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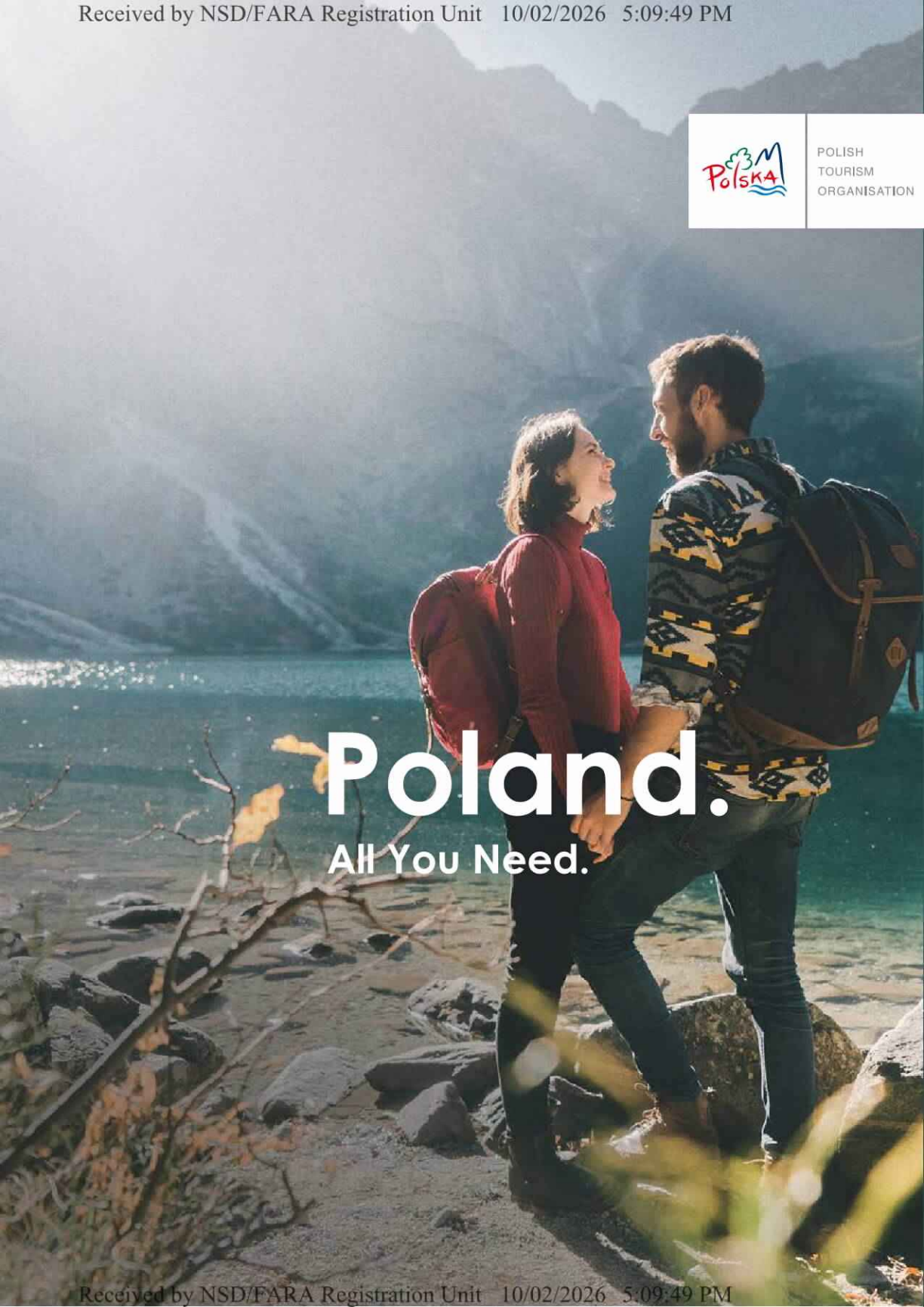
POLISH
TOURISM
ORGANISATION



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Poland.

All You Need.

Poland. It is here that you will find the biggest sand dunes in Central Europe. It is here that the largest complex of lakes and the world's oldest oil well are located. It is in Poland that a re-enactment of the greatest battle of medieval Europe takes place. Finally, it is here that you can see the longest wooden pier in Europe.

There are many things and places in Poland that you did not know about. To visit, to do, to experience. You can find everything here. See for yourself!

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“Closest to the sea.”

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The historical centre of over 1000-year-old Gdańsk, Sopot pier – a symbol of carefree seaside holidays, historic ships mooring at Gdynia's Pomeranian Quay... The list of attractions in the Tricity (the cute Polish name for the linked cities of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia), where history mixes with modernity, goes on and on.

Three times more attractions

It is impossible to imagine visiting Gdańsk without seeing the famous Royal Way. Between the Upper Gate, where it starts, and the Green Gate which ends it, you will encounter the most prominent monuments of this Hanseatic city: the Court of St. George's Brotherhood built in 1494, the Artus Court with its beautiful façade in the style of Dutch Mannerism, and the symbol of Gdańsk: Neptune's Fountain. It is also worth visiting the Amber Museum. Here you will find out how amber forms, what properties it has, and see unique plant and animal amber inclusions.

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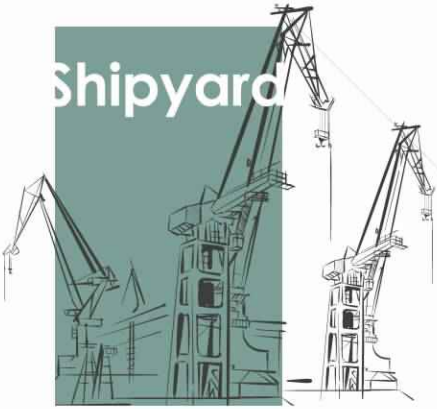
Gdańsk – trail of history



Gdańsk can also be proud of its impressive role in recent history. One important place is the Gdańsk Shipyard, which in the consciousness of Poles no longer functions as a shipbuilding facility, but above all is a place of remembrance for shipyard workers killed during the suppression of protests in December 1970, and the cradle of the Solidarity movement. Anyone who wants to learn more about the history of the fight against the communist regime should visit the European Solidarity Centre, which has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

The building, covering 3,000 square metres, is not only a museum but also a library, a research and scientific centre, and a conference centre. As many as 1,800 exhibits are housed there: photos, maps, manuscripts, and archival documents remind us of momentous events from the recent history of not only Poland but of the whole of Central and Eastern Europe.

Gdynia – floating museums and smart education

It is definitely worth going to Gdynia if you are travelling with children. They will be fascinated by the two impressive historic ships moored at the Pomeranian Quay: Dar Pomorza (Pomerania's Gift) and ORP Błyskawica (Lightning). Take the tour and you will see not only the deck but also the engine room and officer rooms.

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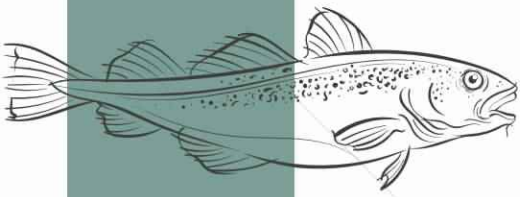
Fauna



Young enthusiasts of aquatic animals can visit the Gdynia Aquarium, an unusual zoological garden at the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute. Here you can admire not only a colourful coral reef but also electric eels, crocodiles, huge turtles, piranhas and sharks.

Another unique place in Gdynia is the EXPERYMENT Science Centre, which was awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. The children will love it! The phrase "learning through play" acquires special meaning here. The interactive exhibition literally fascinates young visitors – in the Hydroworld they will learn the secrets of water, enjoying the Tree of Life they will see the world through the eyes of a dog or a bee, the Invisible Forces exhibition will help them understand the complicated world of physics through experiments, and in the part called Operation: Human they will carry out a virtual operation. It's hours of fun for the whole family!

Sopot – 100 percent relaxation

In Gdańsk and Gdynia you will want to explore, explore, and then explore some more, while in Sopot, without the slightest feeling of guilt, you can simply give yourself up to blissful laziness... Breathe in the scent of resin, walk slowly around the Forest Opera amphitheatre, and, in fine weather, take a stroll along the 4.5 km of sandy seaside shore. Be sure to see the local wooden pier which, at 512 metres, is the longest in Europe, and drink coffee at one of the numerous cafés near Bohaterów Monte Cassino Street, commonly referred to as "Monciak".

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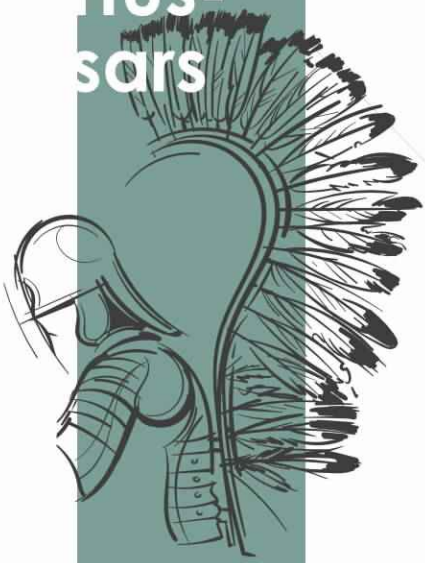
Tricity surroundings

Although the Tricity itself has much to offer, it is worth leaving it for a while to go and see a nearby Teutonic castle with all its attractions. Gniew Castle is a historical fortress built after 1290 on a square plan. When visiting it with a guide, you will see, among other things, a torture chamber equipped with sophisticated machinery, the castle chapel and defensive cloisters. Today Gniew Castle is also a hotel, a venue for social events, banquets or training courses. You can take part in historical and team-building games, watch extremely captivating and detailed costume shows, including Wrath of the Hussars or a Polish-Swedish battle, or listen to a Gregorian choir concert by candlelight. And those who want a holiday with a thrill should watch Holidays with Ghosts – a multimedia performance with pyrotechnic effects.

Staying at Gniew Castle is also an opportunity to learn horse riding, take a gondola cruise on the Vistula, taste the castle's cuisine and take advantage of the spa facilities – just enough to spend not one but a few days here.

Wrath of the Hussars



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This city on the River Oder is associated with the griffin's head which adorns the city's coat of arms. Szczecin's urban history stretches back over 750 years. The medieval Castle of the Pomeranian Dukes with its extraordinary halls (built by John Frederick and Elisabeth), the Mieczysław Karłowicz Philharmonic shaped like a crystal, and Wały Chrobrego (Chrobry Embankment) with a 500-metre-long terrace, are just some of the gems to be found in the capital of the West Pomerania region.

Where the air smells of chocolate

You can start your trip from Szczecin's boulevards, where the air smells of chocolate. This is thanks to PPC "Gryf" S.A. (a confectionery industry enterprise), whose history dates back to 1946. It's a really nice way to begin a trip!

www.hortulus-spectabilis.com.pl

www.szczecin.eu/en

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Beautiful views of the River Oder and the port…

…are the highlights of Wały Chrobrego, designed by Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau at the beginning of the 20th century, with a distinctive fountain that amazes passers-by with its colourful light show after twilight. A gentle wind, the murmur of water, passing boats and ships let you revel in the seaside-like atmosphere. From here it is not far to the National Museum and the Maritime University.

The Szczecin Underground Routes are definitely worth seeing – a gigantic reconstruction of the largest civilian air raid shelter from World War II and a nuclear bomb shelter from the Cold War period. Those who want to learn about Szczecin's latest history cannot miss the Breakthroughs Centre for Dialogue. It is a special initiative run by this borderland city, documenting its difficult, yet true, history.

Stroll among blooming roses

In summer, the Rose Garden will make the perfect end to your tour. Not only trees and shrubs are planted here, on more than 2 hectares of land, but also exotic plants and over 9,000 examples of 99 rose varieties.

How about something besides mainstream tourist destinations? Those who are eager to step off the beaten track will be delighted with Szczecin's Venice: a group of historical buildings near Kolumba Street. A former brewery, where alcohol and yeast were produced, attracts connoisseurs of post-industrial architecture. Charming buildings made of red brick create a unique atmosphere, so probably anyone who watches the world through the lens of a camera will be delighted here.

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The area around Szczecin is overgrown with vegetation! The city is surrounded by the Wkrzańska, Goleniowska and Bukowa forests. In the latter, in the town of Glinna, you can visit one of the most beautiful dendrological gardens in Poland, where you can admire a collection of over 800 species and varieties of trees and shrubs, including giant sequoias. There is also the charming Emerald Lake with its multitude of hiking and walking trails.

Attractions of West Pomerania

Everyone who loves nature will feel great in Wolin National Park. Here you can admire the most beautiful part of the cliff-tastic coastline. The European bison sanctuary located on the green tourist trail allows you to take a closer look at this proud example of Polish fauna. And those who want to see even more nature... should visit Dobrzyca!

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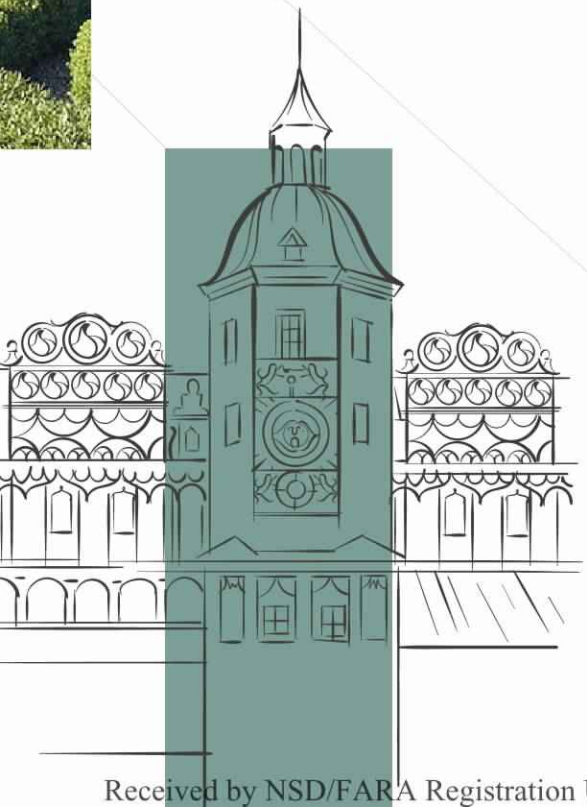
Dream gardens

A walk around the Hortulus Spectabilis Gardens in Dobrzyca, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, is an extraordinary experience. Here, you are simply overwhelmed with flowers and greenery! Spread over 4 hectares, the 28 themed gardens are open to visitors – everyone will find something for themselves. You can admire sophisticated shrub sculptures – the amazing collage they create will make you dizzy. The atmosphere is truly fabulous – it's a wonderful experience for everyone.

When it comes to the youngest tourists, they are sure to like the world's largest hornbeam maze. From the terrace of a 20-metre-high observation tower, you can admire gardens named Magic, Energy, Time and Space along with a Stone Circle. Need more attractions for your kids? No problem! Outdoor fun in the maze will ensure they have a fantastic time which, thanks to a board game called Power Maze, will be remembered for even longer!



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Bydgoszcz is a city with an incredibly rich history and centuries-old traditions. It attracts tourists with its numerous monuments, delights with its picturesque location on the River Brda and plays an important role in industry, trade and logistics. Few people know that it is one of the largest cities in Poland: it is 8th in terms of population and 11th in terms of area. Bydgoszcz is doing very well as the capital of Kujawsko-Pomorskie province, offering tourists a host of attractions and unforgettable experiences.

Bydgoszcz is synonymous with water

With the River Brda passing through the centre of the city, the Vistula marking its eastern border, and the Bydgoszcz Canal, Bydgoszcz is synonymous with water and sometimes it is even called the Venice of the North. Most people associate it with its distinctive 19th-century buildings on the River Brda's waterfront, which is aptly named the Bydgoszcz Venice. It is here that you can see the most famous sights of the city: the monumental granaries. They are indisputable proof of the role played by Bydgoszcz in the salt and grain trade over the centuries. You can admire this part of the city from the deck of the Bydgoszcz Water Tram.

www.biskupin.pl

visitbydgoszcz.pl/en

www.muzeummydla.pl/en

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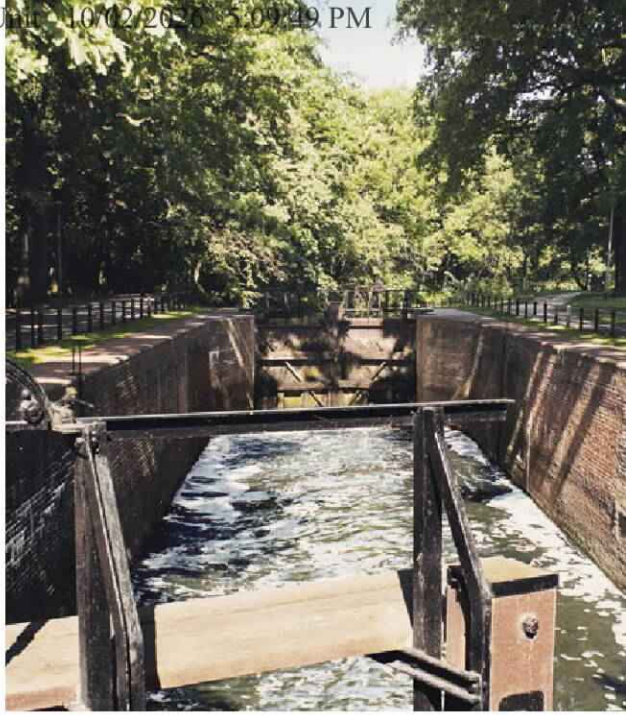
Symbol of the province

When sightseeing, you simply must visit the Bydgoszcz Canal, with its several locks from the second half of the 18th century. It is the oldest inland waterway structure of this type still in use in Poland. It is also worth stopping at the Archer statue in Jan Kochanowski Park. The statue, along with the granaries over the River Brda and the Bydgoszcz Canal, is the most recognisable symbol of this province capital.



Museum of Soap and the History of Dirt

Near the Old Market Square you can find an unusual attraction: the Museum of Soap and the History of Dirt, where everybody can learn about the history of hygiene, and will even have the opportunity to make their own soap! This peculiar place was awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. The EXPLOSEUM (DAG Fabrik Bromberg War Technology Centre in use from 1939 to 1945), located in a former military factory that belonged to the Third Reich, is equally exceptional.

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When visiting the city with children, you won't want to miss one of the greatest attractions of modern Bydgoszcz. We are talking about the fountain in the Music District, which is sure to delight adults as well. Thanks to the use of electronically controlled fountain nozzles, you can enjoy unique shows of music, light and water. During the summer months of July and August, shows are held daily.

Architecturl gems

In Bydgoszcz, nature harmoniously blends with architectural marvels. This is reflected in the unique buildings of the Bydgoszcz Venice as well as in numerous buildings in other parts of the city. Those worth mentioning include the Covered Market built in 1904 in the neo-Gothic modernist style, the Art Nouveau building of the Copernicanum from 1903-1906, and the Opera Nova, which is one of the most modern music theatres in Poland.

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Archaeological Museum in Biskupin

When planning a visit to Kujawsko-Pomorskie province, you cannot miss the most famous archaeological reserve in Central Europe, located in Biskupin. Three reconstructed settlements make up the museum:

- an in situ one – a settlement founded by the first farmers, with longhouses from 6,000 years ago
- a Lusatian one, from the Bronze Age 2,700 years ago
- an early medieval one from the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries

Numerous attractions await visitors: museum lessons, exhibitions, and even a cruise on Lake Biskupin and a ride on a narrow-gauge railway from the late 19th century along the Biskupin-Żnin route. At the museum, between May and September you can encounter re-enactors practising ancient crafts. In this way, the reserve contributes greatly to the cultural heritage of Poland. The annual Archaeological Festival in Biskupin is the best proof of this. Its organisers set themselves the goal of popularising science through numerous competitions, workshops, presentations, shows and concerts. The event impressed the Polish Tourism Organisation which awarded it its Certificate. It is worth planning your stay in Kujawsko-Pomorskie province for the duration of the festival.

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It is not without reason that the official slogan promoting one of the most beautiful Polish cities, founded by the Teutonic Knights in 1233, reads: "Toruń – Touch the Gothic". Indeed, there are plenty of Gothic and medieval architectural sights here. And if you add the fact that the Medieval Town of Toruń has proudly appeared on the UNESCO list of world cultural and natural heritage since 1997, you can understand why Toruń must be considered a truly royal city of the Kuyavia-Pomerania region.

Breath of history

Toruń
Gothic masterpiece

muzeumpiernika.pl/en
www.visittorun.pl
planetarium.torun.pl/en

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The Medieval Town of Toruń is the oldest part of the city. It consists of the Old and New Towns and the area of the Teutonic castle. Most of the monuments are located in the Old Town, which covers an impressive 19 hectares! In fact, on every corner you can see a delightful trace of medieval history. You have to see the Old Town Hall with its 40-metre observation tower, the Church of the Holy Spirit and the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and various architectural curiosities – such as the Leaning Tower, tilted 1.4 metres to the side of the street. A simple walk among centuries-old red brick houses, towers, remains of defensive walls and impressive granaries is an extraordinary experience.

Interactive sweet adventure

Ginger-bread

The Living Museum of Gingerbread, awarded the Golden Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, is a real treat, not only for those with a sweet tooth. It is here that, under the supervision of a Gingerbread Master and Spice Witch, you can prepare your own gingerbread cake according to the original recipe, bake delicious gingerbread yourself and even decorate it. The museum describes the tradition of baking Toruń's specialities in a clever way. You can learn the history and secrets of gingerbread art from legends told by guides in Old Polish, and find out how to turn your knowledge into practice. The kids will be delighted and proud to get their own little apprentice certificate.

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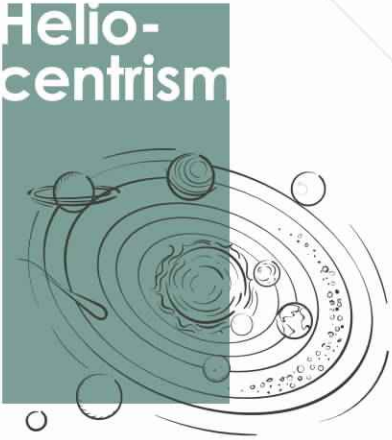
Of course even a child associates Toruń with Nicolaus Copernicus. It was here that the world-renowned astronomer was born in 1473. You can visit the house of the man behind the heliocentric theory and see a monument to him, but if you are travelling with children, the most interesting part of your trip will be the Toruń Planetarium. A cosmic abyss on a spherical screen, planets and stars at your fingertips – what more do you need to satisfy the kids? Probably... some Toruń gingerbread.



Following in the footsteps of Copernicus

Toruń can make you hungry not only for gingerbread but also for knowledge. To get a better understanding of the life and achievements of the man who "stopped the Sun and moved the Earth", it is worth going on a family trip along the Copernicus Trail.

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Copernicus Trail

The trail starts in Olsztyn, its longest section leads through Warmia and Masuria, then across Pomerania, to end in Kujawsko-Pomorskie province, in Toruń. What are the attractions of this, one of the most famous Polish trails? Of course, it includes the most important sites related to the life of Nicolaus Copernicus, including Olsztyn's Gothic castle, the Warmia Bishops' Castle in Lidzbark Warmiński, Cathedral Hill in Frombork, and St. Nicholas' Cathedral in Elbląg.

The finish line is Toruń, so we have come full circle... Fortunately this city can be admired endlessly. Maybe this time you should take a trip around Toruń's green parks? Kępa Bazarowa Island, the Valley of Dreams, the Zoobotanical Garden...

The possibilities are endless!

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“Down the Oder, down the Warta…”

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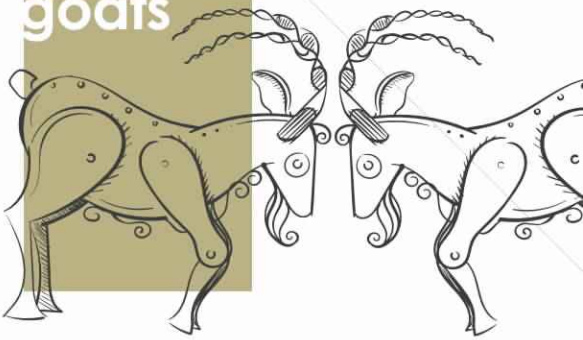
This is the only city mentioned in the Polish national anthem. This is where the legendary billy goats butt heads daily at noon on the Town Hall tower. And this is where the Piast Trail begins, reflecting how rulers of Poland once travelled between towns. When visiting the tourist treasures of Poznań, it is impossible to ignore its surroundings, including Wielkopolski National Park – a green gem of this region, with numerous natural monuments and a post-glacial landscape.

Poznań's billy goats



Poznań
Splendour of the first Piasts

www.szlakpiastowski.com.pl
www.visitpoznan.info/en
www.poznan.travel/en

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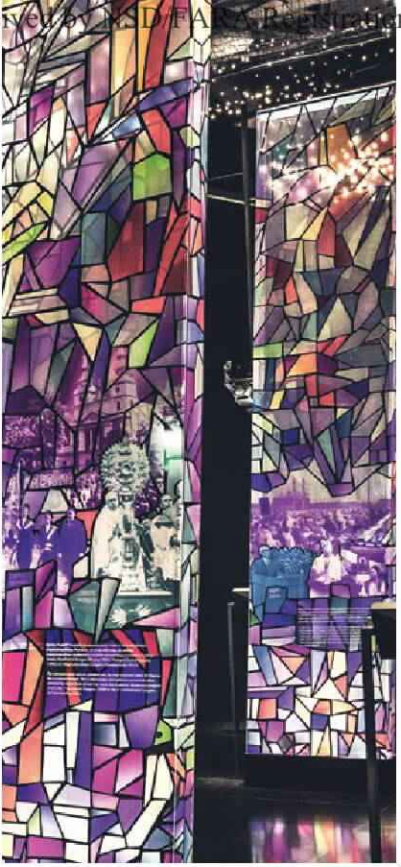

Many people associate Poznań mainly with the mechanical billy goats which, interestingly, were given names (Pyrek and Tyrek) in 2002 during a competition held by a radio station. Poznań, however, is much more than just the goats. At the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries, Poznań served as the capital city of the first Piasts and was concentrated in the Ostrów Tumski (Cathedral Island) area, which today is the only remaining island on the River Warta in Poznań. When visiting, it is best to start from this point on the map and from Porta Posnania ICHOT (an interactive centre about Cathedral Island's history). Cathedral Island is the oldest part of the city and one of the possible sites of the "Baptism of Poland". The most important building that you can visit here today is the cathedral with its five towers.

Poznań is the first stop on the Piast Dynasty Trail,

a famous tourist route awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, where we follow the trail of the Piast rulers, visit their strongholds, see places where they stayed, learn about the history, customs and material culture of the Piast dynasty.

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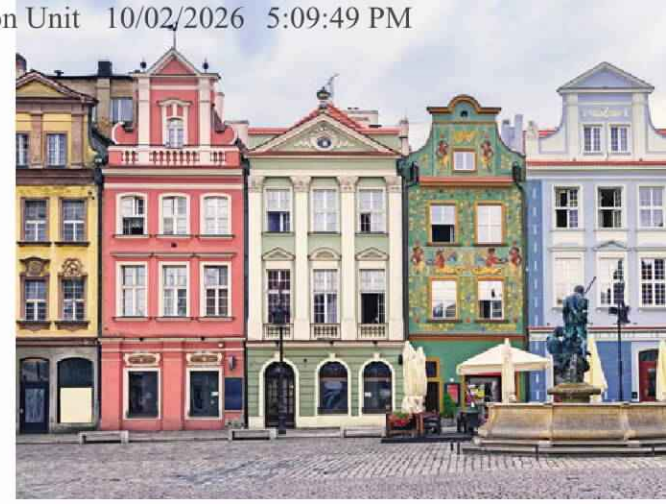
In its later history, the city became famous for many events; it was an economic refuge during the struggle with invaders and to this day it is one of the most important business, tourist, scientific and cultural centres in Poland. It is worth mentioning that it has the longest-existing exhibition centre: the Poznań International Fair. Many interesting cultural events take place in the city, including the Malta International Theatre Festival, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Before coming to the Wielkopolska region, it is worth checking the events calendar to see if there are any regular events happening which you can attend.



When visiting Poznań, make sure you see the Old Market Square and the surrounding area (including the Museum of Musical Instruments, Górka Palace, a model of old Poznań and the Fara Church), visit the Old Brewery, the Castle District and the Palm House.

Wielkopolski National Park – green mark of a glacier

Just 15 km south of Poznań stretches Wielkopolski National Park: you can visit the Natural Science Museum in Jeziory and admire Lake Góreckie, a post-glacial ribbon lake. In Wielkopolska National Park you can learn a little geography as you admire a typical landscape shaped by a glacier, with a frontal moraine, bottom moraine, dunes and distinctively shaped lakes. Exploring the paths around the park, you will also discover the Foresters' Boulder (Głaz Leśników) which is more than 10 metres in circumference and simply a fragment of rock carried by the ice sheet. Wielkopolski National Park includes 18 reserves and protected areas with interesting species of plants and animals. You will never run out of things to do! But, above all, you will achieve unprecedented peace thanks to the soothing sounds of omnipresent nature.

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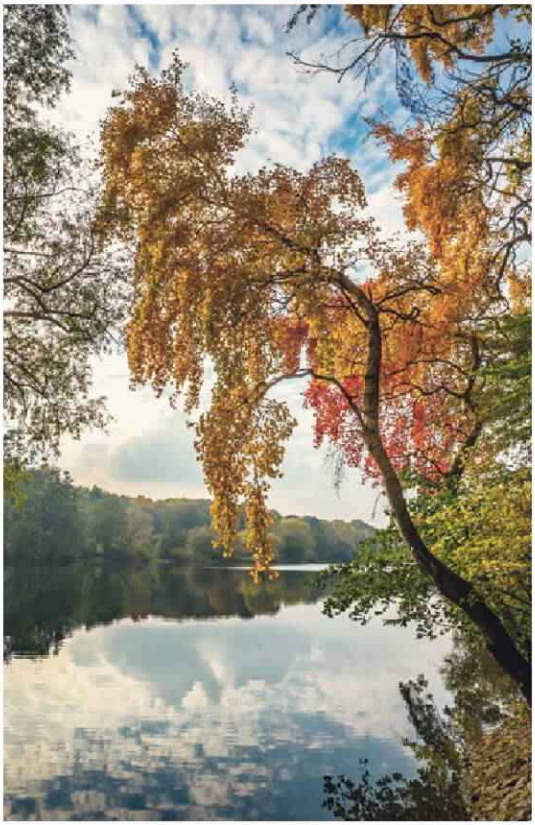
At the edge of the park there is a unique place with a rich collection: the National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, which organises many interesting events. It is worth mentioning, for example, a series of events called "Interaktywne upowszechnianie i poznawanie zbiorów" (Interactive Promotion and Popularisation of the Collections), which was awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. Among other things, for over 50 years the museum has been teaching how food is produced from natural raw materials and where it comes from. Tourists can learn about the history of beekeeping, and some secrets of selected industries: confectionery, meat curing, alcohol distillation, agricultural tools and their history, and various traditional, somewhat forgotten crafts.



Cycling across Wielkopolska

Here is some important information for fans of bicycle trips: the Wielkopolska System of Bike Trails, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, runs through the province. There are dedicated guidebooks and folders for each of the four routes that will turn an ordinary bike trip into a fascinating and educational journey.

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On the one hand, we have numerous monuments and modern buildings, on the other – the soothing world of nature. Such is Gorzów Wielkopolski – full of contrasts that complement each other. With a history spanning 700 years, the city lets you go back in time for a brief moment when you take a walk across the Old Market Square and its surrounding areas. For those who want to take it easy, there's Nadwarciański Boulevard as well as numerous parks and gardens.

City of contrasts

The best place to start is the Old Market Square. It is here, in the very heart of the city, that the oldest building is located: the 13th-century cathedral. Along with fragments of medieval defensive walls, it brings to life the ancient history of Gorzów.

Gorzów Wielkopolski

City of contrasts

www.gorzow.pl

www.tps-unitisviribus.org.pl

www.atrakcjelubuskie.pl/en

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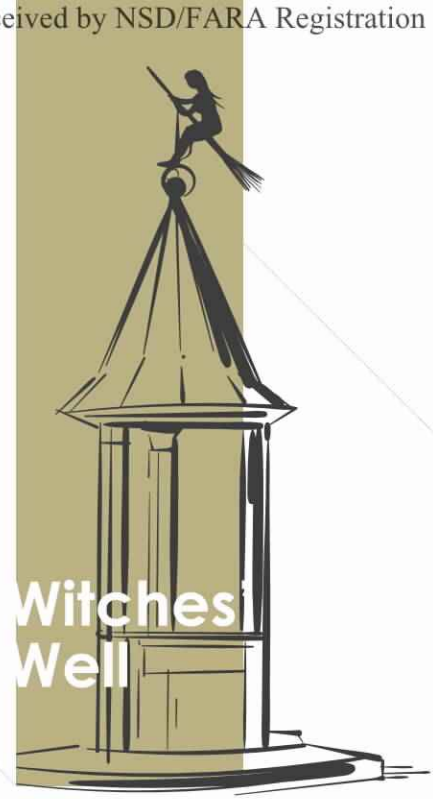
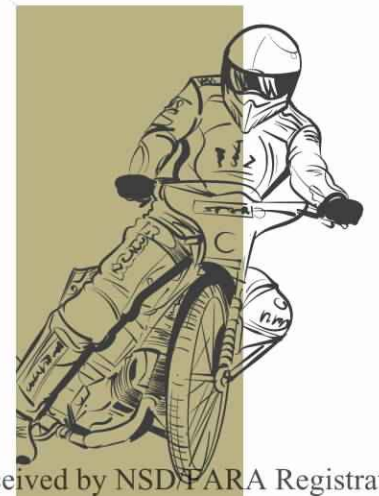


Witches' Well

Nearby you will find Wełniany Rynek (the Wool Market) with its Witches' Well, which is linked to a legend about the last witch burned in Gorzów. Not far from here you will encounter the Śfinster statue, considered controversial by many (it's of a naked man). As you walk along the streets of the city, an array of sculptures will attract your attention. There's speedway rider Edward Jancarz, the famous vagrant Szymon Gięty beloved by locals, and gypsy poetess Papusza – they all await tourists in the city's parks and squares. Beautiful Art Nouveau houses and villas also make up the Old Town.

It is not without reason that Gorzów Wielkopolski is primarily associated with speedway. The city has been involved in this sport for 70 years. The city is even the proud host of a Grand Prix – a world ranking speedway event. Motorsports fans can visit the modern stadium to support Stal Gorzów, the local speedway club.



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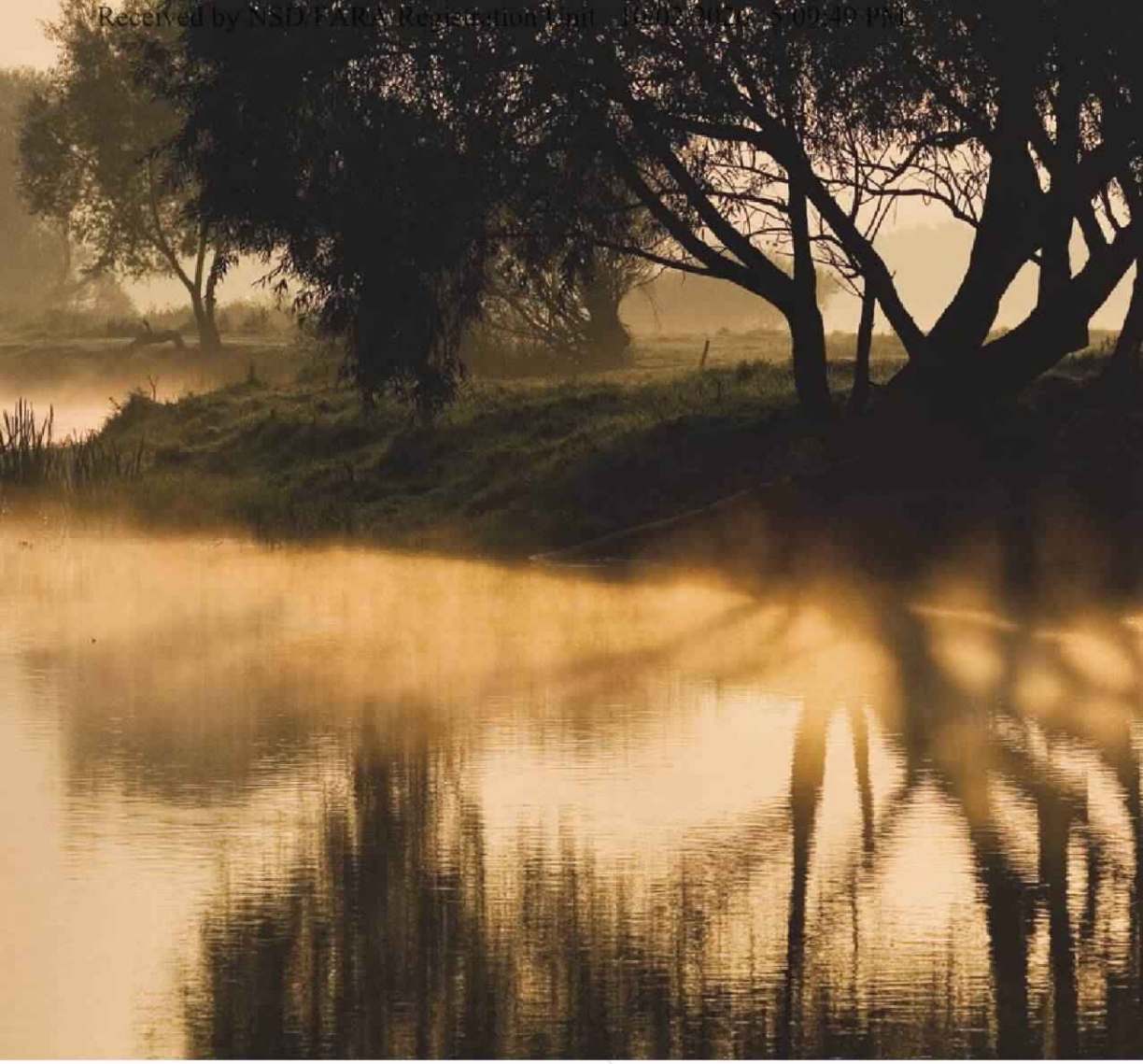

Gorzów Wielkopolski has a lot to offer nature lovers. Wiosna Ludów Park (named after the Revolutions of 1848), also called Rose Park, awaits tourists with flowery paths and a pond. Open-air concerts and festivities take place here on summer days. Nordic walking trails and a rope park in Słowiański Park (Slavic Park) provide an opportunity to burn some calories. The historical parks, founded at the beginning of the 20th century, were later supplemented by other green enclaves. One of them is Górczyński Park, which invites you to rest by the Motylia fountain, the largest in the city.

City close to nature

A 100-year-old dendrological garden at the back of the Regional Museum, just over the River Warta, is also extremely charming. Almost 150 species of trees and shrubs grow here. On the opposite bank of the river runs a bustling boulevard.

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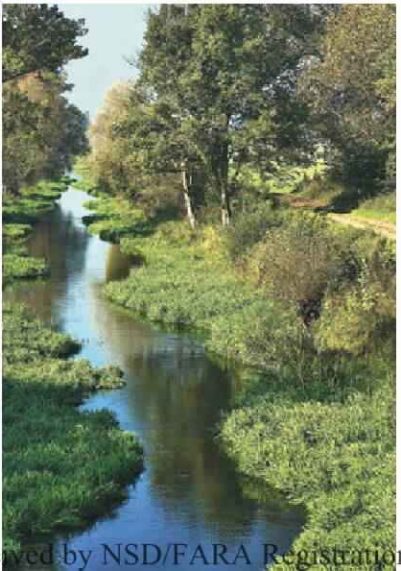
Ujście Warty (Warta River Mouth) National Park

About half an hour by car west of Gorzów Wielkopolski lies Ujście Warty National Park, established in 2001. Located in the Gorzów basin, it impresses with the beauty of its wildlife and is ideal for ecotourism. Flowing through the centre of the park, the River Warta creates ideal living conditions for a host of animals and plants. In particular, there are many birds here that can be observed closely during long walks on the Warta floodplains. There are over 270 species of birds, 35 species of fish and about 500 species of vascular plants. To protect and promote this ornithological paradise, an association of bird lovers called the Bird Republic was founded at the initiative of the Friends of Słońsk Association.



To discover this unique place, its bird inhabitants and numerous monuments, you can take advantage of an organised tour called Weekend in the Polish Bird Republic, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. Participants can enjoy numerous attractions: tours of the national park, sightseeing related to the history of the Knights Hospitaller, kayaking and biking trips, and tastings of local delicacies. The park is open to tourists all year round. Some trails are accessible not only by foot but also by bike or even by car, which gives you an opportunity to see even more. This is the perfect place to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

When planning your trip, Słońsk is an excellent starting point. It is a large village with a Gothic church, castle ruins, and the nature reserve created around the Warta floodplains.

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According to legend, after the Titans killed the god Bacchus, the goddess Athena sprinkled the vineyards with his blood. One of the drops fell in Zielona Góra, which gave rise to the wine history of the city and the surrounding areas. And it is an incredibly rich history!

Wine tales

The local vinicultural tradition dates back to the 14th century. You can experience some winemaking history by visiting the Museum of Wine, which is a part of the Museum of the Lubusz Region. Walking around it, you will often come across sculptures of the head of Bacchus, as the museum has 10 of them. You'll also see historical wine presses, filters and pumps, all used in the production of the noble drink.

www.cit.zielona-gora.pl
www.mzl.zgora.pl/english
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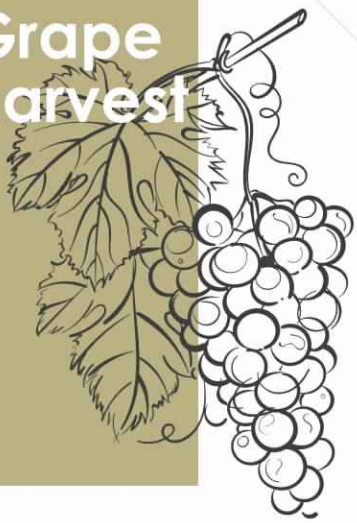
Grape harvest



Another obligatory site during your trip is Winne Wzgórze (Wine Hill) where a reconstructed vineyard is located. Here you will find a charming Wine Park with many paths, sculptures and benches. From the hill you can admire a stunning panorama of the city. At the very top of the hill stands the 19th-century Winemaker's Cottage which used to be owned by the once famous August Grempler. It is worth visiting the cellar. Walking over the hill, you cannot miss the Palm House. More than 200 species of plants, most of them of tropical origin, including an impressive Phoenix canariensis (a date palm), leave you literally drowning in greenery. Children will definitely enjoy the turtle pool, tanks full of tropical fish, the waterfall and a nearby fountain in the shape of the globe, which, when illuminated in the evenings, creates an inimitable atmosphere.

Exploring the wine trail, you cannot miss the Winiarka statue, a distinctive sculpture of a girl carrying wine barrels. She can be found in the square located near Sobieskiego Street.

Wine lovers should definitely visit the local vineyards, which bring to mind the atmosphere of southern France. Here they can appreciate how the actual vines are grown and taste local wines. Zielona Góra is worth visiting in September, during the annual Wine Festival. The several-days-long event attracts huge crowds and is accompanied by concerts, a Wine Contest, Theatrical Gatherings and, finally, a colourful fair.

Zielona Góra is worth visiting in September

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Green Lubusz region

The region itself is a real treat for nature lovers. It is the most forested region of the country, and is also called the Land of Five Hundred Lakes. Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski is a place definitely worth visiting, covering an area of over 700 hectares in the Nysa Łużycka valley on both sides of the Polish-German border.

It is an enormous English-style park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2004, and an example of the harmonious combination of greenery and architecture. Over 650 species of plants have been found throughout the park – lichens, poa grasses, fescue grasses, ferns and heathers. The fairy-tale atmosphere of this place will delight any aesthete who loves relaxing away from urban hustle and bustle.

In Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski

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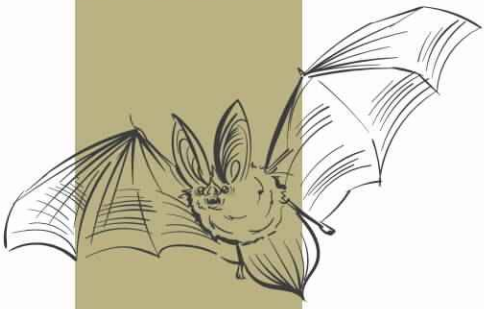
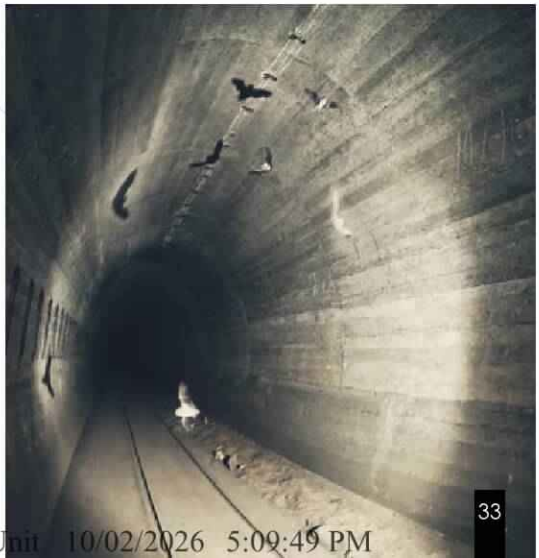
Visiting the house of... bats

Enthusiasts of military architecture and all those fascinated by World War II mustn't miss the Międzyrzecz Fortification Region (MRU). This is one of the largest fortification systems in Europe, with a total area of over 8 square kilometres, built by the Germans in 1934-1944 to protect the Reich's eastern frontier. The underground communication system of this impressive fortification is over 30 km long. You can admire many preserved military exhibits, including flamethrowers and grenade launchers. Visiting the MRU underground systems with a guide, you not only get to know fascinating historical facts, but also come to understand the complex system of this structure.

Fortunately the bunkers no longer fulfil the role for which they were built. They are an attraction for tourists and... a dwelling for 12 species of bats! The darkness, humidity and stable temperature of about 8-10 degrees Celsius all provide ideal conditions for these winged mammals – up to 30,000 of them stay there in winter.

12 species of bats





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Wrocław, the capital of Lower Silesia, delights visitors with its diversity. Its rich history dates back to the times of the Congress of Gniezno in the year 1000, and the city's continuous development means that today we can admire its unique character, particularly appreciated by lovers of industrial tourism. The Market Square, the Africarium, the Centennial Hall and adjacent multimedia fountain, contemporary murals, historical churches and the Gold Mine and Medieval Technology Park in Złoty Stok are just some of the many attractions offered by Wrocław and its surroundings. And many of them are gems even when compared to the rest of Europe!

Many unique attractions

When visiting Wrocław, it is worth starting with the Market Square, which is one of the largest city squares in Europe. Here you can enjoy performances by street artists, take a stroll along Sukiennice (Cloth Hall) Street or relax in a cosy café or restaurant, admiring architectural monuments: the Old and New Town Halls and colourful tenement houses.

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Walking through the streets of the city, in many places you will come across impressive murals. By following a route encompassing these large-sized paintings, you will discover a completely different face of Wrocław.

Poland's biggest multimedia fountain

Right next to the famous Centennial Hall is a multimedia fountain, the largest in Poland and one of the largest in Europe. You are sure to enjoy each of the choreographed water shows accompanied by global music hits and a variety of colourful lights. What's more, during special shows you can watch movies, animations and photos displayed on... the water! It's an attraction that everyone can enjoy.

If travelling with children, you should also plan a visit to the Africarium. This is an attraction unique not only in Europe but also the world! It is the only oceanarium entirely devoted to animals from Africa. Observing sharks, crocodiles, turtles, Nile hippos and many other species is an unforgettable experience. An additional attraction is the possibility to see the animals during feeding time.

See the Africarium

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Lower Silesia's UNESCO sites

In Wrocław, you mustn't miss the Centennial Hall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This sports and entertainment hall from the beginning of the 20th century is impressive through its sheer size. The building, erected on a circular plan, is 42 metres high and can accommodate up to 10,000 people. In accordance with the intentions of its architect, Max Berg, the Centennial Hall performs many functions to this day, serving as a venue for the largest cultural and sporting events.

The Churches of Peace in Jawor and Świdnica are the next Lower Silesian buildings on the UNESCO list. As the only buildings of this type still standing to this day, they remind us of the Peace of Westphalia, concluded in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War. The Churches of Peace are therefore an obligatory item on any history buff's list of must-see historical monuments. What distinguishes them is their unique architecture based on wooden construction and timber frames, and their combination of Baroque forms with Lutheran theology.

Wooden wonder

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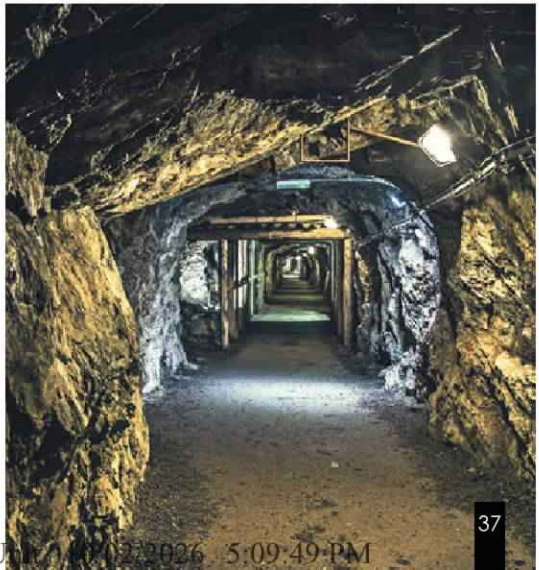
Gold Mine and Medieval Technology Park

When exploring the area around Wrocław, it is worth considering the Gold Mine and Medieval Technology Park in Złoty Stok. Why? It is the only place in Europe where a medieval mining settlement has been faithfully recreated, in which all devices from the past are not just replicas but actual functioning equipment. So what can you do during your stay in the village? Everything that the miners used to do: pan for gold, mint coins, and even cast gold bars, ride a boat in an underground corridor and make golden handmade paper. Among the biggest surprises is a ride in a Leonardo da Vinci replica tank and an underground waterfall – the only one in Poland. And for those who are hungry not only for thrills but also for knowledge, there is a treasury with gold bars and an exhibition of minerals.

It is worth knowing that the Gold Mine Underground Tourist Route has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. This is confirmation that the attractions in Złoty Stok are truly exceptional.



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In 2017, Opole celebrated the 800th anniversary of the town's foundation. This is where you will find the "Opole Venice" and one of the oldest defensive structures in the country. However, Opole is primarily about songs. No one knows if the citizens of Opole are those most given to singing in Poland, but it is certain that the city is known throughout the country primarily for the National Festival of Polish Song which has been held here for more than half a century.

Opole is primarily about songs

The origins of Opole date back to the 8th century, but it is generally considered that the city was founded in the second half of the 10th century, and in the 13th century it became the capital of the local duchy. The city has a very rich history and has been a silent witness to important historical events. Where does the name come from? Opole is nothing more than the word for the basic territorial unit of the Slavs: a group of several villages.

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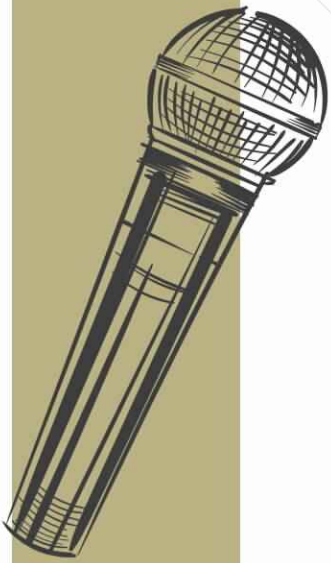
When visiting Opole, you have to visit one very symbolic place: the Millennium Amphitheatre, where the famous National Festival of Polish Song takes place annually and where the Polish Song Museum, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, operates. The museum is the only place of its kind in the country. It includes an interactive permanent exhibition that chronologically presents the history of Polish song, taking into account various accompanying important historical events.

National Festival of Polish Song



Opole Venice

The second most important place to see in Opole is the Piast Tower – the only remnant of the Piast castle destroyed in 1928. The tower is one of the oldest defensive monuments in Poland. On the Opole tourist map, you will also find other places worth visiting: the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, the Holy Trinity Church, the Market Square and the Museum of Opole Silesia. In the picturesque part of Opole's market square, between Zamkowa and Katedralna streets, you can admire the "Opole Venice" where houses rise almost from the river (or, more precisely, the Młynówka Canal, formerly the main course of the River Oder).

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Once in Opole, it would be a pity not to see the nearby attractions. When you learn about history, why not delve into it further and go back millions of years? If you want to feel like you were in the Jurassic Park movies, there is only one place to go: Krasiejów.

Jurassic Park in Krasiejów

This Science and Entertainment Park, awarded the Gold Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation, comprises two amazing sites: JuraPark Krasiejów and the Science and Human Evolution Park. On 40 hectares, you will find about 250 prehistoric life-sized animal models (!), a 3D Time Tunnel, a Paleontological Pavilion with real dinosaur bones, a 5D Emotion Cinema, and a 3D Oceanarium. There is also space for humans – a multimedia museum devoted to human evolution. The Science and Entertainment Park in Krasiejów is a treat not only for children but also for those who have long forgotten what it was like to be a child.

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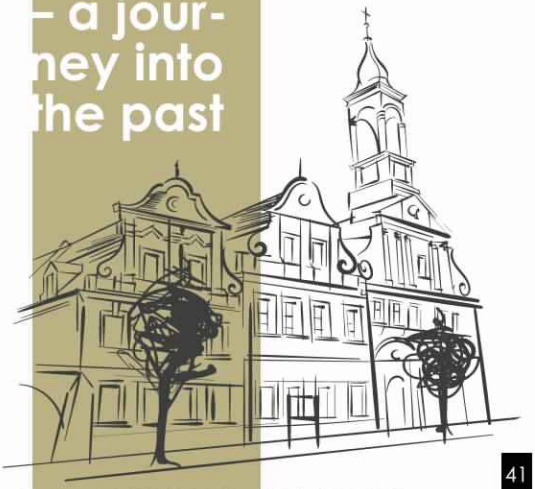
Ju-raPark Krasie-jów

Kluczbork and its surroundings

Less than 50 km from Opole, it's also worth visiting a large collection of monuments in Kluczbork and its surroundings. To make exploring the region more interesting, it is best to look into the "Mirror of the Past" and learn about, for example, old wedding traditions, the secrets of blacksmithing and baking "Kuniów bread". "Mirror of the Past" is a programme for tourists that has received the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation and consists of three elements. The first of them is "Past and Present", the idea being to stage performances during which local residents bring old traditions back to life. The second, "Trail of Dying Skills", involves, as the name suggests, initiatives for the preservation of traditional crafts. The third element invites us to follow the "Trail of Wooden Churches" that covers the areas around Kluczbork and Olesno.

It is also worth visiting the Niemodlin and Moszna castles – both boast the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Kluczbork – a journey into the past



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“A moving story.”

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It's hard not to admire Kraków. One of the oldest cities in Poland, it was the capital of the country up to the 18th century. The number of monuments and places of cultural importance is almost intimidating. Delighted by the Jagiellonian-Habsburg glamour of the city, foreign tourists happily stroll through the narrow streets.

The most important sights of Kraków

It is best to start a tour of the city by following the traces of the medieval route, from St. Florian's Gate, which in the Middle Ages was the main gate of the city, through the main market square, then Grodzka Street, up to Wawel Royal Castle. When walking along this trail, you cannot miss the most important monuments of Kraków: the Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), St. Mary's Basilica, the town hall tower, the Baroque Church of Saints Peter and Paul, and two monasteries – of the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The icing on the cake is, of course, Wawel Hill, where the Royal Castle and the Metropolitan Basilica of St. Stanislaus and St. Wenceslaus are located. Tourists can visit some of the stately rooms as well as the private royal apartments, the Crown Treasury and the Armoury. In the cathedral, the royal tombs and the National Bards' Crypt are worth seeing. The walk up the hill is an unforgettable experience in itself. From the walls of the castle you can enjoy a beautiful view of the Vistula, Podgórze district, and the Old Town.

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City within the city

The second most important place in the city is, of course, Kazimierz district, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the Old Town. This district was a separate town in the Middle Ages. When visiting, it is best to put away your map and get lost amongst old Jewish cemeteries, synagogues and tenement houses. Step off the main streets and you will find small, hidden bookshops and restaurants serving authentic Jewish delicacies.

However, not all places worth a visit are located in Kraków's centre. For example, it is worth seeing Podgórze, which, along with the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, is the most faithful witness to the city's 20th-century history. The intriguing, monumental Nowa Huta and the green Salwator are also important sites on the tourist map of Kraków.

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Kraków's surroundings are as colourful as the city itself. Ojców National Park, located north of Kraków, is extremely enchanting. It is part of the famous Trail of the Eagles' Nests which runs through Małopolskie and Śląskie provinces, connecting Kraków and Częstochowa.

Getting away from the city

The trail leads along a line of medieval castles and fortifications built on limestone rocks that reach as much as 30 metres in height. The closest to Kraków are the charming Korzkiew Castle, the ruins of Fort Srebrna Góra in Ojców, as well as the impressive Pieskowa Skała Castle.

Trail of the Eagles' Nests

The latter castle is picturesquely located above the famous Hercules' Club, a tall limestone stack. You can reach the centre of Ojców National Park by walking from Bronowice, following the varied trail through the Prądnik Valley, or by car. The trails in Ojców National Park are a source of constant surprise with their interesting rock formations, caves and pristine streams. It's hard to believe that this place is just half an hour's drive from Kraków.

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The mountains are always there

The Papal Trail of John Paul II runs south of the city. It leads through the most beautiful parts of the Beskids and Gorce Mountains, the Podhale region and the Tatra Mountains. In just over two hours you can get from Kraków to Zakopane – the most popular spa resort in Poland since the 19th century, where the greatest writers and painters of the 20th century stayed or lived. Witkiewicz, Witkacy, Kasprowicz, Szymanowski, Tetmajer and many others have all left their mark here.

Although the gaudy character of Krupówki Street has nothing in common with the former cultural capital of Poland, the mountains are always there. This is the highest part of the Carpathian arc and the only alpine scenery that can be admired in this part of Europe.

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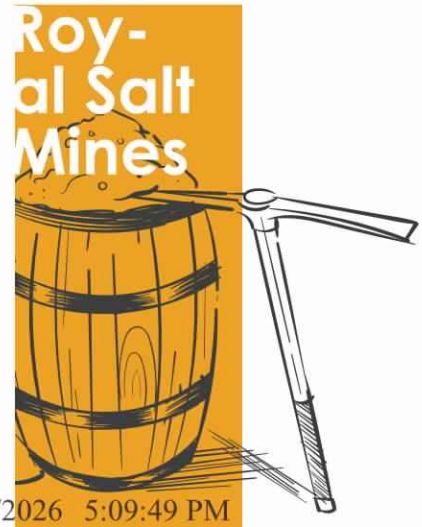
Another interesting tourist destination is the Royal Salt Mines in Wieliczka and Bochnia, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Wieliczka Salt Mine, one of the most important monuments of material and spiritual culture in Poland, is visited annually by more than a million tourists from all over the world.

Overnight stay below ground

Visitors have a choice of several routes, including the most demanding one: Mysteries of the Wieliczka Mine. A salt town was created in the Bochnia Mine, 200 metres underground, where you can spend the night. Both tourists and those seeking cures for ailments enjoy this attraction. You can admire the underground monumental chapels carved in rock, salt chambers, as well as use a cinema, restaurant and sports facilities. Many attractions in both mines have been awarded Certificates of the Polish Tourism Organisation.



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Twentieth-century traces of a tragic history

An obligatory point for all tourists visiting Kraków and its surroundings is a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. It is the only site of this type in the world that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A shocking and tragic reminder of World War II, it is at the same time a monument to the victims. In Kraków, it is worth visiting Schindler's Factory and the Liban Quarry – a former labour camp in Płaszów. These sites were used as locations for an important film in the history of cinema: Schindler's List.

Religious architecture trail

To the south of Kraków lie two hills on which two charming towns are located: Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and Lanckorona. Lanckorona is worth seeing due to its unusual wooden buildings. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, on the other hand, is a pilgrimage park where colourful Passion mysteries are held every year, attracting the faithful from all over Poland.

In addition, a Mannerist architectural complex can be found here that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In a nearby area, also south of Kraków, you will come across historical wooden churches which are also on the UNESCO list. Binarowa, Blizne, Dębno, Haczów, Lipnica Murowana and Sękowa are well-preserved architectural treasures. The oldest of them date back to the 14th century.

It is worth taking one-day trips to visit the fringes of the Małopolska region. In the evening you can return to the vibrant city, sit down with a glass of wine in a narrow street and admire the heart of Central Europe.

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The Cathedral Basilica is a must-see for every architecture enthusiast. It is because of it that Tarnów's Old Town is called a jewel of the Polish Renaissance. However, the city's rich history begins much earlier, so enthusiasts of olden times should not forget to add Tarnów to their itinerary.

The market square in Tarnów is an extremely charming place. It has retained its layout from the Middle Ages, from 1330. Tenement houses from different periods – from the 16th to the 19th centuries – surround the main square, and the town hall is located in the centre. It was created as a result of the reconstruction of a Gothic building from the 14th century and reached its present form about two centuries later. Today it houses a tourist information centre. It is also worth looking up at the building's unusual mascarons – each of the 14 faces is different.

From the Middle Ages to jewel of the Renaissance

Outside the Old Town, you simply must visit the Cathedral Basilica. It is not only a treat for architecture enthusiasts, but fascinating for anyone who enjoys beauty and places with a unique atmosphere. Inside you will find the Gothic-Renaissance tombstones of members of the Tarnowski family and the Baroque gravestone of the Ostrogski family – they are considered to be some of the most outstanding works of art in Poland. The Tarnowski tombstone is 13.8 metres high and 5 metres wide, which makes it the biggest sculpture of its kind in Europe!

it.tarnow.pl/en

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Tarnów's cultural side

Few people know that the Tarnów Ethnographic Museum has a unique permanent exhibition on the history and culture of Romani people. Among other exhibits, you can admire five traditionally painted caravans. However, this is not the only museum worth recommending in Tarnów. The Diocesan Museum located behind the Cathedral Basilic houses an interesting collection of guild art, both paintings and Gothic sculptures, and three triptych altars from St. Leonard's Church in Lipnica Murowana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

When talking about cultural diversity in Tarnów, we must not forget about the great Tarnów-Hungarian friendship.

This combination may seem strange, but the relationship dates back to the 1520s, when Tarnów became a place of refuge for the king of Hungary, Jan Zápolya. You can learn more about his story by visiting Tarnów, especially around Polish-Hungarian Friendship Day which falls in March. You can also take a moment to learn more about the history of Poland and visit Strzelecki Park where the Mausoleum of General Józef Bem (1794-1850) is located. He is an important figure not only for Poland but for the whole world.

Remember that when visiting southern Poland, it is well worth seeing Tarnów.

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Rzeszów is developing rapidly and dynamically. It is an ideal city not only for students studying at its numerous universities but also for tourists looking for cultural events, concerts and festivals. There is something for history enthusiasts too!

Architectural sites of interest

Although the history of Rzeszów dates back several centuries, most of the buildings standing in the city centre are from the 19th and 20th centuries. However, there are numerous gems with a long history that are worth seeing. The first one is the Gothic Church of Saints Adalbert and Stanislaus. It dates back to 1430, but a thorough remodelling took place in the 17th century. Currently the style is more reminiscent of the Baroque because of the added aisles and the bell tower.

Rzeszów
Pride of the Podkarpacie region

www.miastoszkla.pl/en
www.podkarpackie.travel/en

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Rzeszów Castle

Another attraction worth seeing is Rzeszów Castle, once owned by the Lubomirski family. Unfortunately this is not the original building from the 18th century; the castle was in such terrible condition that it was decided it was better to demolish and rebuild it. The reconstruction took place in 1902-1906 on the basis of its Baroque plans, but the castle is nevertheless erected on real 17th-century fortifications.

3rd of May Street

It is located near the most famous street in Rzeszów: 3rd of May Street. In addition, there are other monuments worth seeing along the street, including a complex of Piarist buildings from the mid-17th century with the Church of the Holy Cross and one of the oldest high schools in Poland – a Piarist college.

Fans of history and architecture cannot miss the early Baroque Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary from 1640, a bank building from 1908 which is an example of mixing various architectural styles, and the former Franciscan Reformati church which has survived unchanged since 1709.

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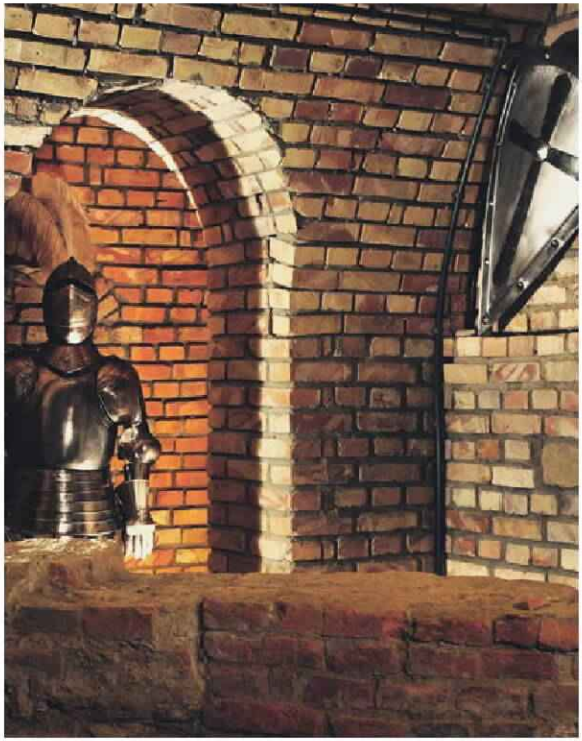
Underground Tourist Route

The Underground Tourist Route is a real treat for all who enjoy unusual hiking trails. It runs under Rzeszów's historical tenements and the market square, linking all its sides and offering many attractions and secrets. The Polish Tourism Organisation has distinguished this route with its Certificate.



City full of life

Rzeszów is an ideal place for culture vultures. Podpromie Hall, one of the most modern sports and entertainment arenas in Poland, is located here. If you are going to Rzeszów, it is worth checking for any planned events that might interest you there.

During UEFA Euro 2012, Rzeszów formed a partnership with Ukraine and created the European Stadium of Culture initiative. It was received so well by residents that it has continued to this day. Every year in June, artists from all over the world come to the city – musicians, painters, photographers, actors and anyone who has anything to express through any form of art. This means it's a good idea to plan a trip to Rzeszów at the beginning of the summer holidays.

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A trip out of town

If you get tired of the city, it is worth taking a trip to the Bieszczady Mountains. In addition to the obvious choice of hiking through these mysterious highlands, you can choose a more unusual attraction: Bieszczady Bicycle Trolleys, which have been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. This is a treat for those who dream of moving along railway tracks under their own steam. How does it work? All you need to do is rent a "bicycle trolley" (a wheeled platform with exercise bikes on top, powering the wheels) from the biggest rental place of this type in Poland, get on it and ride! The route is 47 km long – from Zagórz to Krościenko. Anyone can embark on this amazing trip!

We also recommend visiting the Glass Heritage Centre in Krosno. It boasts the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation and, as the first institution in Poland to do so, presents the unknown and previously ignored subject of the glass industry in a very innovative and interesting way. Here you will find out not only how glass is produced, but also learn the secrets of creating real works of art from glass.

Rzeszów and all its attractions await visitors all year round! You can find everything you are looking for when embarking on a trip: history, interesting architecture, culture and art, nature and activity. There's something for everyone!

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"Padua of the North", "Pearl of Roztocze" – these are just some of the nicknames used to refer to Zamość. Planning a trip to eastern Poland, you should make Zamość an essential part of your itinerary.

This city, located in the south-eastern part of the Lublin region, was designed in the form a symmetrical pentagon in accordance with the Renaissance concept of the ideal city. Zamość's Old Town has been a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site since 1992.

Zamość
The charm of symmetry

www.turystyka.zamosc.pl/en

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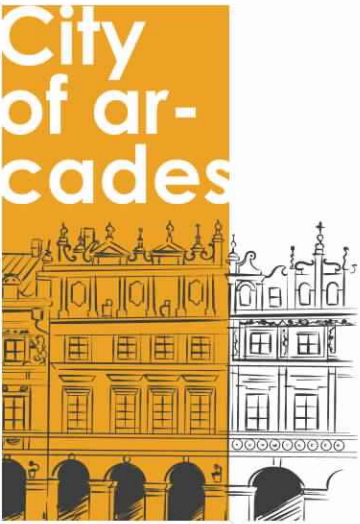
Symmetrical beauty

Many consider the Great Market Square in Zamość to be one of the most beautiful in Poland. It is square in shape, measuring exactly 100 metres on all sides, with charming Armenian tenement houses in the northern part. The Town Hall with its impressive 52-metre clock tower stands in the square. A little further from the heart of the city is the former Zamoyski Palace, once the home of the city's founder, Jan Zamoyski. Other sights include the former Zamoyski Academy building, many religious buildings, and the remains of Zamość Fortress.



The city or its surroundings?

Zamość and its surrounding area boast many attractions.

If you want to learn how to shoot a cannon or use a bow, watch a 5D movie about the city's history, play a strategic military game or learn about the history of Polish weapons, visit the Zamość Fortress of Attractions, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. For those who like spending time surrounded by nature, it is best to visit Roztocze National Park. If you are an active person, you are sure to appreciate the numerous hiking and cycling trails, and if you seek relaxation, we recommend the Zwierzyniec forest's fresh air or swimming in the Echo Ponds. Roztocze National Park is home to the Polish primitive horse (Konik), whose wild breeding was established in 1982. These animals live in the wild and raise their young without human interference.

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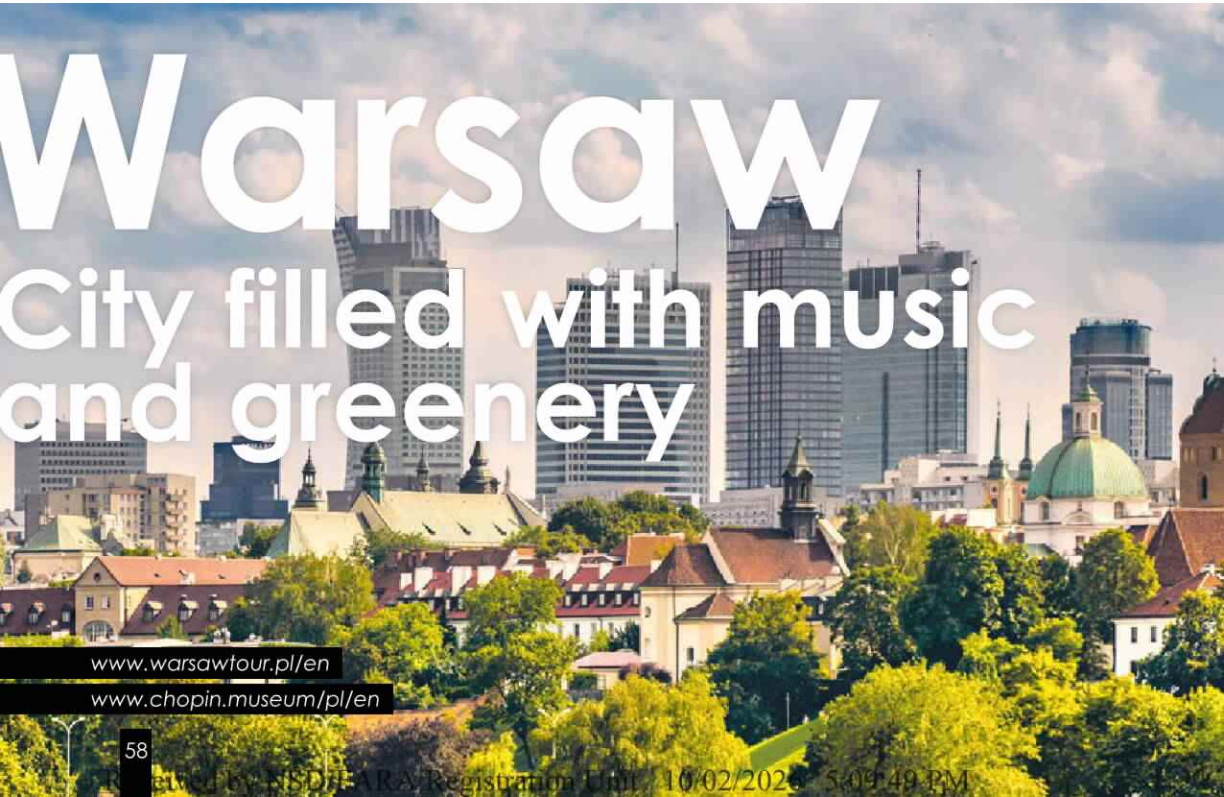
The Royal Castle, Castle Square with its statue of King Sigismund III looking down at you, and the Old Town are, along with the Palace of Culture and Science, the first attractions that come to mind when you think of Warsaw. Immortalised in thousands of commemorative photographs and featured on most of the Polish capital's postcards, they have become not only a symbol of Warsaw but also of Poland, every year bringing millions of tourists to the city. However, Warsaw has much more to offer than just monuments and modern office architecture.

Old Warsaw within the walls – a tourist *must-see*

The most eagerly visited tourist sites in Warsaw are hidden within defensive walls. Interestingly, the walls themselves are a great attraction. Constructed between the 13th and 16th centuries and rebuilt after World War II, they lead from the Royal Castle through the Barbican towards the Vistula embankment. The Barbican is one of the perfectly preserved fortification buildings and now houses a permanent exhibition of the Museum of Warsaw. Halfway between the Royal Castle and the Barbican you will find Old Town Square. It is rectangular in shape and surrounded by historical tenement houses. Its history dates back to the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, when it served as the city's main square. The interesting urban layout, narrow streets and charming tenement houses, most of which are reconstructions of pre-war buildings, entice you to take long walks around the Old Town.



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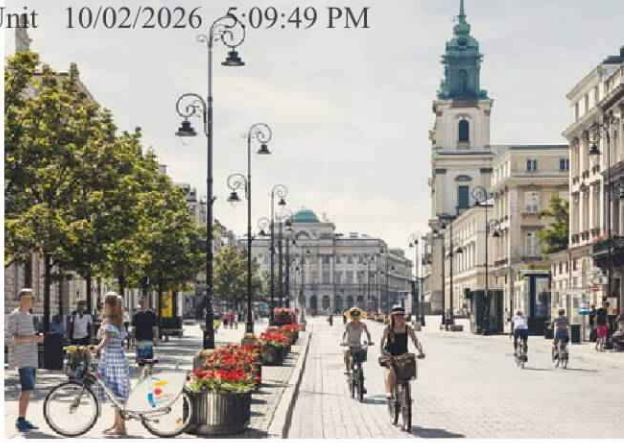
Royal walk around Warsaw

The Royal Castle and the Old Town, maintained in the Baroque-Classicist style, make up a unique architectural complex that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The winding streets of the Old Town invite you to enjoy endless walks. It is also worth going to Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, the northern part of the Royal Route, which was a distinctive entrance to the city and still enjoys considerable interest from both tourists and residents. Going southwards, the streets of the former Royal Route lead all the way to Wilanów. Its 17th-century palace and park are unique historical sites that host numerous cultural events and concerts.



Following in the footsteps of great Poles

Dedicated tourist routes following in the footsteps of great Poles await walking enthusiasts. The Maria Skłodowska-Curie path starts at the Nobel Prize winner's house at 16 Freta St. and leads through various places connected with the scientist. The Papal Trail of John Paul II leads through a number of religious buildings located in the city centre. The Chopin Trail, meanwhile, leads through the various apartments owned by the composer's family, the Chopin Museum, to Royal Łazienki Park where Chopin Concerts are held next to Chopin's monument. This trail leads through the picturesque Mazovia region straight to the village of Żelazowa Wola – Fryderyk Chopin's birthplace.

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For all music enthusiasts and people who want to learn more about the life of the great composer, there is yet another huge attraction: the Chopin Museum in the centre of Warsaw, at 1 Okólnik St. The exhibits found here are unique, unmatched anywhere in the world, and some of them are in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The museum's mission is to cultivate the memory of the great Polish composer, popularise his music, shape sensitivities, promote values and educate. In the beautiful palace interiors you will experience Chopin's music in a unique way that involves all of the senses. This building has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

The Vistula – a river in the city centre

Warsaw's Vistula, underestimated over the years, has reached its time of splendour. The boulevards stretching along its banks are a considerable attraction for both Warsaw's residents and tourists. In summer the river is full of life. In addition to fashionable venues, it also boasts one of the most modern educational facilities in the country: the Copernicus Science Centre, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. Laboratories, an "experimentarium" and a planetarium, all housed within an area of 20,000 square metres, attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Another attraction that Warsaw residents flock to is the garden on the roof of Warsaw University Library in Powiśle district. Its interesting architecture and abundance of greenery encourage you to enter if only for a short while.

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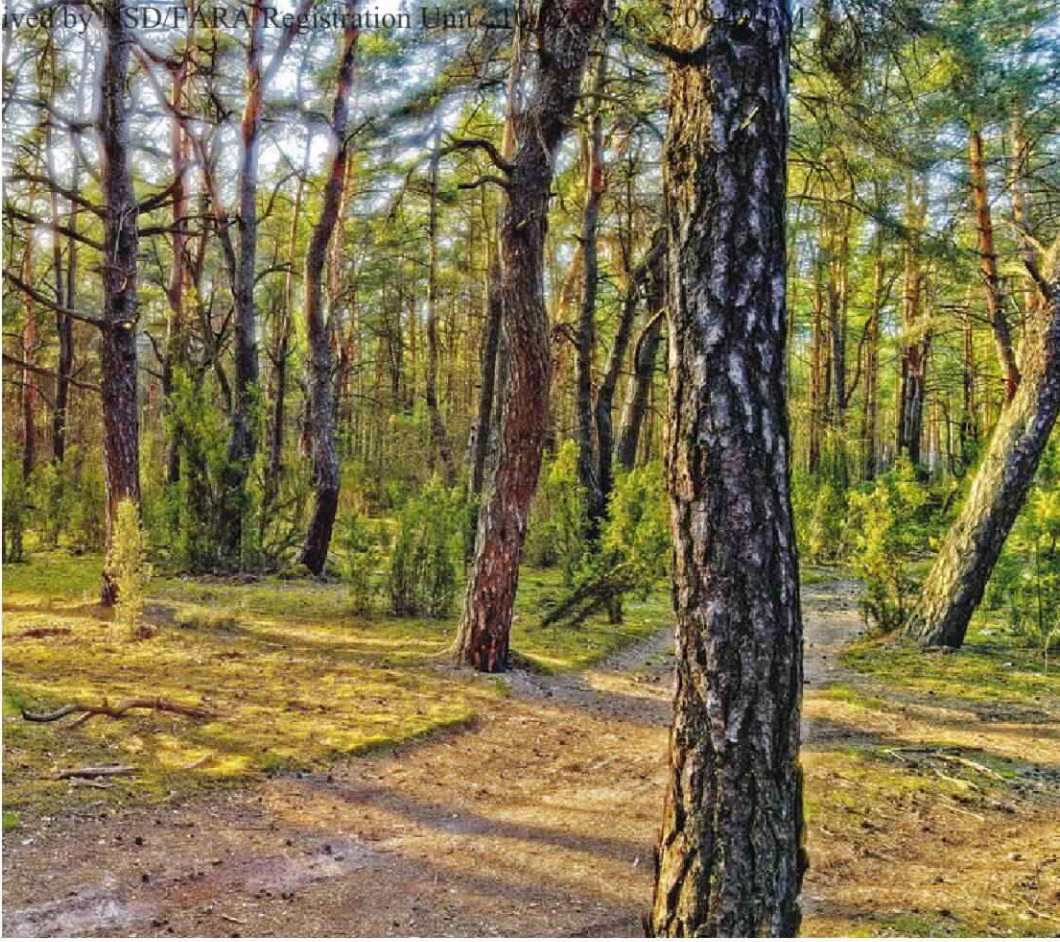
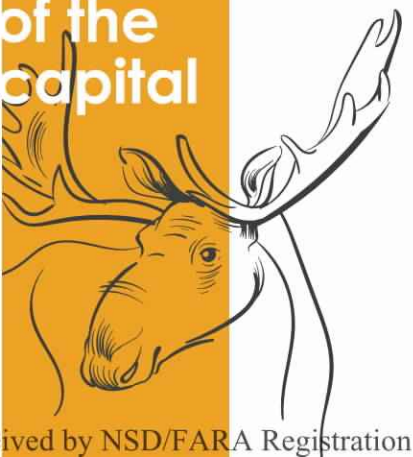


Kampinos National Park

Verdant breath of the capital



What if you want to quit everything and head for the wilderness? Go ahead! Kampinos National Park is located just half an hour's drive north-west of Warsaw. The park covers almost 40,000 hectares. The landscape is shaped mainly by dunes and marshy areas formed in the Vistula's glacial valley. You will find Europe's best-preserved inland dunes here. In the forest-covered wetlands, you can stumble upon many interesting species of animals, such as moose (featured in the park's logo), wolves, beavers, badgers and lynxes. Hiking trails in Kampinos National Park total about 350 km in length, and the park can be explored on foot, by bike or on horseback.

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History written by human hands.

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Katowice, the capital of Upper Silesia, is an example of a small village rapidly developing into a big industrial city. As a result, today we can admire numerous examples of post-industrial architecture. Many technology-related festivals are held here, Industriada being one of the largest, and there is a plethora of traditional and open-air museums as well as old mines, making Upper Silesia a unique place on the map of Poland, visited not only by lovers of industrial tourism. At the same time, the essence of Silesian tradition cannot be missed: Katowice's Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec districts, with their famous workers' town houses, lie at the heart of that tradition.

Industrial city

As a city that is a mere 130 years old and that became the centre of Silesian industry, Katowice stands out with its distinctive architecture, which is very different from that to be found in Warsaw or Kraków. Before you visit the mines, smelters and coking plants, it is worth paying attention to this unique urban architecture.

Katowice

Gem of Silesian tradition

www.slaskie.travel/en
kopalniaguido.pl/en
industriada.pl

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When in Katowice, you simply must take a stroll down Mariacka Street, full of life at almost every hour of the day. The neo-Gothic St. Mary's Church is the focal point of the street. On the way you can admire historical burgher houses from the 19th century. The other important point on the tourist map of the city is various districts with their distinctive red-brick workers' houses, commonly known as "familoki". The most famous districts for these are Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec. It was here that entire families of miners settled in the early 20th century.

Industrial tourism sights

If you want to learn about the industrial history of Upper Silesia, it is really worth going to Zabrze, which has been dubbed the city of industrial tourism. You can visit its old mines, smelters and coking plants, the Queen Louise Adit (a horizontal mine shaft that boasts the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation) with its noteworthy underground boat trips, and the Main Key Heritage Adit. All this will help bring you closer to the industrial tradition of Silesia.

Mines, adits and coking plants

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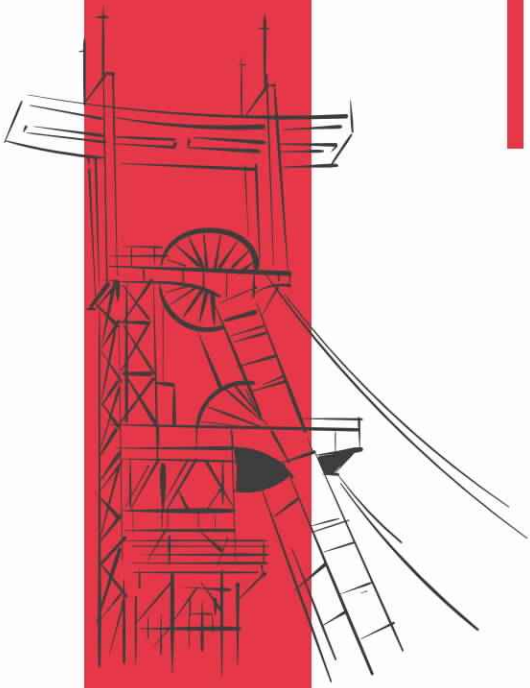
The most interesting places on the map of Zabrze include the Coal Mining Museum with its outstanding historical Guido Mine, which has also received the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. One of the attractions is on the surface. There's an authentic szola (mining elevator) that takes tourists underground. The same type is used by miners working in active mines.

Guido Mine



Coal Mining Museum

There are three levels accessible to visitors. The first, at a depth of 170 metres, allows tourists to glimpse the oldest accessible areas of the Guido Mine. However, it is the next level, 320 metres below ground, that offers the most thrills. Part of this route involves a trip on a suspended electric railway. It is worth knowing that the Guido Mine is the only site in the world to offer this kind of attraction! After an exciting ride, tourists end by visiting the Pump Hall – now the deepest pub in Europe. Here you can relax, try some Silesian cuisine, drink a cup of coffee or taste Guido beer which is a speciality of the place.

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Anyone who wants to take a closer look at technology monuments in Silesia should attend Industriada – the only Polish festival that is entirely devoted to the culture of industrial heritage. It has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. During this June event, you can visit as many as 44 industrial sites in 27 towns in Upper Silesia, including mines, breweries, factories, narrow-gauge railways, sluices, and even entire workers' housing estates. Besides intensive sightseeing, there are many additional attractions waiting for you in the form of several hundred organised events. Concerts, entertainment, performances, exhibitions, competitions and workshops will delight all industrial enthusiasts, both young and old.

Silesian industrial heritage – Industriada

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Świętokrzyskie province and the Świętokrzyskie Mountains are geological treasures as well as a tangible source of paleontological and archaeological knowledge. The world's only fir-beech forest growing on a high mountain range is the pride of the region. And in the heart of the province lies the capital, Kielce, with plenty of places worth visiting.

According to legend

In the past, Kielce was called Kiełce, derived from the Old Polish name for tusks, because according to legend, Mieszko from the Piast dynasty found some enormous ones in the region. To commemorate this event, he decided to build a fortified town with a church exactly where today's Kielce is. And that, in a nutshell, is how the present-day capital of Świętokrzyskie province was established. First of all, you should visit the Kraków Bishops' Palace, which will take you back to the 16th/17th-century Vasa dynasty (today the building houses the National Museum in Kielce), as well as the cathedral basilica – a stately early Baroque basilica with three aisles, founded in 1171 by Gedeon, Bishop of Kraków.

Kielce
Geologist's paradise

swietokrzyskie.travel/en
zamek.checiny.pl/en
www.greenvelo.pl/en

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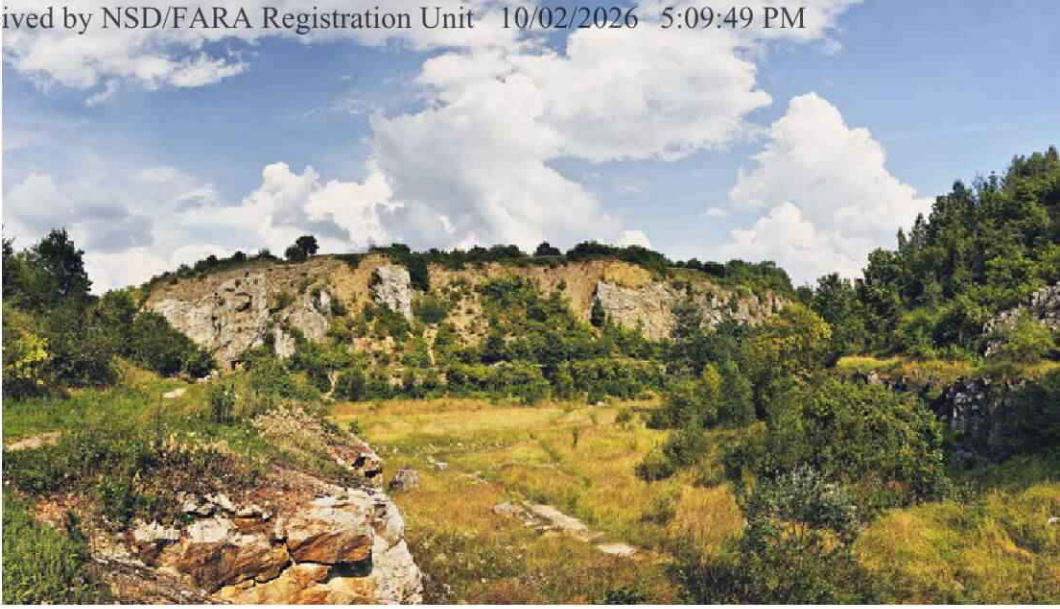

Kielce boasts as many as five nature reserves. Three of them, Wietrznia, Kadzielnia and Ślichowice, are part of the Geopark Kielce educational park (on the Świętokrzyskie Archaeo-Geological Trail). You should definitely visit the Geoeducation Centre, an incredibly interesting place for children and adults, where fascinating and important facts are presented in a way that anyone can understand. Who has never dreamed of journeying to the centre of the Earth? Here, you can make this childhood dream come true in a 5D simulator! During a virtual tour, participants see astounding fossils, caves and flowing lava. Many more attractions await - this a place you simply must see.

Archaeo-Geological Trail

This trail was designed to make it easier and more pleasant to explore the amazing geological and archaeological beauties of the region. It is aimed at both children and adults. Dinosaurs and million-year-old secrets await young tourists at JuraPark in Bałtów (certified by the Polish Tourism Organisation). A multitude of attractions lie in store for you in the mine workings in Krzemionki (its underground route called Travels with Passion was also awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation) and in the caves around Chęcin, including the famous Paradise Cave. As many as 27 tourist attractions are part of the trail, so one day will certainly not be enough to see all of them. Zelejowa Mountain is worth visiting as well, not only to enjoy its beautiful views but also to glimpse traces of old mining activities and interesting rock formations. The place is famous for its calcite rocks called różanka zelejowska, with a quite distinctive pattern, and the whole trail is labelled with the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

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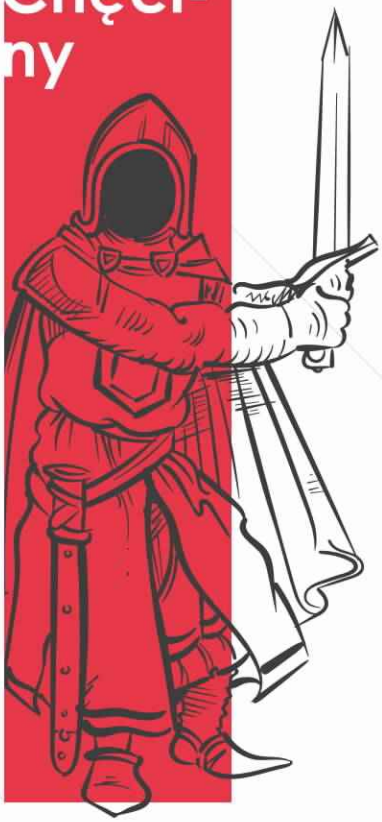
Royal Castle in Chęciny



The Royal Castle in Chęciny was built at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, and the first mention of it can be found in the Act of 1306 signed by King Ladislaus the Elbow-high. The castle was a royal residence for years. It also served as the Crown Treasury, and a prison was located here until the end of the 14th century. You can still visit the castle today, since it is open to tourists all year round! The castle in Chęciny is certified by the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Another charming place that takes us back to the Middle Ages lies just 15 km from Kielce. Here you'll encounter dancing ladies, armourers making coins and castle staff wearing medieval garments; the impression of a journey into the past is intensified by the sounds of medieval music. It gets a bit more modern in the evenings, yet remains nostalgic, as the castle is spectacularly illuminated.

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Unique heritage park

There is another remarkable place definitely worth visiting that lies just 5 kilometres from the castle in Chęciny: the Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia (part of the Kielce Region Countryside Museum). This settlement of several dozen historical wooden cottages covers an area of approximately 65 hectares in the Czarna Nida valley. Here you can visit an old inn, a chemist's shop and explore a small-town market square or learn how manors were built, see farm buildings, artisans' workshops and artists' studios, historical mills and sculptures. Many other attractions that will take you on an unforgettable journey in a time machine await you here. The heritage park is divided into sectors, each of which is distinguished by a particular architectural style typical for the respective regions: the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, the Sandomierz Upland, and the Nidziańska Basin. There also beautiful green areas perfect for long walks. The Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia is certified by the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Świętokrzyski National Park,

located in the central part of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, serves as the region's verdant lungs. Here you can admire a fir-beech forest that novelist Stefan Żeromski called a "fir wilderness", a unique forest of global importance. In the park you should visit the medieval settlement of Bieliny and the Sanctuary of Relics of the Holy Cross. Additionally, try to find one of the tallest trees in Poland – a 270-year-old fir over 50 metres tall. The park is divided into five protected areas, each of which has something different to offer tourists: Chełmowa Góra (Chełmowa Mountain), Łysica–Święty Krzyż (the Holy Cross and Łysica mountains), Czarny Las (Black Forest), Mokry Bór (Wet Woods), and Psarski Dół forest.

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Promised land, Textile City, a place of dialogue for four cultures – these are just some of the names used over the years to describe Łódź. However, modern Łódź is definitely more than just a city with an industrial history – it's a real artistic and business melting pot that is boiling over with attractions. Former textile factories have been turned into recreational and residential complexes, with modern office buildings sprouting up between them, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing architectural buckle to bind the urban fabric together.

Eclecticism in Łódź – exploring 19th-century architecture

In Łódź, it is worth starting your trip from Piotrkowska Street. Once exclusively a transport route, today this artery serves as a good showpiece for the city. With a length of over 4 km, it connects two distantly situated squares – Liberty Square in the north and Independence Square in the south. On both sides of Piotrkowska Street are rows of tenements built in the historicist, eclectic and fanciful "Secession" (Art Nouveau) styles. These buildings form the only route in Poland with comprehensively preserved 19th-century urban architecture and can only be compared with urban Vienna.

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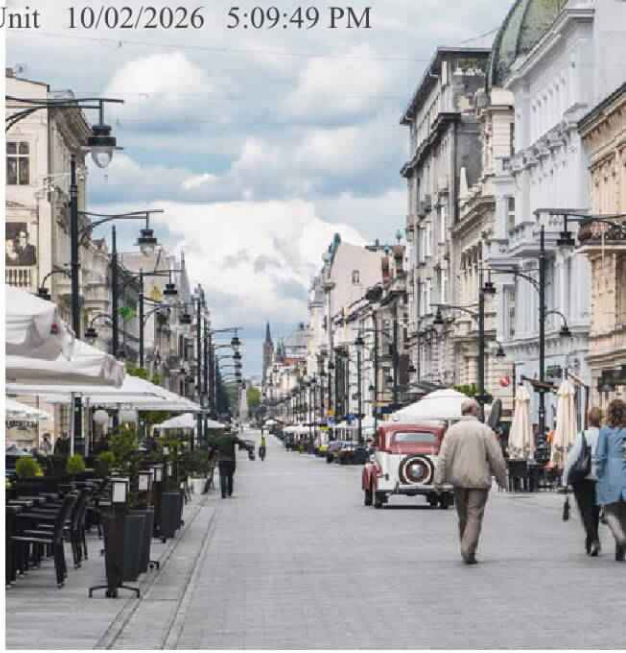
Ludwik Meyer municipal palace



The most interesting tenement on the route is found at No. 3. Although the front may seem inconspicuous at first glance, it hides a real treasure: the Rose Passage, an artistic manifesto and part of an official national monument of history called Łódź – Multicultural Landscape of an Industrial City. The Landau tenement at 29 Piotrkowska St., the Ludwik Meyer municipal palace at 74 Piotrkowska St., and the former residence of Juliusz Heinzel at 104 Piotrkowska St. which is now a local government building, are at least worth capturing with a smartphone.

Multicultural landscape of an industrial city

Strolling along Piotrkowska Street, it is worth looking for lovely hidden restaurants, trendy bistro bars or niche boutiques run by young local artists. Lovers of atmospheric venues and unique street fashion should also visit the OFF Piotrkowska complex at No. 138/140. Here you can not only eat or shop, but also have fun. This is where the heart of the night life is, especially at the weekend.

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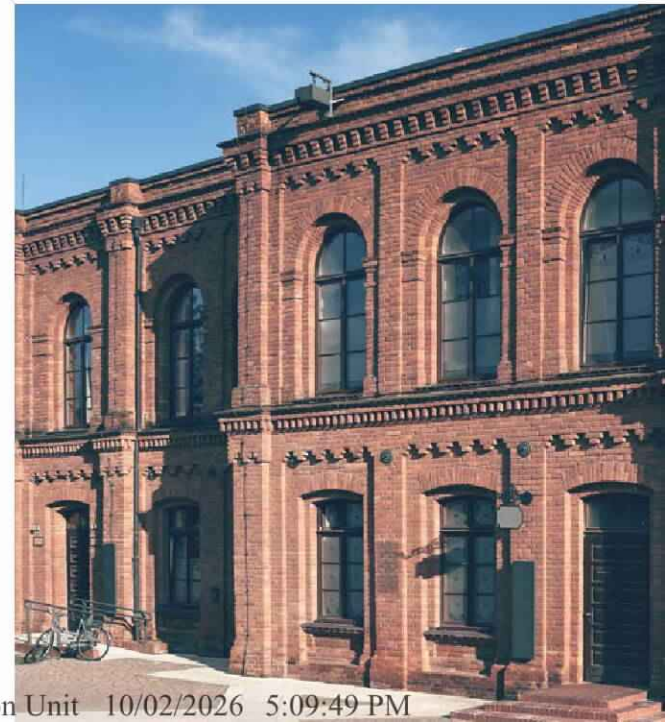
Manu-faktura

Iconic spot on the map of modern Łódź

Manufaktura is definitely one of the most popular places with both Łódź residents and tourists. Here you can find everything you need to have fun in the city: from restaurants serving different cuisines to a cinema, the Mały (Small) Theatre, the MS2 Art Museum, a bowling alley, a climbing wall, a designer 4-star hotel with a glazed, rooftop swimming pool offering a view over the whole city, to a shopping complex that brings together the world's biggest brands. It's worth coming here even if you don't plan to indulge in any of these activities, because the whole complex is also a great example (the largest in Europe) of how to revitalise old textile factories. Manufaktura in Łódź has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Former factory

Manu, Manufa, Manufka – as it is affectionately described by the city's residents – is a cultural and entertainment complex created in the post-industrial buildings of the former business empire of Izrael Kalmanowicz Poznański. Beautifully restored weaving mills, a free-standing power plant, Poznański Palace which houses the Museum of the City of Łódź, and a 3.5-hectare market where numerous events and concerts take place and which changes seasonally into a beach, ice rink, amusement park with a Ferris wheel, or outdoor cinema, are just a few of the attractions.



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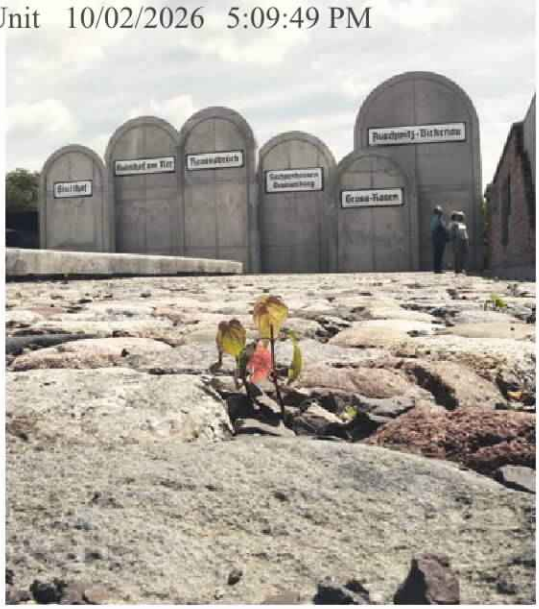

What else is worth seeing in Łódź?

Murals. Small and huge, realistic and abstract, paintings and sculptures. The murals decorating many of the walls in Łódź are in no way inferior to those in New York or Berlin, and have already become a permanent part of the city's landscape. Łódź can boldly call itself the capital of Polish street art.

Visiting Łódź, it is impossible to ignore its painful history. The restored Radegast Station and the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre located in Survivors' Park remind us that in a city of four cultures, culture has not always been the most important thing. Bear this in mind and take a walk through the streets of the former ghetto or visit the Old Cemetery at 43 Ogrodowa St.

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As journalist Andrzej Stasiuk wrote about Lublin: "So the wind is blowing as if some kind of end of the world has begun". Lublin is perhaps the only real boundary between Mitteleuropa and the East. It is a place which for centuries has been a witness to history that slipped past Kraków's Wawel Castle and Warsaw's Old Town.

Cultural capital of eastern Poland

But Lublin was not always a peripheral city hiding in the shadow of Warsaw and Kraków. In the 16th century its location on the route between Kraków and Vilnius was of key importance at a time of deepening relations between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. That is why the Union of Lublin creating the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was signed here. It was an unprecedented event in Europe. Two states, two different power structures, two monetary systems and two different cultures were merging into one nation. Traces of these events can still be found along the Jagiellonian Route of the Union of Lublin. The most important witnesses to those events are, of course, Lublin Castle and its Chapel of the Holy Trinity where the signature of a statesman and participant in the event was found on the wall (yes, such souvenirs were also scratched into walls in the Middle Ages). The oldest religious building in the city is also on this trail: St. Stanislaus' Church together with the Dominican monastery where, according to the Dominicans, the act of signing the union took place. The trail ends in Lithuanian Square with its monument to the Union of Lublin, a symbolic reminder of the city's multicultural history.

Lublin
A Jagiellonian treasure

lublintravel.pl

www.muzeumzamoyskich.pl/72,museum

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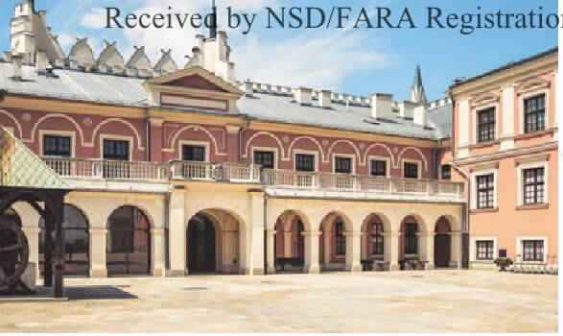

Traces of the Zamoyski family

The Zamoyski Museum in Kozłówka is the perfect place for those who like to escape town. It is a delightful 18th-century palace and park complex that has retained its old character to this day. It's a work of Baroque architecture, most probably of Italian design. Konstanty Zamoyski had the ambition to transform the estate into the most impressive aristocratic residence. The preserved furnishings come from this period. It is worth visiting its chapel modelled after the one at Versailles. The carriage house, on the other hand, houses the only Socialist Realism Art Gallery in Poland, where collections from the first half of the 1950s are stored. The palace is surrounded by beautiful gardens. This site has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Of course the whole Old Town is a crown jewel of the Jagiellonian dynasty. The Trinitarian Tower, the unique Konopnica tenement house and the Musicians' House, various old palaces and narrow gates, evoke the atmosphere of Jagiellonian times and great aristocratic courts. However, it is worth stepping off the beaten path and wandering into the side streets. First of all, to find hidden little bakeries serving a delicacy known as cebularz. Fresh out of the oven, this onion flatbread - buttered - is what every walker needs. Secondly, in one of these streets you will find the House of Words. Lublin's cultural life is concentrated in a basement of this tenement house in Żmigród Street housing an old bindery, a printing house and a living museum where brochures and notebooks are made using traditional techniques, also during workshops.

If you prefer to avoid crowded conurbations, if you enjoy observing the unhurried life of the periphery and discovering traces of living history, Lublin is the place for you.

Cebularz trail

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According to legend, Białystok (literally: "white slope") was founded by Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas in 1320 during a break from hunting. He was inspired by the view of a clear, rapid stream. "A clean, white slope. One could build a hunting lodge over it, or even found a village", he said, and so he did. Today Białystok is a beautiful vibrant city, with the glamorous Lipowa Street, and it has a lot to offer not only those who love to spend time surrounded by nature but also history buffs.

City of many cultures

In fact, the history of Białystok dates back to the 15th century. For hundreds of years, people of different nationalities settled in the city. When the Warsaw-St. Petersburg railway was opened in 1862, many new residents came to the city, mainly Russians, Germans and Jews. This inspired Ludwik Zamenhof, a Białystok citizen, to create one common universal language for everyone. Yes, it was in Białystok that Esperanto was born! Today you can visit the Ludwik Zamenhof Centre, a modern museum devoted to the Esperanto language and its creator. It is a must-see for fans of history.

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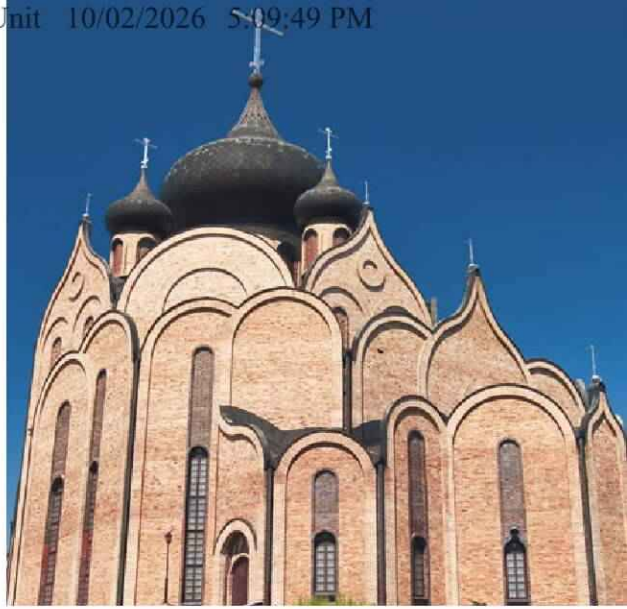
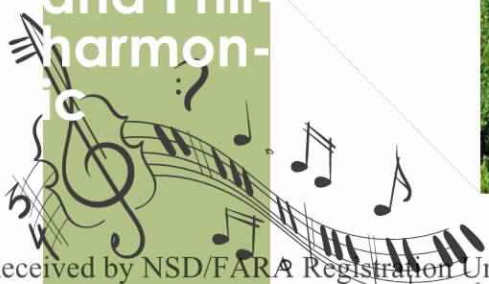


Białystok is a Polish, Jewish, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Tatar city, and the influence of each of these cultures is visible on every corner. Among the numerous religious buildings, above all we recommend a visit to St. Roch's Church, St. Nicholas' Cathedral and St. Mary Magdalene's Church, one of the oldest religious buildings in the city. The 19th-century Piaskower Synagogue and the Jewish cemeteries are also worth seeing. The Branicki Palace is a must-see on a trip to Białystok. It is one of the best-preserved aristocratic estates of Poland's "Saxon Age" (1697-1763), designed in the late Baroque style. It used to be called the Versailles of Podlasie, and to this day its beautiful architecture and palace gardens are a source of great admiration. Currently the palace houses the Medical University of Białystok. When it comes to modern architecture, the European Art Centre which houses the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic is worth mentioning. It is the largest and most modern arts institution in north-eastern Poland and indeed this part of Europe.

Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic



It has even been awarded the coveted Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

For anyone out to enjoy the charms of Białystok, we recommend Gościnny Białystok (Hospitable Białystok) – a 3-day trip targeted mainly at organised tourist groups which has also received the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

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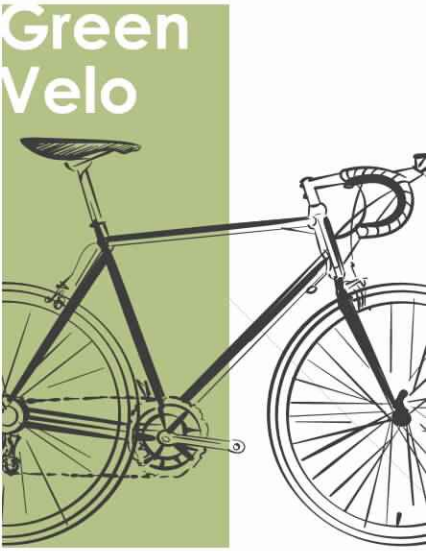
Białystok is located in a region called the "verdant lungs of Poland". You can take a walk across the whole city strolling only through parks, woods and squares! It is not far from here to the next paradise for nature lovers: Białowieża Forest. This forest, located in Poland and Belarus, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Some of the last and largest fragments of primeval forest that covered the European lowlands can be found here. How can you get around it?

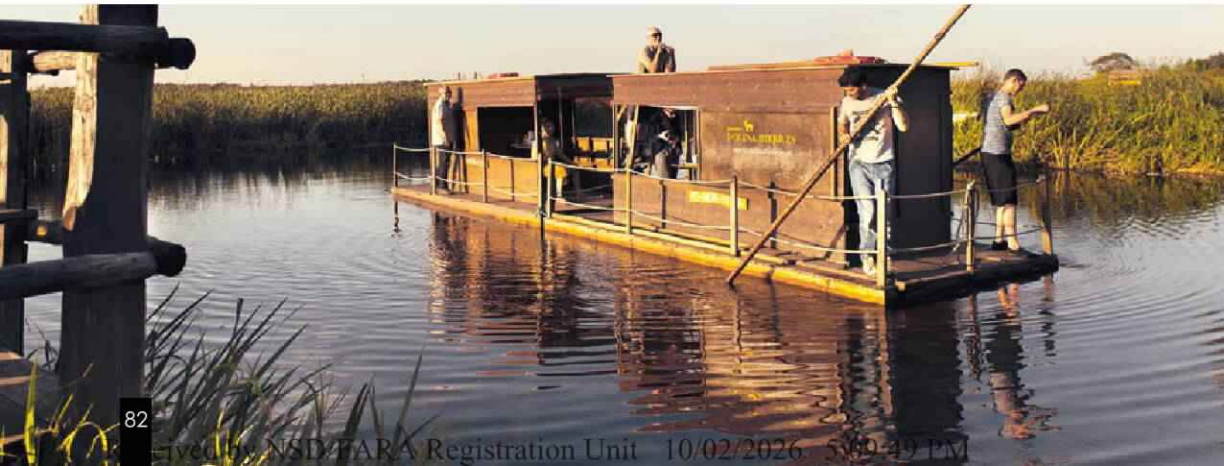
Region of many paths

Obviously, it is best to cycle along the GREEN VELO Eastern Bicycle Trail. The entire route is over 2,000 km long and stretches across five provinces. It is also possible to take the Białowieża Tourist Trail, stretching for almost 120 km on the Polish and Belarusian side, through the primeval forest and its surrounding areas. If you choose it, remember that it is marked in yellow. This trail was awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

It is also impossible to forget about the unique Biebrza River Valley and Marshes. This is one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in Europe, and also Poland's largest national park in. Over 80 percent of Polish birdlife can be found here, which is why the area is called a birdwatcher's paradise. Besides birds, you can stumble upon the local animal king – the moose – and other animals: beavers, otters and wolves.

Lovers of outdoor activities must visit the SZELMENT Regional Sports and Recreation Centre, just a few kilometres from Suwałki. We especially recommend visiting it in winter, as it offers seven illuminated ski slopes! The resort also has rooms for rent. It has been awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.





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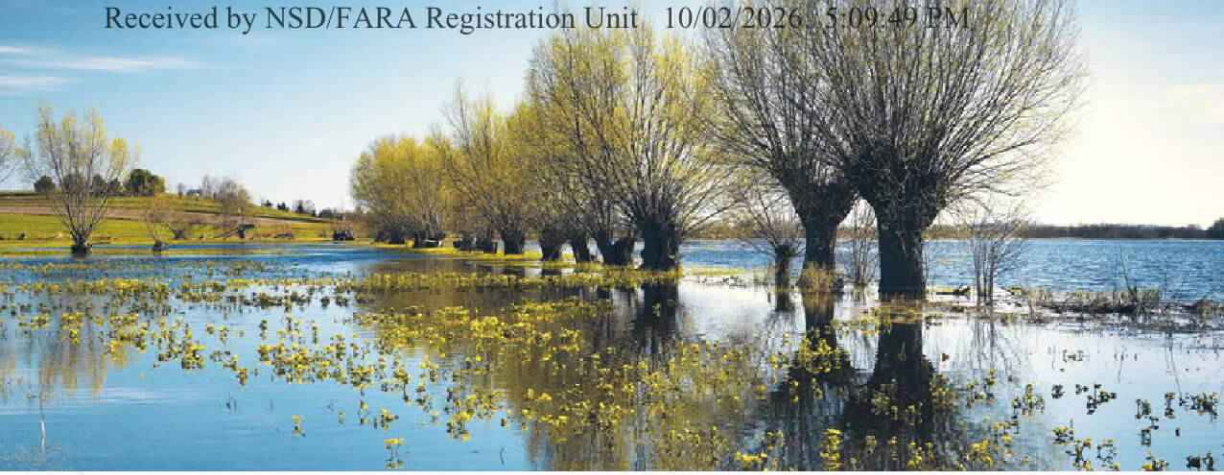
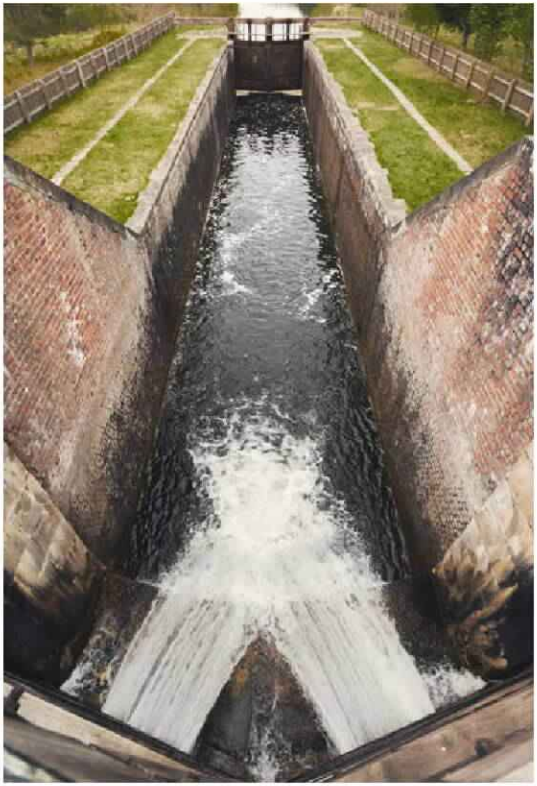


Canal of many attractions

When in Białystok, you must not miss the nearby Augustów Canal, which is part of the Papal Trail, awarded the Gold Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation. This is an example of hydraulic engineering from the first half of the 19th century that is unique in Europe. It is worth taking a cruise, also certified by the Polish Tourism Organisation, to admire the Augustów Forest from the water and to take a break and visit the Marian Sanctuary in Studzieniczna. You can also choose a canoeing trip that can last a few or even a few dozen days. For fans of uncommon sports, the Polish Championships in Floating on Anything are organised every year in Augustów. Anyone who builds "anything" that stays afloat on water can take part. This attraction is recommended by the Polish Tourism Organisation and has been awarded its Certificate.

Podlasie is a region of many faces. Children, youngsters, adults and seniors – everyone can find something for themselves. It's a region well worth visiting!



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Capital of Warmia and Masuria

Being the capital and the most popular urban centre in the region, Olsztyn proudly reigns over Warmia and Masuria. In Olsztyn, there are as many as 11 lakes as well as the Municipal Forest, the largest forest in Europe located within a city's limits. The proximity of nature tempts residents and visitors with the possibility of carefree rest at the water's edge and with numerous bicycle paths and hiking trails.

The history of Olsztyn is connected with the activity of outstanding Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. It is true that he spent only a few years in the city, but it was here, in the gallery of the Warmia Chapter Castle, that he drew an astronomical table on the wall to observe the Sun and determine the spring and autumn equinoxes. The longest section of the Copernicus Trail runs through Warmia and Masuria. It includes all the places where the well-known Polish scholar lived and worked. The trail starts at the High Gate in Olsztyn and leads, among other places, through Dobre Miasto, Lidzbark Warmiński, Braniewo, Frombork and Elbląg. When strolling around the market square and streets of the Old Town, it is best to enter through this medieval gate.

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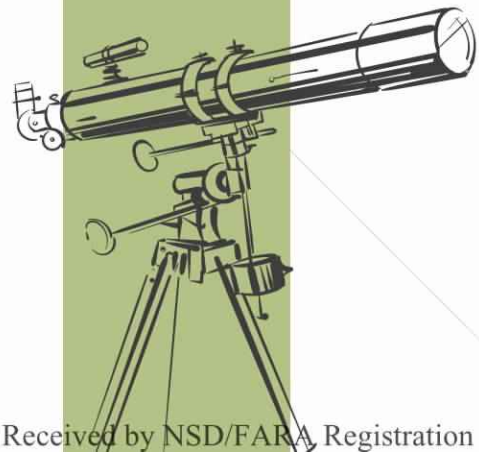
For those who love the sky and stars, the Olsztyn Planetarium and the Astronomical Observatory, located within the outer walls of a former water tower, should be an obligatory stop. Telescope shows observing the night sky take place on the terrace of the observatory on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. When weather conditions are favourable, visitors have the chance to see, among other things, star systems, the brightest planets or the moons of Jupiter.

Near Olsztyn Castle is the Copernicus bench with a monument to the astronomer, a popular photo spot for tourists. Interestingly, local residents treat the bench as a true landmark: for meeting up for dates, for ordering taxis, and for figuring out where they are when it gets dark.

Tele-scope shows



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Warmia and Masuria

And what is the pride of the whole region? In Warmia, which was under the rule of the Teutonic Order for over 200 years, you will find Teutonic castles (although there are plenty of them in Masuria as well), medieval monuments and unique folk clothing including a distinctive cap worn by married Warmia women. Masuria, in turn, is often called the Land of a Thousand Lakes, as there are around 2,600 of them in the region.

Healthy mind in a healthy body

Olsztyn puts a lot of emphasis on rest and recreation. The Ukiel Sport and Recreation Centre offers a wide range of physical activities that you can enjoy all year round. In summer, you can use the guarded swimming pool, the beach volleyball court or rent swimming equipment. In winter, you can enjoy the artificial ice rink, or rent cross-country skis or ice-boats (boats on skis). There are also activities for teenagers – a snow park and a skatepark.

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Paradise for sailing enthusiasts

This is a real paradise for sailing enthusiasts. It is in the Masurian Lake District that we find Mikołajki, one of the most visited Masurian resorts (popular with motor-sports fans, but not only), and a little further to the north is the Galiny Palace and Grange, awarded the Certificate of the Polish Tourism Organisation.

Galiny Palace and Grange

Galiny is a beautifully restored estate with a palace from the 16th century, a 19th-century farm, a romantic park and over 350 hectares of forests, meadows, pastures and ponds.

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