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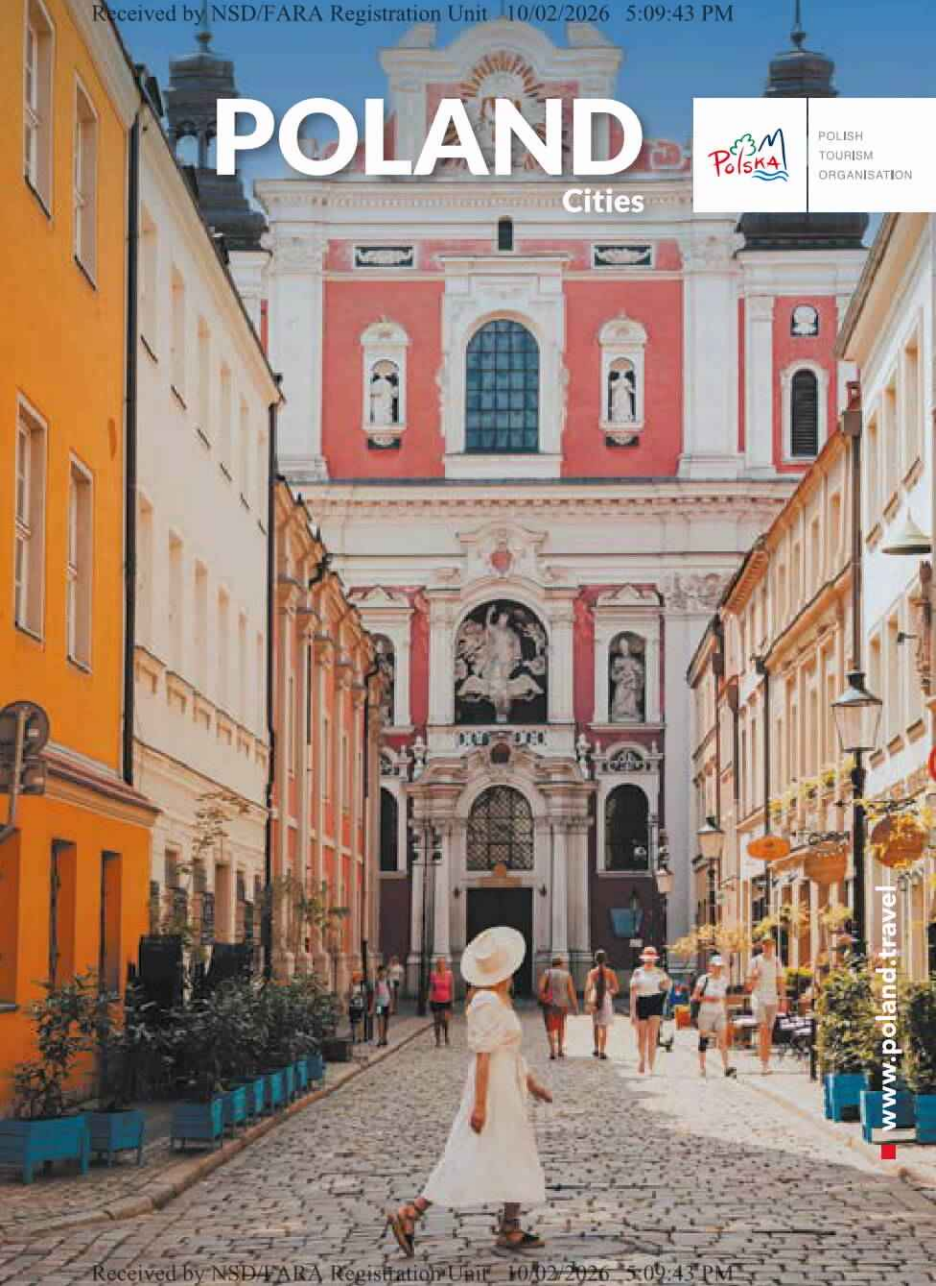
POLAND

Cities

POLISH
TOURISM
ORGANISATION



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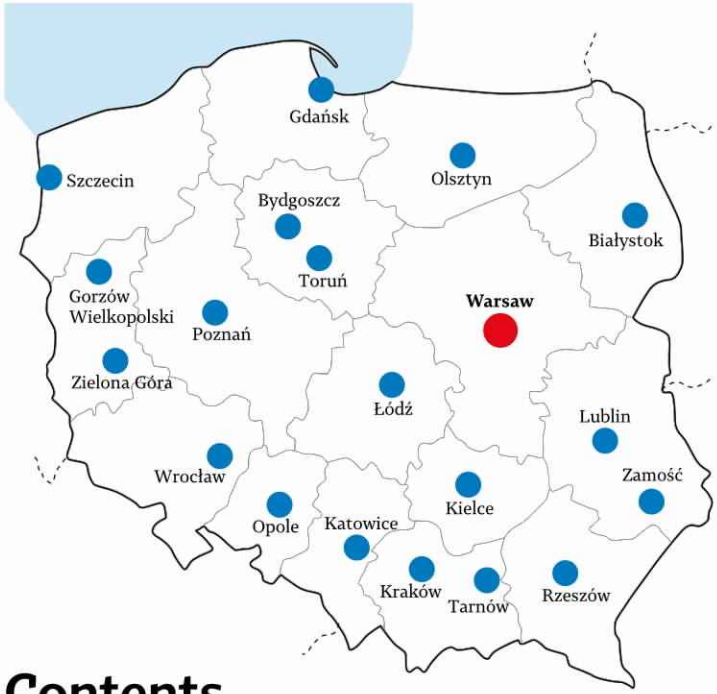

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Polish cities

Full of character and soul, each one has its own unique story to tell

Whether it's UNESCO World Heritage sites or 21st-century architecture you're after, a Chopin concert or a performance by world-renowned jazz or rock musicians, regional dishes or fusion cuisine, street food or Michelin-starred restaurants, yoga in the park, kitesurfing on a lake or excellent bike paths – the choice is yours. Polish cities have so much to offer that they have something for everyone, catering for practically every taste and desire.

Polish cities attract large numbers of visitors every year with their rich cultural offerings and unique attractions. Their annual calendars are always packed with recurring events, while museums draw people in with their engaging sightseeing programmes and interactive multimedia exhibitions. Old town squares, arcades and boulevards entice passers-by with their charming cafés and restaurants serving both traditional Polish dishes as well as modern cuisine from around the world. As you wander the city streets, take the time to visit the art galleries showcasing works by both established and emerging artists, or pick up some local handicrafts or a piece of unique jewellery. Alternatively, the many parks, green spaces and even woodland areas found in the cities are perfect for cyclists, walkers or those who enjoy having a picnic in the heart of nature.

For more detailed information on all the attractions and current events, be sure to check out the city and tourism organisation websites, or stop by the local tourist information points, where qualified staff are always on hand, along with a supply of helpful maps and colourful souvenirs. We hope you enjoy your visit to Poland!

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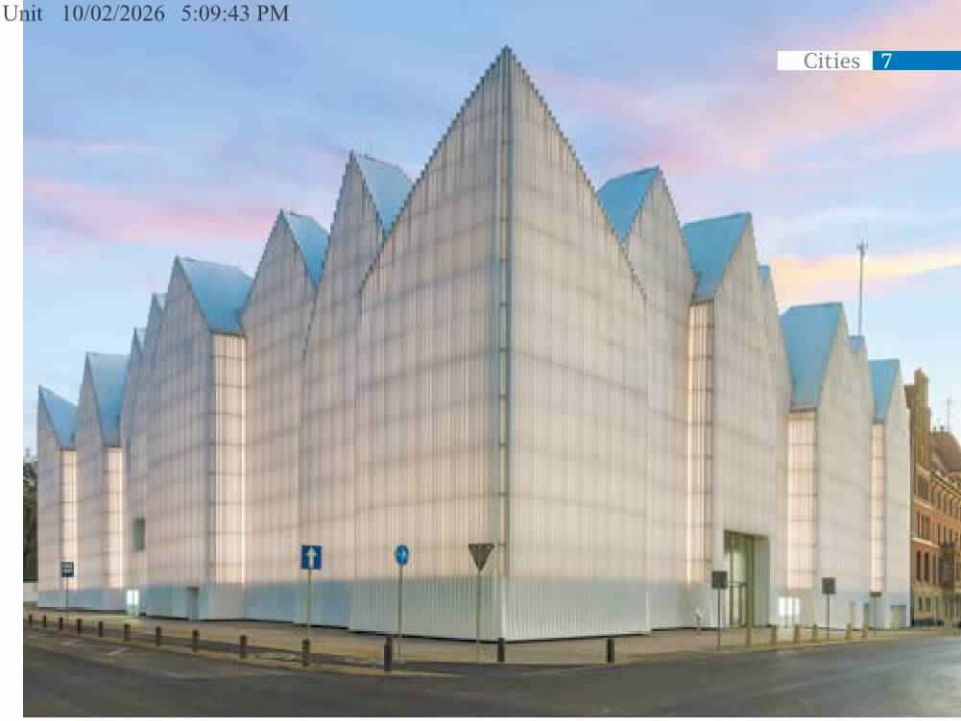
Szczecin

Sailing Ship Parades and a 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.

Szczecin 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 hosted the Tall Ships Races three times, 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-Eugène Hausmann'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.



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Tri-City

A Phenomenon by the Baltic Sea

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 football stadium resembling a giant piece of amber, the European Solidarity Centre and the Museum of the Second World War are the city's new landmarks. ▶

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▶ **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 Błyskawica*, 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, an unusual three-storey zoo with aquatic animals from all over the world, allows you to discover fascinating secrets of underwater life. While in Gdynia, make sure to stop at the modern Emigration Museum and, of course, take a walk on the beach. At the southern edge of the city, right where it meets Sopot, lies the picturesque Orłowo district, known for its high cliff, pier and amazing views of the sea.

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Bydgoszcz
A Fascinating Glimpse of Local Modernity

A river runs through it.

Built 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 a 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.

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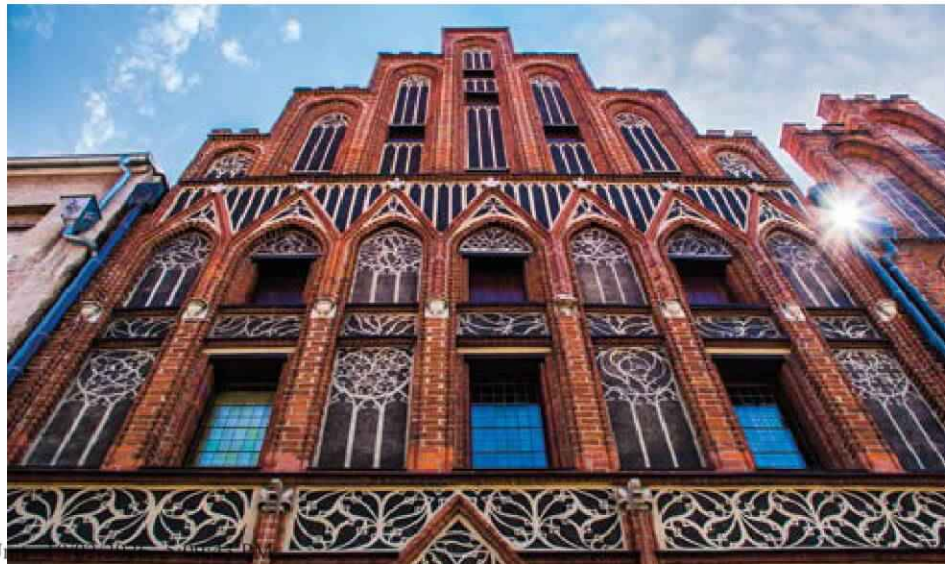
Toruń
Hometown of Copernicus

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.



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Olsztyn

The 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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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 people 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 was also founded on seven hills. The city hosts many music festivals, for example an open-air event called Pozytywne Wibracje (Good Vibrations).

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Lublin

Academic Centre and Gateway to the East

A city of inspiration, and a vibrant academic, business and cultural hub in eastern Poland.

For centuries, Lublin was a town of key importance in the relationship between Poland and Lithuania. At the end of the 16th century, the two countries merged into one state, and it was at the General Assembly in Lublin that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth formally came into being. The chapel in the castle, adorned with priceless Byzantine frescos, stands as a symbol of this historic union. Lublin's strong academic traditions are upheld today by such esteemed institutions as the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University and the Catholic University of Lublin, while its 100,000-strong student population also helps to set the tone in the city. The restored Old Town delights visitors with its colourfully decorated, historic tenement houses, regional dishes served in numerous restaurants, beer produced in a local brewery for over 170 years, and lively nightlife. In the past, the city was also home to one of Poland's most robust Jewish communities, with Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer also immortalising the erstwhile atmosphere of the town in his novel *The Magician of Lublin*.

Every summer, the Carnaval Sztukmistrzów, an international festival of circus arts, takes place in the Old Town and the area around the castle, drawing street performers, jugglers, acrobats, musicians and dancers from all over the world to the city. Highlights of the event, often attracting hundreds of spectators, include a tightrope walking competition and, above all, breathtaking evening multimedia shows in which the performers appear to "fly" to music.

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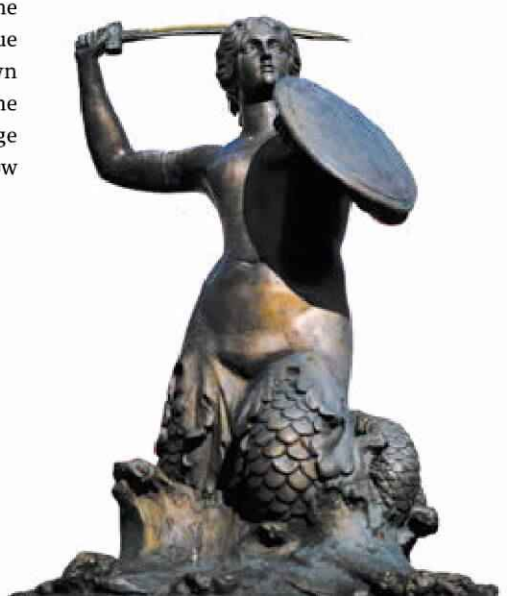
Warsaw
The Invincible City

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.

For 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. ▶



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▶ 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 in the shape of 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. ▶

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▶ 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.

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Łódź
The Polish Hollywood

Formerly the capital of Poland's weaving and textile industry, today it's a vibrant hub renowned for its arts and film scene.

All Polish roads seem to lead to Łódź as the city is located at the intersection of two major motorways, the A1 and A2. Full of contrasts and striking avant-garde installations, this green city is undergoing something of a renaissance. Its first golden age came during the industrial boom at the turn of the 20th century when, thanks to extensive investments and the hard work of its Jewish, German, Russian and Polish inhabitants, Łódź became Europe's leading textile centre, as depicted in Andrzej Wajda's cult film *The Promised Land*. Alongside the huge textile factories, grand palaces were built for the wealthy manufacturers. Many of these remain today, including the magnificent Izrael Poznański Palace, located near the former textile factory that has since been turned into Manufaktura, a shopping and leisure complex that is a favourite spot with local residents and visitors alike.

Equally popular is Piotrkowska Street, a lively pedestrianised arcade area with a unique atmosphere, which is lined with boutiques, clubs and pubs, as well as monuments to famous Polish figures, including a striking statue of Arthur Rubinstein playing the piano. The courtyards off Piotrkowska Street become the setting for artistic events during the Łódź of Four Cultures Festival (Festiwal Łódź Czterech Kultur), in which the organisers allude to the mixture of ethnicities, languages and religions in the old Łódź. ▶

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► For many decades now, the city has been the capital of Polish filmmaking. Graduates of the prestigious Łódź Film School (known officially as the National Film, Television and Theatre School) include many celebrated Polish actors and directors, such as Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Roman Polański, Krzysztof Zanussi, Małgorzata Szumowska and Janusz Gajos. Just as in Hollywood, Piotrkowska Street has its own Walk of Fame honouring legendary figures of Polish cinema. The streets and alleyways of Łódź have provided the backdrop for hundreds of Polish and international film productions, and some of the places immortalised in these films can easily be found by following specially prepared tourist routes.

Alongside film, Łódź is also inextricably linked to the world of art. The walls of many of the city's buildings are adorned with murals and installations made by famous street artists from Poland and around the world. With the large number of murals that have been created here over the years, Łódź now boasts the largest outdoor urban gallery in Poland.

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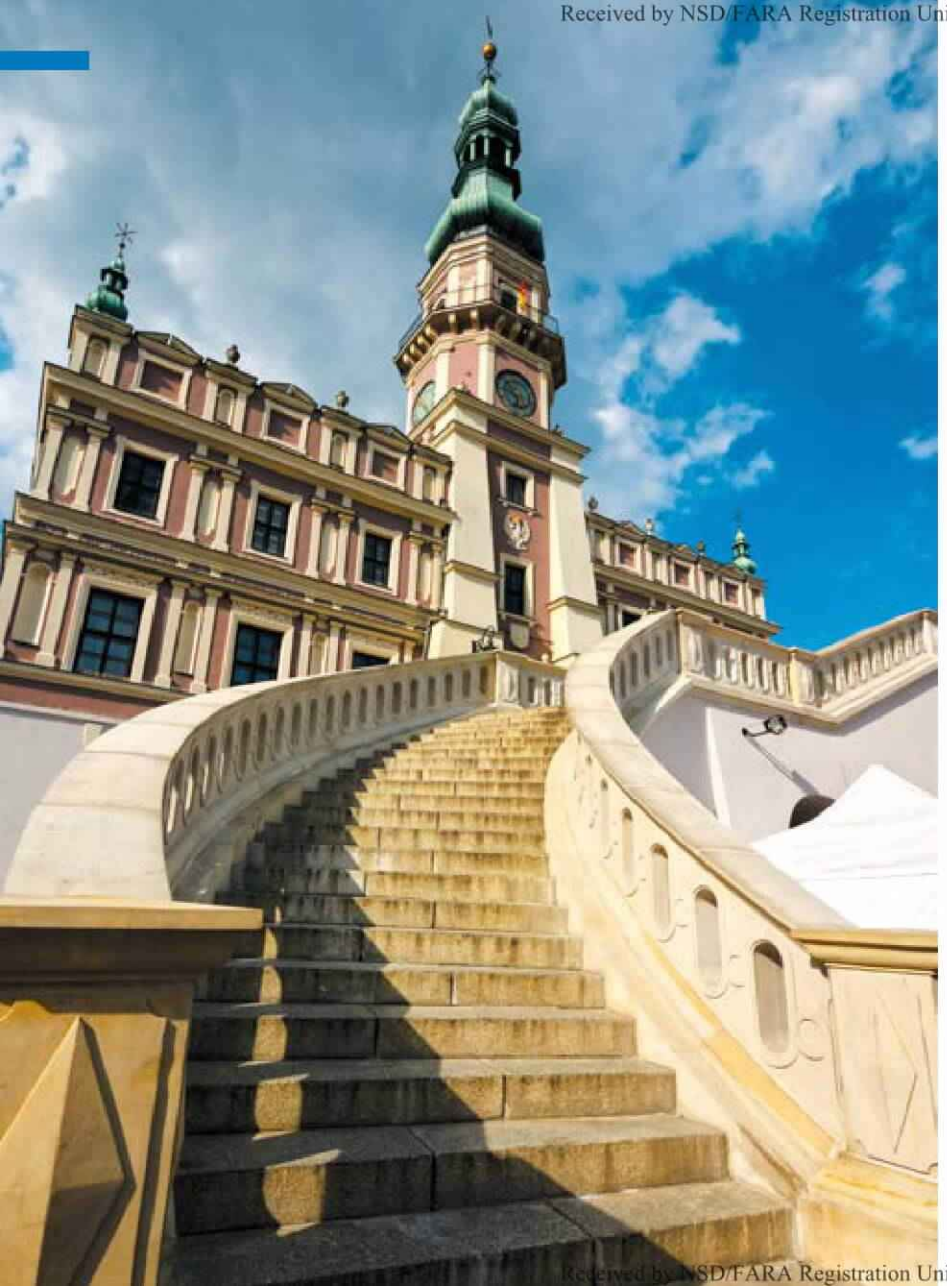

Zamość
The Ideal Renaissance Town

Built far away from other major towns, and modelled on Padua in Italy, Zamość is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Zamość was originally conceived by a visionary politician with a deep love for Italy – the Grand Chancellor of the Crown, Jan Zamoyski – and it was his vision that led to the creation of this "Pearl of the Renaissance". The town's charming tenement houses with their arcades, as well as the stunning Mannerist-Baroque town hall with its grand, decorative staircases, serve as the backdrop for a number of cultural events, including the renowned Zamość Theatre Summer. Encircled by a formidable ring of defensive walls, which have been modernised on numerous occasions, Zamość was once a real fortress, strong enough to withstand the 17th-century Swedish invasion known as the Deluge.

Every year, the storming of the Zamość Fortress is played out during an outdoor re-enactment on the local Field of Mars, featuring participants from various knights' fraternities.

Visitors can explore tourist trails that lead underground as well as through the fortifications, where it's even possible to have a go at firing a cannon.

Zamość is also home to the oldest pharmacy in Poland. Operating in the Market Square since the beginning of the 17th century, it is named the Rector's Pharmacy after its founder, the Rector of the Zamoyski Academy, Szymon Piechowicz.

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Kielce
A City in the Very Heart of Poland

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

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.

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.

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Kraków
Poland's Most Recognisable City

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

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.

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. ▶

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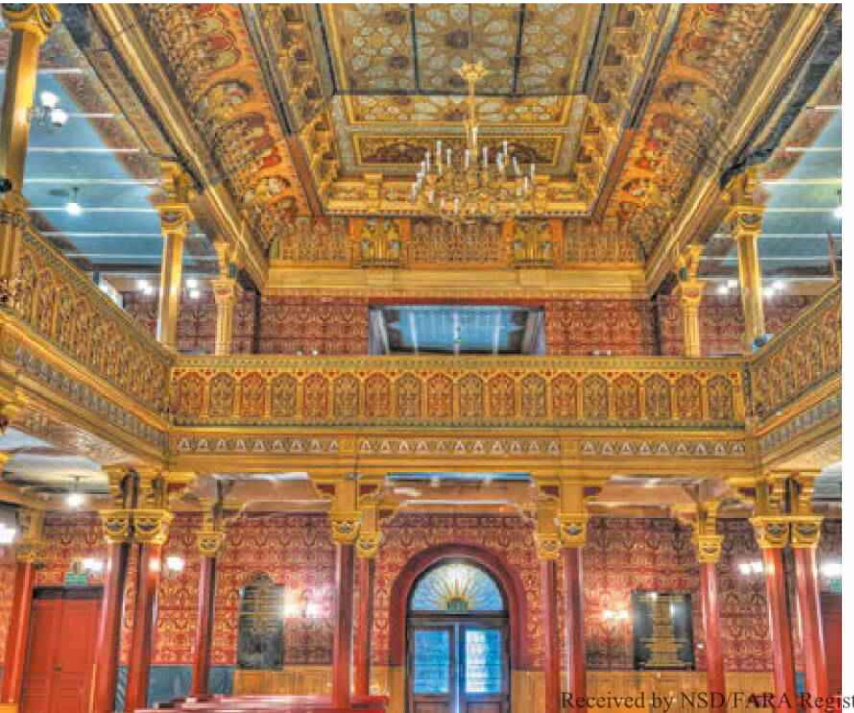
▶ The vaults of the Wawel Cathedral are the burial site of Polish kings, saints, poets and distinguished military leaders. The last kings from the Jagiellonian dynasty lie interred beneath the golden dome of the Sigismund Chapel. The cathedral vaults are also where many other influential people are buried. 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. ▶



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▶ 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 large-scale cultural and sporting events drawing crowds of many thousands. Other green areas beloved by the locals include the two mounds overlooking Kraków that were built to commemorate Poland's national heroes, Tadeusz Kościuszko and Józef Piłsudski.

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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.

Tarnów 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.

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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 Aviation Valley (Dolina Lotnicza), a region with a 70-year tradition and a high concentration of aviation companies, research institutes and pilot training centres.

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

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Katowice

Museums Over Mines, Green Spaces and Great Music

Katowice, the dynamically growing urban hub of Upper Silesia, is quickly climbing the rankings of Europe's most beautiful cities.

The iconic Spodek – a sports and entertainment hall with a unique design resembling a UFO – is the symbol of the city and its most famous landmark. Built during the time of the Polish People's Republic, it now sits adjacent to a modern urban space that gives a nod to the area's mining traditions but in a completely changed form. The site of an active coal mine up until the 1990s, the area, which is beautifully illuminated at night, today houses the International Congress Centre, with its "green valley", as well as the Silesian Museum, where exhibitions are held in galleries located deep underground.

Culture, and especially music, has played a key role in Katowice's development. The city hosts numerous festivals, including the Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition, the renowned Rawa Blues Festival – the world's largest blues event – and the outdoor OFF Festival Katowice, one of the best alternative music events in Europe. Adding to Katowice's prominent position in the world of culture is the presence of acclaimed orchestra ensembles, headed by the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Katowice is also home to the largest city park in the country, which was built on slag heaps and landfills in the 1950s in a pioneering attempt within Europe at an environmental restoration project. ▶

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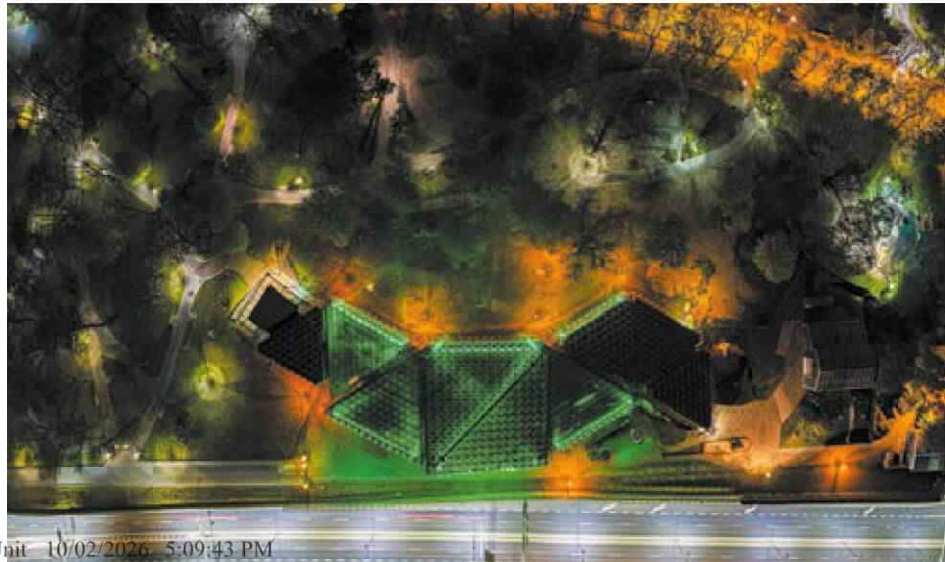
▶ Katowice is not only the capital of Upper Silesia and the beating heart of this mining area, but it is also the centre of a giant metropolis made up of several neighbouring towns, all with a common industrial past. The Industrial Monuments Route runs through each of these towns, connecting the sites associated with coal mining that led to the creation of the local mining hub in the 19th century. Coal extraction also informed the characteristic culture and architecture of this region, as evidenced by the Giszowiec and Nikiszowiec housing estates, with the former being designed as a "garden city". Other sights along the Industrial Monuments Route include the Guido Historic Coal Mine in Zabrze, which is open for sightseeing.
The main attraction in Gliwice, another town in the Katowice urban area, is the Palm House. Occupying a number of pavilions, it provides a real tropical oasis amid the industrial landscape.



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Opole
The 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.

Opole can also boast Poland's most musical museum. The Polish Song Museum, housed in the legendary Millenium Amphitheatre, also known as the Open Air Theatre, tells the story of Polish songs from the 1920s until the present day.

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Wrocław

City of Priceless Historic Landmarks, Works of Art and Dwarves

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.

Magnificent 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 Giełda), 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. ▶

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▶ 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 Racławice 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.

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Zielona Góra
The 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.

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Poznań
A City Worth Exploring

Known as Poland's trade fair capital, Poznań boasts exquisite cuisine, fascinating monuments, and even the chance to journey back in time to the origins of Polish statehood.

The charming streets of Poznań's Old Town converge in the Old Market Square, where the magnificent town hall, one of the finest Renaissance monuments in this part of Europe, proudly stands overlooking the area. A bugle call rings out from its tower every day at noon, played on a carillon, a musical instrument consisting of a set of harmonically tuned bells. The tower also draws large crowds to view its famous mechanical goats, the symbol of the city. Nearby is a well with a sculpture of a woman carrying water while dressed in a traditional folk costume. The Bamber Woman, as she is called, was unveiled over a hundred years ago, and reminds passers-by of the times when 18th-century German settlers chose to make this place their home. Historically, Poznań was a multicultural town where Poles, Germans and Jews lived side by side. ▶

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▶ The oldest part of Poznań is Ostrów Tumski, also known as Cathedral Island, situated on the Warta River. You can learn all about its history at Porta Posnania, an interactive heritage centre and ultramodern museum that has won numerous architectural awards. It lies on the Royal-Imperial Route, a tourist trail connecting Ostrów with the city centre and the Old Town.

In the heart of the city is Lake Malta, an artificial reservoir that attracts water sports enthusiasts in the summer and ice skaters in the winter. The historic Old Brewery, meanwhile, is a great place to combine a spot of shopping with admiring fabulous pieces of art. And no visit to Poznań would be complete without trying some delicious Rogale Świętomarcińskie, or St. Martin's croissants. You can delve into the history of this unique sweet treat at the Rogalowe Muzeum Poznania, aka the Croissant Museum, located in a 500-year-old tenement house.

Ideally situated halfway between Warsaw and Berlin, Poznań has a world-renowned reputation as a major centre for trade fairs. The Poznań International Fair, which celebrated its centenary in 2021, has long been a leader among trade fair hubs not only in Poland, but also in Central and Eastern Europe.

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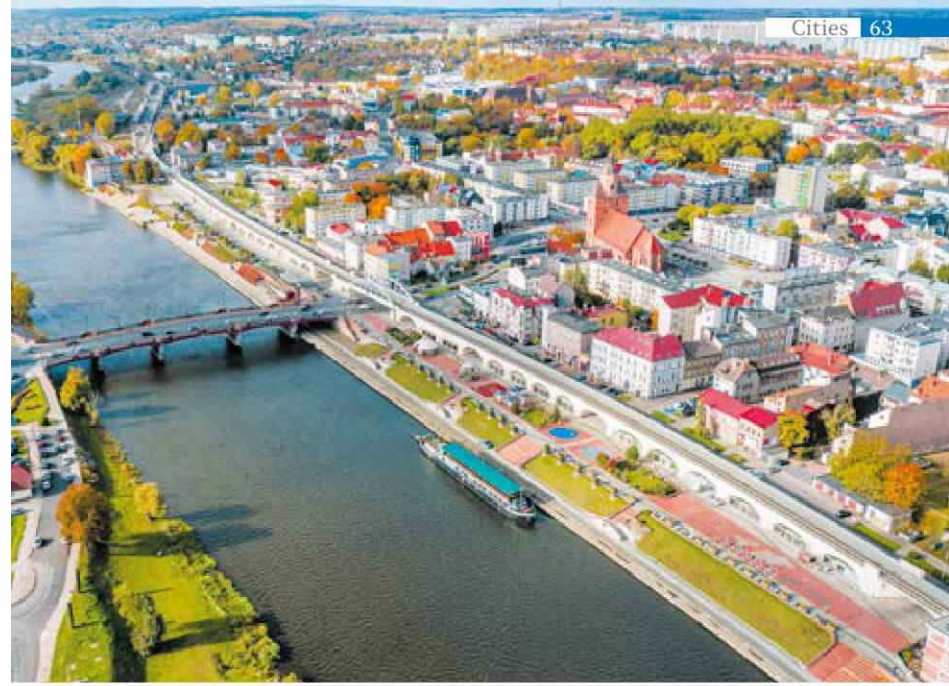
Gorzów Wielkopolski
Embracing the River

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 Two, 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, which were once the largest sports 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.
Surviving in fragments, the 14th-century stone and marble defensive walls are Gorzów's crown jewel, but if you ask tourists visiting the city, the most popular attraction is the Well of Witches.



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