

MINI GUIDEBOOK

Culture and historical monuments

Western Mazovia

Content:

Sylvia Kulczyk

Cover design and graphics:

PANCZAKIEWICZ ART.DESIGN / Paweł Panczakiewicz

www.panczakiewicz.pl

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Mazowieckie Voivodeship

03-719 Warszawa, ul. Jagiellońska 26

tel. (+22) 5979-100, fax: (+22) 5979-290

e-mail: urzed_marszalkowski@mazovia.pl

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Mazovia.
heart of Poland



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WESTERN MAZOVIA

If you look for Mazovia like the one from Chopin's mazurkas, you will find it just here. Extensive fields are cut through with the lines of forked willows. The mosaic is diversified by high church towers and white walls of manors. Obviously time does not stand still and since the 19th c. many things have changed, but the atmosphere of peace and sentimental reverie has been preserved in surprisingly numerous places.

This pocket guide provides descriptions of the cultural attractions of the western part of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, namely Płock and poviats: płocki, sierpecki, gostyniński, sochaczewski, warszawski zachodni, przyszkowski, grodziski and żyrardowski. The biggest city of the region is Płock, but many of the localities that we describe here lie in the vicinity of Warsaw. Both cities, Płock and Warsaw, constitute the best possible starting points if you want a trip around Mazovia. Each place presented in this guide is accessible by bus (PKS), yet with your own means of transport you are free to move around irrespective of the timetable.



MAZOVIAN LANDSCAPES

Although Mazovia is generally considered a flat plain offering few attractive views, if you take a closer look at the region, you will be surprised by the variety of local landscapes. The area that we describe here lies within the limits of as many as five geographical macro-regions, which are hugely different in terms of environmental and human development characteristics. The axes of the region are: a broad, latitudinally stretching valley of the Vistula, and a much smaller valley of the Bzura river that flows into the Vistula from the south-west. On the edge of the valleys lie the oldest and most significant cities and towns of Mazovia, such as Płock and Sochaczew. Those who love wide spaces should go to the Łowicz

and Błonie Plain. The surroundings of Sochaczew, Żyrardów and Błonie are indeed one of the flattest lands in Poland. A great asset of this part of Mazovia, which is typically agricultural, is exceptionally vast views. A somewhat more varied lie of the land is a distinctive feature of the northern part of the said area, i.e. the Płoński Upland. The farmlands here are like an undulating carpet that is cut through in many places with small valleys of local rivulets. A completely unique place is the eastern part of the region, the Gostynin Lake District, which is similar rather to the landscapes of northern Poland. Numerous post-glacial lakes shimmer in the hilly area.

KALEIDOSCOPE OF HISTORY

For years, academics have been trying to establish what in fact the name "Mazowsze" (Mazovia) means. Typically, the Polish name for Mazovia, i.e. "Mazowsze" is divided into two parts: "maz" and "wsze". The second element can be traced to the word "vše", which stands for the "populated area". It is even more difficult to account for the etymology of the first part of the word, though. Most probably, it should be derived from the Polish verb "mazać" (*to soil*) or "mazidło" (*liniment*). Perhaps, it was a nickname given to the muddied inhabitants of the land, or maybe it can be derived from the word "maż" (*grease*) which is connected with wood tar burning.

Explaining the region's name is as difficult as marking its exact borders. As throughout the centuries the borders underwent numerous and significant changes, they have become blurred in many places. The Mazowieckie Voivodeship, which has existed since 1999 and is the largest Polish voivodeship, comprises the majority of the historical region of Mazovia, extending a little further eastwards and southwards.

The history of settlement in this part of Mazovia dates back to the beginnings of the Common Era when in the vicinity of today's Brwinów and Błonie there was a large metallurgical centre. Iron was smelted from bog iron ore with the use of special primitive iron smelting stoves known as "dymarki". The lands of Mazovia had been included in the Piast monarchy territories since the times of Mieszko

I. Nevertheless, their mutual relationships were so loose that in the 11th c. the ruler of Mazovia, Masław, created an independent state with a capital city in Płock. Yet in no time, King Casimir the Restorer managed to incorporate this populous and rich land into Poland. Between 1079 and 1138 it was Płock that served as the capital city of Poland. During the rule of Ladislaus Herman and Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed, in the West and North of Mazovia, numerous towns were established, whose inhabitants were growing rich on trade. Since the end of the 12th c., when Conrad I came to power, the Duchy of Mazovia was politically independent. The duke's court that resided in Płock and Łęczyca was an important centre of knowledge. At the cathedral in Płock, there was a scriptorium where they were copying liturgical books. In the following centuries, as the ruling families

of individual Mazovian lands were dying out, their territories were subsequently included into the Crown. Finally, the period of Mazovian independence ended in 1526. Three new voivodeships were created from Mazovia: Mazowieckie, Rawskie and Płockie. What we should know about the then Płockie Voivodeship is that its population was over 27 persons per sq km which was an impressive number for those times. By the 1650s, Mazovia had been a stable centre of the great Republic of Poland and had had its golden age. Towns and cities developed intensively. Across the area that we discuss here, the localities that were growing in strength included Sochaczew and Wyszogród. Although Płock lost much of its former status to Warsaw, it remained an important crop trade centre. Most of the towns were of a semi-agricultural nature, and their

main source of income was trade. They were eager to invest the resulting capital in the craft and services by erecting water mills, grinding mills and paper-mills.

Unfavourable times came in the 17th century. An economic crisis and several epidemics of the bubonic plague coincided with the Swedish invasion. Warsaw incurred the greatest losses; however the situation of other cities, towns and villages was also tragic. The Swedish invasion of 1655 brought about further impoverishment of numerous minor gentry families. Contrary to other Polish regions, the title in Mazovia did not grant prosperity. More often than not the noblemen had to farm their own land. It took Mazovian towns and villages a long time to recover from the destruction. It is estimated that a hundred years after the Swedish invasion of 1655, the population of all Mazo-

vian towns together (excluding Warsaw) was only 135,000.

As a result of the third partition of Poland, the part of Mazovia in question became the property of Prussia, just like most of the region. In 1807, the territories were incorporated in the Duchy of Warsaw, and in 1815, into the Kingdom of Poland. The region had been expanding and developing until 1830. The population was increasing, while the spatial and land development in urban areas changed. Lots of public utility buildings of brick date back to this period; for example, the town halls in Płock, Gostynin and Sochaczew. Crafts and trade, as well as education and culture were developing successfully. In Płock, the Learned Society and the National Theatre were started. In 1830, the industrial town of Żyrardów was established. After the November Uprising (1830-1831), Mazovia suf-

ferred from strong Russian repression; property was confiscated and the Polish army and the Sejm were abolished. Despite that, the regional economy was developing. On the fertile soils of the Łowicz-Błonie Plain, sugar beet crops were planted, while the textile, distilling, and milling industries were intensively developing. The railway lines that were being constructed, determined a new arrangement of transport routes and related industrial functions. The January Uprising of 1863 claimed thousands of Mazovia inhabitants, and lots of them were exiled to Siberia. Intensive insurgent fighting took place, among others, in the vicinity of Kampinos. Post-uprising repressions significantly changed the region's character. Church property was confiscated, and numerous monasteries were closed. Dozens of towns and small towns were deprived of their town charters.

During the First World War, Mazovia was a scene of numerous battles, and just after regaining independence by Poland, it witnessed a bloody episode of the Polish-Bolshevik war. The interwar time was a period of great changes. The area of Płock tripled, while the area of Sochaczew, located favourably at the railway route, increased as much as twenty times. Significant changes took place near Warsaw too. The most flourishing location in Mazovia was the industrial town of Pruszków.

During the defensive war of 1939, fierce battles took place on the Bzura river and near Warsaw. During the entire period of German occupation, there were guerrilla groups operating in Mazovia. After the defeat of the Warsaw Rising of 1944, Pruszków housed a transitory camp for displaced persons. Many inhabitants of Warsaw lived through the war in the localities around the capital city.

After 1945, the region's intensive restoration began. After this, new centrally-controlled investment started, such as the petrochemical plants in Płock. Between 1975 and 1999, the Mazovia Region comprised seven small voivodeships. The part of the region that we discuss here stretched within the limits of the Płockie, Skierniewickie and Warszawskie voivodeships. After the administrative reform of 1999, lands historically linked to Mazovia, such as skierniewicki, łowicki and kutnowski poviats, found themselves outside the western border of the voivodeship.



PŁOCK

Here Was the Capital of Poland

Płock is one of the most significant cities of Mazovia. Warsaw is like a younger sister of Płock; by the 7th c. of the Common Era, Płock was already a centre of the pagan cult, and during the reign of Ladislaus Herman and Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed (1079–1138) the city was the capital of Poland. The time of the city's greatest glory came to an end when Mazovia was incorporated into the Crown. It was destroyed by fires, epidemics, and last but not least by the Swedish invasion of 1655. In the 1750s, the decline of Płock was such that its population was only one thousand. In the next century, the city gained importance as an administrative centre and began to de-

velop again. In the 1960s, on the outskirts of Płock, a petrochemical plant was built, which considerably accelerated the economic development of the city (yet, at the same time, it confronted city authorities with various environmental problems). Between 1975 and 1998, Płock was the capital of the voivodeship. Today the city, of approx. 130,000 inhabitants, is the largest urban agglomeration in the West of Mazovia, and at the same time an important cultural centre. Płock has its own symphonic orchestra, which not only gives high quality concerts, but also develops a love of music among young people. In the summer, between June and August, music pervades the entire city. The concerts of the Summer Music Festival are organised in different corners of the old part of Płock. The symphonic orchestra gives first-class performances presenting various musical forms:



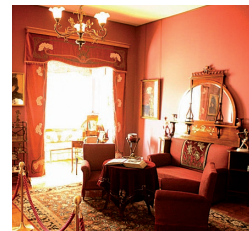
from classical to jazz pieces, operetta music and popular contemporary music. Very popular among spectators are the outdoor shows, prepared by the Płock Symphonic Orchestra and the Dramatic Theatre (www.posorkiestra.pl).

The most valuable historical monuments of the city are to be found on the Vistula slope known as the Tumskie Hill. From the high bank of the river, there is a splendid view over the wide waters of the Vistula (banked with the dam in Włocławek). On the other bank of the river, there is the district of Radziwie with the biggest Polish river shipyard. On the horizon, you can see a dark patch of the Gostynin Lake District forests. The Tumskie Hill is overlooked with Gothic towers of the Mazovian Dukes' Castle of the 14th c. The lower of the towers is called "Szlachecka" (*Gentry's Tower*), while the higher one, topped with a barrel-

shaped baroque cupola is known as "Wieża Zegarowa" (*Clock Tower*). At the foot of one of the towers, archaeologists have discovered the remnants of a stone building that was probably the birth place of King Ladislaus the Wry-mouthed in 1085. The magnificent brick castle was partially destroyed in the 16th c. due to the slope subsiding. After it was rebuilt, it served as the Benedictine monastery until the period of the Polish-Swedish wars. The building was rebuilt a number of times. In the castle interiors there is the Museum of Mazovia. A particular attraction for visitors is a unique local collection of Art Nouveau items including more than eight thousand exhibits. The collection includes pieces of furniture, functional items, ceramics, glass and jewellery. In the museum, you can also admire a rich collection of paintings from the turn of the 19th century, including canvases of Julian

Fałat, Juliusz Kossak and Józef Mehoffer. A part of the museum is also a historical granary at ul. Kazimierza Wielkiego; its exhibits include interesting ethnographical collections of the Mazovia Region.

On the Tumskie Hill, you will also find the Płock cathedral. It was erected as early as in the 12th c., but since then it has been rebuilt a number of times. Between 1901 and 1903, Stefan Szyller restored the cathedral to its original 16th c. appearance. The cathedral's layout is Romanesque in style; its towers, tops and buttresses are Gothic, while the lantern dome is Renaissance. The rich painted interior decoration was prepared to the design of Stefan Szyller by Władysław Drapiewski and Czesław Idźkiewicz. The church furnishings come from a variety of epochs. In the vestibule, you can admire a copy of the Romanesque Gates of Płock of 1154, founded by Bishop Alexander of Malonne. The 13th c. original is now to be seen in St Sophia Cathedral in Veliky Novgorod (Russia). Bas-reliefs that decorate several bronze plates depict scenes from the Bible, allegorical scenes as well as portrayals of founders and artists. The Płock cathedral is not only a significant Catholic church, but an impor-



tant monument of the Polish statehood; in the Royal Chapel Polish kings are buried: Ladislaus Herman and Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed as well as numerous dukes from the Mazovia Region and Płock itself. The unique interiors of the Cathedral Basilica host important artistic events. Music lovers fascinated with mediaeval religious music and ancient hymns gather in Płock in March to see the Festival of the Monodic Music. The programme of the concerts comprises liturgical singing, including, the increasingly popular, Gregorian chants. The festival in Płock gathers superb performers; in the past it has seen, among others, Tomasz Stańko, Marcel Peres, Schola of the Country Theatre "Węgajty" and the Gregorian Schola of Dominicans of Warsaw. In 2006, a guest to the festival was a cantor from the Sistine Chapel, Roberto Colavalle (www.pokis.pl). At the end of April and the

beginning of May, for three evenings, the basilica interiors are filled with choral singing. The international festival known as the "Płock Days of Choral Music" features the best singers from Poland and abroad. The whole event is organised and hosted by the Boys' Cathedral Choir: Pueri Cantores Plocenses (www.pcpplock.pl).

On every Tuesday, between mid May and mid June, Płock cathedral gives you an opportunity to listen to organ concerts. Prominent Polish and foreign artists play the historical church organ that is considered one of the best and biggest Romantic instruments in Poland (www.republika.pl/pmfo).

In the vicinity of the cathedral, in the neo-Gothic building from the early 20th c, there is the Diocesan Museum. A variety of exhibits in the museum will make your head spin. Apart from the rich collections

of paintings and sculptures from various epochs, the exhibits include age-old elaborately decorated chasubles, a unique collection of robe belts as well as valuable incunabula and antique books.

At the rear of the Tumskie hill, you will find a charming Old Town. Some of the Old Town streets have been turned into promenades that invite you to stroll around. At the distinguishingly irregular Narutowicza square, there is a former palace of Płock bishops, which is now a seat of the court. Right next to it, there is a classical tenement known as the Providence House, designed by Jakub Kubicki. The classical style is also a characteristic feature of a former guardhouse of 1837. At the junction of two streets, Tumska and Mostowa, you will find a late-Gothic tenement known as the Trumpet House, whose construction utilised bits

of the city walls. If you want to reach the Old Market Square from the Narutowicza square, you should walk along the charming promenade of ul. Grodzka with classical tenements on both sides. We recommend that you should take a while and turn aside from ul. Grodzka to the parallel ul. Małachowskiego where you can see the oldest Polish school, established in 1180, at the collegiate church of St Michael. It is the Stanisław Małachowski Grammar School consisting of: the Gothic tower of a former collegiate church, the Romanesque and Gothic wing, the 17th c. post-Jesuit wing (rebuilt in the 19th c.) as well as the 20th c. pavilion.

The Old Market Square in Płock is a rectangular square built-up with 19th c. tenements; the northern frontage is occupied by the classical town hall erected between 1824 and 1827 to the design

of Jakub Kubicki. Several interesting figures used to live within the Płock market square. In the tenement known as the Berlin House, at number 8, lived the writer and composer, Ernst Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822), best known for his fairy tale "The Nutcracker". On the other hand, the Guardian Angel House saw the first revelation of Sister Faustine Kowalska on 22nd February 1831.

Every year, on the anniversary of Poland's joining the European Union, at the Old Market Square, the International Day of Black Pudding is organised. Although the festivities are full of music and delicacies, it is obviously the black pudding that reigns supreme. So far, the tasters have included such Polish stars as Tadeusz Drozda and Krzysztof Tyniec.

An important landmark on the cultural map of Płock is the beach on the

Vistula riverbank. In July, it is a scene of the unique Romani Picnic featuring musical performances of the best Polish and foreign gypsy groups. The host of the evening is the award-winning gypsy group from Płock, "Krystiano & Romen". In August, the same beach is a meeting place for fans of electronic music. The two-day festival AUDIORIVER comprises non-stop concerts and DJ performances. The participants have an opportunity to listen to many musical forms: from club music, through hip-hop, to experimental music and abstract laptop sounds (www.audioriver.pl). In August, the Płock beach is a landing place of DESANT (**THE LANDING**), the International Hip-Hop Culture Festival. Apart from the concerts, the festival features freestyle battles and graffiti competitions (www.hiphopdesant.pl).

There are many reasons why you should choose to visit Płock in June. During the joint celebrations of the Days of Płock History and the Chemistry Day, which are traditionally held on the first weekend of June, the entire city gets into the mood of fun filled play: Colourful processions make their way through the streets of the Old Town, while numerous shows, concerts and exhibitions gather musicians, actors, visual artists and writers from Płock. On the Tumskie Hill, we can travel back in time a couple of centuries; we have a chance to observe the arcane of medieval craft and watch breathtaking struggles of medieval knights and crossbowmen. On the other hand, the Old Market Square is in the invisible possession of contemporary artists. It has staged performances of such famous pop stars as Alphaville, Brainstorm and Kim Wilde (www.pokis.pl).

Interesting events and valuable historical monuments make Płock a perfect place for a longer stay. Local hotels can be an excellent starting point for trips to attractive localities in the neighbourhood.

www.e-plock.pl

Muzeum Mazowieckie (*Museum of Mazovia*),
ul. Tumska 2, tel. 024 2624492

Muzeum Diecezjalne (*Diocesan Museum*),
ul. Tumska 3a, tel. 024 2622623



SIERPC

Colours of the Folklore

The first mentions about Sierpc date back to the 11th c., and as early as in 1322, the settlement was granted a town charter. Today, the population of Sierpc is 20,000. In the town, which is known in the first place for locally manufactured quality beer, you will find an interesting urban development concept with two market squares. Characteristic buildings in the town centre are age-old, multi-storey houses of wood, classical town hall with the temporary exhibition department of the Museum of Mazovian Countryside and two Gothic churches. The parish church was erected at the turn of the 15th century. Later on, in the 18th c., it was rebuilt in the baroque style. Over the one-nave church with buttresses domi-

nates a massive, four-storey tower built on a square plan. In the interior, you can admire richly adorned baroque altars and the rococo organ front. The building with a similar history, and consequently, similar appearance is the Church of the Assumption (of sisters Benedictines). In the main altar, there is a Gothic sculpture of Our Lady with the baby Jesus, from the second half of the 14th c. Many pilgrims are attracted to Sierpc by the fame of the miraculous efigy. For several centuries, those looking for supernatural help are also attracted to a small spring at the foot of the slope below the church.

In July, you can come to Sierpc and take part in the International Folklore Festival "Kasztelania". During the concerts, which last for three days, you can admire performances of groups from Poland and from some exotic spots of the globe.



Undoubtedly, the most well-known attraction of Sierpc is a local open-air ethnographic museum. Located on the outskirts of the town, the open-air museum is deceptively similar to a real Mazovian village, vibrant with life. Ten homesteads from north-west Mazovia are arranged in rows, which reproduces the arrangement from the past. The image is complete with a manor complex and an inn. Looking at the rich interior furnishings, you will easily imagine how the people's life here was like on working days and on holidays. The buildings are surrounded with flower gardens, and in the autumn, branches of the home's orchards bow under the weight of apples. The impression of authenticity is even deeper owing to the presence of small farm facilities such as beehives, wells and dovecots. Roadside shrines have not been forgotten either.

While visiting the open-air museum in Sierpc, you can not miss the inn. The eighteenth century building has appeared many a time in Polish films. Today, it still provides food and drink to vagrants, as it did many centuries ago. The inn serves plain but delicious meals; the most popular dishes on the menu include home-baked bread with hand-made butter, sour rye soup (*żur*) and sour milk.

The Museum of Mazovian Countryside is vibrant with life. Here you can take a horse ride or a ride in an open carriage with a folding top known as a "bryczka". At visitors' request, museum lessons are organised or events like sheep roasting with folk performances. A very popular type of event is "Sundays at the Museum". They are organised between May and September and feature performances of folk groups and bands as well as demonstrations of



handicraft products and craft. Every first Sunday of the month is a theme Sunday. In May, visitors have an opportunity to get acquainted with the richness of the regional Mazovian cuisine. The first Sunday in June is the time for children. They learn about their great grandfathers' world, while playing with replicas of old toys, while schoolchildren can sit at old desks and try their hand at calligraphic writing. A thematic Sunday in July is devoted to the apiarian traditions of the region. During the demonstrations that take place in two apiaries, you can see how honeycombs are removed from hives, and try the golden delicacy straight from the combs. In August, the open-air museum invites you to take part in the harvest. On farm fields, scythes are drawn and a horse-drawn mower is put into operation; if only you are willing to, you can learn how to tie and stack sheaves, how to flail, and

even how to use a quern. Of course, a harvest festival and a bread fair are a must. In the autumn, on the first Sunday of September, the open-air museum prepares itself for wintertime. On the fields, potatoes are lifted, at homes, sauerkraut is made, cucumbers are pickled, and wool is carded. After a day of a strenuous work, roasted potatoes will certainly suit every palate.

Muzeum Wsi Mazowieckiej
(Museum of Mazovian Countryside),
ul. Narutowicza 64,
tel. 024 2752883
www.mwmskansen.pl

DROBIN

Courtier's Tombstone

The centuries-old history of a small town, lying halfway between Sierpc and Płońsk, is evident in the medieval urban development plan with a large, rectangular market. The most valuable of the historical monuments in Drobin is the church of Our Lady of the Rosary and St Stanislaus the Bishop. This Gothic church, erected in the second half of the 15th c., was rebuilt in the 17th in the baroque style.

In the interior two three-person tombstones of exceptional beauty have survived. The two-storey Renaissance monument on the right side of the chancel is the oldest three-person tombstone in Poland. It was erected for Paweł Kryski, his wife Ann née Szeńska and their son Wo-

jcich. The latter was a Member of Parliament and a skilful diplomat serving King Sigismund August. Łukasz Górnicki made him one of the characters of his work "Dworzanin" (*Courtier*). On the left side of the chancel, there is the baroque tombstone of Stanisław Kryski and his wife Małgorzata née Uchańska and their son Piotr. Another decorative element in the church is paintings of famous artists from Warsaw, including Wojciech Gerson.

www.drobin.pl



ROKICIE

Holy Fire

25 km further on, in a north-westerly direction from Płock, on the high slope of the Vistula, you will find the massive red brick walls of a church in Rokicie. This is the first Mazovian church built of brick and it dates back to the 13th c. As legend has it, the funds for its construction were raised through the sale of wild horses that used to come to a local watering place. For this reason, the church is sometimes referred to as "mares' church". We recommend that you have a closer look at the external walls of the church. On many bricks you will see names and surnames carved; the oldest inscriptions come from the 17th c., yet the most intriguing elements are the clearly visible, round holes. Where do they

come from? The most probable hypothesis links them to the rituals of the Easter Eve. In the 16th and 17th c., to start a holy fire, they used a tool known as the fire drill. The lighting method involved twirling of a wooden peg back and forth faster and faster against the church wall, which produced the holes that we can see today. The resulting flame was transferred to a Paschal Candle in the church, and then carried from home to home.

WYSZOGRÓD

Bridges on the Vistula

In the Middle Ages, Wyszogród was a town vibrant with life. The first mention that there is a town on the high slope of the Vistula comes from the 11th c., and in 1398, the locality was granted a town charter. The location was an important river harbour, whose base facilities included storehouses and cloth workshops. The destruction of the Swedish invasion of 1655 and fierce competition from Warsaw have wiped Wyszogród off the economic map of Mazovia, making it a small and sleepy town. You can try to find the remnants of the town's former glory in the Franciscans church, where baroque interior furnishings have been preserved.

The entire history of Wyszogród is connected with the Vistula river and it is on the river, where you can find the most interesting

of the town curiosities. Until recently, the local bridge was the longest wooden crossing in Europe. Its construction was 1285 m long, and together with the bridge of the Bzura river it was almost 2 km. It was built in 1944, thanks to the efforts of Polish and Russian prisoners of war. Unfortunately, repeated annual water floods and the movements of ice floes overloaded the bridge. Once a new crossing was put into use, the right bridge abutment was kept in memory of the past. It now serves as an original observation terrace from which you can admire the superb panorama of the Vistula river valley. A new bridge that has been built nearby has a claim to fame too: it is the longest concrete bridge in Poland.

In June, Wyszogród celebrates the Vistula Day. Open-air celebrations and parties are accompanied by scientific sessions for the general public devoted to the development and protection of the river.

ŁĄCK

Tramping of Hooves

Full of forests and lakes, the areas in the neighbourhood of Łąck are one of the favourite weekend destinations of Mazovian townies. If you can spare a minute between mushroom picking and splashing about in the water, we recommend that you visit a stud in Łąck whose white stables are probably the most characteristic buildings in the town. Additionally, the complex includes an indoor riding arena, a horse-racing course and a museum of carriages.

The Stallion Herd in Łąck was created in 1923, following the decision of the President of the Republic of Poland. It was one of the first of such establishments in the country. The main rationale for starting the herd was improvement of horses bred for

farming purposes, yet an equally important reason was the sports activity. Jockeys in colours of the riding club named after the 4th Regiment of Mounted Riflemen reap laurels at numerous jumping, break-



ing and horse and cart driving competitions. In Łąck, you will have fun watching the competitions but also have a chance to see the world from horse back. After a horse-riding lesson, you can have a pleas-

ant rest in a local hotel complex. We particularly recommend that you stay for the night in the "Little White House". This eclectic palace from the second half of the 19th c. located on the lake shore resembles Italian villas. In the interwar period, it was a summer residence of Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, and in 1939, it was the staff quarters of General Władysław Anders. Today, everybody can enjoy a stay in its luxuriously furnished interiors.

<http://stadolack.home.pl>

GOSTYNIN

To Revive History

If we organised a competition to choose a typical Mazovian town, Gostynin would be certainly ranked among the winning localities. It is not very large but it has a very long history; as early as in the 6th c. of the Common Era, there was a fortified settlement on the hill to the North-West of the current location of the town. Since the 13th c. Gostynin had been the main city of the castellany, then – of the Gostynin region. At the end of the 14th c., among the marshes of the Skrwa river, a castle was built. Unfortunately, the star of Gostynin was on the wane after the Swedish invasion of 1655. It took the town a long time to recover from wartime decline. The castle fell into ruin. In the 19th

c. its last surviving part was converted into an Evangelical church, presently a Catholic church of St. Martin. Recently, plans to reconstruct the castle have been considered. Restored to its former grandeur, the place will serve as a hotel and conference centre.

The town's life concentrates on the market square, whose pride is a classical town hall designed by Hilary Szpilowski. A characteristic feature of Gostynin are the multi-storey wooden houses. They were built in 1824 for German dothiers brought to Poland. Visitors' attention is drawn to classical market-halls at ul. Floriańska.

www.gostynin.pl

SANNIKI

Embroideries and Paper Cut-Outs

From behind the luxuriant greenery of a large park, you will see the white walls and a characteristic tower of the neo-Renaissance palace. Its present looks are a result of comprehensive alterations made in 1910 to the design of Władysław Marconi. Nearby stands a monument commemorating the most famous visitor to Sanniki, Fryderyk Chopin, who came here in 1828 to visit his friend, Kazimierz Pruszek. The Fryderyk Chopin Memorial Centre is an administrator of the place and invites everybody to piano concerts (every first Sunday of the month, 2.00 pm.)

Sanniki is a well-known Mazovian centre of folk art. Products of the local artists'

craft include elaborate paper cut-outs and beautifully painted Easter eggs. A good opportunity to become familiar with the local folklore is provided by colourful festivities known as the Sanniki Sunday, which are held on the first Sunday of June. Joyful folk music coupled with the charm of the handicraft fair make a visit to Sanniki an unforgettable experience.

www.scisanniki.republica.pl

SOCHACZEW

Charms of the Narrow Track

Those who travel along a busy road between Warsaw and Poznań do not even realise how much they miss, if they do not stop in Sochaczew. The centuries-old history of the town with a population of a few thousand becomes evident when you see the local castle ruins. This fortified building, picturesquely located on the high bank of the Bzura river was erected by Mazovian dukes at the turn of the 14th century. Wars have not passed by the castle: at first, it was destroyed by the Swedish invasion of 1655, then rebuilt, and then again destroyed in the Kościuszko Insurrection to fall into irretrievable ruin.

Traces of the past, even a more distant one, can be found in the Sochaczew mu-

seum. A visit to the museum is like travelling through the centuries in a time machine. Tools from the Old Stone Age are displayed next to the rich collections of the Second World War exhibits. The exhibition presents a rich collection of weaponry, uniforms and memorabilia that have been found on the battlefield on the Bzura river. Children will enjoy a small open-air museum of militaria arranged on the museum yard.

A great deal of interest is aroused, and not only among small boys, by the Sochaczew Museum of Narrow Gauge Railway. At a former railway station, visitors can admire more than 130 vehicles. One of the largest European collections of this kind includes a variety of different cars, steam engines and auxiliary rolling stock. More than a century old train carriages look as if they are about to depart.

WITKOWICE

At the battlefield

Each year in September, on the meadows by the Bzura river, you can watch the reconstruction of the scenes from the battlefield of September 1939. The fight to win the river crossing is bloodless of course, however all the details are reconstructed with the greatest care and precision. The uniforms and weapons of both armies are accurate copies of the originals or even authentic. During the fight you can see, for example, armoured personnel carriers, motorcycles and even the authentic off-road version of the pre-war Fiat. The communication and first aid services appear at the battlefield and the whole operation takes place in front of several thousand spectators watching the event in awe.

In fact, the museum's activity is not limited to the stationary exhibition. Every Saturday between May and October at 9.00 am., the narrow gauge railway departs from Sochaczew to Wilcze Tułowickie and returns, covering a distance of 18 km. Tourists can expect additional attractions too: a guided walk through the forest and a bonfire.

Muzeum Ziemi Sochaczewskiej i Pola Bitwy nad Bzurą (*Museum of the Sochaczew Region and the Bzura River Battlefield*),
pl. Kościuszki 2, tel. 046 8623309

Muzeum Kolei Wąskotorowej
(*Museum of the Narrow Gauge Railway*),
ul. Towarowa 7,
tel. 046 8625957
www.e-sochaczew.pl

www.grh.friko.pl

BROCHÓW

Fortress church

The red walls of the church of St Roch and John the Baptist are reflected in the waters of the old river bed of the Bzura. The church, erected in the middle of the 16th century, is in Poland a rare example of joining both sacred and defensive functions. Three round towers with embrasures adjoin the main body of the church made of brick. The defensive wall and the now non-existent moat provided additional protection. In the fireplace located in the sacristy, the defenders cooked meals; they only had to take care of their food reserves. The church in Brochów witnessed several turbulent historic events. After the Swedish invasion and the two World Wars, it was diligently rebuilt. Par-

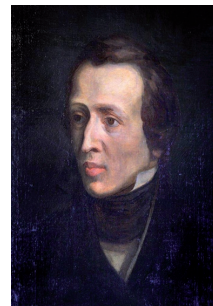
ish records also reveal significant events from the periods of peace. This is where Justyna Tekla Krzyżanowska and Mikołaj Chopin got married in 1806, and their son Fryderyk was baptised in Brochów on 23rd April 1810.

ŻELAZOWA WOLA

To the rhythm of mazurkas

The small village on the Utrata river is visited each year by guests from all over the world. The majority of them are enthusiasts of the music composed by Fryderyk Chopin, one of the most brilliant Polish composers. The great musician was born in Żelazowa Wola in late February 1810, and he used to spend his holiday here, after he moved to Warsaw. That being so, the suppositions that the Mazovian landscapes were his inspiration to compose music, are fully justified.

A one-storey manor house with the roof supported by two columns wrapped with wild vines became the symbol of Polish identity. Few people know that the place looked completely different in the times of Chopin. The present building is in fact the left outhouse of the former manor house, rebuilt in a historical style in the 1930's. The interiors have been furnished in such a way as to reconstruct the atmosphere of the Chopin family house. With great interest,



the visitors admire numerous keepsakes related to the composer and his family. This is the place where a piano was a must. Each Sunday, from May to September, between 11.00-15.00 the house and the park are filled with music.

Dom Urodzenia Fryderyka Chopina
(Birth Place of Fryderyk Chopin),
tel. 046 8633300



KAMPINOS

Church of *Kampinos pinewood*

The establishment and development of a huge village on the edge of the Kampinos Forest is closely related to the exploitation of the nearby forests. The last lessee of the Kampinos property, a starost of Czerwińsk, Ludwik Gutkowski, co-financed the construction of a wooden church that is now the most valuable monument in Kampinos. A Baroque church of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built between 1773-1782. It was made of pine trees that grew in the nearby forest. The timber's characteristic features are fine growth rings. The frontage of the timbered building with the framework structure is decorated with two protruding

towers. The pillars divide the church interior into three aisles. The main altar features the 18th century painting "Christ on the Cross", most probably by Franciszek Smuglewicz. Next to the church, you can find the 18th century wooden bell tower and a brick vicarage dating back to the mid 19th century.

GRANICA

Forest story

If it had not been for the Industrial Revolution, it is possible that this forest settlement would have never been established. The economic changes that took place in the second half of the 18th century brought about a sudden increase in the demand for timber. In order to acquire timber, the so-called *budniks* (forest clearers) started to be settled in Mazovian forests. They dealt with forest clearing in exchange for exemption from serfdom. Their scope of responsibilities also included making charcoal and acquiring potash and ash. The establishment of such a temporary camp of the 'forest people' in 1795 initiated the establishment of Granica. In the interwar period a forest district office was established here. The complex of wooden buildings in the

Polish national style that have survived until now, is under the conservator's protection.

Granica is among the major starting points for trips in the area of the Kampinos National Park. Even if you do not intend to visit the forest routes, it is worth visiting the local museum. In several exhibition halls, you can admire not only the interesting presentations of flora and fauna, but also of the history of the national park. A lot has happened here over the centuries. The forest features important archaeological excavation sites and numerous trails of war events, mostly from the January Uprising and World War II. Near the museum an ethnographic park is being established. The exhibition is collecting examples of historical rural buildings moved from depopulated settlements located in the area of the Kampinos National Park.

Muzeum Kampinoskiego Parku Narodowego (*Kampinos National Park Museum*), tel. 022 7250123

NIEPOKALANÓW

Work of Father Maximilian

Although relatively new, the sanctuary of Niepokalanów is among the most significant destinations for pilgrims in Poland. In 1927 Duke Jan Drucki-Lubecki granted land to the Franciscans to build a monastery. Twelve years later, the order, of more than 750 members, was one of the largest in the world. Since the very beginning, the development of Niepokalanów was connected with Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe. In 1941, Kolbe died in the concentration camp in Auschwitz, sacrificing his life for another prisoner. In 1982 he was canonised by Pope John Paul II. Initially devoted to the Virgin Mary, since that time the Niepokalanów sanctuary has been the place of cult of St Maximilian.

At present, there are over two hundred and fifty monks in the monastery. The Franciscans carry out intensive media activity; in Niepokalanów there are books, calendars and several Catholic monthlies issued, plus there is a TV

and radio studio. Moreover, the fathers pride themselves on the dynamically operating fire brigade.

The Basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mediatrix of all Grace was built in the first half of the 1950's according to the design of Zygmunt Gawlik. The church, plastered in grey, can be seen far away; the building, topped with a characteristic tower with four pylons, is 85 m long and 47 m high. The door of the basilica is decorated with low reliefs depicting famous Marian sanctuaries. The main altar dominates the delightfully spatial church interior, and features the figure of Our Lady Immaculate with a metal mandorla in the background. The altar of St Maximilian is located in the aisle on the left.

In the church vault, the pilgrims and tourists can admire the Panorama of the Millennium. The performance lasting

for half an hour, in the form of a moving scene, is devoted to the history of Poland and Polish Catholic church.

In the museum located next to the basilica you can learn the history of the monastery and the work of St Maximilian. The missionary exhibition constitutes a separate part, where you can find objects collected by the Franciscan missionary posts scattered all over the world. You can also visit the first chapel with the original furnishings and a monastic cell occupied by St Maximilian Kolbe in the first years of the existence of the Niepokalanów monastery.

www.niepokalanow.pl

TERESIN

Healthy mind and body

An eclectic palace, surrounded with an extensive park, is considered to be one of the most beautiful landowner's residences in Poland. It was established thanks to ...sugar beet, and to be more precise, the excellent results of a sugar company established in the first half of the 19th century by Warsaw bankers and industrialists. The name of the town comes from the name of the daughter of one of them, namely Radziwiłł. Another one, Epstein, settled down in Teresin. An impressive palace dominated by the neo-Rococo style, was built between 1860-1900, in line with the design by a French architect Francois Arveuf. A characteristic element of the building is two towers covered with

Baroque cupolas. The visitors' attention is drawn by the rich decoration on the elevation and a mansard roof covered with metal sheet resembling fish scales.

Currently, the palace is owned by the Farmers' Social Insurance Fund, which runs a training and rehabilitation centre here. The atmosphere of the residence favours both work and recuperation.

www.osrteresin.oit.pl

GUZÓW

Charm of French Renaissance

The chimney of the former sugar factory in Guzów stands out over the flat plain between Sochaczew and Żyrardów. The factory was established in 1830 as the first one of this type in Poland. The construction of the processing plant was initiated by the contemporary owner of the Guzów property, count Henryk Łubieński. It must have been profitable, since the subsequent owner of Guzów, count Feliks Sobański, decided to build an impressive palace there. Erected in the French Renaissance style, in vogue at that time, the building was completed in 1895. It is still very impressive, although it fell into ruin after it was abandoned by the offices of the sugar factory, nationalised after 1945.

A stunning portico with four pairs of Tuscan columns, elaborate architectural details and a steep roof with several levels of windows make it greatly resemble the famous Chambord castle in the Valley of the Loire.

For several years the castle has been again the property of the Sobański family. The amount of work to be done in the huge building and the surrounding landscape park make the revival of the building quite a distant perspective.

You can imagine what the palace of Guzów looked like in the time of its glory, when you see the carefully maintained chapel that constitutes the integral part of the building and currently houses the parish office. In front of the church stands a monument that commemorates Guzów as a place where Michał Kleofas Ogiński, a famous composer and pianist, was born.

MIEDNIEWICE

Mourning altars

The sanctuary of Our Lady of Miedniewice, the Lady of Mazovia in the Image of the Holy Family, located on the edge of the Bolimowo Forest, is among the most interesting and atmospheric pilgrims' churches in Mazovia. The very beginnings of the sanctuary are remarkable. In 1674, during a parish fair, a farmer from Miedniewice, Jakub Trojańczyk, purchased a woodcut depicting the Holy Family. To ensure successful crops, he suspended it on a barn pillar. At night, the barn thatched roof started to glow with a marvellous light. The light recurred and numerous people praying there were healed. Three years later the miracle was officially acknowledged by the church authorities and a church was

built in the place of the barn. The contemporary Baroque church was erected between 1737-1748, according to a design by Józef Fontana. The characteristic feature of the building is its four-sided courtyard surrounded with low galleries. What is interesting is the fact that the barn beam where the miraculous image was suspended can still be found at the back of the main altar. What surprises the visitors is the black colour of all the altars. They were painted over as a sign of national mourning after the January Uprising. As a punishment inflicted on the sanctuary administrators, the Reformati fathers for their patriotic involvement, the tsar's authorities dissolved the order and prohibited any pilgrimages to Miedniewice. The church did not revive until after World War I. Since 1966 the sanctuary has been under the care of Friars Minor Conventuals.

ŻYRARDÓW

Town of textile makers

Being one of the youngest towns in Mazovia, Żyrardów is at the same time one of the most remarkable ones. The town name comes from the name of Philippe Girard, the inventor of a flax spinning machine. It was brought from France by Henryk Łubieński and contributed to the establishment of a thriving textile centre. At the beginning of the 20th century, the local factory was the biggest manufacturer of linen products in Europe. Soon after the factory was built, a town for the people employed there was established. Żyrardów has retained a unique spatial arrangement of an industrial settlement from the mid 19th century. The dominant colour here is still the red colour of non-

Usually peaceful and quiet, the sanctuary revives during parish fairs. Crowds of worshippers arrive to Miedniewice; on the Sunday of the descent of the Holy Spirit on 2nd August, on the day of Our Lady of Angels.

plastered bricks used for building industrial and residential buildings. However, the urban order did not exclude great diversity of architectural solutions, resulting not only from differences in the financial standing of various groups of employees that made up the crew, but also from the ethnic diversity of the Żyrardów dwellers. The factory staff included Poles, Germans, Czechs, Jews, Brits and Irishmen.

It is worth visiting the Żyrardów museum. It is located in the Art Nouveau palace, which a long time ago used to be the property of the co-owner of Karol Dittrich's factory. The exhibition illustrates the scale of operation of the factories at that time and the disastrous living conditions of the workers. The museum branch (ul. Narutowicza 34) is devoted to one of the best known dwellers of Żyrardów. **Paweł Hulka-Laskowski**

(1881–1946), a writer and philosopher, who became famous as the translator of the 'Adventures of the Good Soldier Schweik'.

The town authorities are currently facing the challenge of reviving the town centre. It is necessary in order to fully exploit the advantages of its historical industrial layout; an urban gem on the European scale. Although the project is at its preliminary stage, there are already interesting cultural events taking place in Żyrardów. European Musical Integrations are held here at the turn of April and May. The two-day event, dominated by jazz, covers concerts, workshops and a photo exhibition. Of course, a long jam session is a must. It is worth seeing the European Heritage Days organised here in September. The aim of this cultural picnic is to make the town dwellers and guests fa-

miliar with the town heritage, its unique, post-industrial monuments and multi-cultural past.

RADZIEJOWICE

Kingdom of art

The history of the village on the Pisia Gągolina river goes back to the 14th century. Over the centuries the owners of Radziejowice changed several times. Each of them wished to make their seat look more attractive, hence why the local palace is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Mazovia.

Between 1678-1684 an outhouse built several dozen years earlier was thoroughly rebuilt. The work was initiated by Primate Stefan Radziejowski, and the design of the Baroque palace is attributed to Tylman of Gameren. At the request of Anna from the Ossoliński family and Kazimierz Krasieński, at the beginning of the 19th century other alterations were made, this time in the clas-

Muzeum Mazowsza Zachodniego
(Museum of Western Mazovia)
ul. Karola Dittricha 1,
tel. 046 8553313, fax 046 8548180
www.zyrardow.pl

sical style. At the end of the 19th century the building was equipped with a Tuscan portico and balconies on the elevation facing the garden. The so called small castle that was rebuilt at the beginning of the 19th century from the remains of the former fortified residence, is located next to the main part of the palace. Jakub Kubicki added neo-Gothic features to the building, and built a gallery that makes the small castle and the palace a whole.

The palace houses an Artists' Retreat that is at the same time a conference and accommodation centre. Stylishly arranged and enchanting with rich furnishings, the historic interiors are open to visitors. Radziejowice prides itself on a valuable collection of paintings by the most renowned 19th century Polish painters. Its important part is the collection of paintings by Józef Chełmoński, the biggest collection in Po-

land. Living in nearby Kuklówka, the painter used to be a frequent visitor to Radziejowice, and his works reflected the beauty of the Mazovian landscape. An important artistic event is also the annual series of summer concerts of classical music.

The light colour walls of the palace look beautiful against the background of surrounding trees. Ponds, created from the dammed water of the Pisia Gągolina, add variety to the picturesque, English-style park. The elements of a residential layout are also 19th century outbuildings, a water mill and the remains of a manor. The visitors' attention is drawn to an enchanting larch manor house dating back to the turn of the 18th century, known as the Administrator's House.

A beautiful lime alley leads from the palace to the church. A classical church, of St Casimir, was built in 1822. The octago-

nal building with two side breaks was designed by Jakub Kubicki. In the side altars you can find the coats of arms of the owners of Radziejowice: the Hatchet of the Ossoliński family and the Night Heron of the Krasieński family.

Dom Pracy Twórczej w Radziejowicach
(Artists' Retreat in Radziejowice),
ul. Sienkiewicza 4, tel. 046 857715
<http://palacradziejowice.pl>

SKUŁY

Church with a surprise

The tiny village located in the valley of the small river, Pisia Tuczna is worth visiting not only for the local picturesque landscapes, but in the first instance for the local church. The wooden church of St Peter and Paul was built in 1679. Modest from the outside, the one-nave building reveals a rich, 18th century polychrome inside. The majority of ornamentation was applied not on the wood itself, but on canvas attached to the walls. The church is surrounded by huge, old larch trees. A free-standing bell tower dates back to 1822.

PETRYKOZY

Just like in Chełmoński's paintings

The tiny village surrounded by forests on three sides seems to be taken directly from Chełmoński's paintings. In the spring, you can hear thousands of frogs croaking in a pond located near the crossroads. Among the trees you can see the white walls of a nobleman's manor house. The 18th century historical building is the property of a famous Polish actor Wojciech Siemion. He saved the house from falling into ruin and revived it, creating a private art gallery there. Petrykozy was also a retreat for other historical monuments of wooden architecture. Two wooden windmills are particularly picturesque.

MŁOCHÓW

Trails of glory

Although Młochów is only a few minutes drive away from the busy Katowice road, the village is surrounded by fields and seems to be an oasis of peace. A walk in the local palace park makes you feel calm and relaxed.

The palace in Młochów was built at the beginning of the 19th century. The classical building with characteristic Doric porticos was designed by Jakub Kubicki. The palace complex also includes two outhouses and an orangery. At present, the palace is the property of the Institute of Potato Breeding and the orangery houses the parish church.

The buildings are covered in the greenery of the vast landscape park, designed

PRUSZKÓW

Journey in the history

Located at the gateway of the capital city of Poland, Pruszków has a population of several dozen thousand people. Although it existed already in the 15th century, it started to develop dynamically in the second half of the 19th century, after the Warsaw-Vienna railway line was put into operation. Several dozen years later Pruszków was a thriving industrial centre; there are numerous historical industrial monuments preserved, including the buildings of the former factory of pencils of Stanisław Majewski, at ul. Ołówkowa. Several generations of Polish students are already familiar with the company's products. From the train passing by Pruszków you can see the railway workshops with

by Walerian Kronenberg. You can find there lots of trees of impressive shapes. Picturesque ponds add variety to the park. On the biggest pond you can see a small island with a stone figure of the Virgin Mary.

a huge inscription on the fence: "This is where Warsaw passed by". It commemorates the events that took place in 1944, after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising. In the railway halls in Pruszków, the Germans established a temporary camp for over 600 thousand displaced Warsaw inhabitants.

The most valuable historical monument of Pruszków is a classical palace and park complex dating back to the beginning of the 19th century, built for the Potulicki family that owned Pruszków at that time. The manor buildings are surrounded with a vast park. By picturesque ponds you can find huge poplars and ancient larch trees.

The former orangery and coach house is now one of the most interesting Mazovian museums. Visitors to the Museum of Ancient Metallurgy of the Mazovian Region are taken back in time to the begin-

ning of the era, when the second largest metallurgical centre in Europe operated near contemporary Pruszków, Milanówek and Błonie. Iron was smelted from bog iron ore, deposited on river banks and in marshes. Although it is only 33-45% pure iron, its melting temperature is relatively low.

The exhibition will familiarise you with the details of the production process, which was successfully applied by our ancestors. Apart from numerous interesting historical monuments resulting from the excavation work by the museum staff and photo documentation of the work of archaeologists, a huge attraction for the museum's visitors are the panoramas presenting the everyday life of the inhabitants of smelting settlements.

Very often, you can hear music at the orangery. The museum prides itself on a pi-

ano dating back to 1831, which is among the oldest working musical instruments of its type in Poland. The concerts, taking place throughout the whole year, are organised in four cycles: winter, spring, summer and autumn. The varied repertoire and famous names of performers are combined with a homely, cosy atmosphere and attracts music enthusiasts even from Warsaw.

<http://muzeum.miasto.pruszkow.pl>

Muzeum Starożytnego Hutnictwa Mazowieckiego
(Museum of Ancient Metallurgy of the Mazovian Region),
pl. Jana Pawła II 2, tel. 022 7587266

PILASZKÓW

Tradition of a Polish manor

The classical bricked manor house in Pilaszków was erected in the second half of the 18th century for Franciszek Ryks, a personal secretary to King Stanislaus August. We know that the King visited his faithful courtier in his new residence. It was not the only time when Pilaszków was visited by famous guests. This is where, during the Insurrection, Tadeusz Kościuszko handed in the nomination for Jan Henryk Dąbrowski to be promoted to General. Several dozen years later, Mieczysław Marszewski, a famous engineer who designed the Poniatowski Bridge in Warsaw, settled down here.

The manor is surrounded by a meticulously maintained landscape park, dating

back to the first half of the 19th century. It houses the Museum of the Polish Manor House. A small exhibition makes us familiar with the details of the rich history of Pilaszków.

Muzeum Dworu Polskiego
(*Museum of the Polish Manor House*),
Pilaszków, tel. 022 7225163

LESZNO

Palace luxuries

The development of a major village on the edge of the Kampinos Forest is related to the successful introduction of sugar beet to Mazovia in the 19th century. The local sugar factory still uses the crops from the fields surrounding Leszno. However, the oldest historical monument of Leszno is not the processing plant, but a late Baroque palace erected in the first half of the 18th century for the Łuszczewski family. A bulky building with light colour walls is surrounded by an extensive landscape park.

The 20th century connected the palace with the banking sector; in the 1920's it was occupied by Michał Berson, a banker and a collector of works of art, and since

the 1990's it has been the training centre of Bank Gospodarki Żywnościowej. The restored palace has been perfectly adapted for organising conferences and various events. Guests may choose from among several dozen rooms, representation rooms and enjoy a tasty cuisine.

Centrum Szkoleniowo-Konsultacyjne BGŻ S.A.
(*Training and Consultation Centre
of Bank BGŻ S.A.*)
ul. Fabryczna 1,
tel. 022 7258071, fax 022 7258072

LIPKÓW

Gentry traditions

The famous *persjarnia*, that is a company manufacturing the kontusz belts of Paschalis Jakubowicz operated in the late 18th century in a small town near Warsaw, located on the edge of the Kampinos Forest. These wide, and richly embroidered sashes, were an indispensable element of the garments of every respected noble, and products from Lipków were among the particularly desired.

In 1792 a church, that still exists, was built for the owner of *persjarnia*. At first, it was a manor chapel. The classical building was designed by Hilary Szpilowski. The characteristic feature of the church is a tower with a pagoda top. The interior furnishing dates back to the late 19th cen-

ture. In the cemetery located next to the church, you can find the late classicism grave of Jakubowicz.

The brick manor house that is currently a vicarage, was described in 'Ogniem i mieczem' (*With fire and sword*). Mostly, it happened because of ...love. The beloved of Henryk Sienkiewicz, Maria from the Szetkiewicz family, hailed from Lipków. The writer's hearty father-in-law was probably the prototype character of Onufry Zagłoba, and Lipków became famous in the history of literature as the place where Wołodyjowski duelled Bohun.

STAWISKO

Not only a museum

In a big house, on the borderline between three villa locations near Warsaw, that is: Podkowa Leśna, Brwinów and Milanówek, for over half a century lived Anna and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. In the interwar period, Stawisko was the meeting point for writers, composers and other artists. The guests included members of the Skamander group and Karol Szymanowski. During World War II, the hospitable house was a retreat for numerous refugees from Warsaw. They included Czesław Miłosz, Pola Gojawiczyńska, Jerzy Andrzejewski and many others. According to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's will, following his death the house was to be converted into a museum. Fortunately, the artis-

tic spirit of the house did not disappear and is doing fine.

Built in 1928, the villa resembles a traditional Polish manor house. When you are inside, you have the feeling that the host has just left for the garden. Visitors are amazed by the collection of hunting trophies belonging to Stanisław Lilpop (Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's father-in-law), and also with the works by Józef Chełmoński or Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, as well as lots of beautiful objects of applied art. Artur Rubinstein used to play the piano there. The instrument is still used, since there are several dozen artistic events organised at the museum each year. They are initiated by the Garden of Arts and Sciences Association, operating at the museum. It gathers both artists and scientists related to south-western Mazovia, and persons that are not professionally related

to culture, but wish to actively contribute to it. A series of events known as “Sound – Word – Image – Thoughts” is very popular. These include concerts, recitals of texts by actors plus art exhibitions combined with a discussion attended by renowned creators of culture. Equally popular are the “Meetings with Science, Music and Literature”, scientific lectures and soirées combined with concerts. A festival entitled “Musical Confrontations” is held in Stawisko in September and October, and each edition is devoted to a different composer or kind of music.

Muzeum im. Anny i Jarosława
Iwaskiewiczów w Stawisku
(*Museum of Anna and Jarosław Iwaskiewicz
in Stawisko*)
ul. Gołębia 1, tel. 022 7589363
www.stawisko.pl

OTRĘBUSY

Folklore and vintage cars

A small town near Warsaw features as many as three interesting museums. It is not only young boys that are completely lost in the Museum of the Automotive Industry. The collection includes approx. 300 vintage vehicles, mostly saved from being scrapped and later carefully restored. The oldest ones are the Titan tractor from 1895 and a fire brigade lorry from 1908. Real collector's items are two convertibles; the owner of the Adler from 1932 was Stalin, and the four years younger Mercedes was the property of a famous dancer Loda Halama. Visitors can also admire vintage motorcycles, a collection of pre-war bicycles and old car accessories. The museum collection items are

still used; several dozen vehicles in good working order are used for weddings and other events, as well as on film sets.

The Private Museum of Folk Art, established in 1996 by a famous ethnologist, Prof. Marian Pokropek, is completely different. Thanks to his many years' efforts, he has managed to gather an impressive collection of work by folk artists from various corners of Poland. Moreover, the museum holds temporary exhibitions, which present both original ethnographic collections from various parts of the world and the work of contemporary artists inspired by folk art. The exhibition is open to visitors by prior arrangement.

For half a century, the 19th century palace in Karolina has been the seat of Państwowy Zespół Ludowy Pieśni i Tańca “Mazowsze” (***the Polish Song and Dance Ensemble***). The dynamic performances of

a group including several hundred dancers and choristers are a flagship of Poland that is famous worldwide. In a small museum established in the palace you can admire several dozen original national costumes from various regions of Poland. The precision of the embroidery and lace trimmings as well as the beautiful folk jewellery arouse admiration and affection. However, before we decide to get yourself a similar costume, we have to realise that a woman's best clothes can weigh even between ten and twenty kilograms! An interesting thing is an exhibition of souvenir gifts collected by Mazowsze during concerts organised all over the world, and the office of Mira Zimińska-Sygietyńska, who tirelessly and firmly managed the group for several years, is a kind of memorial to her. The museum will soon be moved to new, specially designed facilities. In spring

2006 in Karolina the construction work of the European Centre for Promoting Regional and National Culture "Matecznik – Mazowsze" was initiated. Thanks to funds provided by the Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, the region shall have a new and important cultural institution: "Matecznik" will house a performance hall for 580 spectators, will be a training and educational centre for the organisers of cultural events, a gathering and sharing knowledge of Polish folklore and folk art and, at the same time, an active centre organising concerts and festivals.

Muzeum Motoryzacji i Techniki
(*Museum of the Automotive Industry
and Technology*),
ul. Warszawska 21, tel. 022 7585067,
www.muzeum-motoryzacji.com.pl

Muzeum Sztuki Współczesnej
(*Museum of Contemporary Art*),
ul. Natolińska 15, tel. 022 7585561
www.mazowsze.waw.pl

PEÇICE

Uhlan guard

A villa town located near Warsaw on the Utrata river prides itself on interesting historic remnants. The classical palace was built in 1808 for Paweł Sapieha, according to the design of Fryderyk Albert Lessel. The multi-storey building is decorated with a break on the front elevation, enclosed with two Tuscan columns, slender vases located in wall reverses and two low reliefs depicting allegories of Fame. Over the main entrance you can see the following inscription: "I am a Polish manor house that fights bravely and guards eternally". The building is surrounded with an extensive and beautiful park designed by Jan Christian Szuch, the author of Łazienki in Warsaw.

Dammed water of the Utrata river created a picturesque pond, and the park features numerous vintage trees.

Visiting Peçice, it is worth dropping by a modest but atmospheric church. The classical building was erected between 1825-1832 according to the design of Christian Piotr Aigner. In the church porch your attention is attracted to a stone sculpture of a knight from a Renaissance tombstone.

As legend has it, he is not the only soldier that you can come across in Peçice. Reportedly, since the time when in 1809 the Polish army that was to take part in the battle of Raszyn marched through the town, each unusual event to take place in the nearby capital city is heralded with an Uhlan guard.

RASZYN

Weir battle

On 19th April 1809 the battle of Raszyn took place between the Polish army led by Duke Józef Poniatowski and the twice bigger Austrian army. Fierce fights took place mostly on a pond weir. The post roadhouse in Raszyn was the seat of the Polish staff. To commemorate the event, cannonballs from the battlefield were set in the building walls. Colonel Cyprian Godebski, a poet and a soldier of the Polish Legions in Italy, was fatally wounded in battle. It is said that he died in front of a chapel near the church.

The dramatic events that took place almost 200 years ago are revived each year during the reconstruction of the battle of Raszyn. The landscape has slight-

ly changed since that time, but its main components, including blue pond waters, light colour walls of the classical church and a squat inn remained unchanged. Regiments arriving at the battlefield try to carefully reconstruct the realities of that time, and even the media service wear Uhlan uniforms. The history is back with the rumble of musket shooting.

www.1809.pl