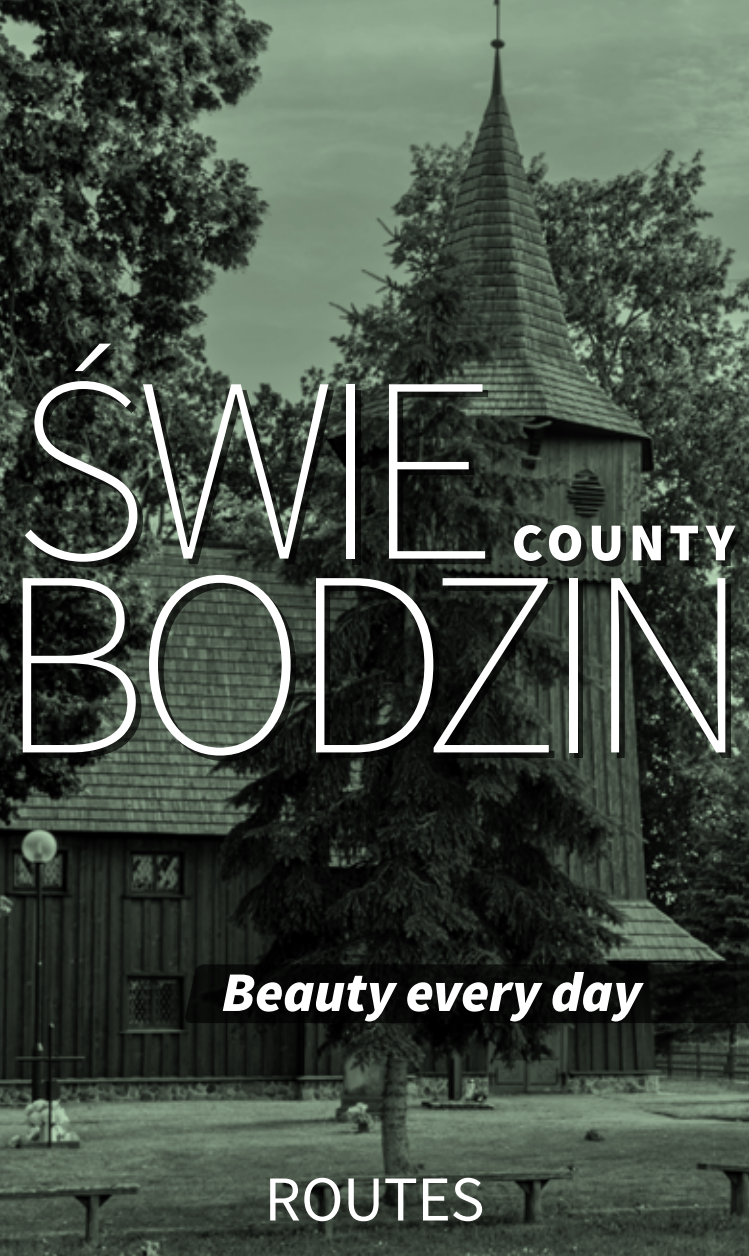




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Foreword

The history of the Świebodzin Land can be explored through the prism of its historic buildings and localities, which have borne witness to political, historical, and social transformations. We invite you to visit a dozen or so sites in our region to rediscover the fascinating stories of the past.



The Political-Military Route

1. THE CASTLE IN ŚWIEBODZIN

Over the centuries of its history, the castle in Świebodzin bore witness to invasions by Hungarians and... Poles. In January 1489, the town and castle of Świebodzin were besieged by the so-called Black Army, the elite mercenary forces in the service of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. The siege, lasting several days, ended with the town's capitulation and ultimately brought to a close the period of rebellion by the local ruler John II of Żagań against the Hungarian monarch. Several centuries later, during the Great Northern War (1700–1721), a detachment of Polish cavalry under the command of Standard-Bearer Adam Śmigieński burst into Świebodzin — then under Habsburg rule — in 1707. After a week-long bivouac in the vicinity of the castle and numerous requisitions, Śmigieński's soldiers departed Świebodzin, forestalling a revolt by the townspeople and the relief force that was presumably being assembled.

2. THE CLOTHIER MONUMENT

Świebodzin cloth was a commodity known and offered in both the east and west of Europe. The statue of a master clothier, erected not far from the town hall, recalls the golden age of Świebodzin's finest export product, mentioned — among other places — in Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel *With Fire and Sword*.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



Wikipedia

3. THE CASTLE IN ŁAGÓW

The castle in Łagów, associated with the presence of the Knights Hospitaller, also had its episode during the Swedish Deluge in the mid-17th century. Several thousand strong forces of the Polish *levée en masse*, under the command of Voivode Jan Piotr Opaliński, entered the lands of the Elector of Brandenburg — then allied with the Swedes — and seized the castle in Łagów for a period of several months.

4. NIEKARZYN

The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) ultimately decided the fate of Silesia and, with it, that of Świebodzin, which had already been forcibly incorporated into Prussia in 1740. One of the larger engagements of the Seven Years' War in our area was the Battle of Kije, where a Prussian observation corps was defeated by Russian forces. In the closing stage of the battle, the buildings of nearby Niekarzyn were burned down. Depending on the historiography, the Battle of Kije is also referred to as the Battle of Pałck or the Battle of Sulechów.

5. THE EMILIA SZCZANIECKA BENCH IN SZCZANIEC

In the centre of Szczaniec we find a bench with a figure of Emilia Szczaniecka of the Ossoria coat of arms, a Polish aristocrat and philanthropist who rendered great service during our national uprisings of the 19th century. Her example proved that the struggle for independence is not only a matter of battles and wars. No less important is the medical aid given to the wounded and the needy, as well as “everyday” patriotic and underground activity.



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Following the Trail of Churches and Religion

1. THE CHRIST THE KING MONUMENT

Świebodzin's most recognisable symbol worldwide has become the Christ the King Monument, which was consecrated on the southern outskirts of the town at the end of November 2010. The monumental figure stands 33 metres tall, with an additional crown measuring 3 metres in height, set atop a mound rising to 16.5 metres. The construction of the Monument, overseen by Monsignor Sylwester Zawadzki, was carried out over a period of five years, i.e. from 2005. Work on such an extraordinary figure was frequently interrupted and hampered by numerous obstacles; ultimately, however, after 2010 the Christ the King Monument became the centre of a pilgrimage movement on an unprecedented scale.



Wikipedia

2. THE SANCTUARY OF DIVINE MERCY

The youngest of the three Świebodzin parishes was formally established in 1987. Work on the church commenced in 1994, and after five years the new Świebodzin church was officially erected. In 2008 the church became the diocesan Sanctuary of Divine Mercy. Both towers of the church draw the eye, symbolising the thousand-year tradition of the Polish Church. The southern tower evokes the “soaring” architecture of the Gothic style, whilst the northern one reflects the character of Greek Catholic and Uniate churches.



Wikipedia

3. THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL IN ŚWIEBODZIN

The oldest town church, dating from the 15th century, was a silent witness to all the events in the town's history. For centuries, as the local religious centre, it unified the Catholic minority. It acquired its new, Neo-Gothic appearance in the mid-19th century following a thorough renovation. Owing to its size, it is sometimes referred to by tourists as a "cathedral".



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin

4. THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF POLAND IN ŚWIEBODZIN



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The church, built at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, was the pride of the local Protestant majority. The previously existing Lutheran church, built using the timber-framed (half-timbered) method, was dismantled, and thanks, among other things, to support from the imperial court in Berlin, a new, brick-built church was erected. After 1945, as a place of worship subordinate to the Parish of St Michael the Archangel, it was commonly referred to as the "small church" or the "school church". Since 1981

it has been the centre of the Parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Poland.

5. THE MONASTIC COMPLEX OF THE CISTERCIAN ABBEY IN GOŚCIKOWO-PARADYŻ

Situated in the border region, the Cistercian monastery was one of the region's largest landowners during the medieval era. From the mid-16th century onwards, Poles served at the head of its governing body. After a series of wars and conflicts in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was rebuilt. Under Prussian rule the monastery was dissolved and a teachers' training seminary was established in its place. Today the former Cistercian monastery functions as the seat of the Higher Seminary of the Diocese of Zielona Góra–Gorzów.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin

6. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES SIMON AND JUDE THADDEUS IN KOSIECZYN

A unique wooden church dating from the closing years of the 14th century. Kosieczyn itself appears in historical records around the year 1334. It is regarded as the oldest wooden church in Poland in which Holy Mass has been celebrated in the Catholic rite for over 600 years.



Wikipedia



The Railway Route

1. THE RAILWAY STATION IN ŚWIEBODZIN

A rail connection linking Świebodzin with Berlin and Poznań became a reality in 1870 as part of the March–Poznań Railway (Märkisch-Posener Eisenbahn). This brought a revolution in the system of exporting goods from the town and importing commodities into Świebodzin and the region. Henceforth, three trains departed from Świebodzin each day in both the westerly and easterly directions: a passenger train, an express train, and a mixed goods-and-passenger train. In 1919 a new line was built connecting neighbouring Sulechów with Świebodzin, and earlier, in 1909, a connection was established between nearby Międzyrzecz and Toporów. In later times, during and after the Second World War, Adolf Hitler passed through Świebodzin in 1939 en route to Warsaw, and in 1945 Joseph Stalin journeyed through the town on his way to the Potsdam Conference.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin

2. THE RAILWAY STATION IN SZCZANIEC

The political changes on the map of Europe after the First World War also left their mark on the railway station in Szczaniec. When independent Poland emerged, the Berlin–Poznań railway line ran through the territories of both Poland and Germany. It became necessary to establish at least a temporary border and customs station on the German side. By virtue of this concept, in the early 1920s Szczaniec became a kind of “seasonal” border station.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin

3. THE TOWN AND RAILWAY STATION IN ZBĄSZYNEK

In 1923 construction began on a new town together with its railway station, which was already a permanent border and customs point. Thus Zbąszynek (German: Neu Bentschen) was born. It was designed according to the garden city concept, where a regular street layout is combined with comfortable detached houses set in large gardens. During the Second World War it was an important railway junction in the German railway system. Zbąszynek only received its town charter in 1945. For a time it functioned within the Polish administration as “Nowy Zbąszyń”.



Collections of the Regional Museum in Świebodzin



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