

Welcome to Poland – on the route of the biggest tourist attractions

Poland is placed at the top of most attractive tourist countries in the CBI index (Country Brand Index). The ranking is based on the opinions of a few thousand people who frequently travel around the world for both tourist and professional reasons. They rank a country for the comfort it offers with respect to various travelling factors starting from the quality of accommodation and finishing with culinary experiences.

Welcome to Poland is the usual route that tourists who visit our country most often choose to follow. When travelling this route, they appreciate places that create what is called the *Polish Travel Brand*. We will begin this presentation with symbols of urban tourism. The WTO statistics show that in the category of tourist popularity and profitability, in the second position after *sun and beach* holidays are trips to big cities, which include sightseeing, visiting historical monuments, discovering cultures as well as travelling to places in order to participate in major events taking place there (Fig. 1).

Urban tourism

The capital's Old Town – traditionally, the first stop of Warsaw's sightseeing programme. The Old Town was completely destroyed during World War II; it was later

rebuilt and renovated, including the Royal Castle (Fig. 2). It is included on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list. The major attractions of the Old Town are the Main Square with surrounding tenement houses; the Barbican; and the Gothic cathedral of St. John.

Along the Royal Route, which runs in a southerly direction from the Old Town towards Wilanów, runs a line of historical buildings, valuable churches and castles including the Church of the Holy Cross. In a nave of that Church, rests an urn with Chopin's heart. Two park-and-palace complexes lie along the route: the Royal Baths (*Łazienki Królewskie*) – a summer residence of the last king of Poland – and, built in the Baroque style, Wilanów – a suburb residence of King Jan III Sobieski.

In the centre of the city, among modern skyscrapers, the tallest building of the capital shoots into the sky. This is, built in the socialist realism style, the Palace of Culture and Science (231 m). One can admire a panoramic view of the city and its suburbs from a viewing gallery on its 30th floor.

The capital lives on many cultural events. The most famous are the *Jazz Jamboree*, the *Warsaw Autumn*, the *Mozart Festival* and the *International Chopin Festival*, which takes place every 5 years. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth, 2010 was declared the *Year of Chopin*. For that occasion, Warsaw and many other

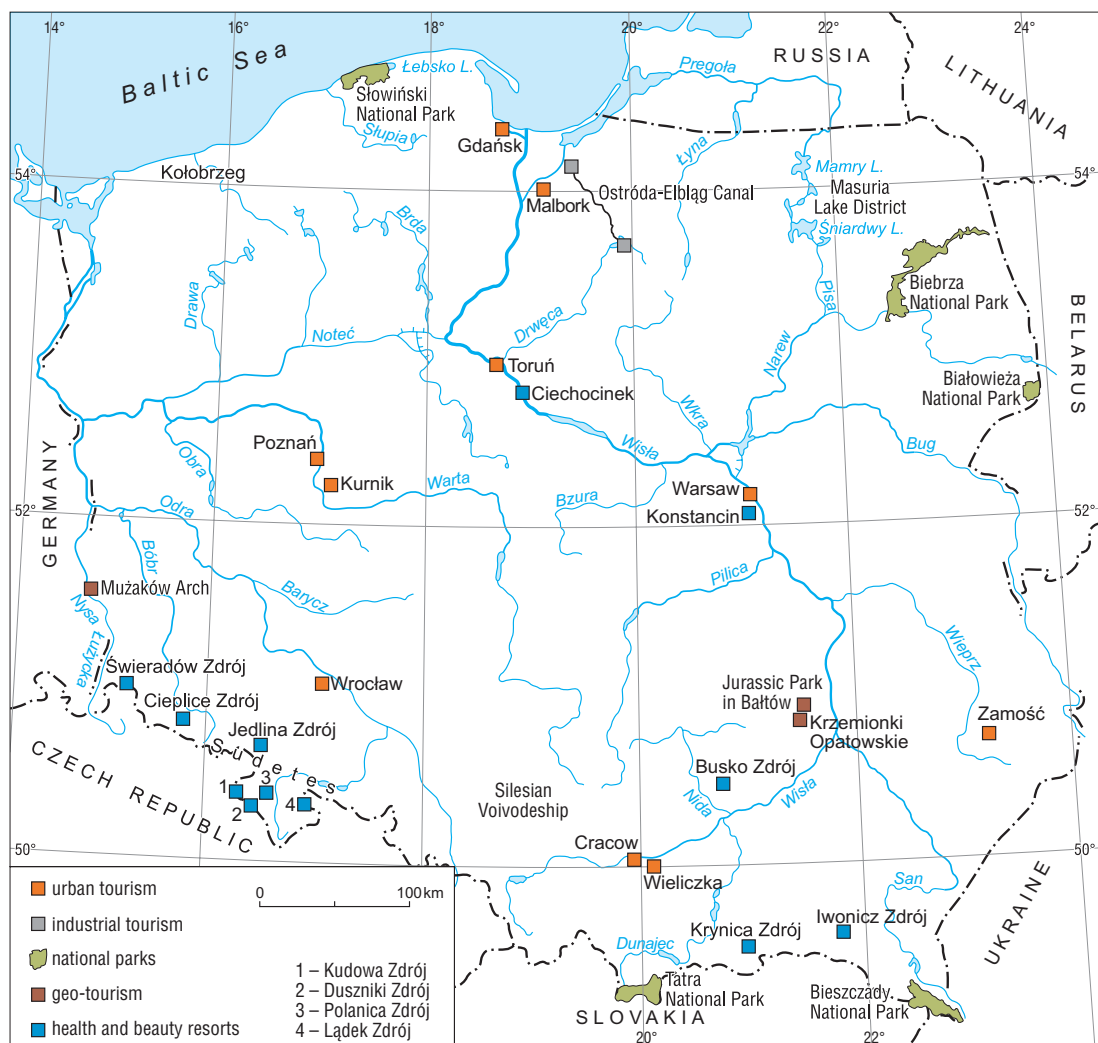


Fig. 1. Map of selected tourist attractions of Poland

Polish cities are organising various cultural events and festivals.

Frederic Chopin is considered to be the most prominent Polish composer as well as an outstanding pianist and the leading representative of the music of Romanticism. Fans of Chopin's music travel to Żelazowa Wola, a village 50 km from Warsaw, where the artist was born. In Chopin's Residence, there is a biographic museum with portraits of the composer and his family as well as furniture of the era. The concert season in Żelazowa Wola runs from May until September. The residence is surrounded by beautifully maintained gardens where some 500 types of trees and

bushes grow. There are three sculptures of the composer in the park.

Hydrogeologists visiting Warsaw may be interested in a health resort called Konstancin, which is situated some 20 km south of Warsaw and where thermal brine is extracted from a depth of 1600 m. The brine has a similar chemical type to waters exploited in the famous resort of Ciechocinek. It contains iodine and is used for inhaling at the foot of graduation towers.

Cracow is generally considered by tourists to be the biggest attraction between the Bug and Oder rivers. Traditionally, it has been placed at the top of worldwide rankings. In one of them, 4 years ago, experts of Orbitz.com (one of two major American internet travel agents) acknowledged Cracow to be the trendiest city. In the other ranking of *Travel Awards* organised by readers of *The Guardian* and the Guardian.co.uk web page, in a category called *the most interesting places outside Great Britain*, Cracow was ranked second after Sydney in Australia.

Cracow was the royal seat and capital of Poland for over 500 years. The historical centre of Cracow – the Old Town including Wawel, Kazimierz (famous old Jewish district) and Stradom, all of which are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list – gathers the most important monuments of Polish history. At the centre of the Old Town is the main square (Fig. 3). This is one of the biggest medieval market squares in Europe. It is surrounded by historical tenement houses and palaces. In the middle of the square is the City Hall Tower built in the 14th century.



Fig. 2. Warsaw, the Royal Castle, Sigmund's Column. All photos from Polish Tourism Organization



Fig. 3. Bugler in Cracow – every day at noon, from the 81 m tall tower of St. Mary's Basilica in Cracow, a trumpet signal, called the *bugle-call*, is played. The legend says that in 1241, when a bugler played on his trumpet a melody to warn the town against Tatar's invasion, his throat was pierced with an arrow. Thus, nowadays, the trumpet signal breaks off suddenly



Fig. 4. *Sukiennice* (Cloth Hall) at the Main Square in Cracow, was once a major centre of international trade. It was built at the end of the 14th century and then rebuilt in the 15th century in the manneristic style. In the 19th century the *Sukiennice* were converted into a representative building, adding the neo-Gothic arcades. At present, the *Sukiennice* house collections of the National Museum, as well as coffee and souvenir shops

Two lines of market stalls dated to the 13th century are incorporated into the Renaissance *Sukiennice* building (the Cloth Hall) (Fig. 4). From the Main Square we go to Wawel via the Royal Route, passing by precious churches and tenement houses.

Wawel used to be the seat of Polish royals, their necropolis and a place where Polish history was sculpted. This remarkable sanctuary defines Polish identity; it is our national and cultural symbol. The present castle building (built in the Renaissance style) incorporates Roman and Gothic fragments. The castle has been converted into a museum and inside the building the royal collections are presented. The most valuable exhibits are the Renaissance arrases. The Wawel Cathedral is one of the most important churches in Poland. It was there that royal coronation ceremonies took place. Nearly all Polish kings and prominent Poles are buried inside the Cathedral or in its crypt. At present, the Cathedral comprises a nave with aisles, transepts with aisles, a choir with double aisles, and an apse with ambulatory and radiating chapels. The most beautiful of them, covered with gold-plated iron, is the 16th century Renaissance Sigismund's Chapel.

When visiting Cracow it is not possible not to visit Wieliczka, only 12 km away. According to participants of an on-line competition by *Rzeczpospolita* newspaper, there are seven complexes in Poland that deserve the name of one of the *Wonders of Poland*. One of them is the medieval salt mine in Wieliczka (Fig. 5). Over a million tourists each year visit the place, which is one of the oldest of that kind of mine in the world, and has been in operation since the 13th century. The mine has 9 levels that go to a depth of 327 m below ground; it has some 300 km of pavements and nearly

3000 chambers. It is also listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list.

An underground tour is 3.5 km long and goes through a labyrinth of salt corridors, chambers with unique sculptures and lakes with highly saline water. The most attractive place is St. Kinga's Chapel located at a depth of 101 m, sculpted entirely in a wall of salt, with chandeliers made of salt crystals and with sculptures made of grey salt.

In Cracow and its environs, mineral groundwater is used for therapeutic use. Practically in the middle of the town (Podgórze district) there is a medical health centre called *Mateczny* where sulphate waters are used in therapy. Similar waters occur and are utilised in therapy in Swoszowice (southern part of the city) and in the nearby health resort of Krzeszowice.



Fig. 5. Horse-driven treadmill in Wieliczka Salt Mine



Fig. 6. Toruń – the town of Copernicus, it is famous for its over 300 historical buildings. The Old Town in Toruń has been included into the UNESCO World Heritage Site list

Another city from the list of 7 Polish Wonders prepared by the opinion-forming daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* is Toruń. Strictly speaking it was the Old Market in Toruń that was chosen (Fig. 6). In 1997, the old-town complex with its original medieval urban planning system was included on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list. Toruń is one of the oldest Polish cities. It is located on two sides of the river Vistula and is the biggest conglomeration of Gothic architecture in Poland. Among the historical buildings that deserve attention are the Old-Town City Hall including a viewing tower, the market square with tenement houses, monuments of Copernicus and *Flisak* (the raftsman), Gothic churches, Copernicus's house, city walls and gates, ruins of the Teutonic Order castle and the Crooked Tower. In 2004, Toruń was established to be the headquarters of the Union of Polish UNESCO cities.

When having fun in the Maritime Region, we usually go to Gdańsk, which is still one of the most precious historical complexes in Poland. Sightseeing usually starts along the Royal Route, *via* Długa Street (Fig. 7) and the *Długi Targ*, where we admire richly decorated tenement houses and historical buildings, including the Golden House built in the 17th century. On its facade there are intricately engraved heads of leaders, royalty and battle scenes. Architectonical ornaments are plated with gold. The History Museum of Gdańsk City is located in the Gothic City Hall. The Artus Court, whose architecture draws on the medieval Knighthood traditions, is considered to be one of the best complexes of that type in northern Europe. In the middle of the *Długi Targ* we stop at a popular meeting point by the Neptune Fountain, which is a symbol of Gdańsk.

The most famous monument symbolising the marine character of the city is the biggest medieval port crane called *Żuraw over the Motława*, which is linked with the *Brama Szeroka* into one defence complex.

From Mariacka street we enter the door of the main church in Gdańsk – the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Inside the church there are many excellent medieval and Baroque works of art including *Pieta* from 1410 depicting the Virgin Mary cradling the dead body of Jesus; a copy of *The Last Judgment* by Hans Memling painted in 1472, and the main altar built between 1510 and 1517. The sacred building is an outstanding monument of Gothic Brick art, the largest brick church in the world, and one of the largest Brick



Fig. 7. Gdańsk by night – the Old Town in Gdańsk, Długa Street

Gothic buildings in Europe. It is 105 m long, the tower is 77.6 m high and its domes reach 29 metres above the floor. Inside the church there is room for 25 000 people.

The oldest parish church of the Old Town is the Gothic church of St. Catherine which was built between 1227 and 1239. Inside, there is a grave plaque dated to 1659, for the famous astronomer called Johannes Hevelius. Inside the 76 m high church tower there is a set of beautifully-sounding bells which are a replica of the 16th century carillon.

Gdańsk represents also the modern history of Poland; it is the cradle of the *Solidarity* movement. The 30th anniversary of the August Agreements was celebrated this year. Strikes by shipyard workers started political changes in Central Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall. One of the postulates by striking workers was to erect the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers to commemorate people killed during the events of December 1970. It was erected close to the places where the first three workers were killed while leaving the Gdańsk Shipyard.

Gdańsk is an extremely interesting place for visitors thanks to many interesting annual events. Some of them are the following:

- ❑ *Baltic Sail*, an annual 5 week long international sailing meeting, which is organised in Norrköping, Karlskrona, Rostock, Gdańsk, Lübeck and Helsingor;
- ❑ *St. Dominic's Fair* (Fig. 8), organised at the turn of July and August – one of the biggest trade and cultural open-air events. Its tradition goes back to the 13th century when many German, French, English and Spanish merchants were coming to Gdańsk;
- ❑ *Days of the Sea* – an event taking place on the night of the summer solstice, with a large number of performances and artistic events referring to links between Gdańsk and the sea.

Gdańsk constitutes a part of the Tri-City agglomeration, which, apart from Gdańsk, consists of the seaside

resort of Sopot and the port town of Gdynia. In the seaside suburb of Sopot, a well of ca. 800 metres depth gives Na-Cl type waters from the Triassic stratum, which is used in a nearby balneo-geological plant as well as in a small pump-room next to the promenade.

A jewel of the tourist programme of our route is Malbork: a brick castle of the Teutonic Order, and another place from the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list (Fig. 9). The past headquarters of the Great Master of the Order. It is the biggest medieval building of that type in Europe and a masterpiece of the defence architecture of those times. The castle is surrounded by lanes of defence walls with towers and gates. Malbork Castle is the top achievement of the late courtly Gothic. The most effective interior of the castle is the summer refectory. At present, there is a museum inside the castle which exhibits, among other things, amber art. Open air events are special attractions that attract thousands of participants.

Let's move to Lubelszczyzna (Lublin Voivodeship), to visit Zamość – a town which is a rare example of urban planning. It was not been built throughout centuries but it was created on the basis of a project that was fully accomplished.

The planning team of this best preserved Renaissance town in Poland referred to a perfect city plan blending Italian architecture. The Old Town has been fully preserved and retains its original layout with the Old City quarter, where a monumental City Hall dominates over a collegiate church, an old orthodox church and a synagogue, the Zamoyski family castle and wonderful tenement houses. It is called loftily the *Pearl of the Renaissance*, the *City of Arcades* and *Padua of the North*. The Old City quarter of Zamość has been placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.



Fig. 8. Gdańsk, Long Bridge, Saint Dominic's Fair



Fig. 9. Malbork (Germ. *Marienburg*), the Ordensburgen

In the capital of the Lower Silesian Province, Wrocław, invariably we head for the Old Town pulsing with tourists and local social life. Its central point is situated in a market with a Gothic City Hall surrounded by tenement houses (Fig. 10). Before we allow ourselves to become tempted by menus of many stylish establishments – let's visit the local historical buildings first. The main building of the University of Wrocław is the biggest Baroque building in the city. One can visit the Leopoldin Hall built in the first half of the 17th century – the biggest secular interior in Wrocław. The oldest part of the city is called Ostrów Tumski. Today, there is a complex of religious buildings with the Gothic Cathedral of St. John the



Fig. 10. Wrocław, the Town Hall – it was built at the turn of the 14th and the 15th centuries in the Gothic and the Renaissance styles. Its interiors including Gothic vaults are worth seeing

Baptist from the 13–16th century. A big attraction in the city is *Panorama Raclawicka* – a monumental painting by Jan Styka and Wojciech Kossak (120 m × 15 m). The Centennial Hall from 1913 is also worth seeing as it is the first modern building made of reinforced concrete in the world, for which it was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. Many cultural events take place in the city and the main venue for these meetings is the Opera House.

The Old Town in Poznań can successfully outdo the one in Wrocław, collecting the highest marks from visiting tourists. Similarly, before visiting the interiors of respected restaurants, luring customers with a variety of foods, and less official venues, we advise you to take a look at monuments of art and give some attention to museums first. The beautiful Renaissance City Hall with fantastic loggia incorporates the Town History Museum, and nearby is the Museum of Musical Instruments. Not far away from there, there is a parish church – one of the most precious Baroque churches in Poland, with a rich interior.

On a hill, in the old royal castle, there is the Museum of Urban Design and on the side of the hill, there is a Baroque church of the Franciscan Order.

Ostrów Tumski is the cradle of Polish nationality. Here, the first king of Poland Mieszko I adopted the Christian faith. In the crypt of the Gothic cathedral you can admire relics from churches of the 10–11th centuries and remains of graves of the first Piasts.

Poznań is the city of international trade exhibitions, which has rich cultural life – a famous opera house, the Polish Dance Theatre, many theatres, cabarets, choirs for

men and boys. Here, the *International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition* and *Malta* theatre festival take place.

There are many recreational venues located at lakes Malta, Strzeszynek and Kiekrz; rowing regatta courses and, open throughout the whole year, the skiing centre at Malta.

At present, over lake Malta a big training, recreational and rehabilitation venue is being built that will be called *Termy Maltańskie*. It will be supplied with thermal mineral water of Na-Cl type and a temperature of 40°C, which will be extracted from a depth of ca. 1300 m.

When guests of Poznań, we cannot refuse ourselves a 20 km long trip towards Katowice, to a castle in Kórnik. This perfectly preserved magnate residence is considered to be one of the most beautiful Polish examples of the modern neo-Gothic style. It draws attention not only for its form, due to high esthetical values, but mainly because of the fantastic interiors (preserved nearly entirely without any changes) dated to the 19th century. To view the entire collection gathered in the museum a full day is needed. Inside the Kórnik Library, a passionate reader could spend the rest of his life. The library was established by Tytus Działyński in 1828. The father's work was later continued by his son Jan. Today, the Kórnik Library is one of the five biggest venues of this type in Poland. Its collections consist of around 400 thousand volumes including 30 thousand prints, 14 thousand manuscripts, maps, atlases, graphics, *ex-libris*, photographs as well as musical and numismatic artefacts.

With great care, the present landlords of the castle look after a large park from the 18th century, which is the biggest dendrological park and arboretum in Poland with over three thousand trees and bushes.

Industrial tourism

From an increasing tourist offer of rich technological and industrial resources, which are covered by legal and conservatory protection, we have chosen two propositions of successful adaptations of old constructions to their new functions.

The values of the first one will be acknowledged by a trip to Warmia and Mazury (Varmian-Masurian Province), where a 19th century canal links the towns of Elbląg and Ostróda. The structure constitutes a unique monument of hydrographical art, the only one in the world that contains still operating technical mechanisms such as slipways, sluices, dams, and safety gates (Fig. 11). To overcome the big difference in water levels, five slipways were built along the route and at some parts ships were transported on wagon platforms that run on railway tracks. The canal had been designed by a Dutch engineer called Georg Jacob Steenke and was built between 1848 and 1872. The biggest engineering challenge was the 99 metre height difference in water levels over an 11 km long distance between lake Drużno near Elbląg and lake Piniewo near Ostróda.

During summer seasons, cruise ships still sail along the 80 km long route. The entire trip takes 11 hours. The canal channel as well as land along its shore have been designated areas of protected landscapes. Every year, thousands of tourists – passengers of cruise ships and individual sailors – can admire the unique natural and landscape qualities, and hundreds of floral and faunal species.

For over 130 years, the waterway has been operated and maintained by a company called *Żegluga Ostródzko-*



Fig. 11. Elbląg Canal, a pleasure – boat on the canal's slipway

Elbląska. Its ships cruise also on Pojezierze Ostródzko-Ilawskie (Ostróda-Ilawa Lake District). Each year the company transports over 40 thousand passengers using cruising ships for 12, 36 and 65 people. The season runs from May 1st until the end of September and on some ships that are equipped in air conditioning even longer, until the first frosts. Thanks to the attractiveness of the structure and more and more extensive promotion, cruise trips on the canal become more and more popular every year.

The second attraction recommended to fans of post-industrial tourism is the *Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian Voivodeship*. The thematic trail comprises 31 facilities: working production manufactures, open-air museums, industrial and technology museums, as well as still operating structures such as railway stations, housing estates and workers' colonies. Every feature has been equipped with an information table including a short history and practical guidance for tourists written in three languages. Personnel caring for the proper assistance to tourists visiting the Silesian monuments provide every interested person with a detailed route guide. You can receive it also in regional tourism information centres.

Tourist trails for people sensitive about nature

Tourists who like resting in the open air will find a place for themselves in nearly every part of Poland. This means people looking for a lazy break and those that are simply happy when connecting with the wild environment, unpolluted by civilisation or those who are all year round outdoor adventurers. Among many places on the *Welcome to Poland* route, the most famous and the most often chosen are described below.

Słowiński National Park. It's famous for its moving sand dunes. The park is listed in the UNESCO biosphere reserve under the *Programme on Man and the Biosphere* (MaB). The biggest attraction are moving dunes, whose height reaches 40 m. Wind moves the sand, covering everything in its way. Over half the area of the park belongs to lakes Łebsko and Gardno.

Masuria. The Masuria Lake District is a complex of the biggest lakes in Poland. Lakes are blended into a beautiful landscape; they have varied shorelines and are a paradise for sailors and enthusiasts of fishing. They are linked with numerous rivers, canals and sluices; they create trails for both inland navigation and water tourism. Especially attractive are sailing routes. There are many bird species living on the lakes. The Natural Reserve of Lake Łuknajno has been included on the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve list. Recently, the Great Masuria Lakes have qualified for the finals of a worldwide competition called the *New 7 Wonders*. By 2011, a jury composed of a group of respected experts will select the magic *7 Natural Wonders* from a list of 28 finalists.

Biebrza National Park. It is the largest national park in Poland, which covers a massive area of Central European wetlands, which are partly of primal origin. Within the park's fauna, the most abundant are birds, mainly marsh

and water birds including very rare species. The park is the biggest mainstay for deer. Fantastic canoe trips can be organised along rivers in the park which allow the observation flora and fauna.

Puszcza Białowieńska. It's a majestic forest of primeval character. A great part of it was designated to be the Białowieża National Park, listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve lists. The reserve comprises the most virgin forest in Europe. The park is famous for farming the European bison and other rare and protected species (Fig. 12).

The Tatra Mountains. The Tatra National Park comprises mountainous territories on the Polish and the neighbouring Slovak sides and is included on the UNESCO Biogenic Reserve list. It is the highest mountain ridge of alpine type in Central Europe – the highest Polish summit is called Rysy: 2499 m above sea level. Many tourist trails allow the most glorious parts of the mountains to be admired, including lakes, valleys, waterfalls, and caves. The Tatras are inhabited by chamois, bears and marmots. There are good conditions for climbing; speleology and trekking all year round; and for skiing in winter.



Fig. 12. European Bison – they were almost exterminated in the 18th century. However, the Polish reintroduction of this species was successful. Most of bison live in the Białowieża Forest – circa 250 representatives of this genus. The entire Polish population of bison amount to 660 specimens

The Bieszczady Mountains. They are the wildest Polish territory. The most precious parts of the mountains have been designated the Bieszczady National Park. Distinctive features of the park are vast expanses of alpine meadows called *połoniny*, which are a mainstay for large mammals and predatory birds. For its unique environmental values, the park has been included in the international Biogenic Reserve of the Eastern Carpathians. There are fabulous regions for trekking and skiing. Very special ornaments of the local landscape are small wooden orthodox churches.

Geo-tourism

Other types of experience are offered by places that are interesting for their geological qualities. When organising such trips you can rely on the Polish Geological Institute, which offers professional and complex services in organising and leading geo-tourist trips. They are especially valued by enthusiasts of earth sciences. Among many offers, it is worth recommending a trip to the first geopark in Poland called *Luk Mużakowa* (Muskauer Park). It is located within a terminal moraine and thanks to its geological and landscape variety, the local history of mining and industry as well as the local culture, the park is becoming an acknowledged tourist attraction of the region. Muskauer Park is located at the border of Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. On the Polish side it is located in the Lubuskie Voivodeship and on the German side within the lands of Brandenburg and Saxony. It comprises the Polish-German part of the *Mużakowski Park*, which is included on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list.

An extremely interesting place on the route is the *Jurassic Park* in Bałtów, in Świętokrzyskie province. Seven years ago scientists from the Polish Geological Institute found dinosaur trails from the Mesozoic Era there. In cooperation with scientists the *Jurapark* was created there, which included creating an enclosure with prehistoric reptile figures. The park was later enlarged with *Horse Land*, which is a horse riding stud farm and a harbour for river rafts that take tourists on trips along the Kamienna river. Later a ski slope was built there as well. Around the area, many agritourism farms have been created. Every year Bałtów is visited by some 300 thousand tourists. When visiting the region, there is no reason not to stop at an archaeological reserve in Krzemionki Opatowskie located nearby. At the end of the past century, mines that were bored in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, as well as in the following thousands of years, were given a designation of monument of history. It is from this region that striped flint, so appreciated by jewellery makers, comes. Actions have been taken to include Krzemionki Opatowskie on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list.

Health and beauty route

We are finishing our route around Poland by a visit to Polish health and beauty resorts offering high standards of medical treatments in sanatoria and biological renovation

and pampering treatments in modern spa resorts. Half of them are located west of the Gdańsk-Katowice line, mainly at the seaside or in the mountains, which can be easily reached by a few-hour drive on the A2, A4 and E28 roads. Kołobrzeg has been especially popular among guests; it is the biggest Polish resort and the only one of its size in Europe. In the Middle Ages, saline springs occurring here naturally were used for a large scale production of salt. Nowadays, the brine extracted from bored wells is used for therapies and treatments in sanatoria, where it is utilised as an important supplement for sea baths.

Kołobrzeg has been specifically acknowledged by visitors from Sweden and Germany and beyond. Accommodation standards, the high quality of natural landscapes, well qualified *euro-lingual* personnel (including lifeguards at swimming pools) as well as the town's structure, which designates a large part of the sea resort as a protected area, are highly valued by visitors. They also point out low prices for accommodation and treatments in comparison to resorts in Western Europe.

Following the route towards Central Poland we will now stop in famous resorts in Ciechocinek and at a unique graduation tower in Inowrocław, which you can reach quickly by a direct train connection from Berlin. A well deserved trade mark belongs to Uniejów on the Warta. Boreholes drilled here provide thermal brine at 70°C, which feeds recreational swimming pools and is used for central heating using heat-exchangers.

Fantastic resting and regenerating conditions can be found in the mountainous region of the Sudeten Mountains and their forelands in south west Poland. The region is famous for the occurrence of mineral waters with a high content of CO₂. These waters are used for treatments in famous resorts in Polanica Zdrój, Kudowa Zdrój, Duszniki Zdrój, Łądek Zdrój, or in less crowded, quieter and more charming places like Świeradów Zdrój or Jedlina Zdrój.

The other important type of therapeutic waters in the Sudeten region is thermal waters that occur in resorts of Cieplice Zdrój and Łądek Zdrój. In both places water comes from natural springs and it is used for therapeutic baths. The drilling programme in Cieplice, which has been undertaken over the past few years, has provided artesian flow from a depth of 2000 m and a temperature reaching 90°C.

It is necessary to include on our list an eastern route as well. This brings us to a famous resort in Krynica Zdrój, where various types of brine are used for treating a wide range of illnesses. Brine in Iwonicz Zdrój contains iodine. At the end we would like to invite you to two pearls of southern Poland, crowded by patients: to Busko Zdrój and its famous mineral sulphur waters; and to Nałęczów Zdrój – deprived of any waters but well acknowledged by visitors for its fantastic, local microclimate.

In this article, we have chosen only a few places on the tourist map of our country. See you on the *Welcome to Poland* route.

Dariusz Liwanowski

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