

MINI**GUIDEBOOK**

Culture and historical monuments

Eastern Mazovia

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Mazovia.
heart of Poland



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EASTERN MAZOVIA

This pocket guide will introduce you to the greatest cultural attractions of the eastern part of Mazovia, and more precisely the poviats: wołomiński, otwocki, garwoliński, miński, węgrowski, siedlecki, sokołowski and łosicki. Throughout history, these territories have always been the borderlands and a melting pot of various nations and cultures. You will find traces of the colourful past listening intently to the clang of weaponry during a knight's tournament at the castle in Liw, resting in the palace interiors of Sterdyń or looking for the remains of a lime tree in Podzamcze, where they dressed the wounds of Tadeusz Kościuszko. Every single location of the small towns scattered around the agricultural plains of eastern Mazovia has its own story to tell. Sometimes you can get to know it by visiting a museum exhibition. Yet, more often than not you can discover the magic of the outlying locations only by walking along the side streets and exploring all the nooks and crannies on your own.

In a number of places, you can still see the remnants of regional folk tradition. You will be able to enjoy them during a festival of wedding ceremonies in Węgrów, a holiday fair in Sokołów Podlaski or Corpus Christi celebrations in Kołbiel.

The largest city in this part of Mazovia is Siedlce, yet many localities lie in the direct vicinity of Warsaw. Both cities, Siedlce 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.



THE LANDSCAPE IN A NUTSHELL

The part of Mazovia that we describe here is like a picture, framed by two river valleys: the Bug river on the north and the Vistula on the west. Both valleys are extremely valuable in terms of the environment because they make up the route of bird migrations and constitute a convenient habitat for numerous plant and animal species. Small clusters of boggy forests add variety to colourful carpets of riverside meadows. More often than not you can spot storks or herons winging their way across the sky. Above the valley bottom, usually on sandy dunes, spread larger forest complexes. We recommend a walk among the pines, for instance in the vicinity of Otwock, as the air here is filled with essential oils that favour good moods.

Towards the main rivers run their tributaries: Liwiec, Świder, Wilga and other smaller rivers that cut through the undulating landscape of eastern Mazovia. It is there, on the river banks, where you can find the most varied spots. However, these are not the only picturesque places in the region. Extensive, agricultural lands with the added variety of a church tower or a tree cluster here and there are extremely charming too. How numerous they are, you will see it first-hand, as you wander along the roads of eastern Mazovia.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF HISTORY

Long before the name of "Mazovia" was entered into the chronicles, at the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries, the areas of the central Vistula basin had already been inhabited. Archaeological excavation sites testify to that. In Świdry Wielkie near Otwock, on the extensive dunes, archaeologists discovered a reindeer hunter camp, a relic of the Palaeolithic era. The traces confirm that nomads who used stone tools had been repeatedly coming back to the same place.

The name of "Mazovia" is a popular name for the central part of Poland, yet it is hard to identify its borders in an unambiguous way. That is because throughout history its borders underwent numerous significant changes. It is equally difficult to

point to the origin of the name itself. 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 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.

Originally, the area of Piast Mazovia reached as far as the valley of the middle and upper Bug river. In the middle of the 11th c., following the alliance between King Casimir the Restorer and Duke Yaroslav the Wise of Kiev, the lands on the Bug up to the Nurzec river, the middle reaches of the Li-



wiecz river and the upper reaches of the Wieprz river were handed over to Ruthenia. In this way, the Polish name "Podlasze" came into being, which means the country "in the neighbourhood of the dalesman of Poland (Lachs)". "Podlasze" has always been strongly connected with Mazovia. Since its very beginnings, the region was a melting pot of different nations. Ruthenian dukes encouraged settlers from the duchies of Turov and Vladimirov, but also accepted people coming from the West.

A linking element for the Mazovian lands were the rivers. In the Middle Ages both the Vistula and the Bug rivers constituted important waterways where a booming trade in wood and crops took place.

Since 1138 Mazovia had been one of the duchies of Poland; later on, it was split into separate duchies whose sovereigns struggled continuously to maintain or increase

their territories. It happened several times in the 14th and 15th c. that Mazovian dukes seized the lands in the upper and middle reaches of the Bug river. In time, when the Piast families were dying out, consecutive parts of the Mazovian lands became incorporated into the Crown. In 1526, the last of the dukes of Mazovia that ruled in Warsaw, Janusz III, died heirless. Since he died only a year and a half after the death of his elder brother, Stanislaus, and both of them were in their prime, the circumstances of their deaths were for a long time the subject of rumours and investigation.

After the incorporation of Mazovia into the Crown, a separate Mazovian province was created of three populous voivodeships. The western part of the area that we describe in this guide was incorporated within the extensive Mazowieckie Voivodeship with a capital city of Warsaw. The lands

located in the East belonged to the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and remained within the limits of the Podlaskie voivodeship (created in 1520) with a capital of Drohiczyn. After the Union of Lublin of 1569, the Podlaskie Voivodeship was incorporated into the Crown, in the Małopolska province. This division had remained stable until the third partition of Poland in 1795.

In the 16th and 17th c., the local economy and culture were undergoing a period of peak development. The Vistula river remained the busiest trade route. The development of trade and craft contributed to the development of towns, including privately owned towns such as Sokółów Podlaski and Węgrów. The golden era came to an end with the coming of the Swedish invasion of 1655. This destructive war, which lasted for several years, combined with the concurrent epidemics stopped

the development of the entire country for more than a hundred years. At the end of the 18th c., Poland began to gradually disappear from the map of Europe. The last attempt to defend the Polish independence was the Kościuszko Insurrection, with the main battlefields located within Mazovia. Unfortunately, the participants' heroism did not manage to assure military success. The Insurrection ended with a defeat in the battle of Maciejowice, where the wounded Tadeusz Kościuszko was captured by the Russians.

As a result of the third partition of Poland (1795), the lands that we describe here became a part of Austria. The rebirth took place when the French army entered Mazovia and the Duchy of Warsaw was created in 1807. Then the courts were reorganised, the army modernised and the education system reconstructed. Yet, in 1813, after Napoleon's

defeat in Russia, Mazovia became occupied by Russians. In 1815, the Kingdom of Poland was created under the control of Tsar Alexander I. The administrative changes introduced by the Russians reinforced the position of Siedlce that became a capital of the Podlaskie Voivodeship.

Between 1815 and 1830, Mazovia was gradually recovering from the decline. The number of inhabitants increased by as much as a third. In 1820, the first Polish paved road was constructed between Warsaw and Terespol. Great changes were initiated in the spatial arrangement and development of towns and cities. Still, in many municipal centres, such as Garwolin, not a single brick house existed. A significant contributor to the development of craft and trade was the Jewish community constituting a majority population in most of the small towns in Mazovia and

Podlasie. In 1830, in Warsaw, the November Uprising broke out. The people of Mazovia, regardless of their faith and social status, unanimously supported another armed bid for independence. Major battles with Russians took place near Iganie and Stoczek. Unfortunately, divergences among the generals leading the Uprising and the fact that the Russians greatly outnumbered the Polish forces brought about a defeat. Following the defeat of the Uprising, the Kingdom's autonomy was considerably reduced. It was finally liquidated after the fall of another uprising in 1864. The fights that broke out in January 1863 after the impressment into the Russian army encompassed the whole of Mazovia. Skirmishes and battles, sentences and exiles to Siberia brought death to thousands. The commander of the longest operating unit, the Rev. Stanisław Brzóska, was executed

in Sokołów in 1865. As part of a "punishment for the uprising", several dozen Mazovian towns, including Kołbiel, Maciejowice and Radzymin were deprived of their town charter. Many of these centres have never regained their past glory.

Despite the repressive measures, Mazovia continued to develop economically. Roads were built and modernised, and in 1866, the Terespol railway line was started. All towns situated along the route, such as Mińsk Mazowiecki, rapidly developed. Those lying distant from the railway tracks, such as Węgrów, were gradually decreasing.

The Polish state regained these areas in 1918, but soon the bloody Polish-Bolshevik war swept through the lands of eastern Mazovia. The Polish victory, in exceptionally heavy fighting, that took place in August 1920 near Radzymin and Ossów are referred to as the "Miracle at the Vistula".

The inter-war period (1918-1939) was the time of organisation, reconstruction and growth of Mazovian towns and small towns. The scope of changes can be confirmed, for instance, by the fact that the area of Mińsk Mazowiecki grew four times and Kałuszyn's more than thirty times. Some important changes took place in Siedlce too, where the Nowe Siedlce (**New Siedlce**) district was created. A driving force in the economy of many Mazovian small towns was their Jewish citizens. In Sokołów and Węgrów, they comprised more than a half of the total population, and in Siedlce – 40% of all the citizens. The multi-cultural society came to an end with the outbreak of the Second World War. Following Hitler's orders, Jews were systematically exterminated. For many inhabitants of Mazovia, their last earthly abode was the death camp in Treblinka.

The end of the war came to eastern Mazovia relatively quickly. Between July and October 1944, the Red Army and the 1st Corps of the Polish Army occupied the area between the Bug and Vistula rivers. The first seats of the new authorities of the Warszawskie Voivodeship were Otwock and Mińsk Mazowiecki.

After 1945, eastern Mazovia, like the whole of Poland, was developing in line with the top-down guidelines and long-term economic plans. As a result of the central planning, two large plants were created: a meat plant in Sokołów Podlaski and a dairy in Węgrów. In 1975, as a result of the administrative reform, forty-nine small voivodeships were created within Poland. Siedlce became a capital of the voivodeship too, and ceased to be one on 1st January 1999, when the Mazowieckie Voivodeship was created in its current form.

SIEDLCE

Under the Watchful Eye of Jacek

Siedlce, a city of the population of almost 80,000 were granted a town charter in 1547. The way it looks now is to a great extent the result of the changes implemented in the 18th c. by Aleksandra Ogińska, née Czartoryska. As an owner of Siedlce she spared no expense in order to transform it in the representative city of her epoch. An important element of the town-planning was a park and palace complex. A brick palace, built before 1730 to the order of Kazimierz Czartoryski, replaced the old wooden manor. Between 1779 and 1781, to the order of Aleksandra Ogińska, the building was thoroughly reconstructed. Stanisław Zawadzki, an archi-

tect, equipped the palace with the classical features. This splendid residence was visited by many noble figures such as the Polish king Stanisław August Poniatowski, the poet Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, and commander-in-chief Tadeusz Kościuszko. Part of the palace complex is a free standing chapel erected in 1791 based on the design of Zygmunt Vogel. This classical, octagonal building is adorned with porticoes and Tuscan columns. Here, Duchess Ogińska was buried.

Aleksandra Ogińska lacked neither imagination nor dash; following her order, the landscape park surrounding the palace was transformed into a splendid sentimental garden. Wild growing copses and groves and flower-beds were cut through with a labyrinth of winding and picturesque channels. Within the park area numerous garden houses were erected, as



well as a fishing hut, a mosque and an orangery. The present-day municipal park, though still charming, is but a shadow of its former magnitude in the Duchess' time.

At ul. Piłsudskiego, there is the Old Square. A late-baroque town hall at the square was built between 1766 and 1772 to the order of Aleksandra Ogińska. A characteristic feature of the building is a massive, octagonal tower topped with a statue of Atlas holding a Globe. The citizens of Siedlce call the figure "Jacek" and consider it to be the symbol of the city. Today, the building houses the Regional Museum. Visitors to its exhibitions have an opportunity to learn about the history and culture of the Podlasie region. Additionally, the museum organises a number of interesting events such as the "Easter Traditions" competition (on Saturday before the Palm Sunday) and an advent competition of playing old-time pastoral piping in-

struments known as "ligawki" (in December). Additionally, the museum organises very solemn celebrations of the Polish Independence Day (on the first Sunday after 11th November).

At ul. Floriańska there is a church of St. Stanislaus, which is the oldest brick church in Siedlce. This baroque building was erected between 1740 and 1749 as a foundation of Izabela and Kazimierz Czartoryski. In 1793, the architect Stanisław Zawadzki rebuilt its facade in the classical style. In the chancel of the church, visitors' attention is drawn to pictures of four Evangelists from the collection of the Ossoliński family. On the side altars, you can admire the 18th c. paintings by Szymon Czechowicz. Next to the church, there is a grand, late-baroque presbytery.

In spite of appearances, not all the historical monuments in Siedlce are related to the life of Duchess Aleksandra Ogińska. An im-



pressive cathedral building was erected between 1905 and 1912. The designer of this neo-Gothic church with two towers of 75 m was a provincial architect, Zygmunt Zdański. Apart from the size, the church is distinguished by colourful stained-glass windows.

Opposite the cathedral, there is the Diocesan Museum. The local collection of the sacred art is both rich and varied. Its special treasure is the only painting of El Greco in Poland. The canvas depicting the ecstasy of St Francis has been discovered accidentally while inventorying church monuments in Kosowo Lackie.

You can visit Siedlce at any time of the year, but the city's cultural life is particularly vibrant in May. Numerous concerts, sports contests, exhibitions and film reviews are part of two events: the Days of Siedlce and the student festival commonly known in Siedlce as "Jackonalia".

Muzeum Regionalne (*Regional Museum*)
ul. Piłsudskiego 1,
tel. 025 6327470, fax 025 6324224
<http://muzeumsiedlce.w.interia.pl>

Muzeum Diecezjalne (*Diocesan Museum*)
ul. bpa I. Świrskiego 56,
tel. 025 6449865
www.muzeum.siedlce.pl
www.siedlce.um.gov.pl

SERPELICE

A holiday Resort by the Bug Riverside

A popular holiday resort located at the eastern border of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, lies at the picturesque gorge of the Bug river. The area's greatest attraction is obviously the river itself and the beauty of the local nature, yet we would like to draw your attention to the Calvary of Podlasie, being a replica of the Way of the Cross. The chapel complex is located on the forested hill on the outskirts of the town.

On the second weekend of July, in Serpelice, they organise the Bug Riverside Festivities "Reminiscences of Podlasie". The guests have a chance to participate in sports games and plays, admire knight re-enactments and horse-riding demonstrations, and learn about the arcane of old time crafts.

KOTUŃ

Helmets and Fire Engines

This small locality vaunts with an efficient team of the voluntary fire service and an exceptional museum, established at the firemen's initiative. In a fire station that has been extended for this particular purpose, they present historical fire fighting equipment and numerous memorabilia related to the history and culture of Polish fire-fighting; all in all, the museum has almost a thousand exhibits on display. The museum collections include eighteen late 19th c. fire engines and twenty portable pumps from the 20th c. Probably; some of them could still be started. The sightseers' greatest admiration and curiosity are aroused by a hand-operated fire engine from the turn of the 18th and 19th century. In Kotuń, you

can also see fire engines, personal equipment and uniforms as well as all other essential fire fighting accessories and paraphernalia. You do not have to stretch your imagination to guess what a given item was used for in the past.

Muzeum Pożarnictwa
(Fire-Fighting Museum)
ul. Wiejska 9, tel. 606985413

CHLEWISKA

A Breeding Ground for Talent

A charming, white-walled manor house built in the middle of the 19th c. for the Róžański family, later bought (1926) by Aurelia Reymont, Władysław Stanisław Reymont's (a winner of the Noble Prize in literature) widow. The new owner introduced numerous changes in Chlewiska, which are still visible in the manor. At that time, an eastern wing was added to the manor, as well as a gardener's house and an entry gate in the Podhale region style. The extensive park and garden were tidied up; some of the trees planted at that time still give cool shade to the visitors of Chlewiska.

In spite of the changing owners, the manor house was fortunate not to share the fate of other similar structures, which

are often falling into ruins now. Since 1999 the owner of the house has been the Povi- at Starost Office in Siedlce. Now the house serves as an Artists' Retreat, where numer-

ous all-Polish and international plein-air and other artist workshops are organised.

www.reymontowka.art.pl



MOKOBODY

Temple of Divine Providence

Onufry Ossoliński, a starost of Drohiczyń and an MP for the Four-Year Sejm (1788-1792) was an ardent patriot. When it turned out that there were no chances to erect the ex voto church for adoption of the May 3rd Constitution in Warsaw (in spite of the invitation to tender for the design), Onufry Ossoliński brought the winning architect to Mokobody. The architect's name was Jakub Kubicki, and it was him that started the church construction in 1793. Yet, the changing fortunes of history meant that completing the work took an unusually long time. Actually, the founder did not even live until the completion. The consecration of the church

took place as late as in 1837, and the finishing works were still progress in the second half of the 19th c.

The classical temple followed the central layout. The middle section is double-domed with one dome erected over the other one. As for the interior décor, special attention should be paid to the 17th c. picture of Our Lady of Budzieszyn. An interesting detail is a scale-model of the church made in 1793 by Jakub Kubicki himself.

KORCZEW

Dashing Through the Snow

A distinctive silhouette of the palace in Korczew is a U-shaped structure. It was erected on an elevated slope of the valley of the Bug river in 1734. The erection was initiated by a castellan of Podlasie and an MP for the Grodno Sejm (1793), Wiktoryn Kuczyński who, in acknowledgement of his economic achievements, was often referred to as the "King of Podlasie". A hundred years later, the structure was reconstructed in the neo-Gothic style to the design of Franciszek Jaszczold. Additionally, an extensive landscape park was planned at that time. The park inspired many legends. For instance, you can try to find a 2-meter high stone hidden among the greenery, as the touch of it is supposed to bring happi-

ness and wealth. Several years ago, the palace returned to the daughters of its pre-war owners. After removing the traces of an almost 50-year communist rule (the palace had served for instance as a fertiliser storage place), the "Pearl of Podlasie" underwent a true rebirth.

Since then the palace in Korczew has opened its doors to the public. Now tourists are allowed in some rooms. The permanent exhibition tells the story of friendship between Joanna Kuczyńska, a lady of Korczew, and Cyprian Kamil Norwid, a poet. Some interesting temporary exhibitions are organised too.

Every year in February, Korczew hosts an original and spectacular event of Dog Sled Racing. Though the tradition of this sport in Poland is rather short, the number of participants is growing quickly. The specificity of this discipline is that it requires per-

fect harmony between sled dogs and the sled driver (or musher). A good sled dog team is able to speed through the ice covered areas at 40 km/h. The race participants in Korczew come from all over Poland, but they also include the best musher's from Europe and the rest of the world. The event does not even need snow; if the natural conditions do not live up to expectations, the sleds are replaced with three-wheeled carts.

We recommend visiting Korczew in the summertime too. In July you can take part in the "Green Korczew" festivities which refer to the tradition of agricultural exhibitions. Here art meets farming skills. Visitors have an opportunity to see agricultural machinery, cars and construction materials, and at the same time admire the work of folk artists, musical and horse-riding performances.

You can stay in Korczew for a bit longer too; a free-standing palace tower offers cosy and comfortable accommodation for four guests.

<http://korczew-palac.pl>

STERDYŃ

To Live in a Palace

Picturesquely located on the old bed of the Bug river, the palace is a true architectural gem of eastern Mazovia. Erected at the end of the 17th c. to the order of Jerzy Ossoliński, a warrant officer of the Nur lands, the palace was rebuilt in the neo-classical spirit by the last of the Ossoliński of Sterdyń, Stanisław. The project was commissioned to an eminent architect, Jakub Kubicki. The palace is surrounded by an English-style park, established in the middle of the 19th c. By the time of the agricultural reform, Sterdyń had remained in the hands of the Krasieński family. In the post-war period, the historical interiors housed a secondary school and a labour ward. As a result, many locals can pride themselves on being born

in the palace. At the moment, the palace is owned by a private company. The new investor has not only restored the palace to its former glory, but continually improves the palace facilities. The palace comprises 69 rooms in four buildings as well as conference and banquet rooms. In the executive rooms, visitors can enjoy the carefully restored 18th c. polychromes. All guests praise the local cuisine, and they enjoy spending long hours in "Miodopitnia" – a mead drinking parlour in the basement.

www.sterdyn.com.pl

SOKOŁÓW PODLASKI

Deep in the Old Chests.

This powiat town on the eastern edge of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship prides itself on its' long history. Sokołów Podlaski obtained its town charter in 1424 from the hands of the Grand Duke Vytautas the Great. By 1867, it had remained a private city. It belonged to the Kiszka family and then to the Radziwiłł family. The time of the town's greatest magnificence was the 18th c., when it was the property of Kleofas Ogiński. Then a prosperous manufacturing plant of carpets, silk scarves and Słuck sashes was established.

An expert in the region's history, Mr Marian Pietrzak tries to rescue the remnants of

the town's past from oblivion in his private museum. Among the exhibits, collected by Mr Pietrzak for many years, you can see old horse-drawn vehicles, a weaving workshop, some decorative old chests, as well as interesting military items and numerous paraphernalia related to the history of the Sokołów region. At the moment, Sokołów is both an industrial and agricultural centre, and a centre of the local cultural life. Many local events relate to the rich folk tradition of the region. For instance, the Regional Cuisine Festival (at the end of October and the beginning of November) is to promote somewhat forgotten customs and ceremonies connected with the autumn. It is also a real treat for connoisseurs of traditional food. As the winter sets in, a colourful holiday fair is held during the week preceding 20th December. If you do not have an idea for Christmas deco-

rations, here you will find both inspiration and ready made decorations. A great attraction of the fair are performances of artists playing "ligawki", that are extremely long old-time wind instruments traditionally played during Advent. At the end of May and the beginning of June, Sokołów is visited by folk groups from all over Europe. Not infrequently, the European Folk Meetings on the Bug River will bring more knowledge about various regional traditions than a trip abroad.

Those who prefer moving to the more recent groove come to Sokołów to participate in the International Dance Festival "Sokolik" (organised over the second weekend in May), where you can see the best Polish hip-hop groups. The event with tradition is the All Souls' Day Jazz Festival at the beginning of November with a line-up of world-class jazz musicians.

Muzeum – Skansen Ziemi Sokołowskiej
(*Open Air Ethnographic Museum
of the Sokołów Region*)
ul. Lipowa 64
www.sokolowpodl.pl

SADOWNE

Antique Mysteries

Enthusiasts of antiques, folklore and all kinds of oddities should visit the Museum of the Sadowne Region. Within the fairly limited space of the museum, you will find a huge number of exhibits. They include age-old pieces of furniture, musical instruments, interesting paper cut-outs and papers and homespun cloth. The museum's eye catchers are: a considerable collection of slug-heated irons and a collection of wall clocks. History enthusiasts will spend more than a while admiring the prints documenting the history of the region.

Muzeum Ziemi Sadowieńskiej
(*Museum of the Sadowne Region*)
ul. Kościuszki 74, tel. 025 653561

TREBLINKA

The Last Stop

The forests on the Bug river hide one of the most moving mementos of the Second World War. The museum-memorial in Treblinka commemorates the death of about 800,000 Jews from across Europe who between 1942 and 1943 suffered in the local concentration camp. In the camp's thirteen gas chambers several thousand people were killed every day. In August 1942, Janusz Korczak, a prominent educator and writer, and the author of *King Matt the First*, shared the same deadly fate as the children in his custody.

While walking along a former railway loading platform, pensive and thoughtful visitors to Treblinka follow the same road which led thousands of people to the last

stop. At this place of torment, you can see the monument by Adam Haupt and Franciszek Duszenko. The monument decorated with bas-reliefs symbolising prisoners' martyrdom is surrounded by several thousand granite rocks stylised as Jewish tombstones, known as "macewas" (from Hebrew). Instead of the surnames, the tombstones feature the names of places that the victims came from. You just cannot pass by and remain indifferent.

2 km further to the west, there are the remains of Treblinka I - a penal camp established in August 1941, where approx. 10,000 people were imprisoned for various administrative offences. A small monument by Franciszek Strykiewicz is situated next to the graves.

A part of the Museum of Armed Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka is an exhibition pavilion where you can see the drawings of

Samuel Willenberg, a survivor of the death camp, as well as the items discovered during maintenance work. They bring a deeply human dimension to the tragedy.

Muzeum Walki i Męczeństwa
(*Museum of Armed Struggle
and Martyrdom*),
tel. 025 7811658

SUCHA

Under the Old But Native Roof

On the sunny, summer days, the white walls of the local manor can hardly be seen from behind the luxuriant green of the trees. This baroque mansion house of larch wood was erected in 1743 to the order of Ignacy Cieszkowski, a castellan of Liw. In the following century, the manor was timbered and a classical arcade portico was added. "Sub veteri tectu sed parentali" – "Under the Old but Native Roof" reads an inscription above the entrance.

The history of the manor is filled with interesting events. In 1787 the manor hosted King Stanisław August Poniatowski, and in 1814 it witnessed the birth of August Cieszkowski, a prominent philosopher and economist. Following his invitation, Sucha

was visited by Zygmunt Krasiński, a poet. After 1945 it was inhabited by employees of a State Agricultural Farm (PGR), and later it served as a school. With each passing year, the manor was falling into ruin. In 1988, the ruin was bought by Maria and Marek Kwiatkowski, whose joint efforts and persistence brought the building to life. It is a special place, at the same time a museum open to visitors and a lived-in real house. Meticulously restored interiors have managed to preserve the atmosphere and character of the typical Polish manor. In the rooms overlooking the garden, you can still see fragments of the original wall and ceiling paintings.

Around the manor land, there are over twenty historical wooden structures from the Siedlce region. It is supposed that one of the cottages was a shelter for the Rev. Stanisław Brzóska, a general and the chief

LIW

Meet the Yellow Lady

The large village of today used to be a bustling town, and in the 16th c. even the capital town of the Liw Region, one of ten regions making up the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. By far the most valuable remnant of the past is a castle whose red mass overlooks the riverside meadows. This fortified building was erected in the early 15th c. by Janusz I, and in the following century was developed by Duchess Anna and queen Bona. Like all of Liw, after the Swedish invasion of 1655, the castle fell into ruin. At the end of the 18th century, among the remains of the castle, the starost's office was built – a baroque structure whose mass is now an integral part of the restored castle.

chaplain to some of the partisan troops, during the January Uprising of 1863. Sightseers' curiosity is aroused by the round manège from the end of the 19th century and a Dutch-type windmill with its original mechanism. Several years ago, the collection was enriched with the second manor house, a huge wooden building from 1825, transferred from Rudzienko. It can host a symposium, a picnic or family celebration.

Muzeum Architektury Drewnianej
Regionu Siedleckiego
*(Museum of Wooden Architecture
of the Siedlce Region)*
tel. 604095147
www.sucha.podlasie.pl

The castle in Liw is a must-see for all enthusiasts of historical weaponry. In the local Armoury Museum, you can admire collections of Polish and foreign weaponry used in Poland. This rich collection includes both century old cold steel items and almost contemporary bayonets and Kalashnikovs. Portraits of the Polish 16th/17thc. nobility, paintings of battle scenes and historic maps complement the exhibition.

Like every castle worth its salt, Liw has its own ghost too. People say that around midnight, the castle halls and walls are a walking path for the Yellow Lady, a ghost of Ludwika Kuczyńska, née Szujska, unfairly accused of marital infidelity and beheaded.

At the end of May and the beginning of June, time travels back several centuries at the castle of Liw. Every year the Archaeological Festivities introduce spectators to a different epoch; Liw has already

been visited by ancient Romans and Vikings, and even Napoleonic soldiers. During the event you can look at the exemplary archaeological site, and learn about the arcane of old time crafts such as smithery, wood tar making and minting.

On the third weekend of August, knights, squires and ladies-in-waiting arrive from all around Poland to Liw to compete in the "Duchess Ann's Ring" tournament. The most interesting, but also the most challenging, part is the knights' multi-discipline competition. The stakes are high: the winner gets a gold ring with a diamond stone.

Muzeum-Zbrojownia na Zamku w Liwie
(Armoury Museum at the Castle in Liw)
ul. Batorego 2, tel. 025 7925717



GRODZISK

Traces of History

On the outskirts of a small village, hidden among meadows and fields, you will find a huge early medieval fortified settlement from the 11th c. You will easily recognise the round ring of its embankments. Looking from Liwiec, the earthworks are 10 m high and make a perfect vantage point. Though a respectable relic, the old settlement is still used for agricultural purposes. If you set off to meet history, remember not to disturb the grazing cows' peaceful life.

WĘGRÓW

Wonders of Twardowski's Looking Glass

The small town of Węgrów is one the most popular tourist destinations in the region. Here you can enjoy precious historical monuments, interesting events and a friendly atmosphere. Due to its borderland location, Węgrów was granted a town charter as long ago as in 1441. In the following centuries, it grew in strength as a centre of trade and craft. The town owed its prosperity to its caring owners, the Kiszkas, the Radziwiłłs and the Kasińskis. Until the mid 17th c., Węgrów was the main centre of the Reformation in the Podlasie region. At the local Arian church they had a printing house, a seminary and a school that educated many open-minded graduates. The

vestiges of the battle for souls which must have taken place in the town can still be found in the splendid churches of Węgrów. A three-nave parish church of Assumption and St Peter and St Paul at the town square was built in the 16th c. in a Gothic style. The church burnt down in the early 18th c., but the chancel and two slender side towers have remained from the original building. Between 1703 and 1706, the church was rebuilt in the baroque style, most probably to the design of Tylman of Gameren. Work was supervised by Karol Ceroni and Jan Reisner. The valuable interior décor from the baroque has survived until today. The walls and the ceiling are covered with splendid polychromies by Michelangelo Palloni. They portray scenes from the lives of Virgin Mary and Christ, as well as many images of saints and Church Fathers. The stunning richness of the paintings, as well depicting the dog-

mas denied by the Protestants, was meant as a tool in the fight against the Reformation. In the vestry, there is a gallery of portraits of Węgrów owners and church dignitaries. The legendary mirror which belonged to Master Twardowski (a Polish folklore character) also hangs here. As people say, the sorcerer used a metal mirror to summon and show to King Sigmund Augustus the ghost of his beloved wife Barbara Radziwiłł.

The baroque church of St Peter of Alcantara and Antoni Padewski, originally a part of the Order of the Reformati monastery complex, does not yield to the parish church in splendour. The church was erected between 1693 and 1706, most probably also to the design of Tylman of Gameren. As in the parish church, the interior is decorated with rich polychromies by Michelangelo Palloni. In the dome – at the crossing of the nave and transept – delights one of

the most outstanding works of the painter, showing Doomsday. Dripping with gold, the epitaph of Jan Krasieński, set over the entrance to the chapel, also draws the attention of visitors.

Throughout the year, the extensive main square of Węgrów is a site of many interesting events. In June, enthusiasts of folklore are attracted to the festival of wedding ceremonies visited by folk groups from all over Poland and from abroad. Their lively performances run in parallel to the handicraft fair. Visitors have a chance to buy ready-made products, but also observe how they are made, and try their own hand under the tutelage of the craft master. On the third Sunday of September in Węgrów, the Bread Fair takes place. It is to promote ceremonies connected with the harvest coming home. Competitions for the tastiest country-style bread and the most beautiful har-

vest home wreath are even more colourful due to the accompanying performances of folk groups and the folk handicraft fair. We recommend visiting Węgrów in the week preceding Palm Sunday. Your buys from the Easter Fair, such as palms, painted eggs and delicacies will be a wonderful decoration for your Easter table.

www.wegrow.com.pl

WYSZKÓW NEAR WĘGRÓW

Younger Brother of Węgrów

A monumental church in Wyszaków can be seen from a distance of several kilometres. This late-baroque church was founded in 1788 by Aleksander Maciej Ossoliński, the Great Sword-bearer of Lithuania. The triple facade of the church brings unavoidable associations with the parish church in nearby Węgrów. The uniform classical interior décor, dating back to the end of the 18th c. has survived until today. The paintings inside are the works of the most famous regional artists of their time, such as Szymon Czechowicz and Franciszek Smuglewicz.

DOBRE

Portraits and Fairy Tales

While travelling between Węgrów and Warsaw, it is worth stopping in Dobrze. In the nearby village of Makowiec, a great sculptor, Konstanty Laszczka (1865-1956) was born. The attention of the tourists that travel along the Węgrów road will be attracted to a commemorative boulevard located in the place where the artist's family house used to stand many years ago. In the Exhibition Room in the Gmina Centre of Culture in Dobrze, you can see an interesting collection of Konstanty Laszczka's works. The artist, famous mainly for his sculptured portraits, was also keen on working on fantasy or fairy-tale themes.

Izba Pamięci Konstantego Laszczki
(Konstanty Laszczka's Exhibition Room)
ul. Kilińskiego 1a, tel. 025 7571520

CEGLÓW

Unusual Altar

It is said that the Polish name of the town comes from the brickyard which produced bricks for a local church (in Polish the root of the name "cegła" means "brick"). Even if it is only a legend, it proves how deeply the church is stamped on the local history. The Gothic church comes from the 16th c. Visitors' attention is drawn to circular buttresses, typical of Mazovia. In the 18th c., the church became enriched with mannerist gables of the chancel and the sacristy, portals, and the sacristy decorations. We recommend having a closer look at the epitaph set in the external wall of the chancel. This late-Renaissance plaque commemorates Stanisław Oczko, father of Wojciech Oczko, a famous physician of King Stephen Bathory. Inside, you will find

a valuable altar with late-Gothic sculptures and reliefs. A baroque setting contains the fragments of the Gothic triptych of the great altar of the collegiate church in Warsaw. The sculptures were transferred to Ceglów following the order of the Warsaw chapter, probably in the early 17th c. The central panel depicts the Mother of God with baby Jesus and the saints: St John the Baptist and St Stanislaus, while the four square side sections depict the images of St Dorothy, St Margaret, St Catherine and St Barbara. The late-Gothic sculptures decorate also the roof beam.

MIŃSK MAZOWIECKI

The Uhlans' City

This busy city located at the main route leading from Warsaw eastwards has existed for over six hundred years, yet its' most intense development fell in the 19th c., when it became an important centre of transport and industry. The centre of Mińsk is marked with the towers of a parish church that owes its present shape to the reconstruction to the design of Józef Pius Dziekoński between 1908 and 1912. In the right nave of the church, you will find the image of St Mary of the Angels known as the "Heller's Virgin Mary". In front of this painting, in August 1920, prayed General Joseph Heller, one of the commanders in the Polish- Bolshevik war.

In the vicinity of church, in a beautiful landscape park on the Srebrna river stands the palace of the Dernałowicz family. This baroque and classical building is remarkable for its intermediate storey.

Mińsk Mazowiecki is a city with a long military tradition. Between 1921 and 1939, the city was a station for the 7th Regiment of Lublin Uhlans. The memorabilia related to this elitist unit, which was decorated for their bravery in the War of 1920 with the Order of Military Virtue, are exhibited in the small Museum of the 7th Regiment of Lublin Uhlans. Here you can see paintings, original documents, photographs, as well as weaponry, uniforms and decorations.

Muzeum 7. Pułku Ułanów Lubelskich
(Museum of the 7th Regiment of Lublin Uhlans)
ul. gen. K. Sosnkowskiego 4, tel. 025 7593113
www.minsk-maz.pl

WOŁOMIN

House on the Meadows

A modest, wooden house located on a small rise between Wołomin and Kobyłka went down in the history of Polish literature. It is the birthplace of Zofia Nałkowska who also spent most of her life here. It was in Wołomin where she wrote her famous novels "Granica" (*The Borderline*) and "Romans" Teresy Hennert (*Teresa Hennert's Romance*). The themes taken from the family house run through many of Nałkowska's works, but it became immortalised in the novel "Dom nad Łąkami" (*House on the Meadows*).

The house was built at the end of the 19th c. by the writer's father, Waclaw Nałkowski. He was an outstanding geographer and educator, and at the same time a very sociable person who managed to gather a circle of

scholars, writers and journalists, thus turning the House on the Meadows into a literary salon.

These traditions are continued by the Museum of Zofia and Waclaw Nałkowski, created in 1992. In the interiors open to the public, it is possible to see numerous memorabilia related to the work and life of the inhabitants of the House on the Meadows or listen to the concert or the lecture.

Dom nad Łąkami (*House on the Meadows*)
ul. Nałkowskiego 17, tel. 022 786 22 19

KOBYŁKA

Painted Splendour

A parish church of the Holy Trinity is considered to be one of the most splendid baroque structures in Mazovia. The church, founded by Bishop Marcin Załuski, was erected in 1740 to the design of Guido Antonio Longhi. The impressive two-tower facade is only an announcement of the splendour of the inside. The walls of the church are covered with splendid, illusionist paintings. Architectural details painted on the walls make it look larger than it really is. The clouds and the blue sky surrounding the scene of the Triumph and Adoration of the Eucharist on the ceiling create the impression of looking straight into heaven. Decorations in the central nave and the chancel were made in 1742 by Grzegorz Łodziński.

The remaining fragments are more recent, but the whole makes for a coherent composition. Additional ornamentation of the church comprises rich, rococo furnishings from the second half of the 18th c.

OSSÓW

Miracle at the Vistula

The Battle of Warsaw on the north-eastern outskirts of Warsaw between 12th and 17th August 1920 is considered by historians to be one of the most important breakthroughs in the history of modern Europe. The dramatic battles which ended with the Polish victory went down in history under the name of the "Miracle at the Vistula".

Some of the most dramatic scenes of the battle took place near Ossów. On 14th August 1920, at dawn, the Soviets managed to break the Polish defence. The situation was reversed only after the attack of the 1st Battalion of the 236th Infantry Regiment, which included pupils and students. It was then that the Rev. Ignacy Skorupka, a young chaplain of the regiment was killed. The Poles' incredible heroism

is commemorated with a chapel and a cemetery on the south bank of the Długa river. "Should we forget them, then you God forget about us" reads the inscription on the chapel.

It seems that on every anniversary of the battle, the history is revived again. You do not have to be an enthusiast of military to watch in awe the Open Championship of Cavalry Units. The participants include almost a hundred uhlans, light cavalymen and mounted riflemen representing 25 sections of the army, societies and groups that cultivate traditions of the Polish cavalry. They wear uniforms of the military units that they represent as well as characteristic regimental colours. The programme includes a drill and jousting competition, and an obstacle race. Another event which attracts huge crowds is the re-enactment of the battle of Ossów. More than one hundred participants give passionate re-enactment performances.

RADZYMIN

Following the Traces of the Polish-Bolshevik War

Radzymin near Warsaw was a scene of some tough fights during the Battle of Warsaw (12th -17th August 1920). The city changed hands a number of times and ended up completely destroyed. In the battle, 310 Polish soldiers perished, and 1000 were reported missing. The graves of the fallen and a commemorative chapel can be found at the cemetery at ul. Warszawska. Every anniversary of the battle is celebrated in Radzymin in a particularly solemn way. The celebrations begin in the first week of August. Not all events are connected directly with the military tradition. The Signal Horn Player and Hunting Music Competition, concerts of classical music and various sports competitions constitute just a fraction of the events that take place in August in Radzymin.

SULEJÓWEK

Piłsudski's Favourite Place

The exclusive residential locality near Warsaw has a special place in Polish history. Between 1922 and 1926 Sulejówek was a dwelling place of Józef Piłsudski. Among the fathers of the 2nd Republic of Poland (1918-1945) who had connections with Sulejówek were Jędrzej Moraczewski and Ignacy Paderewski. The Marshal's favourite villa, with the charming name "Milusin" (the Polish name is related to the word "cute"), was a gift of his soldiers. The appearance of the building, erected to the design of Kazimierz Skórewicz, refers to the traditional Polish small manor house. It was here that the plans for the May 1926 Coup d'État were prepared. In 2000, the house was given back to the Piłsudski family. They are currently arranging

a museum there, so the place is open to visitors only occasionally. On the anniversary of the date when the house was handed over to Piłsudski (13th June), Józef Piłsudski's Day is organised in Sulejówek. Festive celebrations are also organised on Independence Day, 11th November.

www.sulejowek.pl

GÓRASZKA

Aerial Pirouettes

Over the second weekend of June, the local airport is a meeting place for thousands of aviation enthusiasts. The international aviation picnic organised by the "Polskie Orły" (*Polish Eagles*) foundation is an opportunity to see the adrenaline-raising aerobatic displays of the best pilots in the world. During the event you can also take a plane trip or see an exhibition of aeronautical machinery. Other attractions are also available.

OTWOCK

"Świdermeier" and Pines

The town hidden in the forests on the Świder river assumed its current appearance in the second half of the 19th c., when the Vistula railway reached Otwock. A gentle microclimate and a huge number of sunny days, as well as the therapeutic properties of the local pine forests contributed to the decision to establish a fashionable health and summer resort here. Among the admirers of Otwock, you will find the well-known illustrator Michał Elwiro Andriolli. In 1880 he built the first villas for holiday makers on the Świder river; the design of these buildings was inspired by the architecture of health resorts in the Alps and the Black Forest (*Schwarzwald*) as well as Russian dachas. A characteristic style of

wooden, richly adorned buildings is often humorously referred to as "świdermeier". The most interesting examples can be seen in the residential district of Świder, especially at ul. Kołtątaja and Mickiewicza.

On the southern outskirts of the town, in the residential district of Soplicowo, you will find the Museum of the Otwock Region. Looking at old pictures, you will see how the town used to look. Special attention should be paid to a rich collection of Judaica and interesting ethnographic collections.

After a visit to the museum, you can walk and see a Jewish cemetery hidden in the nearby forest. Before the Second World War, Jews had made up three quarters of the permanent population and the majority of holiday makers. The ghetto in Otwock was established in 1940 and liquidated two years later. The cemetery is one of

the few remnants of the Jewish community. It should be mentioned here that numerous inscriptions carved on the stone tombstones are in Polish.

Muzeum Ziemi Otwockiej
(Museum of the Otwock Region)
ul. Narutowicza 2, tel. 022 7881545
www.otwock.pl

KARCZEW

Help the Capital City

The most precious historical monument of this small town in the Vistula river valley is a late-baroque church of St Vitus erected between 1732 and 1737. The design of the church is attributed to Jakub Fontana, and it was founded by Grand Marshall of the Crown Franciszek Bieliński. The erection preserved a chapel of the Karczewskis of 1541, which had been originally built as an extension to the previous wooden church. In the inside, our attention is drawn to a baroque boat-shaped pulpit. The valuable furnishings include two paintings by Michał Elwiro Andriolli, depicting Christ in the tomb and St Casimir. Most probably, the same author designed the richly ornamented door. The external wall supports

the Renaissance epitaph of Melchior Walbach of 1595. Next to the church, there is a classical belfry from the turn of the 18th century.

Since the 18th c., Karczew has been known for large cattle markets as well as for manufacturing of excellent cold cooked meat. During the Nazi occupation, the local slaughter houses and meat processing plants were of no small importance in sustaining the starving inhabitants of Warsaw. Slaughtering and meat processing were done under the cover of darkness and put the lives of those who did it at great risk. In the morning, the narrow-gauge railway was full of smugglers who set off towards Warsaw. A reminder of the days of yore is a colourful car of the non-existent narrow gauge railway standing at one of intersections.



OTWOCK WIELKI

Noblemen's Residence

The palace from the end of the 17th c. is one of the most precious of baroque residences in Poland. The structure was probably designed by Tylman of Gameren. The palace, surrounded by a picturesque landscape park, stands on an artificial island. Until the end of the 18th c. it had been the residence of the Bieliński family. For example, Otwock Wielki was a residence of Grand Marshall of the Crown Franciszek Bieliński who became the patron of the main street of Warsaw (Marszałkowska, Marshal Street) for his services in development of the Polish capital city. To his order, in 1757, Jakub Fontana added side towers to the palace. Since 1827 to the First World War, the palace had been looked after by the merchant family of Kurtz. Devas-

tated in the turmoil of war, the palace was brought to life as late as in the People's Poland times. Formerly a noblemen's residence, it became a centre for young female offenders and then adapted for government purposes and then closed. At the time of martial law (1981-1983), Otwock Wielki was a place of internment for Lech Wałęsa. Since 2005 this exceptional historical monument has been opened to the public. In the Museum of Interior Decoration, a chapter of the National Museum in Warsaw, we can admire a rich collection of antique pieces of furniture and bric-a-bracs, as well as original wall paintings and stucco.

Muzeum Wnętrz w Otwocku Wielkim
(*Museum of Interior Decoration in Otwock Wielki*)

Karczew, ul. Zamkowa 49,
tel. 022 7694305, 022 7808001

www.mnw.art.pl/oddzialyMNV/otwock

KOŁBIEL

In the Quest for Tradition

Today a large village, between 1522 and 1869 Kołbiel had a town charter. A memento of those times is the spatial arrangement of the locality, with a large trapezoid market square. The towers of the neo-Gothic church of the Holy Trinity overlook the place. The red-bricked temple was erected at the end of the 19th c. to the design of Józef Pius Dziekoński. The interior furnishings come from the older church. Their most valuable elements include the late-Renaissance altar from the first half of the 17th c. and a rococo baptismal font from the second half of the 18th c. Visitors' attention is also drawn to the homespun clothes that decorate the altar. These fabrics, typical of the Kołbiel area, depict narrow stripes on a plain background. On church holidays in Kołbiel, especially during the Corpus Christi procession, you can still see local women wearing traditional dresses with skirts of such fabrics.

DŁUŻEW

Artists' Haunt

The residence of the Dłużewski family was designed by a well-known architect Jan Heurich the Younger and erected between 1901 and 1902. His work received a prize on the "Polish Manor" exhibition. The architecture of the building refers to traditional manor houses. Since 1978 it has housed the Artists' Retreat of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. The Dłużew manor is open not only to professionals. Every person who cherishes quietness and beauty of the scenery can enjoy some rest here and pursue their artistic interests participating in a plein-air workshop.

Dom Pracy Twórczej Akademii Sztuk

Pięknych w Warszawie

(Artists' Retreat of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts)

tel. 025 7992583



MARIAŃSKIE PORZECZE

Not Only For Pilgrims

In a small hamlet on the edge of the forest, you can find one of the most original wooden churches in Mazovia. This baroque temple was raised in 1776 as a foundation of Jan Lasocki, a cup-bearer of Łuków. The proprietors are the Marians. The facade of this three-nave church of log construction is decorated with two towers. Inside, you will be enraptured by the illusionist late 18th c. polychromy by Father Jan Niezabitowski. On the days of Marian celebrations, Mariańskie Porzecze is visited by a number of pilgrims attracted by the famous miraculous painting of Our Lady of Goźlin.

MACIEJOWICE

The Last Battle of the Kościuszko Insurrection of 1794

The most important date in the history of Maciejowice is 10th October 1794, when it became the stage of the last great battle of the Kościuszko Insurrection. The Polish troops comprised approximately 10,500 soldiers; while the Russian army, two thousand more. The battle began in the early morning, and the decisive attack of the enemy took place around noon. The clash ended up with a total defeat of the Poles. As many as 3,500 of Kościuszko's soldiers were killed, and he, with 2,000 of the wounded, was taken prisoner.

The centre of Maciejowice is marked with a large, rectangular market with

a monument commemorating the battle. The simply-shaped, yet striking monument was designed by Mieczysław Welter.

The battle plans and memorabilia are exhibited in the museum located in the classical town hall. An exceptional exhibit is a bed head of the wooden bed where, as people say, the wounded Commander-in-Chief was put.

In Maciejowice, memories of Kościuszko are still alive. Before every anniversary of the battle, a hike is organised to commemorate Kościuszko.

Muzeum im. Tadeusza Kościuszki
(*Museum of Tadeusz Kościuszko*)

Rynek 2, tel. 025 6825804
www.maciejowice.pl



PODZAMCZE

Following the Traces of Tadeusz Kościuszko

Approximately 3 km from Maciejowice, you will find a palace which served as Tadeusz Kościuszko's headquarters during the battle of Maciejowice. Actually, the building that you can see now is not the same building, as the original one was completely destroyed in 1794. Yet, on the foundations of the old structure Count Stanisław Zamoyski built a new residence in the early 19th c. This classical palace designed by Fryderyk Albert Lessel was rebuilt in the second half of the 19th c. by Ksawery Makowski. The stone on the lawn in front of the building commemorates the place where the commander-in-chief had his wounds dressed. The lime trees surround-

ing the stone are suckers of the non-extant tree under which Kościuszko was placed. The palace is surrounded by a beautiful landscape park descending slightly and picturesquely towards the Okrzejka river.

2 km away from Podzamcze, on the right side of the road to Sobolew, you can see the remains of "Kościuszko's pine tree", safe under a small roof. As the legend has it, under this tree the commander-in-chief rested before the battle.

GÓRZNO

Exceptional Granary

Most probably, the local one-storey manor was erected at the turn of the 17th century. Next to the manor, the 19th c. outhouse is located. The neo-Gothic building is a successful imitation of a mediaeval castle. The most precious historical monument of Górzno is a granary, being a part of the manor complex. This two-storey building of log construction is notable for its external gallery. Throughout Poland, you will find only a couple of such masterpieces of wooden architecture.

ŻELECHÓW

Charm of the Country

This small town lost among the fields on the edge of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship has managed to preserve the specific atmosphere of the "back of beyond". Although in Żelechów you will not find any particularly valuable historical monuments, it is still worth having a walk around the marketplace and experience the atmosphere which is gone forever elsewhere. In the very centre of the extensive market, there is the 19th c. classical town hall with a cloth hall. The frontages, in turn, attract with wooden houses typical of a Polish small town, with some of them dating back to the 19th c. Close by the market place there is a large church of the Annunciation. The church was erected at the turn

of the 17th and 18th century and rebuilt in the neo-baroque style in the 19th c. The valuable interior décor from the baroque survived until today.