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## **Culture** <sup>[1]</sup>

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### **Organic connection with water**

#### **Bydgoszcz**

*The Brda River and the Bydgoszcz Canal running through the city create its unique atmosphere. Bydgoszcz listens to its history, particularly the past dating back 150 years. It was a period of prosperity, with growing industry, trade and crafts. The rhythm of the city was outlined by the rapid flow of the river and numerous locks of the Bydgoszcz Canal, which like a water highway connected the city with the east and west of Europe.*

The Mill Island (Wyspa Młyńska), which is an enclave of greenery in the heart of the city, is one of the most charming local sites. 19th-century buildings, known as the Bydgoszcz Venice, stand on the Młynówka River surrounding the island. Walking across the island, you are invited to visit its museums and galleries housed in 19th-century mills and granaries. Location on the international waterway E-70 (Berlin-Kaliningrad) offers to the city connection with the national system of inland navigation through the junction connecting the Vistula with the Odra River. Water enthusiasts are invited to a modern marina blended in the surrounding of the historic Rother's Mills. Nearby bridges and footpaths lead to the charming places of downtown Bydgoszcz, featuring impressive Art Nouveau buildings. The city looks beautiful from the water.

You can find it out by taking a cruise by a river passenger boat or walking the Trail of Water, Industry and Crafts TeH<sub>2</sub>O. It is an industrial, thematic trail combining history of fifteen sites blended in the space of the city. The Opera Nova, standing proudly on the Brda River, is a flagship art stage of our region and nation. Other prominent stages of the city include the Pomeranian Philharmonic and The Polski Theatre.

*Mill Island*

## Gothic, Copernicus, traditional gingerbread

### Toruń

*Gothic streets of the city trigger our imagination and give us a unique opportunity to time-travel. Knowledge of the fact that the great astronomer who “stopped the Sun and moved the Earth” was born and raised in Toruń, inspires respect and encourages to take a deeper look at the history*

*of this Hanseatic city. The spice delicacy developed here centuries ago and legends related to it make that everyone wants to return here, wander through local sites and discover the mysteries of Toruń.*

The Town Hall, monumental churches, charming tenements, and granaries – Gothic can be sensed everywhere. Therefore, it's not surprising that the medieval city of Toruń was designated as World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The fortified walls with gates and towers as well as castle ruins remind about the founders of the city, i.e. the Teutonic Knights. The brave ones volunteer to undergo the “test of righteousness” at

the Leaning Tower. If they are able to keep their balance with their back against the wall of the building, they publically demonstrate their honesty and fidelity. In the Live Gingerbread Museum, listed as one of the seven new wonders of Poland in the 2012 plebiscite of the National Geographic Traveler, and the Toruń Gingerbread Museum one can not only try the spice delicacies, but also participate in their baking and decorating. It's worth checking if the city of Copernicus is closer to the stars by visiting the family house of the astronomer and exploring space in the Toruń Planetarium. The city can also impress military heritage enthusiasts; the Toruń Fortress is one of the biggest fortification systems in Poland.

In the 4th Fort visitors can take a look at life in barracks and experience thrilling moments during a torch-lit tour of the underground tunnels.

Science aficionados and those who enjoy independent experiments are invited to the Innovation Centre – the Mill of Knowledge. Toruń is a city of great events. Bella Skyway Festival is a real explosion of light. The Old Town of Toruń changes its image, moving spectators into a supernatural dimension. Stopping by in Toruń, even for a brief moment, you have to go for a walk on the boulevard alongside the river. Toruń that looks into the Vistula, every time and season, is an unforgettable view.

*Live Gingerbread Museum Władysław Dziwulski Planetarium 4th Fort – Yorck – Żółkiewski*

*Bella Skyway Festival*

# Love at first sight

## Chełmno

*This charming city, sitting on nine hills, has an attractive panoramic view, outlined by steeples of Gothic churches.*

*Among historic sites built from red brick, you will sense a unique atmosphere of this old city with deep-rooted history, situated on the European Route of Red Gothic.*

The history of this city is inseparably tied with the Order of the Teutonic Knights, which gave Chełmno its charter rights, known as the "Chełmno Privilege," naming it the "capital town." Until the 18th century, this document had served as a pattern to charter over 200 cities, including Warsaw, Toruń, Gdańsk, and Wadowice. In the 13th century, a system of fortified buildings was erected in the historical Chełmno Land. These days, their structures are reminded by the Park of Miniature Teutonic Castles. Chełmno is proud of its Europe's longest preserved fortified walls, medieval chessboard street plan and an architectural gem decorating the Market Square, which is the Town Hall built in the Gothic and Renaissance styles. The Fara – one of the six preserved Gothic churches, is a place that attracts those who are in love. The relics of St. Valentine, stored in it, should be the reason for another rebirth of the city – this time, Chełmno as a city of lovers ®. Every year, on February 14, the city festively celebrates "Chełmno Valentine's Day." In the summer, local historic sites create unique scenery of art workshops, outdoor events and colorful regional markets. In 2015, Chełmno was listed as one of the seven new wonders of Poland in the plebiscite of the National Geographic Traveler.

*Chełmno – the city of lovers®*

## City means people

## Grudziądz

*Although the historic cities of Grudziądz are not less important or beautiful than in other towns on the Vistula River, here you will find proofs that the atmosphere of this place is created first of all by its residents. #gru is a trademark of all Grudziądz residents, "created to integrate residents and fill them with pride, encourage to work." It is sensed on a tram, in a cafe, in the market square, but first of all, it is reflected in unconventional actions and daily awareness that everyone can be an ambassador of his own city.*

The panoramic view of Grudziądz is created by some of Europe's biggest historic granaries standing

tall over the Vistula riverbank. In 2011, in the plebiscite of the National Geographic Traveler, the granaries were recognized as one of the seven new wonders of Poland. The restored Klimek Tower, which was once part of the local Teutonic castle, towers over the city. You are encouraged to climb the tower, which top

offers a breathtaking view of the meandering Vistula River. Walking across the city you will discover parts of 14th-century fortified walls with the Water Gate, a monumental Gothic basilica, and three Baroque monasteries of the Benedictine nuns, the Jesuits and the Reformati. Connoisseurs of fortifications will get impressed with the Grudziądz citadel built in the 18th century, which is one of the most stately structures of military craft in Europe. A sentimental monument of an uhlán and girl refers to the cavalry traditions of the city. Grudziądz is also at the itinerary of the European Route of Brick Gothic. The city also has an offer to water enthusiasts, featuring the revitalized Schulz Port that invites to the Grudziądz Marina with interesting architecture.

## **Taking a train deep into history**

### **Pałuki**

Stepping into a car of a narrow-gauge train, you will time travel ... Departure station: Żnin.  
Destination... who knows?

You can learn about traditions and the interesting history of Pałuki and Żnin in the Museum of the Pałuki Land located in the Gothic tower and building of the municipal office. There are not too many people aware of the fact that Polish periodicals, including women's magazines led by "Moja Przyjaciółka" were originated in this place. In nearby Wenecja, it is easy to feel like a child and joyfully discover the world of choo-choo trains. The Museum of Narrow-Gauge Railway, situated in front of a medieval castle, is Europe's biggest ethnographic museum of steam locomotives for 600 mm gauge. This exceptional collection is worth visiting during the Wenecja Night of Steam Locomotives.

Owing to the locomotives belching out with steam, illuminated exhibits and period music, everyone is overwhelmed by the magic of this place and feels like a passenger of the "little" railway station from the early 20th century. Another must-see place during the travel around Pałuki is the Archeological Museum in Biskupin – the most well-known archeological reserve in Central Europe. It features, among others, a reconstructed Neolithic settlement dating back 6,000 years, a Lusatian settlement dating back 2,700 years, and an early-Piast village.

Organised in September, the Archeological Fest shows the everyday life of the early Biskupin residents. Further, the railway leads to Gąsawa, where in the wooden church of St. Nicholas delightful are the unique Baroque wall paintings. The last stop on the railway route does not end our Pałuki adventure. Other exceptional places await us, e.g. Lubostroń Palace, modelled on the famous Italian Villa Rotonda, one of the best preserved mansion complexes in Poland.

*Archeological Fest in Biskupin*

*Wenecja Night with Steam Locomotives Archeological Museum in Biskupin*

## **The birth of Poland**

### **Szlak Piastowski**

*Reaching the roots and looking for answers to the most important questions are part of each person's life. What did the Polish state look like in the first centuries of its existence? The Piast period surely still conceals many mysteries, but the Piast Trail leading us through the regions of Wielkopolska, Kuyavia and Pałuki is like an open book of history. It reveals historical sites and places that saw our history.*

Kruszwica welcomes guests with its Gothic Mouse Tower on Castle Hill. This is a relic of a castle of Casimir the Great dating back to the mid-14th century. It is 32 m high, and from its top one can see the town and the legendary Lake Gopło. In Kruszwica, there is also the oldest preserved church in Kuyavia – the Romanesque Collegiate Church of Saints Peter and Paul – from the turn of the 12th century. Mogilno, scenically surrounded by the lake waters, features the Church of St John the Apostle and a Benedictine monastery established in the 11th century. In the church crypts one can feel the Christian spirit of the past. The monasterial walls guard the oldest well in Poland. In the Basilica of the Holy Trinity in Strzelno, we can find a real treasure – Romanesque columns with personification of virtues and vices. By the basilica, there is St Procopius' Rotund – the largest Romanesque building on the plan of a circle. The stone Romanesque Church of Our Lady is the oldest historical site in Inowrocław. On the church walls one can see bas-reliefs of devils, animals and people, symbolising the fundamental truths of the Christian faith (according to legend, they were to protect the faithful against the evil powers). One of the oldest Gothic cathedral churches in Poland can be admired in Włocławek. Inside the Cathedral of the Assumption, there is the precious marble tomb of bishop Piotr of Bnin, made in the workshop of Veit Stoss. Brześć Kujawski, the old seat of Kuyavian dukes from the Piast line, is the

hometown of Ladislaus the Short. Casimir III the Great was born in Kowal. During the Piast reign, Żnin was the favourite seat of heads of the Polish Church, frequently having as guests kings – Casimir the Great and Ladislaus Jagiello. Here, bishops used to be ordained and decisions important to the country were made. The course of the Piast Trail via Biskupin justifies the reconstruction of an early-Piast village in the archeological reserve.

*Piast Trail*

## Teutonic heritage

*The historical Chełmno Land has preserved many valuable traces of the Order of the German Hospital of Saint Mary in Jerusalem that reigned here centuries ago. A trip along the trail of Teutonic castles is a recollection of the glory of these places, the history of knighthood and old customs.*

On the scenic hill of Golub-Dobrzyń, at the turn of the 14th century, the Teutonic Knights constructed a magnificent castle. Its present shape the building owes to princess Anna Vasa, who transformed the Gothic stronghold into a Renaissance mansion. From the castle courtyard, the characteristic huge steps lead to the rooms. They had been used by knights, who in full gear would ride into the castle. The local

legend warns that the one who takes the steps and looks back he or she will neigh in the least appropriate moment within a year. Grand International Knight's Tournaments are a tradition of the castle in Golub. This is an exceptional time and occasion to watch duels breathlessly in the company of knights and beautiful ladies coming from all over Europe. They say that one can see the ghost of Anna Vasa amidst onlookers. Ruins of a castle with a preserved 54-m-high tower is the Teutonic heritage of Brodnica. The castle basements are full of exhibits presenting the history of this place. In Świecie, ruins of the only Teutonic water castle were in the 14th century surrounded by the waters of the Vistula and Wda Rivers. Its grandest part with the characteristic keep, out of the perpendicular by 106 cm, has been preserved to this day. This is the highest leaning tower in Poland open to visitors. In Radzyń Chełmiński, there are magnificent walls of one of the most important castles in the Teutonic state. After the lost battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg), part of the Teutonic treasure, including personal silverware of Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen, had been kept there. Worth seeing are the mysterious signs carved on the wall. This is a memento of the episodes of the TV series "Pan Samochodzik i templariusze" (Mr Automobile and the Knights Templar) filmed here. Going along the traces of the Teutonic Knights, we will also get to Castle of Bierzgłowo from the 13th century, presently occupied by the Diocesan Culture Centre.

## Chopin's Mazurka

It was here, in the estate of the Dziewanowski family in Szafarnia, that young Frederick Chopin used to spend his summer holidays. Delighted by this place, he composed his first mazurka. He also wrote amusingly his "Szafarnia Daily", including his summer adventures. The future composer would familiarise himself with the vicinity, delight with folklore, observe rural customs, ceremonies, and listen attentively to folk music. In Obrowo he participated in harvest festivals, presented his talent at the Knight's Room in Kikół, and in Obory he played the monasterial pipe organ. As many as 21 towns located in Dobrzyń Land, Chełmno Land and Kuyavia have been combined into the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Frederick Chopin Trail. They are connected not only with Frederick's arrivals during his childhood, but also with his mother and his first love. Nowadays, the Chopin Centre in Szafarnia still resounds with his music. Numerous concerts held here attract music lovers from all over the world.

# Camino Polaco

Camino de Santiago, i.e. the Way of St James, is one of the oldest pilgrimage routes in Europe. It leads to the grave of St James located in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. However, one can go along ways of St James throughout Europe. The Polish Way (Camino Polaco) has

been linking places visited by pilgrims going to Compostela since the Middle Ages. This is an almost 250-km trail featuring historical sites, ecclesiastic memorabilia and beautiful landscapes. Its part in Kujawsko-Pomorskie runs through, among others, Brodnica, Szafarnia, Golub- Dobrzyń, Ciechocin, Toruń, and Kruszwica.

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