interiors are home today to a hotel with a restaurant, conference rooms and exhibition space.

This stronghold, built in the 13th century by the Teutonic Knights, has a long, rich history. Situated on the River Sajna, in an area of scenic pristine forests and lakes, it served as a hunting lodge for the bishops of the Warmia region and later as a Prussian prison. After World War II this historic structure was turned into an artists' retreat and an art gallery. Its meticulously preserved Gothic interiors evoke fascination. The castle hosts numerous international open-air events, exhibitions, meetings and conferences. The owners guarantee mouth-watering dishes in the restaurant and top entertainment, as well, for those who crave an adrenaline rush. Besides feasts and parties in the castle halls, the repertoire includes climbing, paintball battles, zorbing, off-road trips in the area, and powered hang-gliding over Masurian lakes.

www.zamek-reszel.com



Royal Castle in Warsaw: Monument of Polish History

The royal residence, austere from the outside, astonishes visitors with the opulence of its interiors.

The focal point of the square stretching before the castle is Sigismund's Column. It commemorates King Sigismund III Vasa, who moved the Polish capital from Kraków to Warsaw. The column is one of the favourite meeting points in the city. It is also either the starting or finishing point of walks and rides along the Royal Route.

Considering the austerity of its external appearance, the castle's interiors surprise visitors with their sophisticated decorations, delicate mouldings and painstakingly chiselled ornaments gilded with gold leaf. It was here that Europe's first and the world's second constitution was drafted and adopted. The castle, which was almost entirely destroyed during World War II, was rebuilt thanks to public fundraising efforts. The redecoration of the castle's chambers was entrusted to contemporary artisans specialising in antiquated crafts. The Castle Square (Plac Zamkowy) offers a magnificent view of the Vistula River with its verdant banks. On the opposite side of the river, more and more lively pubs and city beaches are opening for business, inspired by the unforgettable panorama of the Old Town and the castle.

**Together with the Old Town, the Royal
Castle is included on the list of UNESCO
World Cultural Heritage Sites.**





In 1683 an army commanded by Jan III Sobieski won the crucial Battle of Vienna, saving Europe from the threat of the Ottoman Empire's Muslim invasion.

Wilanów:

Residence of the Saviour of Europe

Today Wilanów is a true treasury displaying remarkable works of art. Surrounded by lush gardens, the palace is connected to Warsaw's Old Town via the Royal Route.

This Baroque residence was a gift of King Jan III Sobieski to his beloved wife, Marie Casimire Louise. As such, it is a monument to love and partnership. The architecture of the palace in Wilanów is a fusion of the achievements of European art with the predilections of the Polish nobility. The rich collection of art has been arranged so as to represent different periods. It includes antique vases, paintings by Cranach, Rubens and David, fine porcelain from China as well as many objects of everyday use. The former riding hall in the palace is now home to the Poster Museum. The interiors and the outdoor area often host exhibitions, meetings and concerts, as well as music workshops during the International Summer Academy of Early Music. The garden has arrangements with very neatly trimmed trees. In spring, the gardens explode with blossoming magnolias which are the oldest specimens of this species in Poland.

www.wilanow-palac.pl



Royal Łazienki Park: Warsaw's Most Beautiful Park

It is truly amazing how classical architecture is combined here with spectacular gardens.

Royal Łazienki Park is a magical place. It is situated on the gentle slope of the Vistula's escarpment which forms a high riverbank, and is one of the largest garden complexes in Europe. Adorned with a multitude of gazebos, little bridges, sculptures, ponds and brooks, the park is one of the most alluring, scenic stops along the Royal Route, the historical trail leading from the Old Town in Warsaw to the palace in Wilanów. The neoclassical Łazienki Palace, also known as the Palace on the Water, is the heart of the park. Visitors can admire its historical interiors as well as the nearby Amphitheatre and the Old Orangery. On summer weekends, the park becomes a venue for open-air piano concerts during which Fryderyk Chopin's music is played at the foot of his famous statue.





The king used to invite highly respected artists and intellectuals to his residence. To this day, Łazienki Park plays an important part in the artistic life of the Polish capital.

www.lazienki-krolewskie.pl

Nieborów:

Residence of Polish Nobility amid Captivating Gardens

What makes Nieborów stand out among other palaces is its thrilling architecture, its original interiors and its inestimable art collection.

Walking through the palace chambers is a journey back in time across European styles and fashions from the 17th to the early 20th century. The highlight of the sightseeing tour is the charming second floor with the largest ballroom in the palace.

Moreover, there is an artistic majolica workshop in the palace grounds. Established in the late 19th century and relying on local clay reserves, it first copied the products of renowned European manufacturers and eventually focused on local traditions for inspiration.

The palace is surrounded by a French garden with fine specimens of trees and harmonious floral arrangements. Near Nieborów you can also visit Arkadia, an English garden. It is definitely one of the most beautiful romantic gardens in Poland, and perhaps even in Europe.

www.nieborow.art.pl



Janowiec Lubelski: Close Neighbour of Kazimierz Dolny

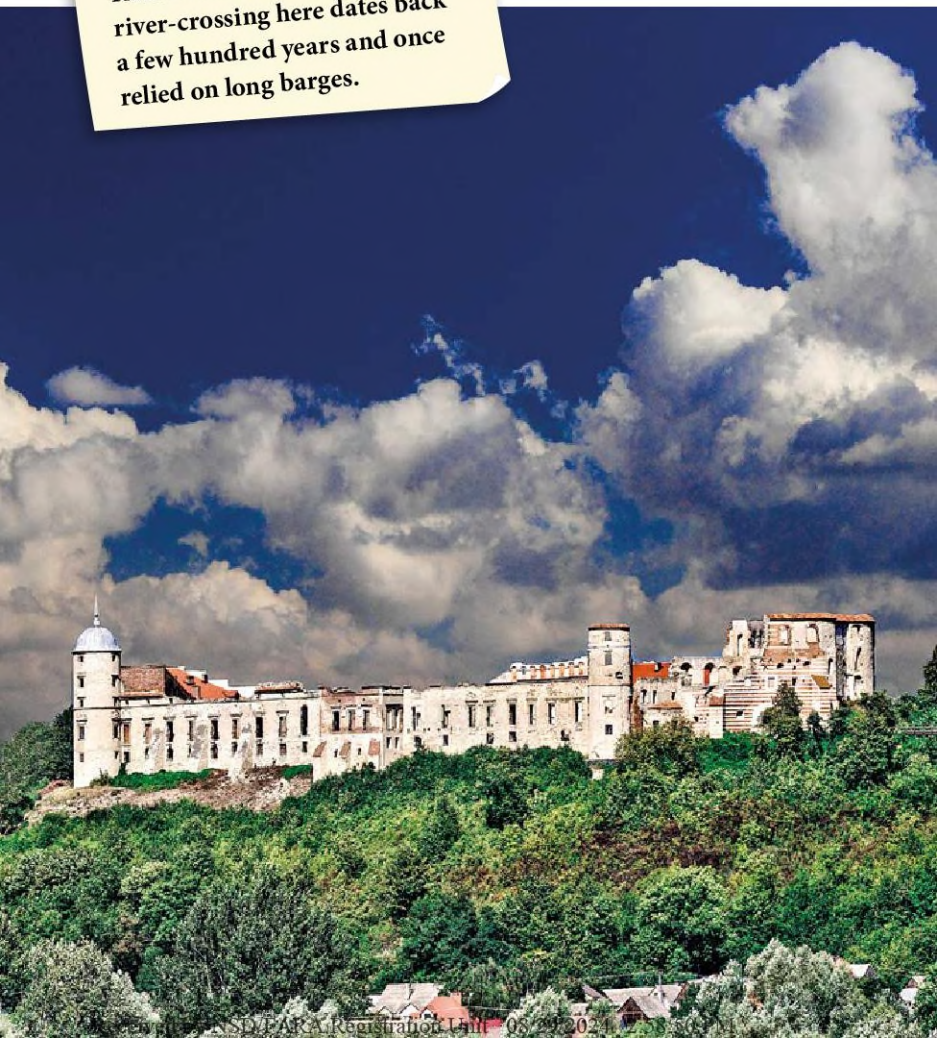
The famous little town on the Vistula, Kazimierz Dolny, and the castle in Janowiec stand facing each other on either side of the river.

The Janowiec castle was once a magnificent fortress. Distinguished architects and artists contributed to its development and decoration. Today it is a picturesque ruin on top of a hill, which makes it a perfect setting for films and cultural events. The surviving section of the castle houses a small museum and the elegant park nearby has been turned into an outdoor museum of wooden buildings moved here from other sites in the region. The granary, which is over 100 years old, is home to an ethnographic exhibition. The shed, which is just as old, is a venue for concerts and theatre performances, and the 18th-century manor house is now arranged to serve both as a museum and a guest house. Janowiec Lubelski lies within a popular tourist triangle outlined by three historical towns: Puławy, Kazimierz Dolny and the health resort of Nałęczów.



When the River Vistula allows, modern ferries travel back and forth between Janowiec and Kazimierz. The tradition of river-crossing here dates back a few hundred years and once relied on long barges.

www.mnk.d.pl



Białystok: Polish Versailles in a Fairy-Tale Garden

This aristocratic residence is surrounded by Baroque gardens considered the most beautiful in this part of Europe.

These days the palace is owned by the Medical University of Białystok. Its interiors are home to the Museum of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy.



The spatial arrangement of the Branicki Palace bewilders visitors with its perfect symmetry. The meticulously arranged flowerbeds, the regular network of lanes, and the fountains and sculptures which fill the garden all enhance the feeling of expectancy as one approaches the main facade. The palace in Białystok was designed in the 17th century by the highly skilled architect Tylman van Gameren. Due to his ingenuity, the seat of the aristocratic Branicki family is referred to as the Versailles of the North and finds no equal in this part of Europe. Many cultural events are held in its fascinating setting. The most esteemed one is the international soul music festival called Good Vibrations (Pozytywne Wibracje).

www.podlaskie.it





In 1569 Lublin Castle was the site of the historic signing of the Union of Lublin creating a single state: the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth which lasted for over 200 years.

Lublin Castle: Witness of Brotherhood between East and West

The hill towering above Lublin is the location of a beautiful royal residence.

Belonging to the Polish king, this castle was almost completely destroyed during the 17th century. A hundred years later, a new one was erected, modelled on the English designs fashionable at that time. The only sections from the original layout to have survived intact are the old Romanesque tower with its thick walls and the Gothic Chapel of the Holy Trinity with its Byzantine and Ruthenian frescos. The chapel, considered the most valuable vestige of Lublin's history, has a typically Western architecture whereas its frescos evoke the spirit of its Slavic roots. As such, it is one of the most interesting works of medieval art in Poland and is exceptional in Europe. The castle stands proudly over the city, as it has for centuries. Its neo-Gothic facade is one of the most recognisable sights of Lublin.

www.zamek-lublin.pl



Kozłówka: Palace Reminiscent of Versailles

Home to one of the most intriguing museums in the country, Kozłówka will bewitch you with its elaborate collection of paintings and sculptures as well as the opulence and colours of its interiors.

The owners of the palace intentionally emulated the design of the Palace of Versailles (with the French *entre cour et jardin* model), in the hope that their residence would overshadow the homes of other aristocratic families. A fairy-tale French garden leads up to the palace. The interiors still have their original furnishings from the early 19th century. The museum prides itself on its collection of Zamoyski family portraits and copies of European masterpieces. The former carriage house has been turned into the Socialist-Realist Art Gallery with over 1,600 authentic sculptures, paintings and posters made by Polish artists in the 1950s, at a time when art was used as a tool for Communist ideology.

www.muzeumzamoyskich.pl



Visitors can also watch authentic newsreels from the 1950s, known as Polish Film Chronicles.



For over half a century, until the Palace of Versailles was built, Krzyżtopór was the largest residence in Europe. Unfortunately it has fallen into ruin over the centuries.



Krzyżtopór: Ruins of a Gigantic Calendar

The castle's proud name comes from the Polish words for a cross ("krzyż") and an axe ("topór"), symbolising the faith and the coat-of-arms of its owner.

By erecting a palace exemplifying the calendar, 17th-century nobleman Krzysztof Ossoliński wanted to overshadow contemporary castles and leave a lasting sign of his family's power. The architectural elements were symbolic and highly impressive. There were four turrets, one at each corner, representing the seasons of the year. Inside, there were as many large chambers as there are months and as many smaller rooms as there are weeks in the year. The number of windows corresponds to the number of days in the year.

But, Ossoliński did not stop there. Even the stables had crystal mirrors and horses had their hay served in marble mangers. In the tower over the gate, one of the rooms was topped with a glass ceiling. The floor above it was arranged as an aquarium so that guests gathered at the table could admire exotic fish while enjoying their dinner.

www.krzyztopor.org.pl

www.swietokrzyskie.travel/en/




Kurozwięki: Palace with a Touch of the Wild West

People come to Kurozwięki to try their luck in the corn maze, admire Arabian horses at the local stud farm and see American bison up close.

Embellishments and improvements take place all the time at this complex. The palace at the centre of the park houses a plush hotel, a restaurant, a cafe, a pizzeria and a “buffalo bar”.

By far the main attraction is the American bison herd, the only one in Poland. Today it has around 80 of these majestic creatures. That is enough for bison meat dishes to appear on the restaurant menu. The events organised here all echo Wild West traditions. They include a Buffalo Safari, horseback riding and horse races but, above all, the annual August festival known as Wild West at Kurozwięki (Dziki Zachód w Kurozwiękach). The programme of the festivities includes horse shows, lessons in archery and tomahawk throwing, riding a mechanical bull as well as pop music concerts.



During the Wild West festivities, a Native American village is built in the palace grounds.

www.kurozweki.com





Wawel: National Symbol

Wawel Hill with the Royal Castle, the Cathedral and the Dragon's Den are by far the most popular attractions of Kraków.

The Royal Castle was the seat of Polish rulers until the end of the 16th century. The majestic castle perched on top of Wawel Hill is both a monument of history and architecture and a treasury full of works of art and national heirlooms. Today the castle is a museum. Its permanent exhibition comprises the State Rooms, Royal Private Apartments, Treasury and Armoury. In the Audience Hall (Sala Poselska), 30 sculpted heads look down on visitors from the ceiling. These visages portray the local community from the times of the Renaissance. The heads are amazingly detailed, but the most precious collection at the castle is the awe-inspiring tapestries known as arrasas. Woven in the late 16th century, they depict biblical scenes and some of them bear the coats-of-arms of Poland and Lithuania.

The Armoury exhibits the Szczerbiec: the original coronation sword of Polish kings. Being the only royal insignia which has survived to this day, it is priceless.

www.wawel.krakow.pl/en/



Baranów Sandomierski: Stone Masterpiece Like a Jeweller's Gem

There is absolutely no exaggeration in nicknaming this place a “pearl of the Polish Renaissance” or the “little Wawel.”

The park and palace complex in Baranów is a precious historical monument and a luxurious hotel oasis. It was designed by Italian architect Santi Gucci, the court artist at the Wawel Castle, and built in the 16th century on a rectangular plan. The inner courtyard was closed on all sides, with arcaded cloisters resembling Wawel's. What is surprising is that to enter the courtyard, you need to climb stairs. It was placed this high intentionally, for protection against any flooding from the River Vistula nearby. The palace is home to a museum and a restaurant. Adjacent to it there is an elegant hotel, and some of the historical interiors of the palace have been arranged as stylish luxury suites. In addition, there is also a conference centre and a golf academy.

www.baranow.com.pl/en





Baranów Sandomierski is connected to Łańcut through the cultural Trail of Palace Residences and Museums (Szlak Rezydencji Pałacowych i Muzeów).



Łańcut:

Interiors Filled with Music

This is one of the most fabulous aristocratic residences in Poland.

During concerts and festivals, its original preserved chambers come alive with music.

Walking through the rooms of this palace feels like a fascinating journey in time. The interiors mirror fashions ranging from the 17th century to the turn of the 20th century. Great attention was paid to every detail, and every element of the furnishings is a historical artefact in itself. Each of the collections is equally impressive, whether paintings, drawings, furniture, musical instruments, porcelain, glass, lacquerware, silverware, tapestries, or the library full of books. The most prized part of the entire collection at Łańcut is the assortment of horse-drawn carriages once belonging to former palace owners. Parked in the stables and the carriage room, these handsome conveyances make a spectacular exhibition, one of the largest in the world. The palace is surrounded by a grand English park. Almost year-round, the interiors and the gardens are filled with music. The tradition of organising concerts in Łańcut dates back to the 18th century.

www.zamek-lancut.pl



Wiśnicz Nowy: *Palazzo in Fortezza*

This 17th-century castle is one of the most precious examples of military architecture in Poland.

The castle in Wiśnicz bears testimony to past military power. The fortified bastions were once equipped with 80 cannon and, thanks to the supplies stored in the castle, inhabitants could survive even a three-year siege. Near the end of the Renaissance, when warfare techniques had evolved and even the highest Gothic walls could no longer guarantee safety, the stronghold was remodelled. As a result, residential chambers were arranged, with sweeping views of gentle hills, forests and localities in the valley. The castle was then surrounded with fortifications shaped like a pentagon. These days the castle houses a history museum, a stylish hotel and a restaurant. The old rooms often become venues for classical music concerts and many festivals, e.g. the culinary Broth Festival (Festiwal Rosołu).



**The construction of the
Wiśnicz castle was the
embodiment of the Italian
concept of *palazzo in
fortezza*.**

www.zamekwisnicz.pl





Visitors can enjoy a walk on
top of the dam on the River
Dunajec and see the huge
hydroelectric power plant.

Niedzica and Czorsztyn: Castles Rising over Tranquil Waters

The ring of mountains around the valley and its broad lake are part of one of the most picturesque landscapes in southern Poland.

Medieval castles at the foot of the Pieniny mountain range are an unusual accent in the scenery. The castle in Czorsztyn is a romantic ruin, while the one in Niedzica is preserved in remarkably good condition. The museum in Niedzica Castle is dedicated to the region's history and its original culture, and the stone terrace offers a magnificent vista. The castle towers over Lake Czorsztyńskie, a man-made reservoir.

The cruise ships circumnavigating the lake: the *Biała Dama* (White Lady), the *Harnaś* and the *Dunajec*, dock right below the castle. Popular hiking trails begin at the castle, and during winter the area becomes a mecca for skiers. Every August, Niedzica is also the host of an entertaining music festival, Baroque in Spisz (Barok na Spiszu).

www.czorsztyn.com



Krasiczyn: Noble Vision of the World Order

This is one of Poland's most exquisite residences, its architecture expressing the ideals the nobility once believed in.

The castle was built in such a way that the onlooker would realise right away the hierarchical organisation of the world. The social order recognised by the 17th-century Krasicki magnate family is represented by the corner towers. Each of them is different. The most magnificent one, called Divine, is topped with a dome and shelters a chapel. The Papal tower has a crown-shaped attic, echoing the Roman Catholic papal tiara. The Royal tower, decorated with six little turrets, resembles a castle. The Noble tower is fortified with battlements. The walls of the residence are decorated with hunting and biblical scenes, along with great wall medallions depicting emperors and Polish kings. The castle is surrounded by a lush park with a special microclimate.

The courtyard and the interiors often host concerts, performances and other events. Krasiczyn is situated just 10 kilometres from Przemyśl, a splendid town in the historical Polish-Ruthenian borderland, full of historical monuments.

www.krasiczyn.com.pl/en





Pieskowa Skala:

Renaissance Gem amid Limestone Cliffs

The Renaissance form of the castle was inspired by the Wawel royal residence.

www.pieskowaskala.pl www.orlegniazda.pl

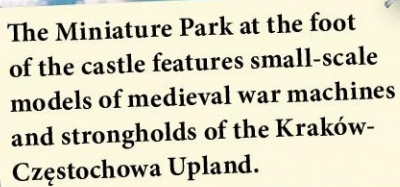


Pieskowa Skała drew from the best architectural examples. Along with the surrounding opulent gardens with ponds and a zoo, the architecture proved that, at the end of the 16th century, the castle could rival the royal residence in character and exuberance.

The courtyard encircled by cloisters impresses visitors even today. Every room in the castle is dedicated to a different period through appropriate interior decor. The view from the loggia is particularly captivating, as the castle is situated high amidst the picturesque limestone cliffs of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland. The most distinctive monadnock in Poland, widely known as Hercules' Club (Maczuga Herkulesa), stands 25 metres tall in the vicinity of the castle. Pieskowa Skała is one of the most precious gems of the Polish Renaissance and a major landmark along the Trail of the Eagles' Nests (Szlak Orlich Gniazd).

An aerial photograph of a formal garden at Pieskowa Skała. The garden features a complex layout of green hedges forming various geometric shapes, including squares and rectangles. Inside these hedges are flower beds with different colored flowers, such as yellow, red, and purple. The garden is set on a light-colored path or lawn.

Every June, the Pieskowa Skała castle hosts a festival called the Days of Old Polish Culture (Dni Kultury Staropolskiej). The event presents art, music, dance and cuisine harking back to the olden days.



The Miniature Park at the foot of the castle features small-scale models of medieval war machines and strongholds of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland.



Ogrodzieniec: Echoes of Past Splendour

Due to its turbulent history, all that is left of this once resplendent castle is a ruin. The stark white stone walls of the castle and limestone monadnocks stand out against the hillside greenery. Even today, the ruin itself remains a magnificent testimony to its past.

Built in the Middle Ages, a chain of 25 castles known as the Trail of the Eagles' Nests stood among limestone outcroppings and guarded the important trade route leading from Kraków to Silesia. All of them except Pieskowa Skała fell into ruin, but their remnants are very picturesque accents in the region's landscape.

Situated on a vast treeless hill, Ogrodzieniec is the largest of them. During its construction, the existing limestone rock of the hill was incorporated into the line of the outer walls. The limestone building material was obtained locally, and the whiteness of the walls remains in stark contrast to the grassy surroundings. This scenery has proved very popular among historical re-enactment groups and present-day knight fraternities. From May to September, people can watch shows organised by the local knight brotherhood (Bractwo Rycerskie Ziemi Ogrodzienieckiej).

www.zamek-ogrodzieniec.pl



Pszczyna: Breathtaking Castle with Authentic Interiors

Nearly all the furnishings in the castle's rooms are original antiques from the 19th and 20th centuries.

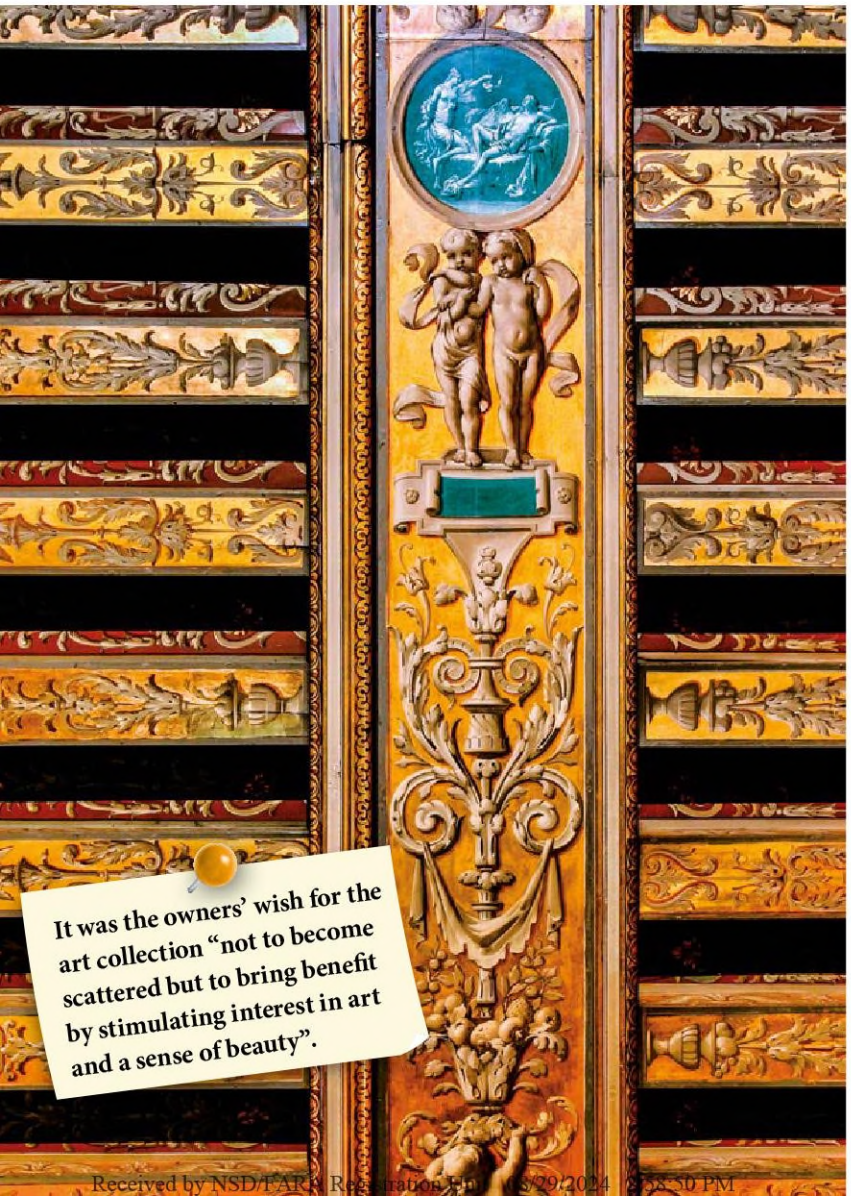
The castle in Pszczyna does not tower over the town but forms a whole with it. It is located next to the historical Old Town area and is surrounded by a park designed as a romantic garden. Visitors can take a pleasant stroll over charming bridges, sit back on benches tucked away amid trees and flowers, or stop at one of several graceful little chapels. The integrity of the castle and the town can be witnessed especially during events which take place both in the Old Town Square and in the castle grounds. The museum in the castle displays 19th- and early 20th-century interiors. The underground treasury exhibits European and Oriental armour dating between the 16th century and the inter-war period of the 20th century. The rooms of the castle are often filled with music from concerts of primarily classical music.

www.zamek-pszczyna.pl

**Pszczyna's Bison Farm
(Pokazowa Zagroda Żubrów) is
situated not far from the castle.**







It was the owners' wish for the art collection "not to become scattered but to bring benefit by stimulating interest in art and a sense of beauty".

Gołuchów: “Loire Castle” in the Wielkopolska Region

A true jewel among castles.

The architecture of the castle in Gołuchów echoes the look of the famous French chateaux on the River Loire. Its exterior neo-Renaissance traits are evident in its pitched roofs and ornate chimneys. The halls and study rooms are decorated with magnificent furniture, sophisticated fireplaces, paintings and tapestries. Throughout, the castle boasts a rare collection of Greek vases. Its decor is enhanced by authentic historical architectural elements conceived in other European countries and incorporated here. The adjacent park is filled with about 1,500 rare and precious trees. Right next to the park, visitors can admire bison, fallow deer and the *konik polski* (Polish primitive horse) at the Model Animal Farm. One of the castle's outbuildings is home to the only museum in Poland devoted to forestry.

www.mnp.art.pl



Książ: Jewel of Lower Silesia

This medieval residence of princes, redecorated in the Baroque style by its later owners, is in the same league as the largest Polish castles, sitting right next to Wawel and Malbork.

This impressive structure with a large garden complex is surrounded by hills. The gardens catch the eye with their sophisticated flowerbed arrangements. Maximilian's Hall and the apartments of Princess Daisy are opulently decorated in the Baroque style. Daisy von Pless was one of the most interesting figures to have lived in the castle, remembered not only for her charm and beauty but also for her pacifist stance during both World Wars. Night sightseeing tours of the castle are especially exciting. These days, Książ offers luxury hotel accommodation and fine dining in its restaurant. It is also a venue for exhibitions and festivals, among which the most interesting are the Festival of Flowers and Art (Festiwal Kwiatów i Sztuki) held in May and the Princess Daisy Ensemble International Chamber Arts Festival (Międzynarodowy Festiwal Kameralistyki Ensemble im. Księżnej Daisy).

A tour of the castle also includes part of a mysterious tunnel constructed by the Nazis during World War II.

www.ksiaz.walbrzych.pl





The castle has 8,000 square metres of space and boasts 365 rooms and 99 turrets.



Moszna:

Welcome to *La Belle Époque*

Every year, the charm of this fairy-tale castle attracts throngs of visitors.

The castle in Moszna is an eclectic structure. Its primary style is Baroque but architectural details and decorations reveal the influence of other periods as well. This includes Art Nouveau, which was just budding at the time the castle was undergoing modernisation. The period at the turn of the 20th century in Europe went down in history as “La Belle Époque”. Following the fashion of the time, in order to enhance the picturesque appearance of the residence, it was integrated into the surrounding park. Together with its fantastical setting, Moszna Castle is now a perfect venue for outdoor events, art performances, most notably the summer concerts of a festival called Jazz in the Palaces (Jazz w Pałacach). Some of the rooms have been arranged to accommodate guests, who may also choose to eat in the palace restaurant.

www.moszna-zamek.pl



Kórnik: Precious Book Collection in a Romantic Setting

Located not far from Poznań, the castle houses one of the most valuable book collections in Poland while its surrounding gardens are home to rare and protected tree species.

The design of the residence was the creation of Italian and German architects. Its original architecture alludes to English trends of the Romantic period. Modifications from the 19th century, such as adding turrets and battlements to the palace's lofty silhouette and surrounding it with a moat filled with water, were supposed to emphasise the appearance of a residence of knights of long ago. Again following English tendencies, Oriental motifs were integrated into the decoration of the facade. In keeping with this design pattern, the castle was surrounded by English gardens arranged in such a way as to create the impression of a natural formation. The Kórnik arboretum is famous for its fabulous rhododendrons. Because of the presence of many rare species of plants, it enjoys special protection.







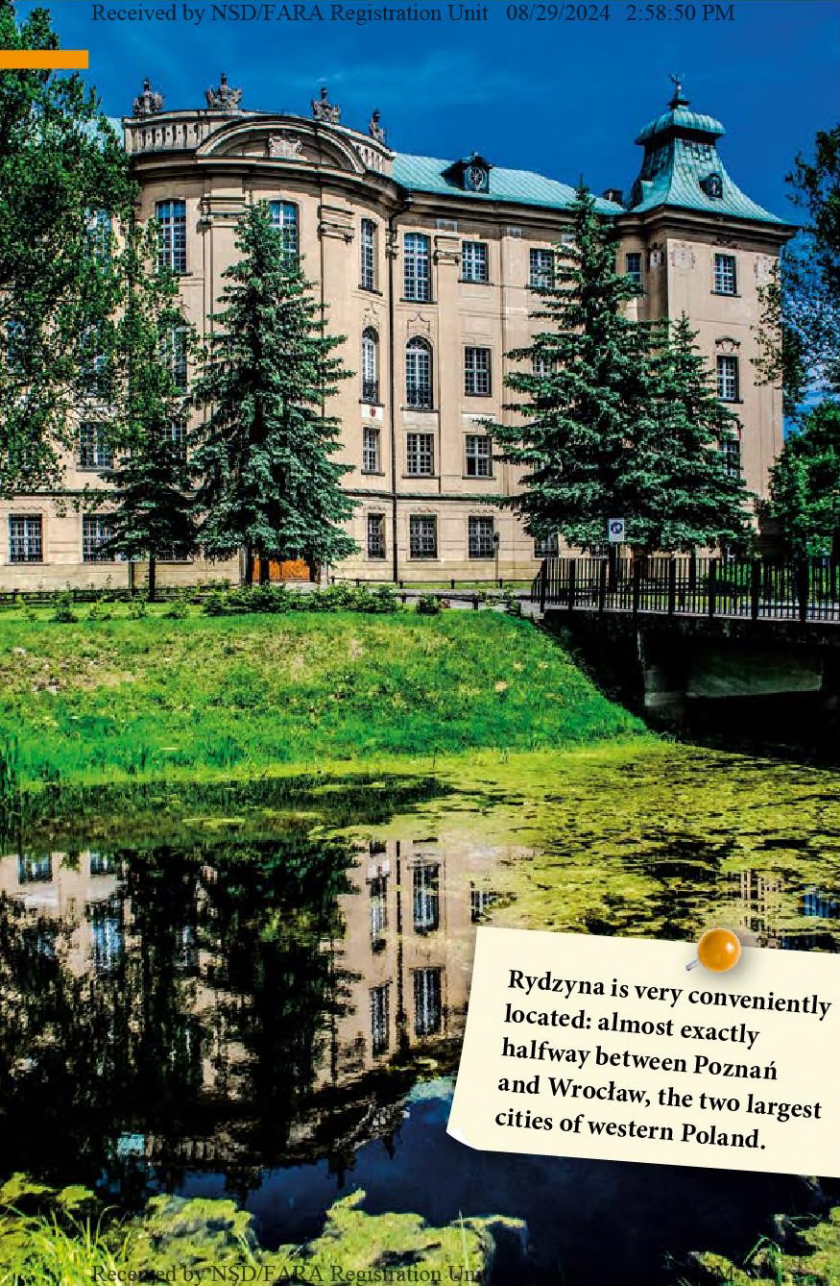
Czocha Castle: Venerable Historic Building and Elegant Hotel

At first Czocha Castle was a frontier stronghold, and later a magnate family's residence. Today it welcomes visitors from all over the world.

The castle was designed as a fortress in the 13th century. After centuries of political turbulence followed by a fire which destroyed the castle in the 18th century, the structure was restored to its former glory thanks to ample funding. Thus, it became one of the most interesting landmarks of Lower Silesia. Unfortunately, after World War II almost all the furnishings fell victim to looters. Today the impressive monumental stronghold is home to an elegant hotel and its historical interiors can be visited like any other museum. Knights' tournaments, dance shows, comedy acts and concerts organised here add to the appeal, along with a stylish cafe and a restaurant specialising in Polish cuisine. The castle grounds have also been used as the set for many feature films and documentaries. The castle's wine cellar hosts mead-tasting events, promoting this drink so strongly connected to the culture of old Poland and appreciated by gourmets.

www.zamekczocha.com





Rydzyňa is very conveniently located: almost exactly halfway between Poznań and Wrocław, the two largest cities of western Poland.

Rydzyzna: Dazzling Baroque Masterpiece

The halls of the palace please the eye with their opulent interiors. Splendid sculptures and monumental frescos leave no one unimpressed.

Painstakingly reconstructed, the palace mesmerises visitors with its interior's aesthetically pleasing decor. When the castle went up in flames in 1945, the efforts to restore it to its former glory took 20 years. Exhibitions devoted to art, history and nature are now housed in truly resplendent settings. The palace also has a hotel, a mini spa and conference rooms. The hotel rooms evoke the spirit of past eras. Their luxurious furnishings are also reflected in their names, such as Royal Room or Princely Suite. Visitors can also access other superb rooms doubling as conference venues, such as the Four Seasons Hall with its sculptured personifications of spring, summer, autumn and winter, or the stunning Sea Hall.

www.zamek-rydzyna.com.pl





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