

BIALYSTOK

Tourist guide



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Białystok Tourist guide

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Table of contents:

HISTORY, MONUMENTS, ARCHITECTURE

4

Outline of the history of the city	5
Bialystok of the Branicki Family	14
Bialystok of manufacturers	34
Traditional wooden architecture	40
Architecture of the 20th century	45
The present-day face of the city	49

THE CITY OF MANY CULTURES

56

Bialystok temples	57
Bialystok through a pilgrim's eyes	71
Tartars in Bialystok	74
Jews in Bialystok	76
Bialystok, the capital of Esperanto	80
Bialystok delicacies	83

CULTURE AND ART

86

Galleries and museums	87
Bialystok music and theatre stages	92
Cyclical cultural events	94

BIALYSTOK FOR ACTIVE PEOPLE

96

Sport and recreation	97
Green Bialystok	101

THE ENVIRONS OF BIALYSTOK

104

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

110

Tourist information points	111
Shops with souvenirs	111
Accommodations	112
Where to eat	114



HISTORY • MONUMENTS ARCHITECTURE

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

BEGINNINGS OF THE SETTLEMENT

The legendary beginnings of Białystok date back to the 14th century and are connected with Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, grandfather of Władysław II Jagiełło. The prince, just like his royal grandson, loved hunting. During one of the frantic chases after animals, he wandered away from human habitations and had to spend the night in a forest. In the morning he got captivated by the view of the beautiful surroundings, especially the small but fast-flowing river from which he drew some water. Soon, in a place that enchanted Gediminas called Biały Stok (meaning "a clear stream"), a castle-town was built.

We will never know where Giedymin set up his campsite (especially that the legend, although charming, is historically inconceivable), but thanks to archaeological excavations we know people settled there much earlier - in prehistoric times. The Mesolithic hunters, in pursuit of herds of animals, camped on the banks of the Biała river, and about 5,000 years ago the first farmers appeared in this area. The oldest permanent settlement within the boundaries of present-day Białystok functioned in the area of the current courtyard of the Branicki Palace between the 3rd and 4th century of our era. More than 1000 years later, in the same place, the history of the city began.

The town called Białystok was mentioned for the first time in the document from 1514, but Białystok estates were established much earlier - probably in the 1530s. Their first owner was Jakub Raczko Tabutowicz, son of a Lithuanian boyar. The estate was owned by his descendants until the middle of the 16th century. Raczko family built a wooden mansion located on the site of today's fore courtyard of Branickis' palace and they probably founded the first church in Białystok.



An artistic vision of the Swan Coat of Arms on a townhouse at Kościuszko Square. The Swan Coat of Arms featured on the seal of the first owners of Białystok estates, photo by A. Tarasewicz

TIMES OF WIESIOŁOWSKI FAMILY

After the death of the last member of the Raczkowicz family, Mikołaj Bakalarz, the estates were for a short time owned by his wife, Katarzyna neé Wołłowicz. In 1547, she signed them over to her second husband, Piotr Wiesiołowski. He was a courtier of the last Jagiellons and a friend of Sigismund II Augustus. Apparently, he saved the king's life during a hunt - using his extraordinary strength, he 'impaled on his javelin a bison' that was speeding towards the monarch.



Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary funded by Piotr Wiesiołowski, photo by A. Grabowski

The next owner of the property was his son, Peter the younger - the Court Marshal of Lithuania. He went down in the history of the city as the founder of the oldest preserved building - the Białystok church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the time when Piotr Wiesiołowski managed the estates, they became part of another state. In 1569, the king Sigismund II Augustus incorporated Podlasie into the Crown. Through the town (along today's Skorupska

and Daleka streets), ran the border between the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This situation lasted until 1795.

After the death of Piotr in 1621, the estate was taken over by Krzysztof Wiesiołowski, the great Lithuanian marshal. Along with his wife - Aleksandra neé Sobieski (aunt of King Jan III) - they endowed churches and hospitals located in their estates, also in Białystok. After the death of Krzysztof who was childless, the Białystok estates were according to his will incorporated into the Tykocin domain. They became part of the property of the local fortress and seminary for war veterans, and after the death of Aleksandra were transferred to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. At that time, there already existed a grandiose residence in Białystok, the main building of which was a brick manor house, referred to in the sources as the tenement.

In 1661, the Sejm handed over the Tykocin and Białystok estates to Stefan Czarniecki as a reward for his services in fighting the Swedes. In the same year, King John II Casimir allowed the Białystok vicar to conduct free trade in church property, which led to the creation of a triangular marketplace. This shape resulted from the alignment of intersecting routes to Suraż, Choroszcz and Wasilków. We can easily detect it in today's layout of Kościuszko Square. It was the first step on the way to the creation of the city.



The triangular market in Białystok, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN DURING BRANICKIS' TIMES

Czarniecki himself never lived in Białystok. He handed over the estate to his daughter, Katarzyna Aleksander, and 20 years later, she passed it on to her son, Stefan Mikołaj, whom she had with her husband, Jan Klemens Branicki of the Gryfin coat of arms. In this way, in the castle-town on the banks of the Biała river, appeared a dynasty that inscribed itself most prominently the history of the town.

Stefan Mikołaj - participant of the battle of Vienna, master of the royal household and voivode of Podlasie - transferred the family residence from Branice in Lesser Poland to Białystok. For the needs of his own residence, he began rebuilding the Wiesiołowski mansion. To this end, he employed an outstanding architect, Tylman of Gameren. At the same time, in 1692, he ensured the location of the town, that is, granting it Magdeburg rights by King John III Sobieski. The Białystok town privileges were confirmed by documents issued by Augustus III of Poland, in 1749, and then in 1760.

The works on enlarging the town and the residence were continued and expanded on a large scale by the son of Stefan Mikołaj and Katarzyna Scholastyka neé Sapieha, Jan Klemens Branicki, who became one of the most influential people in the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He held the office of the royal commander-in-chief. He was the voivode of Krakow and - as a consequence - the first senator of the Commonwealth. In the last election he was a candidate for the royal throne. During his rule, Białystok became one of the most important centres on the political and cultural map of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The royal commander-in-chief's court was visited not only by magnates, outstanding artists and foreign emissaries, but also by crowned heads, and in particular by Branicki's brother-in-law, Stanisław II Augustus.



Jan Klemens Branicki,
from the collection
of the Podlasie
Museum in Białystok

Jan Klemens was famous for his excellent taste and he converted Białystok in true Polish Versailles. The most renowned architects and artists worked on the extension of the residence. Many valuable works of art and handicraft were collected in the palace. The gardens were breath-taking. There

was a theatre with its own ballet and orchestra. The first military school in Poland was opened in the town.

The commander-in-chief cared a lot about the town development. He funded the construction of representative buildings, interfered in the urban layout. He drafted in craftsmen to settle in Białystok and work for the needs of the court, granted them guild privileges. He organized markets and fairs. The eighteenth-century Białystok was well-known for its good organization, cleanliness and beauty.

After the death of the commander-in-chief in 1771, the town and the palace became the property of his wife. Izabela neé PoniatoŹska managed the estates until 1808. She was remembered by the inhabitants as a caring hostess, founder of the KEN school and an innovative Institute of Obstetrics. She was a witness to the events leading to the downfall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the takeover of Białystok region by Prussia in the Third Partition.



Izabela Branicka
neé PoniatoŹska,
from the collection of
the Podlasie Museum
in Białystok

The invaders conquered the town in January 1796 and made it the capital of the region that became part of New East Prussia. Białystok became the location of many offices and a military garrison. At that time, about 5,000 people lived in the town. In 1802, both the town and the palace and garden complex were sold to the Prussian authorities. Izabela stayed on. As a resident she lived to see another change of borders.

In 1807, under the Treaty of TylŹa, Napoleon, who created the Duchy of Warsaw, handed over the Białystok district to the tsar. From then on, the town was part of the Russian Empire. This situation remained until Poland regained its independence.

MANCHESTER OF THE NORTH

The 19th century was a period in which Bialystok underwent a huge metamorphosis. From the baroque, neat little town, it became the thriving manufacturing centre - a Manchester of the North. It had a population of almost 100,000. After the November Uprising, the Russians, as part of the repressions, introduced a customs border between the Kingdom of Poland and the Empire. Many industrialists from Congress Poland began to transfer their businesses to Podlasie. Economic repression of the tsarist authorities paradoxically contributed to the rapid development of Bialystok. In the second half of the nineteenth century, textile factories sprung up like mushrooms. Most of them were small and employed a few or a dozen or so employees. With time, plants employing several hundred people began to operate in the city. Bialystok became the largest industrial centre in the western governorates of Russia. Podlasie products could be found throughout the Empire, even in the Far East.

With the development of the textile industry, the population of the city grew rapidly. Not only workers were settling in Bialystok. New opportunities attracted entrepreneurial manufacturers, often of German origin.

In this way, the mosaic of nationalities and religions of the city's inhabitants became even more enriched. Apart from Poles, Jews, Russians and Germans, there were also Belarusians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians living in the city. Followers of Judaism and Islam lived alongside Roman Catholics, members of the Orthodox church and Evangelicals. No wonder that it was in this melting



The sculpture of Mercury from Becker's factory, which became a symbol of Bialystok industrial development, photo by A. Tarasewicz



Tenement house at św. Rocha Street from the beginning of the 20th century, photo by A. Tarasewicz

pot of cultures that the idea of creating a single, transnational language came into being. Ludwik Zamenhof, creator of Esperanto, was born in Białystok in 1859. In that city he spent the years of childhood and early adolescence, and there he also began to work on his lifework.

An important impulse for the development of the city was the construction of railway lines. The first of them, the Warsaw-Petersburg line, crossed Białystok in 1862. From this period comes the historic railway station which has been a beautiful city landmark for over 150 years.

THE DIFFICULT 20TH CENTURY

The development of the textile industry was stopped by the military actions of the First World War. In 1915, Russians withdrew from Białystok, taking with them the equipment of most factories and destroying objects of strategic importance. Russian airships stationed in the Pietrasze Forest in Białystok disappeared from the sky. The German occupation began, lasting for over three years, until February 19, 1919. Białystok was a key location on the rail route by which German soldiers departed from the Eastern front. For this reason the city celebrated Poland's regained independence a few months after other Polish cities.

In the interwar period, Białystok became the capital of the province which contributed to the rapid development of the city. From this period come interesting modernist monuments, including the widely appreciated St. Roch's Church. The downtown gained a metropolitan character thanks to the new administrative buildings. Wonderful green boulevards were created. The high society was attracted by the



St. Roch's Church,
photo by A. Grabowski

Ritz hotel. Białystok residents liked spending time in places serving Macedonian boza and Turkish confectioneries. Yiddish could be heard on the streets just as often as Polish. All this colourful, multi-ethnic world disappeared after the outbreak of World War II.

On September 15, 1939, German troops entered Białystok and a week later handed over Podlasie to the Russians. The city became the capital of the Republic of Western Belorussia proclaimed by the occupiers. The population was very quickly subjected to Russian terror. The most tragic consequences were deportations into faraway regions of the Soviet Union, experienced by about 20,000 Białystok inhabitants.

On June 27, 1941, Germans entered Białystok. The bloody terror began on the very same day. Soon after, the occupiers created a ghetto through which about 60,000 people passed - residents of the city and nearby towns. In the summer of 1943, despite the outbreak of a heroic uprising in the ghetto, their fate was sealed. Persecution was not limited to the Jewish population; thousands of Białystok inhabitants were sent to German prisons and concentration camps. The city became encircled by a ring of mass graves.

Białystok, affected by two occupations, lost a significant part of its inhabitants and almost 80% of downtown buildings. Terribly destroyed and depopulated, it regained freedom with the entry of the Red Army on July 27, 1944. The recent occupiers turned to be the liberators, but the Białystok people clearly remembered the period of 'the first Soviet' rule. The policy of the then allies only seemingly differed from the one conducted in 1939-1941. The persecution of the independence-seeking underground began, and again Podlasie ran with blood. For a time, it was not settled which country these lands are part of. Finally, Białystok found itself within the borders of Poland.

Post-war times were a period of reconstruction and expansion of the city and the inflow of new residents. The industry developed dynamically, especially the textile industry with its long tradition. The cotton industry plant in Fasty became the showpiece of the region. At the same time, Białystok gradually became an important academic centre. The following tertiary education institutions started their activities: the Medical Academy (nowadays Medical University), University of Technology, a branch of the University of Warsaw transformed over time into an independent University of Białystok, and the Puppetry Art Department (branch of National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw).

PRESENT-DAY FACE OF THE CITY

In the 21st century, Białystok has become one of the ten largest cities in Poland. It is inhabited by over 297,000 people. It is not only the capital of the province, but also an important academic, cultural and sports centre. It gained a modern character without losing its friendly, intimate nature. Every year it is ranked among the best cities for the quality of living. The contemporary landmarks of Białystok are: the modern university campus complex at Ciołkowskiego Street, the impressive building of the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic, the city stadium and the most beautiful murals in Poland.

We encourage you to visit Białystok using the city tourist routes - you can find their description at: **odkryj.bialystok.pl**

The routes marked out in the city are:

- The Branicki family trail
- Białystok manufacturers' trail
- Bojary trail
- Wooden architecture trail
- Esperanto and multicultural trail
- Białystok temple trail



Dragon-Chicken mural, photo by A. Tarasewicz

BIALYSTOK OF THE BRANICKI FAMILY

When we look at the magnificent mock-up of the Baroque Białystok exhibited at the Historical Museum (page 88), we can clearly see that, speaking of the eighteenth-century town, the most important was the layout of the Branicki family palace and garden. It consisted of the main building of the palace, various utility buildings for the court (orangery, arsenal, etc.) and gardens with pavilions and animal enclosures, ponds and water compositions. The town with the market and the church was in a sense a functional addition to the Polish Versailles. However, apart from their residence, Jan Klemens and Izabela Branicki also invested in the development of the town. The surviving documents show that the lordly couple personally decided on many social and economic issues concerning Białystok. They took care of its



Historic city centre, photo: The Municipal Office in Białystok



Palace of Branicki Family at night, photo by K. Jakubowski

appearance, though sometimes only superficially (one of the well-known commander-in-chief's decrees concerned the obligation to brick up only the frontal walls of houses for their better appearance on the street side). Thanks to the Branicki foundation, numerous buildings were erected, which - reconstructed after the war - are still pleasing to the eyes of passers-by. Restored in homogeneous colours from the era (pale yellow and white), in the urban space they constitute clear heritage of an eminent family of 18th-century landowners.

PALACE OF BRANICKI FAMILY

1 J. Kilińskiego Street

History

The beginnings of the court in this place date back to the 15th century, when extensive property on the Biała River was given to Jakub Raczko Tabutowicz of the Swan coat of arms. It was one of the largest bestowals in these areas. Probably the eldest son of Jakub, Michno, commissioned the construction of a wooden mansion. In the first half of the 16th century, when the Białystok estates were owned by Wiesiołowski family of the Ogończyk coat of arms, Piotr Wiesiołowski the elder, camp commander of king Sigismund II Augustus, made Białystok his main place of residence. According to the design of the royal architect, Bob Bretfus, a brick fortified manor ('tenement') was erected.



The Great Gate of the Branicki Palace, photo: The Municipal Office in Białystok

When, in the second half of the 17th century, Stefan Mikołaj Branicki transferred his family residence from Branice near Krakow to Białystok, it required the transformation of the Wiesiołowski court into a more sumptuous, comfortable and functional residence. Following the new architectural trends, the baroque reconstruction was undertaken by an outstanding architect of that time, Tylman of Gameren.

The next modernization and extension of the palace and garden layout in the style taking into account the new trends in the European architecture was carried out by Stefan Mikołaj Branicki's son, Jan Kazimierz, who in honour of his grandfather changed the name given to him in baptism to Jan Klemens. For the construction and renovation works he employed eminent architects, sculptors, painters and craftsmen, often associated with the royal court, including: Jan Henryk Klemm, Jakub Fontan, Pierre Ricaud de Tirregaille, Jan Chryzostom Redler, Antoni Herliczko, Sylwester Augustyn Mirys and Szymon Czechowicz. A magnificent mansion and an impressive garden were created.

The Białystok palace enchanted with its splendour and attracted notable guests not only from the country, but also from abroad. It was also visited by monarchs welcomed in accordance with the royal ceremony, including Augustus II the Strong, Augustus III of Poland and Stanisław II Augustus. The death of the commander-in-chief, the last representative of the family, ended the period of glamour of the Białystok residence, in the eighteenth century referred to as Versailles of Poland.



In the 19th century, the former Branicki family residence was sold by the heirs to Tsar Alexander I. In 1809, the Russian authorities took over the palace and made it available to military institutions. The most representative interiors were designated for tsarist apartments, the remaining part was used by officials. In 1837, Nicholas I of Russia handed over the building to the Institute of Noble Maidens. The renovation and subsequent reconstruction of the palace began, to adapt the buildings to new requirements. In August 1914, the Institute was closed due to the approaching war front, and a few months later transferred to St. Petersburg. During the evacuation, elements of furnishing of the building were taken to the Governor's Palace in Vilnius and to St. Petersburg.

In the years 1915-1918, the Bialystok residence was repeatedly looted by German and Russian troops. Everything that had any value was robbed: paintings, sculptures, artworks and even door handles.

In the interwar period, the voivodship office functioned in the palace. After the German troops entered Bialystok (in 1941), the occupants used the building for the headquarters of the Civil Administration of the Bialystok District under the command of Erich Koch.

In 1944, large parts, estimated at 70% of the building, were destroyed. Due to the unique significance of the object, a decision was made to rebuild it. After the war, there were plans to house a museum in the historic palace building, however in 1950 it was decided instead that it would be handed over to the emerging Medical Academy, nowadays functioning as the Medical University. In the 1970s, the polychrome of the main hall and staircase of the palace was made, and in the following decade the reconstruction of the palace chapel began, and the pseudo-historical décor of today's Aula Magna was created. In the years 2004-2007, the original 18th-century colours were restored to the elevations and the palace illumination arrangements were set in place.

The layout of the palace

The brick-made **Great Gate** in the form of a triumphal arch leads to the palace. It was erected around 1755 on the basis of Jan Henryk Klemm's design. Material obtained from the previous gate, which was standing between the courtyards - where currently sculptures of Hercules are located - was used for its construction. The finial of the gate tower is a representation of a griffin on a golden ball holding an



Fore and gala courtyard, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

oval shield with a gold monogram JB placed on a blue field. Below the dials there is a canopy with the image of Jupiter as a flying eagle, and in the outer façade - blind windows covered with illusionistic paintings closely imitating real windows.

The room above the passage houses the oldest clock mechanism in Białystok (with quarterly and hourly gongs), constructed over 250 years ago for Jan Klemens Branicki. Currently, in the tourist season, when the Multimedia Information Centre (page 111) operates at the gate, on weekends and public holidays you can visit the facility with a PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) guide free of charge. This is a unique opportunity to observe how this powerful metal mechanism set on a solid oak construction works, and to find out why the clock is whimsical at times and sometimes hurries or slows down.

The cobbled main avenue leads through the fore courtyard flanked on both sides with small buildings of the so-called well. The courtyard, according to a known design drawing from the mid-18th century, is planted with a double row of young Dutch lindens and decorated with reconstructed fountains in recesses.

The fore courtyard is separated from the gala courtyard by a gate guarded by sculptures of Hercules, one fighting against the dragon and the other against a multi-headed hydra. They were made of sandstone by Jan Chrysostom Riddler and they were the biggest sculptures in Białystok during Branicki times.

The main building and the two side outbuildings surrounding the **gala courtyard** create a layout resembling a horseshoe. In the 18th century there were guest rooms in the northern

outbuilding and a small stable that could accommodate 24 horses. Currently, in the right wing there is an entrance to the Museum of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy, which allows you to visit the palace with a guide (page 89).

The southern outbuilding contained household premises: kitchens, pantries, a treasury, a pharmacy and rooms for servants. A small coach house was situated next to it. Other buildings behind the kitchen outhouse also were used for domestic needs. There were: a pie making room, a bakery, a patisserie, apartments for officials and court service, fruit and flower orangery, a hothouse, stables and an armoury, where the valued Galeria Arsenal (Arsenal Gallery) now operates (page 87).

The main body of the palace is a three-story structure with a decorative balcony in the central part. In the tympanum above the main entrance, the Branicki coat of arms - Griffin - is placed, and above it - the sculpture of Hercules as Atlas bearing the globe. The façades of the palace and outbuildings are decorated with sculptures placed in recesses and on consoles. Numerous representations of Hercules and the remaining sculptural decor of the façade create an iconographic programme apotheosizing Jan Klemens Branicki as an ancient hero. The panoplies depicting elements of war equipment were supposed to indicate the main feature of the Branickis' Griffins - bravery. The roof of the palace with two Baroque helmets is encircled by an attic.



The so-called Hercules group above the entrance to the palace, photo by A. Tarasewicz

A large hall (vestibule) leads to the **interior**. During the Branicki's times, it emphasised the scale of the residence and the good taste of its owners. It was in grey and green tones with illusionistic painting on the walls. An impressive staircase, supported by sculptures of two Atlantes, led from the vestibule to the first floor. At the entrance to the staircase, a marble figure of Rotator, that is a grinder, was positioned. The author of the staircase sculptures was Jan Chryzostom Redler. On the ground floor, there were private apartments of Jan Klemens and Izabela Branicka, a dining room with sideboard rooms, bathrooms (converted in the later period into guest rooms) and Parisian rooms. Branicki's apartment was in green colours, and Izabela's in the tones of crimson.

The first floor was the representative part of the palace, the so-called piano nobile. Guests were welcomed there, receptions were held, and the most exquisite guest rooms served as bedrooms for particularly important persons visiting the Branicki family home. There were: the Great Hall (ballroom), Chinese Rooms, a Table Hall (dining room), a chapel, a billiard room, Gold Rooms and Royal Rooms. The



Vestibule, photo by I. Czajkowska

interiors were decorated with carvings, decorative mouldings and frescoes. The rooms were filled with richly decorated furniture, mirrors, sculptures and paintings. The rooms were heated with Gdansk and Saxon stoves, as well as with marble fireplaces. In the 1750s, an impressive library was established at the palace. Hundreds of works in French, Latin, Polish and Italian languages as well as maps and globes were collected in richly decorated bookcases. There was also a telescope.



Palace of the Branicki Family, view from the site of the gardens, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Currently, due to the purpose of the building as the seat of a university, the interiors have been only partially reconstructed in accordance with the eighteenth-century décor. It is worth paying attention to the preserved historic elements dating back to the Branickis' times: the sculptures of Atlantes in the staircase, the marble figure of Rotator at the entrance to the stairs, columns of black marble in the lobby, two hearth plates with coats of arms (Branickis' Griffin and Poniatowskis' Ciotek) in the reading room, fragments of old mouldings in the palace chapel and two offices - former Golden Rooms (currently the office of the rector of the Medical University), as well as residual painting décor on the walls. By deciding to take a guided tour from the Museum of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy, we get the opportunity to enter the Aula Magna, the chapel and the palace cellars. The reminders of the former Wiesiołowski court are: a gothic arch window in the garden façade, barrel vaults of the cellars, exposed fragments of foundations and a brick floor in one of the basements.

GARDENS OF THE BRANICKI FAMILY

Based on the opinions of contemporary experts on the subject, it can be said without any exaggeration that the Branickis' garden parlour is not only the most beautiful but also the best reconstructed baroque garden of the Saxon era in Poland. This was undoubtedly determined by the meticulousness with which the authors of the reconstruction sought

out written, iconographic and cartographic historical sources, as well as archaeological relics. When in doubt, they used comparative analyses of solutions preserved in other European baroque gardens. The main authors of the concept of revitalization of the garden layout were Fr. Dr Jan Nieciecki, Dr Eng. Dorota Sikora and architect Tomasz Rogala.

Commander-in-chief Branicki was developing the garden layout from the 1830s, and with time, along with the acquired status, he enriched its conceptual scheme. In accordance with the spirit of the era, the palace and garden layout of that period was arranged using mythological symbolism, discernible by all European aristocracy.

In Bialystok, Branicki planned the garden part in the spirit of the mythological garden of the Hesperides, full of gushing springs, where the golden apples of immortality grew and the gods walked around, occasionally meeting mortals. This idea was reflected in numerous fountains and large statues on both sides of the main avenue, presenting mythological gods often facing mortals they were associated with, such as Diana and Actaeon. Out of more than 200 Baroque statues and sculptures only 13 have survived to our times (before 1755, they stood in the garden, as we learn from plates attached to them). The missing sculptures in the main avenue were replaced by their copies in the 1950s. The statues have been signed, which helps to identify the conceptual programme of the composition and to decipher connections between characters.

The upper garden was set along the main viewing axis, running from the palace gate through the courtyards, the palace,



Sculptures in Branicki Gardens,
photo by K. Pierwienis

the central avenue, all the way to the stalls for animals. It consisted of eight boxwood areas, including four with fountains.

In the boxwood areas surrounded by a floral rim, figures of children impersonating mythological archetypes of zodiac signs and four elements were placed on pedestals. All this was part of an extensive astronomical

programme designed by commander-in-chief Branicki to provide walkers with intellectual entertainment.

The vegetation of the garden parlour was also not accidental - Branicki personally ordered the planting of flowers referring to mythological figures, including narcissi, anemones, hyacinths, which were planted several times a year (currently, the city also conducts spring, summer and autumn planting). In the summer, pot plants were also exhibited in boxwood areas - orange trees, whose fruits were considered to be the symbol of golden apples of immortality, and laurels, referring to the laurel wreaths symbolizing glory.

Patterns of boxwood embroidery and flower rims on the ground areas can also be admired from the palace balcony, accessible during the tourist season.

On the border of the garden parlour and the lower garden, there is another object of interest – the reconstructed Pavilion under the Eagle. This building constitutes the crowning of the Herculean contents present in the whole conceptual programme of the layout. Here we are dealing with the moment when Jupiter in the form of a golden eagle flies to Hercules lying on his deathbed, brings him a golden apple in its beak and offers immortality. Hercules lives in the abode of the gods, where he marries Hebe, the goddess of youth (the busts of both spouses are on the sides of the entrance to the pavilion). Everything is dominated by the decoration symbolising bravery and valour of the hero (white and gold composition of various types of weapons and war accessories placed on the skin of a lion), to whom Branicki wanted to be compared.



Pavilion under the Eagle, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

On the eighteenth-century etchings depicting the garden, we will also see bosquets known from other European realizations, that is, 5-6 m high walls of intricately trimmed hornbeam shrubs creating architectural forms and labyrinths. Ravaged by the turmoil of history and left unattended for years,

they survived in the form of a romantic park. Entrances to this green space are guarded by representations of the mythological deities of nature - Vertumnus and Pomona from the palace side, and Pan and Syrinx from the side of the bridge over the canal. While strolling between the trees, we find other historical buildings from the Branicki period: Italian pavilion with columns, Tuscan pavilion over a dry pond in the lower garden and the so-called screen wall with the image of Our Lady of the Gate of Down from the inter-war period.

On the edge of the lower garden, a building that no longer exists housed one of the most outstanding court theatres of the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The timber framed building, erected probably in the years 1749-1766, survived until the first half of the 19th century. The theatre could accommodate about 400 people.

The Branicki Garden is open to visitors free of charge. It makes an impression at any time of the year, but it is most beautiful in summer when flowers bloom and fountains spurt.

Little Palace for Guests

6 J. Kilińskiego Street

A short distance from the main palace, a charming baroque building is located, currently housing the civil registry office and the office of the president of Białystok. The building covered with a mansard roof with dormers is a refined finial of the Jan Kiliński Street perspective from the side of the cathedral.

The palace, called palace for guests, was built by the Jan Klems Branicki foundation, although the commander-in-chief himself did not live to see the completion of construction, he died a year after its commencement. The preserved sources show that the interiors of the 'treasury house' were not yet finished at that time.

Contrary to today's name, the palace probably did not have rooms for guests, because at the end of his life, Branicki did not host all that many. In most likelihood it was supposed to be a *maison du plaisir* - a place fashionable at the time, intended for spending time away from the main residence and court etiquette. This nature of the building and the need to match current functions to its rooms determined the decor created at the beginning of the 21st century. The interiors could have been designed in the 18th



Palace for Guests, photo by K. Jakubowski

century had the palace been completed. The author of the whole concept was the best expert on the Branicki patronage, Fr. Dr Jan Nieciecki, and painting works were created by, among others, Robert Stpicyński and Witold Górniewicz, whose portraits or crypto portraits can be seen in the interiors if you look hard enough. The remaining elements of permanent décor were designed and made by Wojciech Lachowicz, while furniture - by Krzysztof Makowski.

According to the spirit of the epoch, there is splendour in the palace, which is however subject to gradation: from the modest lower lobby to the grandiose setting of the stairs and the upper hallway decorated with pictures of Branicki's residence, to the main hall embellished with white wooden wainscoting with gilded slats. In this room, three parts can be separated: a common anteroom and two rooms, one Izabela's and the other Jan Klemens Branicki's, decorated with twin ornaments in the female and male versions and huge portraits of the founders.

Exceptionally rich in content is the last room on the first floor - a study referring to grotesque rooms, fashionable in the second half of the 18th century. Through the mythological symbolism of the chamber, it shows Izabela Branicka's relationships with the two most important men in her life - her brother, Stanisław II Augustus, and general Andrzej Mokronowski. Although the story of this hidden love is not documented with undisputable evidence, it fires the imagination and still evokes emotions.

While the upper part of the palace is in a baroque but leaning towards a classicist style, the civil registry rooms on the ground floor remains in the flow of a flowery rococo of the times of Louis XV. The interior in which the weddings take



Interior of the Guest Palace, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

place, refers to the so-called garden rooms with images of exotic plants, animals and ancient ruins, with flowery carpets and furniture upholstery. The second room takes us to a garden alcove, and from its windows we look at Branicki's gardens and its pavilions: Chinese and the one under the Eagle.

The palace for guests is open on weekdays during Municipal office hours and on Saturdays during wedding ceremonies. With a bit of luck, you can get permission to visit the interior or take advantage of guided tours organised every now and then.

The old parish church

2 Kościelna Street

The oldest preserved historic building in Białystok is not too visible, as it is part of the Białystok cathedral complex. Its history dates back to the 17th century, when in 1617 Piotr Wiesiołowski started the construction of a brick parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The founder died in 1621, before the completion of construction, and the works were continued by his son, Krzysztof Wiesiołowski. In 1626, the church was consecrated by the bishop of Vilnius, Eustachy Wołłowicz. It was a late Renaissance-style building with one nave, separated in the eastern part, presbytery closed with an apsis and a massive, square tower above the entrance. The building has survived to our times, but with some changes. In the middle of the 18th century, on the initiative of Jan Klemens Branicki, the church was rebuilt, and its furnishing replaced.

In the 19th century, due to the increasing number of Białystok inhabitants, efforts were undertaken to build a new temple. The tsarist authorities did not consent to this, they only allowed the extension of the existing one. In 1902, during the reconstruction, the 17th century presbytery was pulled down and the main altar was placed in a flat wall.

A massive gate, with fittings embedded in a decorative late-Renaissance portal made of light sandstone, leads to the church interior. Its tympanum contains a bas-relief depicting the coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The shield of the coat of arms, probably from the tombstone monument of Piotr Wiesiołowski the younger, is embedded in the outer wall of the temple. It contains the following coats of arms: Wiesiołowski's Ogończyk, Wołłowicz's Bogoria, Jastrzębiec and Korczak (coats of arms of Piotr Wiesiołowski's grandmothers). Next to it is a black plate (according to a legend, cut with Cossack sabres in the 17th century) from the statue of Gryzelda Wodyńska, who died in 1633.



The old parish church, photo by A. Grabowski



Tympanum, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Inside the temple there are preserved elements of the 18th-century furnishings: murals by Antoni Herliczka, painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Sylwester Augustyn Mirysin on the main al-



The main altar in the old parish church, photo by A. Tarasewicz

tar, ciborium housing the Blessed Sacrament, gilded antependium on the wall of the sacrificial table in the main altar, two side altars – of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Crucifixion – pulpit, baptismal font and organs. Near the side altars there are two marble 18th-century monuments. The first, located on the left side of the main altar, made of coloured marble, with the heart of Jan Klemens Branicki, was funded by the wife of the commander-in-chief, Izabela Branicka. The second, of black marble, contains the hearts of Stefan Mikołaj Branicki and Katarzyna

Branicka neé Czarniecka (father and grandmother of Jan Klemens Branicki). These monuments are supplemented with an epitaph dedicated to Izabela Branicka. The picture of a vase with flowers and a view of Białystok was embroidered with her maid, Weronika Paszkowska.

A plaque commemorating the world premiere of 'God is born' carol is embedded in the temple. It was the first public performance of devotional Songs written by Franciszek Karpiński, which appeared in print in Supraśl in 1792.

There are crypts in the basement of the church. Buried in them were, among others: Piotr Wiesiołowski the younger, Izabela Branicka and Katarzyna Poniatowska (niece of the last king of Poland).

Since the 1980s, the church and its furnishing have been gradually renovated and restored.

BUILDINGS AROUND KOŚCIUSZKI SQUARE

While walking around Kościuszki Square, which is the most important historical square of the city, we come across the 18th century buildings founded by Jan Klemens Branicki. Against the background of post-war buildings, they can be distinguished by their baroque architectural forms and bright elevations in pale yellow and white colours.



Kościuszki Square with the town hall, photo:
The Municipal Office in Białystok

Hospital

2 Kościuszki Square

Right next to the gate of the cathedral complex a former hospital for the Białystok poor is situated. It was founded by commander-in-chief Branicki in 1762 as a shelter 'for seven old church paupers and six old women'. The baroque body of the building is distinguished by a large avant-corps crowned with a spectacular tympanum. As a result of subsequent reconstructions, the building got an auditorium located further in the yard, in which the first Białystok theatre of the 20th century operated. Plaques located on both sides of the entrances commemorate the fact that after World War II, demonstrative trials of soldiers of the pro-independence



Former hospital, photo by A. Tarasewicz

underground were conducted in that place. The inhabitants of Bialystok also remember that the building housed an atmospheric TON cinema - today only an inscription on the facade remains.

Cekhauz

4 Kościuszki Square

The building was associated with the impressive, though without any military achievements, army career of commander-in-chief Jan Klemens Branicki. There were rooms for the military guard, armaments and fire-fighting equipment were stored there. The building was thoroughly redeveloped during the Prussian partition, in the 19th century it belonged to the municipal authorities, which then leased it to one of the Bialystok societies. In 1944, the



Former cekhauz, photo by A. Tarasewicz

building was destroyed. After the war, it was reconstructed without much reference to the original shape. Currently, it is an elongated building covered with a half-hipped roof with a dormer, with columns in a recess closed by a metal grate. During the reconstruction, a decision was also made to move the building away from the frontage of the square, as testified by the outlines of the old foundations marked with red pavement slabs. Until recently, the state archive was located there, and now it is one of the locations of the Bialystok Slendzinski Gallery (page 87). Currently the building functions as an open-air gallery with regular exhibitions on the history and culture of Bialystok displayed on the fence.



Monastery of the Daughters of Charity, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Monastery of the Daughters of Charity

5 Kościuszki Square

A large part of the opposite frontage of the square is occupied by the large edifice of the Saint Vincent à Paulo Daughters of Charity Congregation. Branicki brought them to his estates, entrusting them with care over the patients in the hospital. The building is also called the House of Saint Martin, whose image appears in the medallion above the entrance. The construction of the monastery began at the end of the 1760s, thus classicist forms appeared in the Baroque architecture of the edifice. The grand building is covered with a gable roof with a turret placed over the middle avant-corps. The Daughters of Charity, despite turbulences of history and frequent changes of the building's function in the 19th and 20th centuries, are again its owners and run a kindergarten and charity activities.

Astoria

4 H. Sienkiewicza Street

Another historical structure remembering the times of Branicki is the building on the corner currently part of the Astoria gastronomic complex. The Baroque building covered with a mansard roof with dormers has a bevelled corner where the representative entrance is flanked by two Ionic columns. Described in sources from the 18th century as a 'courthouse', it was used for various functions in subsequent centuries. In the interwar period, there was a pharmacy here, owned by Feliks Philippics, the first president of the city council after



Astoria, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Poland regained independence in 1919 (there is a plaque dedicated to this distinguished resident of Białystok on the building).

Town hall

10 Kościuszki Square

The most important building in the centre of the triangular square is the town hall which was built in the middle of the 18th century. As the owner of a private town, Jan Klemens Branicki did not actually need such impressive rooms for councillors, because he ruled over his estates by himself. However, erecting the town hall in a private town was an indispensable symbol of status, while the building itself was used for commercial purposes. In dozens of shops and stalls (from Branicki's time up to World War II), all sorts of goods were sold there - it can be said that it was the first shopping mall in Białystok. Initially, the central part of the building,



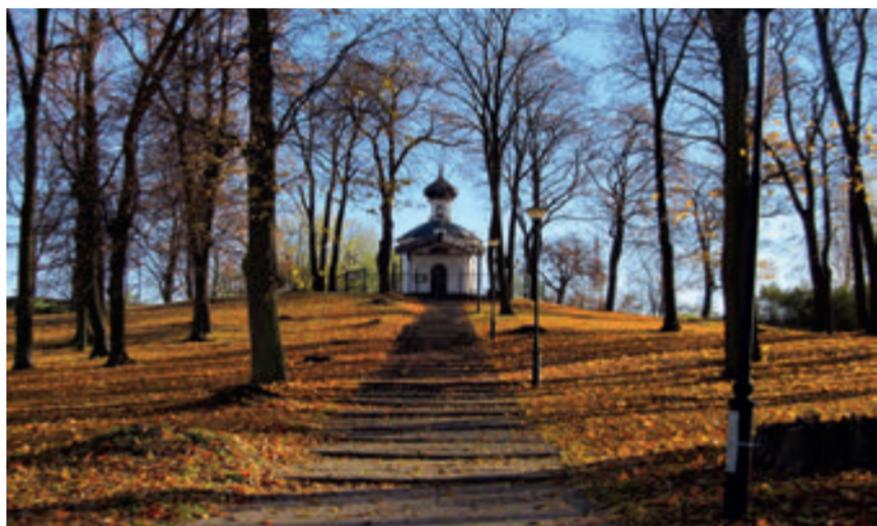
Town hall, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

crowned with a tower, was connected with four corner alcoves by arcades. In 1940, 'during the first Soviet period', the town hall was pulled down, and in its place the Soviet authorities intended to erect a monument to the eternal friendship of West Belarus with the motherland. Fortunately, this idea has never been implemented. The square remained empty until the 1950s, when the town hall was rebuilt in a slightly modified form - the alcoves were connected with the main building - and it became the seat of the Regional Museum. Currently the headquarters of the Podlasie Museum with the gallery of Polish painting is located in its premises (page 88). Looking from the right perspective at the town hall tower, we can see that the Bialystok town hall smiles to passers-by.

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

18 K. Kalinowskiego Street

The present-day Orthodox church, located on a hill tenderly named by Bialystok inhabitants Little Magdalene, was funded by Jan Klemens Branicki around the middle of the 18th century as a Roman Catholic chapel belonging to the so-called altar of St. Roch. At the same time, a cemetery was founded around the building. As a result of changes taking place in religious communities living in Podlasie, the chapel changed its owners - it was a place of prayer for both Greek Catholics (Uniates) and the members of the Orthodox church. Also, the cemetery became multiconfessional over time. Currently, the church belongs to the Orthodox Ordinariate of the Polish Army, and part of the hill - the former cemetery - is occupied by a modern opera house.



St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox church, photo by K. Jakubowski

BIALYSTOK OF MANUFACTURERS

In the second half of the 19th century, Białystok became an important centre of the textile industry, operating so dynamically that it was not far behind Łódź. It was even called Manchester of the North.

Tangible proof of this are the factory buildings preserved to this day. Until recently, the value of such architecture was only considered in utilitarian terms. Currently, its cultural and aesthetic values are increasingly appreciated. The most impressive mementos of the industrial prosperity period are the palaces scattered around the city, erected for the needs of manufacturers and their families.

Until today, not only historical buildings have survived, but also stories about the turbulent fortunes of industrialists', the building of textile powers, and sometimes their sudden falls. It is worth visiting the historic palaces and getting to know the fascinating history of their inhabitants.

Nowik's palace

35 Lipowa Street



Nowik's Palace, photo by A. Grabowski

Located on the main, representative street of the city, the palace was erected for Chanon-Hersz and Sara Nowik in the years 1910-1912. The dominating feature in the Art Nouveau body of the building is a four-sided tower with magnificent bay windows intricately decorated with olive leaf motifs. Among the rich decorations of the frontal façade, laurel wreaths and garlands prevail. The interiors have been com-

pletely transformed and are not made available to visitors, because for several decades the building has been the seat of the Military Draft Office. Nowiks were potentates in the production of cloth and wool fabrics. The remains of their factory - a water tower, the former weaving mill and hat factory - can be viewed in Augustowska street.

Becker's plant and palace

15 Świętojańska Street

One of the largest industrial plants in Białystok was the Silk Plush Factory of the Białystok Manufacturing Association E. Becker and co., located at the intersection of Mickiewicza and Świętojańska streets. It employed several hundred people and continued its activities until World War II. Most of the factory buildings were destroyed by the retreating Germans,



A historic warehouse of finished products from the former Becker's factory, photo by A. Tarasewicz



Mansion of the board of the former Becker's factory, photo by A. Grabowski

but soon after the textile production restarted in the factory under changed name - Biruna Fleece Plant Factory. In the 21st century, the building has been completely redeveloped as a shopping centre, but many elements of the original industrial building have been preserved. A huge, three-storey warehouse of finished products, erected along Świętojańska Street in 1895, survived and has been listed in the register of monuments. The rough red brick facade with a centrally located shallow avant-corps was adorned with a statue of a running Mercury, the Roman god of commerce - hence the common name of the building. Currently, the facade of Mercury - visual symbol of industrial Białystok - is part of the facade of the shopping centre. The modern elevation also includes the gable of the oldest factory building - the finishing plant, and its former cubature has been emphasised in the form of a shopping mall. The building of the former stable and coach house from 1911, currently the restaurant, has been also incorporated into the shopping area. The Alfa shopping centre is one of the more interesting examples of how the post-industrial heritage can be preserved through adaptation of factory buildings to contemporary needs.

The historic Palace of the Directorate, built in the western corner of the factory complex in the years 1902-1905, remained unchanged. The building, a beautiful example of the French neo-Renaissance, was erected from red brick on a pedestal

made of cut stones. It is embellished with plastered details - decorative friezes, tops with pediments and window trims. The two-storey building is adjoined by a three-storey tower crowned with a profiled cornice and frieze decorated with garlands. The mansard roof is covered with stone slates.

Cytron's Palace

37 Warszawska Street

The building was erected in the years 1910-1913. Soon after it became the property of Samuel Hirsz Cytron, and then his heirs. After the war it was used for various functions, and finally, in 1990, it became the seat of the Historical Museum.

The two-storey mansion is a beautiful example of Art Nouveau. Slightly further back from the frontage of Warszawska Street, it rises behind a large original fence. The entrance to the building is on the left side of the front facade, while on the right there is a gate access with an arched vault. On the richly decorated facade there are, among others, motifs of sunflowers, wreaths and laurel garlands as well as twigs with fruits. The central part of the façade is crowned with a sinuously curved, decorative cornice topped with obelisks.

Inside, the layout of the rooms and the sumptuous marble staircase have survived. Thanks to the exhibitions of the Historical Museum (page 88), visitors can admire not only the restored Art Nouveau polychromies, but also the fully reconstructed appearance of a rich Białystok residence from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.



Cytron's Palace, photo by A. Tarasewicz



Hasbach's Palace, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

Hasbach's Palace and factory settlement

23 Dojlidy Fabryczne Street

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Hasbach family was one of the most notable factories owning family in Białystok. The most important of their seats they located in Dojlidy near the Cloth and Tricots Factory (and after the First World War - plywood), which was the basis of the family wealth. A representative palace in the style of the French neo-Renaissance was created in 1905-1907, as a result of the reconstruction of a villa erected 30 years earlier. It is a two-storey building, plastered, except for the front elevation of red brick, with a prominent circular tower. Worth noticing is the mansard roof covered with sheet metal mimicking slate. In the interiors, original elements of furnishings have been preserved: Art Nouveau stairs in the hall and decorative stoves and fireplaces from the late 19th and early 20th century. Currently, the palace houses the offices of several institutions, including the Voivodeship Office for the Protection of Monuments in Białystok.

The buildings of the plywood factory are located a short distance from the palace. The complex of post-war industrial buildings consists of a hall, a chimney, and a boiler room dating back to the Hasbach family times.

At the end of the 19th century, the Hasbach family erected a settlement of one-storey wooden houses for their factory workers. Eight out of eleven buildings have survived to this day (at 25 a-g Suchowolca Street).



Krusenstern family palace, photo by A. Grabowski

Krusenstern family palace (Lubomirski Palace)

26 Dojlidy Fabryczne Street

This sumptuous neo-Renaissance palace was erected in the mid-19th century by Aleksander Krusenstern, the secret advisor to the tsarist court. It is also called the Rudygier family palace (from the name of the subsequent owner, Zofia Rudygierowa, daughter of Krusenstern), and also the Lubomirski palace - Lubomirski family owned the estate from 1922. During their rule the estate, and especially the neighbouring Dojlidy brewery, developed dynamically. During the German occupation, the palace was the seat of Erich Koch, the Gauleiter of the Nazi Party in East Prussia, Chief of Civil Administration of Bezirk Bialystok, one of Hitler's close collaborators. A reinforced concrete shelter was erected for his needs. After the war, the building was restored and handed over to educational institutions. Inside, almost none of the elements of the original interior have been preserved.

The two-storey building faces north. In the central part of the facade, the dominating feature is the an avant-corps, preceded by stairs, crowned with a triangular pediment. The terrace on the first floor is supported by four Ionic columns. Worth noting are busts with personification of the seasons. A beautiful park with preserved ponds and old trees stretches around the residence. It was established during the construction of the palace.

TRADITIONAL WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

Some people say that Białystok is the only city with a truly eastern soul that remained within Polish borders after World War II. They add that by walking through the last preserved quarters of pre-war buildings we will gain the best idea of what the towns of the former borderlands looked like. Unfortunately, we must hurry. Modernity inexorably and relentlessly displaces traditional wooden architecture. The face of the city changes from year to year.

To see what Białystok wooden building looked like, and to experience the ambience of unhurried life, you must go to the Bojary (Boyars) district. A walk along Staszica, Wiktorja, Słonimska and Koszykowa or Złota streets transports us magically to the past. It is also worth taking a look at Mazowiecka and Młynowa streets, where the last picturesque houses have survived - relics of the pre-war districts of Białystok, fragrant with the smell of lilac and jasmine.



A house in Bojary,
photo by A. Tarasewicz

BOJARY

Bojary district is one of the most magical places in Białystok. Although it is in the very centre of the city, it still retains the charm of the outer boroughs where everything moves at its own pace. Narrow, winding, cobbled streets and ivy-tangled houses are a memento of Białystok from the 1920s and 1930s. However, the history of the district reaches

much further back. The first settlement was established there in the 15th century. It was inhabited by boyars - court service. To this day, the old arrangement of fiefs can be detected in the urban layout. This is where the key routes ran - Great Lithuanian Road and Bazylianska Road - a highroad separating the Białystok and Dojlidy estates (i.e. today's Skorupska and Daleka streets) was even a state border. From

1569, he separated the lands of the Crown and of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Commander-in-chief Branicki introduced big changes there by establishing the New Town, where he settled court officials, craftsmen and artists. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, Białystok's intelligentsia began to build their homes in Bojary. Until recently, the entire district was coherent in nature. Today, the historic urban tissue is degrading. The charm of old Bojary can be best experienced in Koszykowa, Wiktorja and Staszica streets.

Several original wooden houses remain in Wiktorja Street. Many of them are in a pitiful condition, like the one at number 9, which was the home of a great landscapist, Czesław Sadowski. There are also those that have been restored to their former glory. The house at 5 Wiktorii Street, where the Slendzinski Gallery is located, is certainly worth a look (page



Building at 5 Wiktorii Street in Bojary, housing a photo gallery, photo by A. Grabowski

87). While viewing photo exhibitions, you can also familiarise yourself with the layout of a typical boyar house from the beginning of the 20th century. The building has been restored with attention to historical details. Until recently, there was a house on the opposite side of the street, which was visited by Józef Piłsudski. Comrade 'Wiktor' often came to Białystok in his youth, when he was in conspiracy organizing the structures of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party).

Apparently, for their safety the conspirators made an underground passage to nearby Koszykowa street. While strolling along, you can easily imagine those times. This is the area



Modernist Wolter family villa, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

with the greatest number of the original houses from the late 19th and first quarter of the 20th century, and in addition the charm of this street is enhanced by the cobblestones, referred to as “cats’ heads” in Polish. During World War II the Home Army underground activity flourished in Bojary. In many houses, especially in Staszica street (among others, at No. 8) secret classes were held.

It is also worth taking a walk along Słonimska Street, where at number 31 the modernist villa of Jan and Zofia Wolter has been preserved. The functionalist building was built in 1934 according to the design of the Białystok architect, Rudolf Macura. Right next to it is a year older, beautiful villa of Adam Puciłowski.

MŁYNOWA STREET AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

Młynowa Street together with the nearby Sienny Square was before the war in the centre of the infamous Chanajki - the most impoverished Jewish district. The poor reputation of this neighbourhood of mysterious alleys continued for many years after the war. Traces of old buildings can still be found there. Looking at the last wooden houses or shabby tenement houses, it is worth trying to imagine the times with hubbub everywhere, not only in Polish, but also in Yiddish. The horseshoes were striking sparks on the cobblestones. A blacksmith operated on the corner of Odeska

Street, and the carters gathered around the water cistern, right next to the fence of the Evangelical cemetery. Commerce was booming around Sienny Square, and the surrounding tenement houses hid cheap taprooms and illegal gambling caves.

The most beautiful example of wooden construction at Młynowa Street is the house at number 19 with a characteristic spire at the top of the ridge. It was erected in 1932 for the family of Jakub Flikier - a Jewish entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Ryszard Kaczorowski's quarter

Mazowiecka Street

The view of the wooden house at 31/1 Mazowiecka Street against the background of the modern skyscrapers is a perfect symbol of changes that have taken place in the architecture of Białystok over the last 100 years. A small, two-storey house was erected on a trapezoidal layout in the 1920s or 1930s. It has a very characteristic body with a corner front façade resulting from the shape of the site located at the junction of Wesola and Mazowiecka streets.

The house is part of the so-called Ryszard Kaczorowski's quarter, that is a group of buildings that were there at the time when Ryszard Kaczorowski, who was later the last president of the Republic of Poland in exile, lived in this area - at 7 Mazowiecka Street. The school he attended was located at number 35 in a townhouse dating back to 1863. Today, there is commemorative plaque on its façade. You can get the idea of what the future president's home that no longer exists today used to look like by walking a few dozen metres further on. A 'wooden tenement house'



House at 31 Mazowiecka Street,
photo by A. Tarasewicz



General von Driesen's villa, photo by A. Grabowski

at 52 Mazowiecka Street, typical of the pre-war Białystok landscape, has survived to this day.

General Von Driesen's villa - Museum of Alfons Karny's Sculptures

17 Świętojańska Street

The wooden residence was built in the second half of the 19th century. The present shape is due to the reconstruction made for the needs of General Nicolaus von Driesen, the commander of the Dragons regiment stationed in Białystok. In its history, the villa was owned by many users and institutions, ultimately becoming the seat of the Museum of Alfons Karny's Sculptures (page 88).

The large wooden villa, with its high roof supported by corbels, makes a big impression. It is necessary to look inside to admire the original elements of furnishing that give an idea of the scale of the splendour of the old town residences. The décor of the Mauritanian salon with a beautiful polychrome ceiling and a portal with a door has been perfectly preserved. In the Baroque parlour, attention is drawn to the ceiling with a polychrome and decorative moulding depicting putti against the background of the clouds. In the hall, the exquisite wainscoting in Tudor style, original wallpaper, chest ceiling with rosettes and two impressive ceramic furnaces have survived to this day.

20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE

A visit to Białystok is a must for all lovers of modernist architecture because of the famous St. Roch's Church (page 60). It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful examples of a modernist sacred building in Europe. Not everyone, however, knows that in Białystok many other buildings can be found that may generate interest, or even enchant the admirers of the twentieth-century trends in architecture.

The earliest modernist buildings appeared in Białystok even before the outbreak of World War I, but the most impressive structures were erected in the interwar period. Besides St. Roch's church, buildings worth mentioning include: the public administration buildings in Mickiewiczza Street, modernist villas of Zdobycz Urzędnicza housing estate and the seat of the Municipal Theatre. At that time, both public buildings as well as private single- and multi-family houses were built.

Immediately after the war, the dominating style became, of course, socialist realism. A memento of that period is the monumental edifice of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party at the Independent Students' Union Square, currently one of the seats of the University of Białystok. In the 1960s and 1970s, other interesting modernist buildings were constructed.



St. Roch's Church, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Persons travelling to Białystok by train will easily notice the post-modernist post office building with an interesting wavy roof located right next to the railway station. Just before the Central Harvest Festival, three round buildings made of steel, glass and aluminium were erected in Akademicka St. and Piłsudskiego Avenue, while at the foot of St. Roch's hill a complex of buildings came into being. Due to their characteristic shapes they are called the saucers by the city residents. In the 1970s, the Central Shopping House was opened, the Philharmonic was completed, and the seat of the Białystok Puppet Theatre was erected.

Detailed information about Białystok modernist architecture along with suggestions for walking routes can be found at: <http://www.modernizm.uwb.edu.pl>.

Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theatre

12 Elektryczna Street

The former Marshal Józef Piłsudski Municipal Theatre was erected on the basis of the design by Jarosław Girin, in 1933-1938. It is located in the city centre and encircled by the Old Park. Sgraffiti with images of muses (placed in five shallow



Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theatre, photo by A. Tarasewicz

recesses) on the front elevation, and the characteristic glazed staircases framing the facade composition on both sides attract the onlooker's attention.

'Okraślak' (Rotunda) Townhouse - Army Museum

7 and 7/1 J. Kilińskiego Street

The building with a white, raw facade and a characteristic following the curve of the street was created according to Szymon Pappe's design and is an example of modernism of the 1930s. From 1976, the Army Museum has been located in this building (page 89).



Modernist tenement house at Kilińskiego Street, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Seweryn Nowakowski's villa

26 Akademicka Street

A brick-made, modernist villa was erected in the second half of the 1950s. The building with an asymmetric, cubic body was designed in the spirit of functionalism. The villa was built for the needs of Seweryn Nowakowski - the last and most eminent mayor of pre-war Białystok, which is recalled on a memorial plaque placed on the façade.



Seweryn Nowakowski's villa
26 Akademicka Street,
photo by A. Tarasewicz

Philharmonic and Music Schools Complex

2 Podleśna Street

The late-Modernist building of the philharmonic was erected in 1975. It was designed by Krystyna Drewnowska. It houses a concert hall with 500 seats, a chamber hall as well as a music schools complex. In 1983, the building was embellished on its main façade with a figural-ornamental bas-relief 'Polihymnia' created by Białystok artist Jerzy Grygorczuk.



Polihymnia bas-relief on the façade of the Philharmonic building at Podleśna Street, photo by A. Grabowski



Białystok Puppet Theatre, photo by A. Grabowski

Białystok Puppet Theatre

1 K. Kalinowskiego Street

The building was put into use in 1979. It was the first building in Poland designed specifically for the needs of the puppet theatre. Its authors were Warsaw architects: Waclaw Kłyszewski, Eugeniusz Wierzbicki and Jerzy Mokrzyński. It serves as the seat of the Białystok Puppet Theatre (page 92).

Power station

13 Elektryczna Street

The building of the oldest Białystok power plant was built in the years 1908-1909. It is a perfect example of early modernist industrial architecture and the first building in Białystok with the reinforced concrete structure. The building was extended several times, and, after the World War II damage, reconstructed based on 1930s plans. Attention is drawn to the front elevations of power plant halls with triangular gables and tall, narrow windows as well as the side elevation fitted with huge windows under arch lintels and extending along the bank of the Biała River. In 2010, one of the halls was handed over for the needs of Arsenal Gallery (page 87).



The building of the former power plant, photo by I. Czajkowska

PRESENT-DAY FACE OF THE CITY

ARCHITECTURE

Białystok, which is primarily associated with magnificent Baroque and Modernist buildings, can also boast outstanding examples of contemporary structures. The most interesting projects from the 21st century include investments for universities and cultural institutions as well as an impressive municipal stadium (page 100). Many tourists are attracted by their modern beauty.

Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic

1 Odeska Street



Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic, photo by A. Grabowski

The concept of the edifice erected in 2006-2012 was created in the studio of Prof. Marek Budzyński, known among others from the design of the Supreme Court and the University Library in Warsaw. Similarly to other projects of this architect, Białystok opera perfectly fits into the surrounding nature. The building opens up to the greenery of the Central Park with a glazed, wide lobby, and at the same time climbing vegetation entangles its pillars, roof and walls. Set in a minimalist style, erected from raw concrete and glass, the building houses a modern concert hall with an auditorium for almost 800 people and a chamber hall. In the large foyer, the impression of spaciousness is enhanced by glass stairs and catwalks. The interiors are decorated with notations of compositions by S. Moniuszko, J. Maksymiuk and K. Penderecki, made by Tadeusz Urbanowicz. It is possible to visit the garden located on the roof of the opera.



A bird's eye view of the University campus, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

University Campus

1 K. Ciołkowskiego Street

The design of the Białystok University campus was also created in the Marek Budzyński's studio. Here, too, there is a symbiotic relationship between architecture and the surrounding nature. The great investment was completed in 2014. Currently, in Ciołkowskiego Street, there are faculties of mathematics, computer science, physics, biology and chemistry. The four main buildings of the complex are located around the Syntezy Nauk square, with the centrally positioned sculpture of Tomasz Urbanowicz, symbolically depicting the Big Bang. Impressive glass portals with spiral descriptions of individual areas of science lead to the offices of each faculty. The philosophical quotes placed on panels are arranged in the shape of letters that create the term best expressing the spirit of the place – POZNANIE (*COGNIZANCE*). Andrzej Myrcha Natural Science Centre operates at the university campus (page 90).

The Centre for Modern Education at the University of Technology in Białystok

16 Zwierzyniecka Street

The most recognizable building of the Białystok University of Technology, located on the edge of the campus, was completed in 2013. Architects from AA_Studio took care to give it a local touch - raw, concrete building facades gained a unique character thanks to the openwork ornamentation motifs of traditional Podlasie cut-outs.



The Centre for Modern Education at the University of Technology, photo by I. Czajkowska

The State Archive in Białystok

101 A. Mickiewicza Street

The seat of the Białystok archive was opened in 2018. It was designed by the Jan Kabac's studio and is certainly one of the most interesting contemporary buildings in Białystok. In front, there is an impressive large rotunda, with a façade clad in copper sheet, adjacent to the black stone facade of another part of the three-bodied building.



The building of the State Archives, photo by I. Czajkowska

Didactic and entertainment hall of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the University of Białystok

20 Świerkowa Street

Completed in 2013, the building won many awards and recognition in the architects' circles. The most recognizable element of the building is the characteristic, softly curved façade with copper panels. The project was created in the studios of Jan Kabac, Anna Pszonak and Bogdan Pszonak.

BIALYSTOK MURALS

More and more people both in Poland and in the world think of Białystok as of a city full of fantastic murals. Our 'Girl with a watering can' won the hearts of street art fans from around the world and has been copied in remote parts of the globe. And this is not the only pearl on the walls of Białystok buildings. There are about forty large-format paintings in the city. Murals are made, among others, as part of the Contemporary Art Days and the Folk on the Street action organized by Białystok cultural institutions as well as the Lumo Bjalistoko festival. Grassroots initiatives are undertaken by the city's inhabitants. Thanks to these initiatives, works on very diverse subjects are created. They often deal with socially important topics, like the mural 'Woven of multiculturalism' (19/1 Józefa Piłsudskiego Avenue), which refers to the city's multicultural heritage and is an expression of tolerance and openness of Białystok residents.



'A girl with a watering can' mural by Natalia Rak, made as part of the Folk on the Street action organized by the Provincial Centre of Culture Animation in Białystok, photo by I. Czajkowska

A girl with a watering can

11/4 J. Piłsudskiego Avenue

The contemporary showpiece of Białystok is undoubtedly the mural on Piłsudskiego Avenue. A girl in a folk costume

who, with a watering can in her hand, is watering the tree growing in front of the building, has endeared herself to most Białystok residents and tourists. She is appreciated by street art experts - regularly appears in lists and albums devoted to this field of art. The author of the mural is Natalia Rak, a graduate of the Lodz Academy of Fine Arts. Her large format works can be found in many parts of the world. 'A girl with a watering can' was created in 2013 as part of the Folk on the Street campaign promoting folk culture, conducted by the Provincial Centre of Culture Animation. The mural is a reference to 'The Legend of giants' from the book by Wojciech Załęski entitled 'Hecz, precz, stała się rzecz. Wydobyte z kufra pamięci' (*Yon, begone, a thing has come on. Taken out of the chest of memory*).

A woven tale

18 Radzymińska Street

In 2017, a boy joined the cult girl. He is dressed in an attire decorated with Belarusian folk motifs. Above his head stretches a wonderful pattern transferred from Podlasie double weave fabric called 'Bread Baking', created by Ms Lucyna Kędzierska, a weaver from Wasilków. The mural itself is the work of Belarusian artists from the TAKTAK group, also created as part of the Folk on the Street campaign conducted by the Provincial Centre of Culture Animation. The gigantic work decorates the gable wall of an eleven-storey skyscraper - it is the largest folk mural in Poland.



'A woven tale' mural made by TAKTAK as part of the Folk on the Street action organized by the Provincial Centre of Culture Animation in Białystok, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Instability

60 Swobodna Street

In 2015, as part of the Contemporary Art Days, a mural was created with a boy standing among the skyscrapers and diligently constructing a house of cards. Its author is the famous Italian artist, Francesco Camillo Giorgino known as Millo, whose characteristic, colour-thrifty works can be found in many cities of the world and in leading art galleries.



Instability, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Inequality

1 Batalionów Chłopskich Street

Artists from the Chekosart group presented the image of a black woman pulling a white mask off her face. The anti-racist message of the mural resonates even stronger thanks to a quote from the work of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer 'People are equal, only the inequality divides them'. The mural was created in 2013 on the initiative of the informal group - Normal Białystok, which propagates tolerance and cultivates multiculturalism of Białystok.



Inequality, photo by A. Tarasewicz

Grandma Eugenia

14 M. Skłodowskiej-Curie Street

In June 2019, a huge mural was created on the building belonging to the Podlasie Marshal's Office. Artists from Good Looking Studio presented a smiling face of a Białystok inhabitant, Mrs. Eugenia, with the caption: 'send a postcard to Grandma'. Both the heroine and the slogan are well known to all fans of the Up to Date Festival, during which the organizers annually encourage participants to send festival postcards to the loved ones. The mural quickly gained renown in the world of street art, not only because of its artistic value, but also thanks to an important message that encourages closer family relationships.



Grandma Eugenia, photo by A. Tarasewicz

A CITY OF MANY CULTURES



Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit, photo by K. Jakubowski

BIALYSTOK TEMPLES

Białystok is a city where, for centuries, next to the towers of Catholic churches, the domes of Orthodox churches have soared towards the sky. The multi-denominational character of the local community results from the history of these lands. Settlers from Mazovia were arriving from the west, and Ruthenians - followers of the Eastern Christianity - were coming to the Podlasie forests from the opposite side. With the passage of time, protestants and followers of other religions - Islam and Judaism - also came. Their descendants lived together for hundreds of years, creating a harmonious multicultural, colourful community. Today, this kind of mosaic of cultures constitutes a strong magnet attracting many tourists to the capital of Podlasie.

The most important sacred buildings of Białystok are located along two tourist routes: the Esperanto and Many Cultures Trail, and the Trail of Temples.

Metropolitan Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

2 Kościelna Street

The oldest temple in Białystok is the church founded by Piotr Wiesiołowski on today's cathedral hill. The 'White Church' flourished during Branicki times, and for this reason it has



Metropolitan Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, photo: The Municipal Office in Białystok

been described in greater detail in the chapter dedicated to Branicki family (see page 26). Today, it is an integral part of the metropolitan cathedral complex and at first glance it is hidden in the shadow of the huge body of the “red church”.

In the second half of the 19th century, when Białystok expanded to become an industrial city of many thousand inhabitants, the local Catholic community desperately needed a new temple. The small building erected for the purposes of the 17th century settlement was not able to accommodate even a fraction of the congregation. However, granting the permission to build a new church was the prerogative of tsarist authorities, who repeatedly refused it. In this situation, Białystok inhabitants used a clever and - as it turned out - a very effective trick: they asked for permission to expand the existing church. The huge neo-Gothic edifice is therefore only an annex to an earlier temple, probably the largest in the world!



Interior of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, photo by K. Jakubowski

The author of the design of the Białystok metropolitan cathedral was Józef Pius Dziekoński, a Warsaw architect recognized as the greatest creator of neo-Gothic churches in Poland. The building works on the temple began in 1900. The construction proceeded very quickly - in 1905 the church was consecrated, and the finishing works were completed two years later. In 1944, when the retreating Germans burned the city, stained glass and roof were damaged, but the temple survived. Archival photos of the church against the background of the totally destroyed city centre are shocking.

The monumental archcathedral was constructed of a typical Gothic Revival building material - red brick. The facade facing John Paul II square is dominated by two huge towers. Despite their height, they seem to be lightly raising towards the sky. Attention is drawn to three ogival portals of the front en-



Main altar in the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, photo by A. Tarasewicz

trance with carvings in tympanums depicting Christ carrying the cross, crucifixion and resurrection. The temple was built on a layout of a Latin cross. Between the main nave and the two aisles there are rows of large pillars that support the cross-rib vaults. Large ogival windows and the rosette above the entrance are fitted with stained glass.

Inside, attention is drawn to the main altar designed by Wincenty Bogaczyk. Referring to the figure the church has been dedicated to, the artist placed in the centre the scene of the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Mother of God surrounded by angels floats on the clouds. Among the apostles shown below, it is worth noticing the leaning figure with a crucifix in his hands - this is Fr. Wilhelm Szwarz, the church builder. Undoubtedly, it is one of the most beautiful neogothic altars in Poland.



Altar with the painting of Merciful Jesus in the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, photo by A. Tarasewicz

In the left aisle there is the Chapel of Merciful Jesus with the famous image created by Ludomir Sleńdziński, ordered by blessed Michał Sopoćko. Right next to it is the chapel of Our Lady of Mercy with a copy of the sacred painting – Our Lady of the Gate of Down. This place perfectly symbolizes Białystok's strong links with Vilnius. For hundreds of years, our town was part of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, as testified by the statue at the eastern wall of the temple, designed

by Dmitri Grozdev. After World War II, the Vilnius Archbishop resided here. The Białystok diocese was established by John Paul II during his visit to Podlasie in 1991. A year later, the Białystok archdiocese was established. The seat of the archbishop and curia is located next to the cathedral, in a baroque building of the former presbytery.

St. Roch's Church

1 ks. A. Abramowicza Street

In 2018, by the decision of the President of the Republic of Poland, the church complex dedicated to Christ the King and Saint Roch has been recognized as a Historical Monument. In this way it was included in the prestigious group of 105 monuments of the greatest importance for the cultural heritage of our country.

Originally on the hill of St. Roch there was a chapel founded by commander-in-chief Branicki. At the end of the 19th century, efforts began to build a Catholic temple in that place, but due to the opposition of the tsarist authorities, these plans were abandoned until the establishment of the Second Polish Republic. St. Roch's Church was erected as a monument – a thankful votive for Poland regaining independence and winning the war against the Bolsheviks. Its creator - Warsaw architect, Oskar Sosnowski - allegedly already in the trenches of World War I, dreamt of surrounding his independent homeland with churches. Each of them was to be



St. Roch's photo by A. Tarasewicz

‘an artistic expression of the litany to the Blessed Virgin’. Of all these plans, only the Białystok temple materialised – the bright Morning Star which at the same time was the dawn of independence. While looking at St. Roch’s Church, it is worth remembering that Sosnowski’s project is imbued with deep, symbolic content. The architectural and artistic reflection of the idea of the morning star is both the spatial arrangement of the building and the recurring star-crystal theme of decorations.

Oskar Sosnowski is recognized as one of the most outstanding Polish architects of the interwar period, and the Białystok temple as the magnum opus of his output. Another important figure that contributed to the creation of the temple is Fr. Adam Abramowicz, who was appointed to this mission by the Vilnius curia. His determination and inexhaustible energy enabled the implementation of Oskar Sosnowski’s vision

without compromising the artistic goals despite the constant lack of funds. The cornerstone for the church was laid in 1927. The work took 20 years, including the particularly difficult



Stained glass plafond in the church dedicated to Christ the King and St. photo by The Municipal Office in Białystok

period of World War II, when Russians planned to set up a circus in that building. The basilica was consecrated on April 18, 1946, but the furnishing of the temple continued for many years.

St. Roch's Church is considered to be the most outstanding example of a Modernist religious building in Poland, and at the same time it is one of the most beautiful

temples of this type in the world. Built from reinforced concrete, the structure rests centrally on an octagon layout. The building is dominated by a 70-meter tower topped with a figure of the Virgin Mary in Glory. The interior is additionally illuminated by a glass dome, veiled with stained glass ceiling designed by Placyda Bukowska. The vault is supported by several slender, eight-sided pillars. Sosnowski drew inspiration from historical structures (especially Gothic, but also Renaissance), and at the same time created a thoroughly original and modern design. Experts place his work within the trends of European Expressionism.

On the ramparts surrounding the temple from the city side you can find the sculpture of Christ the Good Shepherd by Stanisław Horno-Popławski, one of the greatest Polish artists of the 20th century. His other



Christ the Good Shepherd, photo by A. Tarasewicz

work - the Virgin Mary with the Child - is on the tombstone of Fr. Abramowicz on the southern façade. The wooden furnishings of the church are strongly connected with its architecture. Oskar Sosnowski himself designed many of its



Main altar in St. Roch's photo by A. Grabowski

elements. His work was continued by Stanisław Bukowski in cooperation with Aleksander Wels and Irena Pławska. The main altar is dominated by the figure of Christ the King - another sculpture by Stanisław Horno-Popławski. On the left is the altar of St. Anthony and the side chapel dedicated to St. Roch. The 18th-century painting by Augustyn Mirys embedded in the altar comes from the original furnishings of the previously existing chapel of the Bran-

icki foundation. On the right side of the main altar, there is the altar of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, and behind it, the chapel of Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn with a copy of the Vilnius picture.

During the tourist season, **the observation deck is open on the church tower (Monday to Saturday from 9am to 4pm, on Sundays and holidays from 2pm to 5pm)**, from which you can see the beautiful panorama of the centre of Białystok. **Admission is free.**

Church of St. Wojciech Bishop and Martyr

46 Warszawska Street

The present-day church of St. Wojciech was erected in the years 1909–1912 for the needs of the congregation of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession. The initiator of the construction of the temple was pastor Teodor Zirkwitz, and the founders were local German manufacturers. In 1939, after the resettlement of the German population to the Reich, the parish was liquidated, and the building, damaged during the war, was taken over by Catholics. In the 1960s, Lent retreat was led by Fr. Karol Wojtyła, and blessed Michał Sopoćko provided pastoral care.

The Neo-Romanesque red brick building was designed by an architect from Lodz, Jan Wende. The building was erected on a cross layout with a presbytery under a semi-circular apse. A two-storey, octagonal tower rises above the temple. The



The Church of St. Wojciech,
photo by I. Czajkowska

The church has a hall structure. Three large rosettes and windows under semi-circular lintels are fitted with stain glass from 1950s. Its author was, among others Halina Cieślińska-Brzeska, whose works can also be found in the Chapel of the Mother of God in Jasna Góra and in the New York headquarters of the United Nations. The apse is decorated in the style of Romanesque art: the image of Christ blessing and scenes from the life of St. Wojciech were painted by Kinga Paweńska. The elements that have been preserved from the original furnishing are: the Neo-Romanesque pulpit and matronea (galleries open to the nave, supported on columns), often found in Evangelical churches, with cast-iron candlesticks from the Antoni Wiczorek's factory in Białystok.

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Church of the Resurrection

5 Ks. Abp. R. Jałbrzykowskiego Street

Many tourists coming to Białystok from Warsaw notice the white-green Baroque church situated on a small hill. Surprisingly, the temple was built not so long ago, in the years 1991-1996, according to the design of Michał Bałasz. It refers to the 18th century church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Berezwecz - an outstanding example of Vilnius Baroque. In this way,



The Church of the Resurrection,
photo by A. Tarasewicz



Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Dojlidy, photo by A. Grabowski

the building fits in with the current trend in architecture of recreating the outstanding but no longer existing historical buildings

Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Dojlidy

27 ks. St. Suchowolca Street

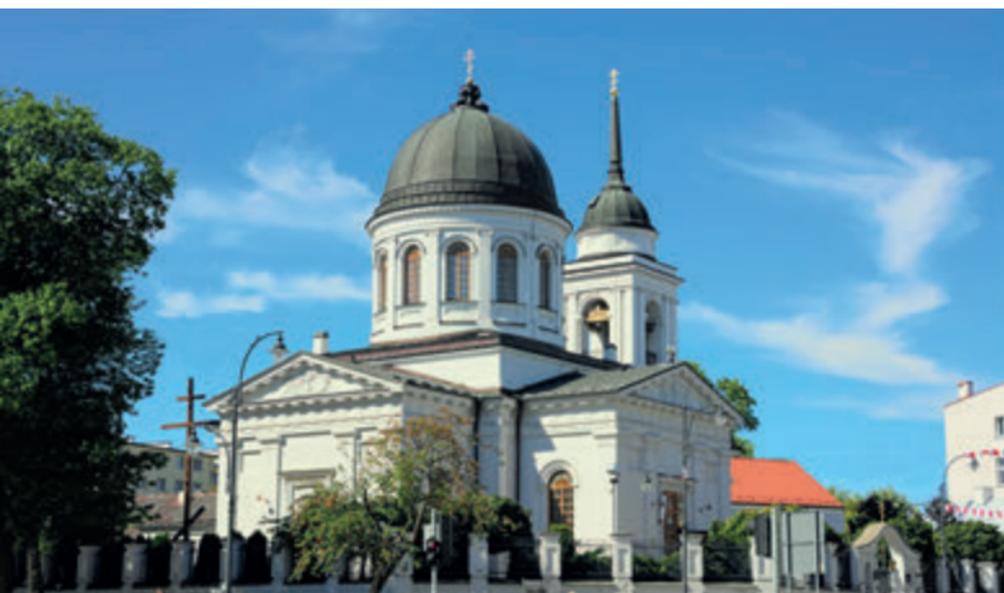
The temple was built according to the design of Stanisław Bukowski, in the years 1949–1955. The two-nave building with a slender tower on the left side of the façade is considered one of the most interesting examples of post-war modernist religious architecture. Inside, the attention is drawn to the ceramic Stations of the Cross by Irena Pławska and the moulding decoration in the presbytery, designed by Placyda Bukowska and made by Jerzy Machaj.

Next to the church is the grave of Fr. Stanisław Sucholowiec, who was a vicar in the parish from 1986. As a chaplain of Solidarity, he organized masses for the homeland. In 1989 he was murdered in a nearby presbytery. There is a high probability that the crime was committed by Security Service officers.

St. Nicholas' Orthodox Cathedral

15 Lipowa Street

Members of the Orthodox Church constitute about 20% of the inhabitants of Białystok. Their most important temple is St. Nicholas' Cathedral at Lipowa street. There was an Orthodox church on this site as early as the 18th century. We know the descriptions of the wooden Uniate temple generously



St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral, photo by A. Tarasewicz

supported by commander-in-chief Branicki. In the 19th century, a decision was made to demolish the ancient building and erect a magnificent brick-made Orthodox church. The works started in 1843. They proceeded at a very fast pace, and three years later the edifice was completed, and the temple was consecrated.

The classicist building was fully compliant with the religious architecture standard mandatory at that time in the Russian Empire. The building was set on a Greek cross layout, extended on the western side by one tower span. The central part includes an impressive dome supported by a high drum. Originally, it was painted blue, and the roof of the temple - red. The church is orientated (facing eastwards) and the main entrance is on the side of the tower.

The interior of the church is filled with polychromes from mid-1970s. Their author was the painter associated with Podlasie, Józef Łotowski. He followed the example of the earlier iconographic decoration made in 1910 by a Russian artist, Mikhail Avinov. Only one of his frescoes has survived - the 'Resurrection' in the altar part of the temple. Not even fragments of the original 19th century polychromy survived to our times.

The most important element of furnishing is the iconostasis, which in the temples of the Eastern Orthodox rite separates the zone accessible to the faithful from the altar part, which can be entered only by the clergy. Over the centuries, a strictly defined arrangement has been established, according to which each icon has a specific place assigned to it in

the iconostasis. According to this tradition, to the right of the royal gates is the image of Christ Pantocrator, and to the left - the icon of the Virgin Mary with the Child. Behind them are pictures of the archangels Gabriel and Michael.

Next, in parts of the iconostasis, which in the form of side altars overlap the walls, there are icons of the Transfiguration and of the patron of the temple - St. Nicholas. The royal gate is in the central part of the iconostasis. It is fitted with four icons of evangelists and two of Annunciation. Above, attention is drawn by the openwork, decorative rosette. The second row includes circular paintings depicting the most important holidays. The Last Supper was traditionally placed in the finial. The iconostasis was created in the Neoclassical style, in 1876. It is filled with icons created by Adrian Małachow in the mid-19th century.

On the right side of the iconostasis, there is a particularly worshiped 'Białystok Icon of the Mother of God'. The image was meticulously reproduced from copies and photos, because the original was lost during the 'biezenstwo' period, i.e. mass deportations of people deep into Russian territory in 1915. The first version of the painting was at the same time a 17th century copy of the 'Suprasl Icon of the Mother of God', and this one - of the 'Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God' of the Hodegetria type.

Further to the right are the relics of St. Gabriel Zabłudowski, placed in a small silver coffin. They solemnly returned to Poland in 1992, after many transfers from one place to another. The boy, murdered at the end of the 17th century, came from the nearby town of Zwierki. The martyr's body, despite the passage of years, has not decayed. Many miracles are ascribed to him. Canonized in 1820, St. Gabriel enjoys unflinching worship. He is considered the patron of the Orthodox youth.

In 1951, as a result of post-war changes of borders, the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church founded the Orthodox Białystok-Gdańsk diocese. St. Nicholas' Church was raised to the rank of a cathedral temple. This is recalled by the characteristic elevation with the image of an eagle in the centre of the temple.

Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit

13 Antoniuk Fabryczny Street

It is considered one of the most beautiful Orthodox churches in Poland. This is the largest Orthodox temple in our country and one of the largest in Europe. It has two levels used by



Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit, photo by K. Jakubowski

the faithful. The author of the church design and most of its equipment is the esteemed Białystok architect, Jan Kabac. The Construction took place from 1982 to 1999.

The architecture of the temple is full of deep symbolism. The forms of domes and elevations (filled with semicircular arches and ogives in the so-called donkey ridge) are supposed to suggest the flames of fire descending upon the apostles during the Pentecost. Five domes, in the tradition of Eastern religious architecture, symbolize Christ with four Evangelists.

The interior of the temple also arouses the visitors' admiration. The nave laid out on an octagon layout has an area of 800 square meters. It is connected to many spaces, including baptismal font and sacristy. On the eastern side there is an altar part, hidden behind an impressive iconostasis designed by Jan Kabac, carved in floral motifs, crosses and rosettes. Work on it lasted over a decade. 260 icons were written by Wiktor Downar and Aleksander Łoś. The interior of the temple is filled with frescoes created at the beginning of the 21st century. Their authors were iconographers from Donetsk, working under the guidance of Vladimir Telichko. In a huge dome, attention is drawn by 'panikadlo' - a chandelier reminiscent of a crown, with stained glass images of saints and apostles. It was created in Minsk, has a diameter of 6 m and weighs 1200 kg. This is the only such object in the world.

In 2006, construction of the belfry began. It was also designed by Jan Kabac. The soaring, slender structure is 70 m high and it matches perfectly the church architecture. From

the height of 30 m to the dome little flowers made of white stainless metal fill the space with glittering light, symbolising the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. The arches incorporate mosaics with images of the Mother of God, Christ and saints, created in Donetsk. Together they cover an area of 60 m².

St. Sofia Orthodox Church

5 Trawiasta Street

Bialystok Hagia Sophia was erected in the late 20th century. Michał Balała's design refers to the most famous temple of the Byzantium Empire in both in ideological and architectural terms. At the same time, it remains firmly inscribed in the history and landscape of Bialystok.

Built on a rectangular layout, the temple has five domes, the largest of which is 16 m wide. Four smaller domes are crowned with towers located in the corners of the building. The church was built of brick, with rich decoration on the elevations - overlapping semi-circular arches resting on pilasters. The façade is dominated by a round entrance portal with mosaics.



St. Sofia Orthodox Church, photo by A. Tarasewicz

The interior of the temple is filled with frescoes. Their concept was developed by an outstanding professor from Thessaloniki, Konstantinos Ksenopoulos, and they were painted by four Greek artists. The main dome contains a wonderful image of Christ Pantocrator surrounded by angels. In the apse, above the single-row iconostasis, there is a fresco of the Mother of God in an orant posture, and below, the Eucharist of the Apostles. The author of the icons in the iconostasis was a Greek artist Konstantinos Spandinos.



Orthodox Church of the Resurrection
photo by A. Tarasewicz

Orthodox Church of the Resurrection

9 W. Sikorskiego Street

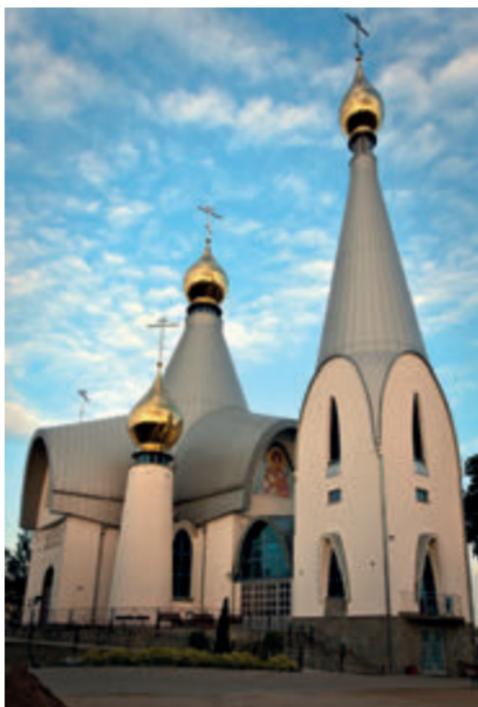
The temple was built according to the concept of Białystok architects, Jan Kabac and Jerzy Uścińowicz, in the 1990s. It may serve as a proof that designers of modern projects can successfully draw inspiration from historical traditions. The authors referred to examples of sacred building of the Novgorod school of ancient Ruthenia. The entire interior is decorated with polychromes created by artists from Belarus - Wiktor and Aleksy Downar as well

as Andrew Rummo. The oak iconostasis is filled with icons made by students of the Post-secondary School of Iconography in Bielsk Podlaski. Attention is also drawn to 'panidilo' – a chandelier with images of the twelve apostles.

St. George's Orthodox Church

36 K. Pułaskiego Street

The two-level temple, which enraptures with its modern shape, was designed by Professor Jerzy Uścińowicz. The cornerstone was laid in 2000, and the construction continued for over a decade. Five onion-shaped, gilded domes rise above the characteristic, curved roof of the church. The person responsible for the decoration of the upper church - frescoes, design of iconostasis and its icons, was Jarosław Wiszenko.



Orthodox Church of St. George, photo
by I. Czajkowska

BIALYSTOK TROUGH A PILGRIM'S EYES



Mural with images of blessed Fr. Sopoćko and St. Faustyna, photo by A. Tarasewicz

The capital of Podlasie generates interest among Catholic pilgrims because of its connection with the figure of blessed Michał Sopoćko - spiritual confidant of St. Faustyna Kowalska. By a stroke of fate, these two Apostles of the Divine Mercy met in Vilnius. It was Fr. Sopoćko who, as the confessor of the future saint, encouraged her to write down mystical and spiritual experiences in the form of a Diary. He also contributed to the creation of the first painting of Merciful Jesus by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski and to Ludomir Sleńdziński's painting currently displayed in Bia-

lystok. Inspired by the revelations of Sister Faustina, he devoted himself to promote the cult of the Divine Mercy. He published many works on this subject, founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus, and strove for a holiday to be established.

Fr. Sopoćko came to Białystok after leaving Vilnius in 1947. Here he spent the last three decades of his life, continuing his pastoral work. He inscribed himself in the memory of Białystok residents not only as a tireless advocate of the Divine Mercy, but also as an outstanding lecturer in the Higher Theological Seminary, a scientist, propagator of the idea of sobriety, organiser of religious life, and a spiritual guide.

Places related to Father Sopoćko's life and activity are easy to find thanks to the pilgrimage and tourist trail in the footsteps of the blessed Fr. Michał Sopoćko: <http://szlak.archibial.pl/>.

Some of the most important locations on the trail have been described below.



Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

Sanctuary of The Divine Mercy

1 bł. ks. Michała Sopoćki Square

Fr. Sopoćko's ultimate dream was the establishment of the Sanctuary of The Divine Mercy. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the realization of these plans - the idea materialized after the priest's death. The temple was consecrated on September 30, 2007. The mortal remains of the blessed Fr. Sopoćko rest in a chapel in the upper church. In the lower church are the relics of Saint Sister Faustina. Noteworthy is the building itself, in which the architecture expresses the symbolism of the cult of the Divine Mercy. In their design, architects Andrzej Nowakowski and Janusz Pawłowski, emphasized rays radiating from a central place in the church - the tabernacle, and the painting of Merciful Jesus by Krystyna Zawadzka. In front of the temple, a papal altar has been erected, a memento of the mass which John Paul II celebrated at the airport in Białystok during his visit in 1991.

Chapel of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus

42 Poleska Street

Fr. Michał Sopoćko spent the last years of his life under the care of the Missionary Sisters, to whom he moved in the early 1970s, when he needed care due to his age. Until the last days of his life, he propagated the cult of the Divine Mercy while serving in the chapel, with which he was associated



Chapel of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus, photo by A. Tarasewicz

from 1955. He died in the house of the Missionary Sisters on February 15, 1975.

The house where Fr. Sopoćko lived

9 Żłota Street

The two-storey house from 1934 is a beautiful example of wooden buildings typical of pre-war Białystok. From 1947, for over 20 years, Fr. Sopoćko rented flat number 4 in this building.



The house at 9 Żłota Street, photo by A. Tarasewicz

TARTARS IN BIALYSTOK



Tartar delicacies, photo by K. Jakubowski

Podlasie, as a land of the Polish orient, has for a long time attracted tourists from all over the country. Visits to historical mosques in Kruszyniany and Bohoniki, and walks through historic mizars – Tartar Cemeteries – leave unforgettable impressions. In those places that have not changed much for centuries, we will easily be transported several hundred years into the past to 1679, when the Lion of Lechia, King Jan III Sobieski, handed over Podlasie villages to Tartar cavalry units in exchange for their faithful service to the Commonwealth. In

your mind's eye you can see riders, progenitors of our uhlans, who set their tugs in the lands given to them.

Today, the descendants of former steppe warriors live not only on the lands received in the 17th century, but also in the cities and towns of the region. From the 19th century, many of them settled in Bialystok. Currently, they form a community of several hundred people. Here are the seats of the Highest Board of the Muslim Religious Union and Mufti of the Republic of Poland. Religious, social and cultural life flourishes. The centre of Tartar activities in Bialystok is the Prayer House at Piastowska Street.

It is worth adding that in recent decades, the Islamic community in Bialystok has grown, as many Chechens have found their second home in Podlasie. It is not the first time that Bialystok has become a new homeland for war refugees. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries emigrants from turbulent Turkey settled in this region.

They quickly became part the city, establishing the famous confectioneries that tempted with the taste of Turkish delight and sweet Turkish breads

Mutual relations with the Muslim minority in Bialystok follow the tradition of peaceful coexistence which has survived in Podlasie for many centuries.

Muslim house of prayer

13 f Piastowska Street

For the Bialystok Tartar community this wooden building from the 1930s is a mosque, a place of prayer as well as occasional meetings. The ground floor houses a prayer room arranged like a mosque - with a mihrab, i.e. a niche directed towards Mecca, and a wooden minbar. The first floor is used by the members of the board of the Muslim Religious Union and its head, the Mufti of the Republic of Poland. The Muslim Culture Centre in Bialystok is open to individual visitors during the secretary's office working hours - from Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm, and by appointment for organised groups.

Bialystok is one of the places on the Tartar Trail, whose description can be found in the chapter The Environs of Bialystok (page 106).



Interior of the house of prayer, photo by A. Tarasewicz

JEWS IN BIALYSTOK

For almost three centuries, Jews constituted an integral (and for a time dominant in numbers) part of the Bialystok community. Today, we will not hear Yiddish in the city streets. No passerby will hum 'Bialystok majn hejm'. We will not see the famous Tykocin tallits waving in shop windows. We will not visit a Jewish theatre or cabaret. We will not come to the synagogue to compare the beauty of the cantors' singing. And if we manage to eat some Jewish delicacy, its taste will be completely different from what it used to be.

The history of Jewish settlement in Bialystok dates back to the 1750s. The first privilege determining their status was granted to them by Stefan Mikołaj Branicki, in 1692. The town owner allowed them to have a temple, a hospital and a cemetery. The area where they were to settle - next to Gościniec Suraski - was also marked out at that time.

Both the number and percentage of Jewish residents of the town were continuously increasing. In 1663, 75 Jews paid taxes. In 1800 there were already 1788, which constituted 45% of Bialystok residents. In 1914, when the capital of Podlasie was inhabited by almost 100,000 people, 66% of them were Jews.

Most of them were poor, but the wealthiest buyers, entrepreneurs - owners of textile factories were part of the elite of the city. There were also those who got fabulously rich, like Isaac Zabłudowski - a merchant, the first Jewish millionaire in Russia.



Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, photo by A. Grabowski

The Białystok Jews were very politically and socially engaged. The city is recognized as one of the cradles of Zionism and a leading centre of the workers' movement. At the turn of 1905 and 1906, Białystok became an arena of strikes, protests and even bomb attacks. In this tense atmosphere, pogroms of the Jewish population took place, instigated by the tsarist authorities. The most devastating one took place in June 1906 - more than eighty people were murdered, and as many were wounded. The victims are commemorated by a monument erected at the Jewish cemetery at Wschodnia Street.

The richest Jews settled in the city centre. The hub of the oldest Jewish district of Szulhof was the Synagogue Square. The first synagogue was built there probably as early as the 17th century. In the years 1903-1913, an impressive Great Synagogue in a Moorish style was erected. Further on, the quarters of Chanajki and Piaski were inhabited by the poor.

The Jewish community of Białystok disappeared during World War II. Jews became subjected to bloody repressions from the very first hours of German occupation that started on June 27, 1941. Soon after, a ghetto was set up in Białystok - one of the largest on Polish lands. It is estimated that about 60,000 people passed through it. Virtually all of them were murdered during the pacification operations or in extermination camps, mainly in Treblinka. Resistance movement was active in the Białystok ghetto. On August 16, 1943, an armed uprising broke out. It had no chance of succeeding despite the heroism of the fighters.

The German occupation ended not only with the extermination of Jewish inhabitants of the city, but also with the destruction of most of the material mementos of this community. The centre of Białystok virtually ceased to exist. Of the dozens of synagogues and houses of prayer, only three buildings remained: the Cytron Synagogue, the devastated Piaskower Synagogue at Piękna Street and completely



Cytron Synagogue
photo by I. Czajkowska

destroyed (after the war rebuilt in a very simplified form) Samuel Mohilewer Synagogue at Branickiego Street. The rabbinical cemetery was razed to the ground.

The few preserved fragments of the material heritage of the Białystok Jews and the places associated with them can be located thanks to the Jewish Heritage Trail in Białystok: <http://szlak.uwb.edu.pl/>.

Cytron Synagogue

24 a L. Waryńskiego Street

The synagogue was built in 1936 from the funds of the Cytron family of manufacturers. It functioned until 1968. During the German occupation it was in the ghetto and operated in secret. In the 1970s, the original layout was obscured and the remains of rich furnishings destroyed.

It is a two-storey modernist building made of plastered brick. Attention is drawn to the characteristic windows under semicircular lintels on the upper floor. Originally, there were ornamental decorations in the panels below the windows. Since 1993, the synagogue is the seat of the Słędziński family Gallery (as at June 30, 2019).



Cemetery at Wschodnia Street, photo by A. Tarasewicz

The Jewish cemetery

at Wschodnia Street

The cemetery was founded in the suburb of Wygoda, in the 1890s. It replaced the previous main Jewish necropolis - the rabbinical cemetery. Currently, it covers an area of about 10 ha. About 6,000 tombstones have survived to our times. In recent years, some of the matzevot have been renovated. The ohel of rabbi Chaim Herz Halpern, erected in 1922, is located in the central part of the cemetery. The victims of the pogrom perpetrated in 1906 were buried in the cemetery and commemorated with a monument in the form of a granite obelisk. Only groups with a guide can visit the cemetery.



Monument on the site of the Great Synagogue, photo: The Municipal Office in Białystok

Monument on the site of the Great Synagogue

The area between Suraska and Legionowa streets

On June 27, 1941, German troops entered Białystok, and immediately murders began on the city streets. Over 2,000 Jews were killed on the memorable Black Friday. Germans forced about 800 people into the building of the Great Synagogue. The Nazis threw grenades inside and set the building on fire, the imprisoned burned alive. Along with the synagogue, the flames consumed virtually the entire district. The monument commemorating the victims was created in 1995. Its shape refers to the bent, burnt structure of the dome of the Great Synagogue.

Monument to the Ghetto Insurgents and the ghetto cemetery

Żabia Street, Mordechaja Tenenbauma Square

In 1941, a Jewish cemetery was established at Żabia Street - the only Jewish cemetery in occupied Europe founded in the ghetto during the war. It became the resting place of the victims of Nazi terror and of insurgents who fell during the fighting in August 1943.

Currently, the former Cemetery area contains a monument surrounded by an iron fence - this is where the exhumed remains of over 3,500 people were entombed. Right next to it there is a commemorative black obelisk with a tribute to the heroes of the fight in the Białystok ghetto inscribed on it in three languages - Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish. Ceremonies in their memory are organized every August 16, on the anniversary of the outbreak of the uprising.



Monument at the ghetto cemetery, photo by A. Grabowski

BIALYSTOK, THE CAPITAL OF ESPERANTO



Esperanto flag.

Photo from the archive of the Medical University in Białystok

Undoubtedly, no other person who lived in Białystok became as well known in the world as Ludwik Zamenhof. The creator of the international language Esperanto spent the first several years of his life in the capital of Podlasie. As he emphasized, it was a key period for shaping his perception of the world: *The place of*

my birth and childhood, Białystok, determined the direction of all my future endeavours. Białystok was inhabited by [...] Russians, Poles, Germans and Jews. [...] In such a city, more than anywhere else, sensitive nature feels the burden of multilingualism and easily comes to the conclusion that language diversity is at least one of the main reasons that tears the human family into hostile parts.

Ludwik Zamenhof was born in a Jewish family on December 15, 1859, as the eldest of eleven children of Marek and Rozalia Zamenhof. He inherited from his father, a foreign language teacher, linguistic talents and very quickly decided about his future life path. Already in childhood he decided that he would undertake the task of developing a new language, which on the one hand would be completely artificial - and therefore foreign to everyone - and on the other hand simple enough for everyone to have a chance to master it quickly and efficiently. In the supranational, uni-



Statue of Ludwik Zamenhof, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

versal language, Zamenhof saw a tool that would lead to mutual understanding of the feuding nations and would ensure universal peace in the future. The proof of the great sensitivity of little Ludwik was the drama entitled *Tower of Babel*, which he wrote when he was only 10 years old. In Zamenhof's play, the biblical story was set in the scenery of the multi-ethnic Bialystok market.

In December 1873, the Zamenhof family left Bialystok and moved to Warsaw. There the first version of *lingwe uniuersala* was created. Ludwik continued working on the artificial language without an interruption, although at the same time he studied medicine in Moscow, Warsaw and

Vienna. In 1887, he published *The International Language*. The Preface and the Complete Manual, which quickly gained many enthusiasts around the world, and from the alias 'Dr. Esperanto' (the doctor who hopes) came the name to the universal language. The green star became its symbol. At the time of Zamenhof's death in 1917, Esperanto was valued by thousands of enthusiasts around the world. Today, it is used by about two million people. Esperanto congresses are organized every year. 94th World Congress of Esperantists took place in Bialystok in 2009. The Ludwik Zamenhof Centre was opened on that occasion (page 91).

Birthplace of Ludwik Zamenhof

26 L. Zamenhofa Street

Until the 1930s, there was a wooden house in this place, where Lejzer (Ludwik) Zamenhof was born on December 15, 1859. The family lived on the first floor of the building until they left Bialystok in 1873. Currently, this place is marked by a commemorative plaque and a mural depicting, among others, the figures of Zamenhof and Jakub



Mural in the place where the family home of Ludwik Zamenhof was located, photo: Municipal Office in Bialystok

Szapiro, the founder of the first Esperanto organization in Bialystok and the initiator of renaming former Zielona Street to Zamenhofa Street.

Statue of Ludwik Zamenhof

plaza next to I. Malmeda Street

The bust of the creator of Esperanto was made by Jan Kucz in 1973 and is located on the plaza not far from Zamenhof's birthplace.



Statue of young Ludwik Zamenhof,
photo by A. Tarasewicz

Statue of young Zamenhof

Northern frontage of Kosciuszko Square at Zamenhofa Street

The statue was unveiled on the 102nd anniversary of the death of Ludwik Zamenhof. Made on the initiative of Bialystok residents according to the artistic conception of Ryszard Piotrowski and Katarzyna Piotrowska. The work shows the figure of the creator of Esperanto as a little boy. Letters of Polish, Hebrew and Cyrillic alphabets are embedded in the pavement around him. Young Ludwik certainly crossed the nearby streets many, many times.

Former grammar school (gimnazjum realne)

8 Warszawska Street

From autumn 1869 until December 1873, Zamenhof attended the Bialystok male grammar school. He completed three years of the school and in the middle of the fourth he moved with his family to Warsaw. A commemorative plaque has been placed on the wall of the 1830s building. Currently, the school's traditions are continued by the VI High School - King Sigismund Augustus.

BIALYSTOK DELICACIES

If we sat at a table laden with just local delicacies, what would we find there? Certainly, potato dishes and traditionally served mushrooms - gifts of the surrounding forests - would reign.

Let's start with an appetizer... to begin with, we suggest the legendary herring a'la Bialystok. Or maybe something lighter - salads with **Korycin**, Narwan or dried **cheese**, Podlasie mushrooms with horseradish or dried porcini pate will satisfy the tastes of the most demanding gourmets. Time for soup. Of course, we choose borscht - a'la Podlasie with dried mushrooms and cabbage, or Bialystok way - with juicy apples, or maybe mushroom soup, preferably **Bialystok honey fungus soup**. In summer, be sure to try **chlodnik a'la Bialystok** served with eggs and potatoes, or Lithuanian borscht with beetroot roots and leaves, and in the most sophisticated version - with the addition of crayfish necks.

Among the main dishes, the unquestioned queen is **potato babka**, rooted in Jewish cuisine. It was once served with a blot of sour cream, today more often with mushroom or goulash sauce. Another contender for the crown - **Kishka**, that is, potato stuffing neatly packed in pork bowels and baked in a well-heated oven. It is difficult to find it outside Podlasie.

Kartacze, also called **cepelinai**, derive from the Lithuanian cuisine. Their oblong, oval shape can really bring to mind an airship - zeppelin - flying above Bialystok over 100 years ago. Cepelinai are large dumplings made with pastry containing grated potatoes, formed around a stuffing of chopped meat.



Potato babka, photo by A. Tarasewicz



Buza, photo by A. Tarasewicz

They are served doused with fat, crackling and onion. You can also try vegetarian versions with mushroom, cheese or sauerkraut filling.

Another noteworthy dish with Lithuanian roots are **kaldyny** - small dumplings made of wheat dough stuffed with meat. Tartar kaldyny are their slightly larger version. **Pierekachevnik** also originates from the cuisine of Tartars who have been living in Podlasie for centuries. It is an oval, rolled dumpling made of many thin layers of dough layered with beef and mutton stuffing or - in the sweet version - with cheese or apple stuffing.

You must try Podlasie smoked pork and dried lunch meats, especially **kindziukas** and **kumpiak**. Traditionally smoked fish are also delicious. They are served with **brine-pickled gherkins** from barrels immersed in the waters of Narew River, which - as legend has it - delighted Napoleon himself, and **sauerkraut made with pickled whole heads of cabbage**.

And what shall we offer you to drink? Of course, **bread kvass** or even bread and hops kvass, local craft beers, or maybe something stronger - a shot glass of local **moonshine made of grain**, nalewka - kind of tincture - made of dog rose (żenicha), hedgenettle (bukwiczówka) or zubrovka vodka (made of bison grass). For dessert, we serve a golden **sękacz**, baked slowly on a wooden roller rotating over the fire. The dripping mass creates characteristic knots (Polish: sęki), hence the name of the delicacy. The layers of dough resemble tree rings. This recipe came to Podlasie from nearby Prussia. **Mrowisko** (anthill) derives from the Lithuanian tradition - a very picturesque baking: a mound made of thin angel wings sprinkled with poppy seeds, raisins and doused with Podlasie honey. It is also worth trying a fluffy **marcinek**, which consists of several dozens of thin pancakes layered with cream. It used to be served at the Tsar's court in the Białowieża palace.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the unique Bialystok **buza**. This slightly sparkling, cloudy drink of a bright straw-like colour is made on the basis of millet, lemon and sugar. Perfectly refreshes and quenches thirst. It has a sweet and sour taste with a slight hint of raisins and yeast. **Buza should be well chilled and served in the company of halva.** In 2017, the drink won the first prize in 'Our Culinary Heritage - Tastes of the Regions' competition and, since 2018, it has been included in the list of traditional products of the Podlasie Voivodeship kept by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. You will struggle to find it outside the capital of Podlasie. A recipe for a buza was brought to Bialystok by Macedonians fleeing the war-torn Balkans. The first buza, or the place where the buza was served, was set up over 100 years ago and, soon after, new ones appeared. In Bialystok of the 1920s and 1930s, it was fashionable to have buza with halva in a Macedonian buza, visit a Turkish confectionery for a Turkish delight, and another delicious snack was Jewish **bialas**, i.e. yeast roll with onion and poppy seeds.

Bialystok has always been a place where Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and even German and Russian cuisines coexisted. This mixture of nationalities and cultures was enriched by Tartars from Podlasie as well as Macedonian and Turkish refugees. Culinary traditions intermingled, creating new qualities and - above all - seduced with the unique taste of Podlasie...



Potato kishka, photo by A. Tarasewicz



Muzeum Historii
Medycyny i Farmacji UM



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HISTORII
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CULTURE AND ART

GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

Arsenal Gallery

2 A. Mickiewicza Street

13 Elektryczna Street

galeria-arsenal.pl

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Arsenal Gallery is one of the best contemporary art galleries in Poland. It has a rich collection of paintings, drawings, installations, videos, photographs and items – Collection II, which consists of over 250 works representing the most important trends in art of the last three decades. Every year, the institution organizes about 20 exhibitions of the most significant Polish and foreign artists. The Arsenal Gallery is located in the historic interiors of the Branicki Palace complex (page 15) and in the modernist building of the former power plant (page 48).

Sleńdziński Family Gallery

(during the reorganization, as of June 30, 2019)

24 a L. Waryńskiego Street

9am to 5pm, and on Sunday from 11am to 5pm

5 Wiktorii Street

Open to visitors on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday from 11am–5pm

galeriaslendzinskih.pl

EXHIBITION HALL

ul. Legionowa 2

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Friday: 10am–6pm, and on Saturday and Sunday: 11am–5pm

The gallery operates in three facilities. The oldest of them, located in the historic building of the Cytron synagogue (page 78), houses a permanent exhibition dedicated to the family of outstanding Vilnius artists – Sleńdzińskis. Contemporary art lovers should visit the exhibition hall at Legionowa Street. On the other hand, at Wiktorii Street, photo exhibitions are on display in a wooden house typical of the Bojary district (p. 40).

Białystok Town Hall

MAIN LOCATION OF THE PODLASIE MUSEUM IN BIALYSTOK

10 Kościuszki Square

muzeum.bialystok.pl/ratusz-w-bialymstoku/

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 10am-5pm

The interiors of the Białystok Town Hall (page 32) house a permanent exhibition of paintings, including the works of such outstanding artists as: Witkacy, Jacek Malczewski, Olga Boznańska, Jan Stanisławski, Julian Fałat and Stanisław Wyspiański. Original portraits of Izabela and Jan Klemens Branicki are also presented. It is worth paying attention to the temporary exhibitions, the thematic range of which is very wide - from archaeology and history to folklore, arts and crafts.

Alfons Karny Sculpture Museum

BRANCH OF THE PODLASIE MUSEUM IN BIALYSTOK

17 Świętojańska Street

muzeum.bialystok.pl/muzeum-rzezby-alfonsa-karnego/

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 10am-5pm

The perfectly preserved interiors of a 19th century villa (page 44) contain the artistic achievements of Alfons Karny, who is considered one of the greatest sculptors of the 20th century. The artist was born in Białystok and spent his childhood and youth here.

Historical Museum

BRANCH OF THE PODLASIE MUSEUM IN BIALYSTOK

37 Warszawska Street

muzeum.bialystok.pl/muzeum-historyczne/

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 10am-5pm

A visit to the Historical Museum is the best proposition for those who would like to move in time to Białystok at the beginning of the last century. The interiors of the Cytron's palace of in Art Nouveau style (page 37) have been meticulously restored and filled with furnishings from 100 years ago. They perfectly convey the appearance and atmosphere of a home of the wealthiest burghers. In addition, the museum presents one of the largest mockups in Poland - it shows Białystok in the 18th century. It can be admired as the show entitled *'Versailles of the North' bathed in sounds and lights*.

Army Museum

7 J. Kilińskiego Street

mwb.com.pl

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 9.30am-5pm

Located in a modernist townhouse (p. 48), the museum, in three permanent exhibitions, presents military units, especially those associated with Podlasie, from the outbreak of World War I to modern times. Modern exhibitions present showpieces in a carefully arranged scenery, in the form of dioramas and using multimedia.

Siberia Memorial Museum

26 H. Sienkiewicza Street

sybir.bialystok.pl

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 9.30am-5.00pm

Białystok suffered greatly during Soviet deportations, losing about 20,000 inhabitants. A special museum being erected at Węglówka will be devoted to the fate of people exiled to Siberia, both during World War II and earlier. The finishing works on the modern building of the facility are currently taking place. Work has already begun on the permanent exhibition. For now, there is an education and exhibition centre presenting souvenirs, documents and photographs from the times of the four great deportations from 1940-1941.

Museum of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF BIAŁYSTOK

1 J. Kilińskiego Street

umb.edu.pl/muzeum_historii_medycyny_i_farmacji

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Friday: 10am-6pm, and on Saturday and Sunday: 9am-5pm

The museum is located in the right wing of the Branicki Palace. We will see here, among other things, restored interiors of a 19th-century pharmacy, dentist office and military hospital. Due to its location, the institution presents exhibitions related to the palace. Thanks to museum guides, you can learn about the history of the residence, following two thematic routes: 'A walk into the past' – a historical path that leads through the palace basement and representative rooms, and a shorter one, including the museum exhibition and the Great Hall with the chapel. Guided tours take place at scheduled times.

Professor Andrzej Myrcha Natural Science Centre

UNIVERSITY OF BIAŁYSTOK

1 j Ciołkowskiego Street

uwb.edu.pl/universyteckie-centrum-przyrodnicze-im-profesora-andrzeja-myrchy

Open to visitors from Monday to Friday: 9am - 3pm, and on Saturday: 10am-2pm

Nature lovers, people interested in fossils and minerals, curious about fauna and flora of north-eastern Poland and... polar regions should definitely plan a visit to the Natural Science Museum at the University campus in Białystok (page 50). The cabinet of Ryszard Kaczorowski - the last President of the Republic of Poland in exile - donated by his wife in 2011, is also exhibited here.

Podlasie Museum of Folk Culture

7 Leśna Street, Wasilków

skansen.bialystok.pl

Open to visitors from Monday to Sunday: 9am-7pm (shorter hours off-season)

The open-air museum is located at the exit route towards Augustów. Its collection contains examples of traditional wooden architecture from Podlasie. In their interiors you can see exhibitions on many aspects of everyday life including folk art. The original illicit distillery from the Knyszyn Forest arouses the emotions of visitors. Another curiosity is the Ecological Education Centre of the Podlasie Falconry Museum sustaining the Polish falconry tradition. The open-air museum hosts many events on the folk culture of the region, such as the Tastes of Podlasie, the Tartar Culture Festival and Podlasie Fragrant with Herbs.



Podlasie Museum of Folk Culture, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok

Archdiocesan Museum in Białystok

48 Warszawska Street

archibial.pl/instytucje/archiwum-i-muzeum-archidiecezjalne/archiwummuzeumbialystok.blogspot.com

Open to visitors from Monday to Friday: 9am–1.30pm

The museum collects artefacts of sacred art and mementos of religious life and culture from the area of the Archdiocese of Białystok. It also has a collection of contemporary religious art, which is dominated by works of Podlasie artists.

Museum of Old Vehicles and Moto Retro Technics

MUZEUM AT WĘGŁOWA

8 Węglowa Street

motoretro.org.pl

Open to visitors on Sundays: 11am–3pm

The museum founded by a group of enthusiasts from the Moto Retro society displays antique cars, motorbikes and technical equipment in the scenery of a former military warehouse at Węglowa Street.

Ludwik Zamenhof Centre – Białystok Cultural Centre

19 Warszawska Street

centrumzamenhofa.pl

Open to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday: 10am–5pm

The facility houses a multimedia permanent exhibition, thanks to which you can move back to Białystok at the time of Ludwik Zamenhof's childhood and familiarise yourself with that city and the character of the creator of Esperanto. Temporary exhibitions, often devoted to photography, change periodically. It is the place of many interesting cultural and educational events referring to the multicultural identity of Białystok.



Ludwik Zamenhof Centre – Białystok Cultural Centre, photo by I. Czajkowska

BIALYSTOK MUSIC AND THEATRE STAGES

Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic – European Art Centre in Białystok

1 Odeska Street
oifp.eu

The Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic (OiFP) operating for several years in a modern building (page 49), is the largest institution of this type in eastern Poland. Its rich repertoire includes operas, operettas and musicals as well as classical and popular music concerts. It is worth buying tickets well in advance. Exhibitions of paintings, photography, and opera artifacts are organized in the foyer.

Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theatre

12 Elektryczna Street
dramatyczny.pl

The oldest theatre stage in the city has been functioning in a historic, modernist building since 1938 (p. 46). Plays dealing with key contemporary problems are shown here, as well as light entertainment, but at the same time ambitious, repertoire.

Białystok Puppet Theatre

1 K. Kalinowskiego Street
btl.bialystok.pl

The Białystok Puppet Theatre, awarded dozens of prizes, is one of the most valued puppet groups in Poland. The repertoire is addressed not only to children of different ages, but also to adult viewers. Its roots date back to the 1950s, and since 1979 it has been operating in its current location (page 48).

Department of Puppetry Art

14 H. Sienkiewicza Street
atb.edu.pl

The Białystok Department of Puppetry Arts is a branch of the Theatre Academy in Warsaw. It has been operating since 1975. There is a school stage presenting students' performances. Every two years the 'Lalka-nie-lalka' ('Doll-not-doll') International Festival of Puppetry Schools is organized.

Białystok belongs to the Association of Puppet Friendly Cities, and this is confirmed not only by performances and festivals, but also by sculptures in the urban space. On Suraska Street

we will find a granite theatre 'Mask' made by Bogusław Szycki, and at Lipowa Street - 'Travel' - a sculpture created by Michał Jackowski.

Białystok Cultural Centre

5 Legionowa Street
bok.bialystok.pl

The seat of the Białystok Cultural Centre (Białostocki Ośrodek Kultury - BOK) is located in Legionowa street. It includes the Forum cinema and Fama cafe associated in the Local and Studio Cinema Network. It is a place not only of film screenings, concerts and festivals, but also photo exhibitions. The Białystok Cultural Centre has been organizing events for many years: Contemporary Art Days, East Culture / Another Dimension Festival, ¿Underground/Independent? Culture Festival and ŻUBROFFKA International Short Film Festival.

For over 40 years, BOK has been organizing Autumn with Blues, the oldest blues festival in Poland, and for 35 – Zaduszki (All Souls' Day) Blues. Thanks to them Białystok is an important location on the blues map of Poland. The material trace of these connections is Bluesa Avenue, located between Suraska and Legionowa streets. At the passage, stone plates are formed in the shape of piano keys, and metal plaques commemorate artists and promoters of this genre of music.



Mask at Suraska Street,
photo by K. Jakubowski



Bluesa Avenue,
photo by I. Czajkowska

Voivodeship Culture Promotion Centre

8 J. Kilińskiego Street
14 św. Rocha Street
www.woak.bialystok.pl

Voivodeship Culture Promotion Centre (WOAK) was founded in 1957 and is one of the oldest institutions involved in initiating cultural activities and promoting cultural life in Podlasie. WOAK organizes exhibitions of contemporary and folk art in the gallery at 8 Kilińskiego Street and in the so-called 'Saucers' at 14 św. Rocha Street, where you can also see a collection of costumes and souvenirs related to the famous 'Kurpie Zielone' ('Green Krupie') Song and Dance Ensemble. The flagship cultural event organized by WOAK is the Podlasie Octave of Cultures held annually in July.

CYCLICAL CULTURE EVENTS

	Month
New Year's celebrations	January
Cavalcade of Magi	January
Dance Fest Carnival – Modern Dance Festival	February
Days of Borderland Culture and the Great Kaziuk Fair	March
¿Underground/Independent? Culture Festival	March
Bialystok Easter Fair	March/April
'Kopyść' Sailors' Song Festival	April
International Book Fair – 'On the border of cultures' Literary festival	April
Motoserce (Motoheart)	April
'Kaleidoscope' – International festival of contemporary dance	April/May
Contemporary Art Days	May
Night of Museums	May
Art Books for Children Festival	May
Jana Kilińskiego Street Fete	May
'Belarusian Song' all-Poland Festival	May
'Hajnowka' International Orthodox Church Music Festival in Białystok	May
'Baroque Gardens of Art' Festival	June
The Days of the City of Białystok	June
Białystok Midsummer Fair	June
Halfway Festival	June

Jewish Culture Festival "Zachor - Colour and Sound"	June
International Puppetry Schools' Festival	June
International Festival of Puppet Theatres for Adults "Doll Metamorphoses"	June
Military Picnic "Mission East"	June
Podlasie Breakfast of Champions	June/ August
Summer with historic monuments	June/ September
Tartar Culture Festival	June/July
International festival of music, art and folklore "Podlasie Octave of Cultures"	July
New Pop Festival	July
Cathedral Organ Concerts	July/August
Julitta Sleńdzińska International Festival of Early Music	August
Extreme Festival Białystok	September
Up to Date Festival	September
Dawn of Culture/Another Dimension	September
Collected Literary Festival	October
Festival of Cultures and Travel "World-Curious"	October
Blues All Saints' Day	November
Autumn with Blues	November
ŻUBROFFKA International Short Film Festival	December
Antique Fair near the Town Hall	every third Sunday of the month



**BIALYSTOK
FOR ACTIVE PEOPLE**

SPORT AND RECREATION

Białystok is one of the largest sports and recreation centres in eastern Poland. City residents and tourists can engage in many disciplines at both competitive and recreational levels. The green surroundings of the capital of Podlasie encourage you to spend time actively, while the extensive urban infrastructure enables everyone to find an attractive proposition for themselves.

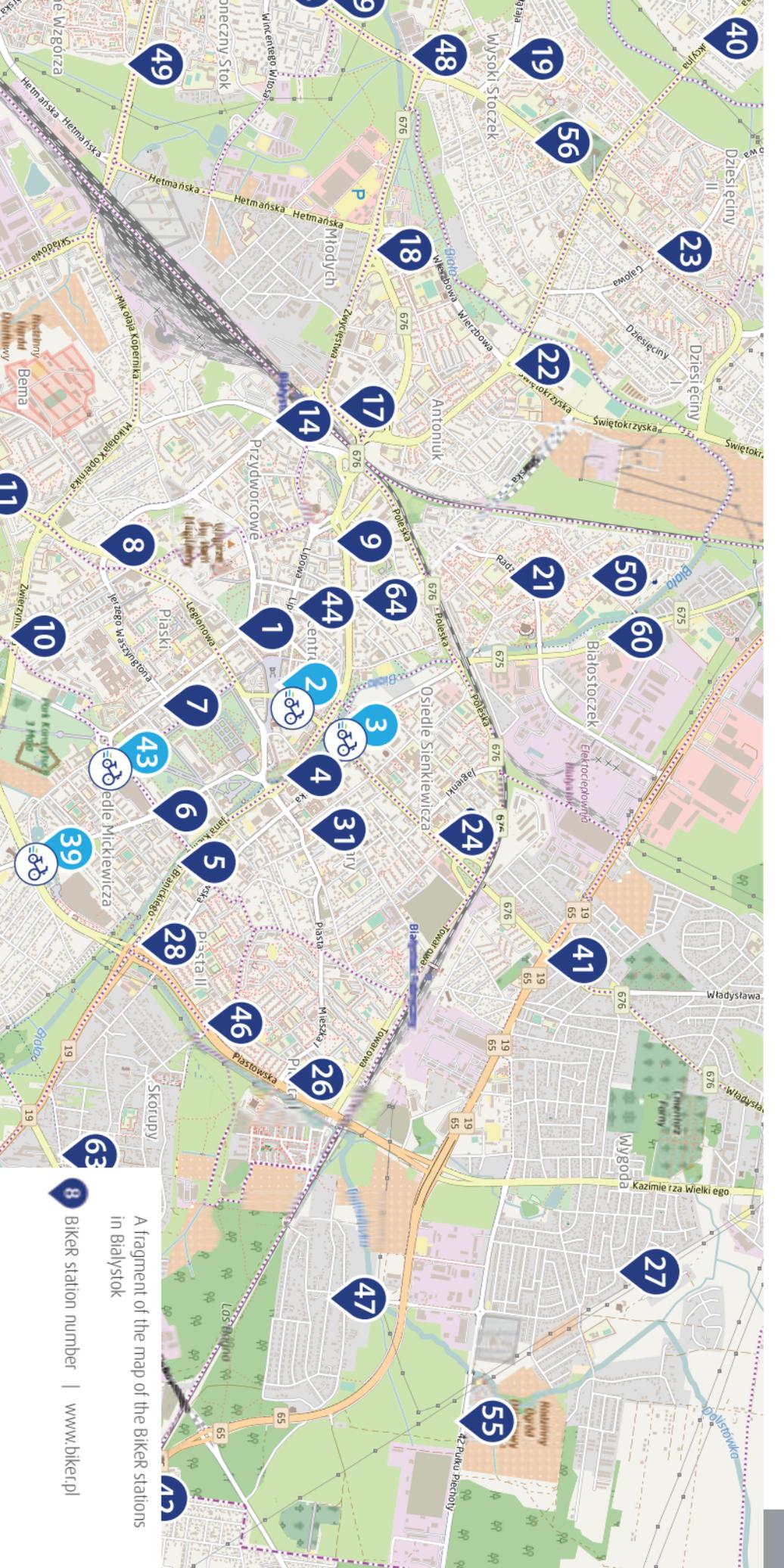
Białystok parks and nearby forests are the perfect scenery for walking or cycling trips. In winter, they become a paradise for cross-country skiers (the first illuminated cross-country skiing trail in Poland is located in Pietrasze Forest). Water sports enthusiasts find their heaven on the Dojlidy Lake. Krywlany Airport attracts fans of airplanes and gliders. Award-winning Białystok balloonists also take their aerial voyages there. The Rising Białystok Track is nearby. There are several swimming pools with recreation zones and a bathing resort in the city. You can find skateparks at Węglówka and in Jadwiga Dziekońska Park. In winter, you can go ice skating on the indoor ice rink at Zwierzyniecka Street. Right next to it, the athletes exercise at their own stadium. Nearby are indoor tennis courts. However, the most famous venue is the modern Municipal Stadium which attracts crowds of fans, especially football and the Jagiellonia Białystok football club fans.

It is hard not to notice the large numbers of cyclists on Białystok streets. There are well-connected cycle paths of a total length of more than 120 km. Every year their range is being systematically expanded. Białystok is an important location on the trail of the longest bicycle route in Poland - Green Velo. However, what enthusiasts of two wheels value the most are BiKeRs, beloved by Białystok residents.

Bikers

bikerbialystok.pl

Białystok Bicycle Communication - BiKeR started operating in 2014 and very quickly became extremely popular among city residents and tourists. More than 75,000 people use city bikes, and the number of rentals per year exceeded half a million a good while ago. Over 650 two-wheelers, including tandems and children's bikes, are available in 64 stations



A fragment of the map of the Biker stations
in Białystok

8 Biker station number | www.biker.pl

scattered throughout the city and even in nearby municipalities. To become a user of BiKeR Białystok Bicycle Communication, simply register on bikerbialystok.pl, which takes about a minute. For the first 20 minutes the use of bicycles is free of charge.

“Dojlidy” Water Sports Centre

1 Plażowa Street

miejskoaktywni.pl



Zalew w Dojlidach, fot. Urząd Miejski w Białymstoku

Located within the city limits, at the picturesque lake, the ‘Dojlidy’ Water Sports Centre is a favourite place for rest and recreation for Białystok residents. In summer, it attracts the sunbathers to a sandy beach, numerous playgrounds, an outdoor gym, as well as beach football pitches and volleyball courts. There is a guarded lido, a water playground for children and a water equipment rental place. Lovers of hiking, biking and skiing can benefit from an extensive network of routes and places where you can rent Nordic walking poles, bicycles, and cross-country skis in winter. The facility has a camping site with infrastructure for camper vans, barbecue and bonfire areas, a sailing port and fishing piers.

Municipal swimming pools

miejskoaktywni.pl

Water sports enthusiasts can choose from several modern facilities. At 4 Włókiennicza Street, a Sports Swimming Pool operates, including a full-size swimming pool, a trampoline and slide, as well as a comfortable relaxation area equipped with a recreational pool, paddling pool for children, jacuzzi

and sauna. If you are looking for some leisure, visit the Kameralna Swimming Pool at 39 C Mazowiecka Street. Parents with children usually choose the Family Pool at 1 A Stroma Street where, apart from a full-size pool, sauna and jacuzzi, there is also a special zone with paddling pools and slides, as well as other attractions for children.

Municipal Stadium

1 Słoneczna Street

stadion.bialystok.pl

The Municipal Stadium, open to the public in 2014, is the largest and most modern facility of this type in the region. The pitch with natural, heated turf is surrounded by stands for 22,368 spectators. Next to it is a full-scale training pitch with artificial turf and lighting. The complex was designed by the APA Kuryłowicz & Associates studio headed by Stefan Kuryłowicz, one of the most eminent Polish architects. Matches of Białystok Jagiellonia are played at the stadium. American footballers and rugby players compete on the side field. Numerous cultural events, fairs and conferences take place here.



The Municipal Stadium, photo by Municipal Office in Białystok

GREEN BIALYSTOK

In comparison with other large cities, Białystok stands out due to its location among wonderful landscapes and nature. It is surrounded by a wide ring of the Knyszyn Forest. Absolutely unique is the fact that from the very centre of the city you can reach them by walking along a compact corridor of greenery. Such a walk takes about two hours. It starts in the Old Park or in the historic gardens of the Branicki Palace, then the route runs through Planty, the 3 May Constitution Park, and the Zwierzyniecki Forest. From here it is only a few steps to the Solnicki Forest or... to the campus of the Professor Andrzej Myrcha Natural Science Centre, in which you can familiarise yourself with the flora and fauna of Podlasie. Another curiosity that distinguishes our city is that within its borders there are two strict nature reserves: Antoniuk and Zwierzyniecki Forest. All lovers of outdoor recreation will find a place for themselves - both those who appreciate walking in the surroundings of manicured parks, as well as those who seek contact with wild nature.

PRINCE JÓZEF PONIATOWSKI OLD PARK

It was created at the end of the 19th century in the place of a large drained pond and Mars Fields, i.e. a military training square from the time of the commander-in-chief Branicki.



Old Park with the A. Węgierko Theatre, photo by A. Grabowski

The Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theatre is located in the centre of the park. It was erected in the 1930s (page 92). A wide avenue with a modern fountain stretches in front of the modernist building.



Planty, photo by A. Grabowski

PLANTY

The park stretching around the Branicki Palace is located in the 18th century fallow deer and red deer enclosures. Its current appearance was developed in 1950s. In the part neighbouring on Mickiewicz Street runs an impressive Avenue of Lovers with a fountain, which on Saturday and Sunday evenings captivates with the play of lights and shapes drawn by streams of water. Nearby there is a rose garden and a romantic pond with a sculpture of 'Washerwoman' by an outstanding artist Stanisław Horno-Popławski. Parallel to Akademicka Street are the Marian Zyndram Kościałkowski boulevards shaded by old trees remembering Branicki's times.



Fountain in Planty, photo: Municipal Office in Białystok



Bialystok zoo, photo by A. Tarasewicz

3 MAY CONSTITUTION PARK AND AKCENT ZOO

Being part of the Zwierzyniecki Forest, the 3 May Constitution Park was separated in the interwar period. In Branicki's times there was a so-called great bestiary, where huntings were organized. Currently, it is one of the favourite places of recreation for Bialystok residents, especially the youngest who are eager to visit the Akcent Zoo. **The zoo is open free of charge during the hours: 9am–6pm.** It shows species present today and in the past in Podlasie forests, including bison, wolves, lynxes and brown bears.

ZWIERZYNIECKI FOREST RESERVE

The reserve was established to protect natural wet oak-hornbeam forest. Due to its location a short distance from the city centre, it is one of the favourite places of recreation for Bialystok inhabitants. There are numerous walking paths surrounded by over 100-year-old hornbeams and oaks. The main avenue begins at Zwierzyniecka Street.

ANTONIUK RESERVE

The 70-hectare reserve covers part of a natural forest typical of the Bialystok Upland, together with many plant species under legal protection. Interesting features are forest springs and postglacial moraine forms of terrain. A nature trail of about 3 km runs through the reserve. It starts at the highway towards Augustów, near the Podlasie Museum of Folk Culture.

THE ENVIRONS OF BIALYSTOK



Monastery in Supraśl, photo by K. Jakubowski

THE ENVIRONS OF BIALYSTOK

Due to its location in one of the most ecologically valuable regions of Europe, Białystok has become an appreciated centre of nature tourism. There are four national parks within the Podlesie Voivodeship, including the oldest and largest in Poland. Every year, tens of thousands of tourists visit the Białowieża Forest designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site - the last relic of the primeval forests in Europe. Bird lovers are attracted by the great Biebrza National Park with some of Europe's most extensive primeval peat bogs. Just a dozen or so kilometres from Białystok stretches the Narew National Park called the Polish Amazon. Driving north, to the charming Suwałki region, it is impossible to bypass the Wigry National Park. Lovers of the so-called green recreation appreciate the Landscape Park of the Knyszyn Forest on the outskirts of the city.

Białystok attracts thousands of tourists interested in the multicultural tradition and history of Podlasie. The region that has been for centuries the borderland between east and west, captivates with a unique blend of diverse religious and ethical traditions. There is a reason why it is called the land of the Polish Orient - Tartars have lived here for hundreds of years. There are historical mosques in Kruszyniany and Bohoniki that are included in the most prestigious group of Monuments of History located in Poland. The old Jewish synagogues have been preserved in many places. The most famous one is in Tykocin - a town also known for its beautiful Baroque monuments and a castle, whose history dates back to the times of the last Jagiellons.

In most towns in the Białystok region there are both Catholic churches and Orthodox churches. Christians of both rites have lived side by side for hundreds of years. This is the case in Wasilków, Sokółka, Choroszcz, and Supraśl with its magnificent monastery. Podlasie is famous for its beautiful Orthodox churches - the wooden, colourful temples are considered the most charming. They can be found, among other things, in the Land of Open Shutters, where traditionally decorated country houses are still standing. Local craftsmanship, with double weave fabrics appreciated in remote corners of the world, is presented by the Folk Handicraft Trail.

SUPRAŚL

Located in the heart of the Knyszyn Forest, Supraśl is considered by many to be the most beautiful town in Podlasie. It has the status of a spa thanks to its unique microclimate.

Tourists are attracted not only by natural attributes and a special charm of unhurried life, but also by its unique monuments. The hub of the village is the 500 years old Orthodox monastery with an impressive Gothic, defensive church of the Annunciation of the Holy Mother of God. Crowds of tourists are attracted by the famous Icon Museum and the Museum of Printing and Papermaking. The eclectic Buchholtz palace is located in the centre of the town, and 19th century weaver houses have been preserved along the neighbouring streets, a reminder of the times when textile industry flourished in Supraśl.



Mosque in Kruszyniany, photo by A. Tarasewicz

TARTAR TRAIL

In the 17th century, King Jan III Sobieski granted the lands around Sokółka and Krynki to the soldiers of the Tartar banners. Their descendants live there to this day, and tourists following the Tartar Trail can learn about their history, culture and delicious cuisine. The most important places along the trail are Kruszyniany and Bohoniki where you can find the oldest mosques in Poland and historic mizars, i.e. cemeteries. The cemeteries in both villages have been recognized as Historical Monuments, which confirms their great importance for the Polish cultural heritage.

SOKÓŁKA

The town is located along the Tartar Trail. The Museum of the Sokólska Land has an interesting exhibition on the history and culture of the Tartars.

For a decade, Sokółka has attracted crowds of Catholic pilgrims who go to the temple of St. Antoni Padewski. In

2008, a Eucharistic event took place there. The Host which, according to the believers, miraculously transformed itself into a fragment of the human heart muscle is adored in the church chapel.

FOLK CRAFTS TRAIL

The train along which you can familiarise yourself with the traditional folk crafts of Podlasie starts a dozen or so kilometres from Białystok. Pottery workshops and a forge have been operating in Czarna Wieś Kościelna for generations. In Zamczysko you can observe the work of a spoon and ladle maker, and in Sokółka - a sculptor. To this day, the Podlasie double weave fabrics, appreciated by weaving experts around the world, are produced in Janów and nearby villages. It is worth visiting the Folk Handicraft Centre in Niemczyn and the thriving Double Weave Chamber in Janów.

KNYSZYN FOREST LANDSCAPE PARK

It begins on the outskirts of Białystok and is the largest landscape park in our country. It offers countless routes for hiking, cycling, horse riding and cross-country skiing. It protects the unique flora and fauna of Podlasie - twenty-one nature reserves are located within the Knyszyn Forest Landscape Park (PKPK). While crossing the Knyszyn Forest, you can easily come across tracks of bison, wolves and even lynxes.



In the Knyszyn Forest, photo by K. Jakubowski

TYKOCIN

Tykocin, charmingly located on the banks of the Narew River, called the baroque pearl of Podlasie, attracts thousands of tourists every year. While strolling round the town, we will find reminders of its fascinating history everywhere we move. The centrally located Czarnieckiego Square with the



Great Synagogue and Talmudic House in Tykocin, photo by K. Pierwienis

statue of the great commander-in-chief is encircled by 19th century wooden houses, a seminary from the 17th century and a historic hospital. The square is kind of embraced by arcades of the Baroque church of the Holy Trinity. The whole composition was created according to the foundation and idea of Jan Klemens Branicki. On the other side of the river, a castle is situated, continuing the tradition of the mighty stronghold of King Sigismund Augustus. While in Tykocin, you must visit the Jewish quarter with an impressive 17th-century, late Renaissance Great Synagogue and museum in the former Talmudic House.

NAREW NATIONAL PARK

A dozen kilometres from Białystok is the wild Narew valley, where the river waters flow through many corridors forming a real maze. Dozens of hectares of swamps stretch around, home to over 200 species of birds, including a dozen or so of the highest conservation status. The park area is classified as an important European refuge for birds. Narew National Park is an ideal place for canoeists. Walking tourists can take advantage of routes marked out on wooden footbridges: in



Narew National Park, photo by K. Jakubowski

Kurów - at the park office - and between the towns of Waniewo and Śliwno, where an additional attraction are the floating platforms drawn on ropes, on which you can cross the river.

BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK

The largest of the Polish national parks covers an area of almost 600 km² of meadows, wetlands and peat bogs along the meandering Biebrza River. This is one of the last great swamps in Europe. As one of the world's important bird sanctuaries, the park is a mecca for ornithologists from around the globe. Almost 300 species of birds have been recorded here, including many under strict protection. The undisputed king of the Biebrza marshes is the moose - this is its largest refuge in Poland. The seat of the park is located in Osowiec-Twierdza - a place that attracts lovers of not only nature, but also history, especially the military history.

CHOROSZCZ

The town is located a dozen kilometres from Białystok. Its charms have already been appreciated by Jan Klemens Branicki - the commander-in-chief ordered to build a summer residence in Choroszcz. It has become his most famous. In a baroque palace, surrounded by old trees of a historical park, there is now the Museum of Palace Interiors, which is a branch of the Podlasie Museum. The Choroszcz temples: the 18th century Dominican church and monastery and the Orthodox church of the Protection of Mother of God are also worth visiting.

THE LAND OF OPEN SHUTTERS

30 km from Białystok towards Białowieża there are charmingly situated villages: Trzecianka, Soce and Puchły, in which wooden architecture from the turn of the 19th and 20th century has survived. Colourful Orthodox churches rise among the greenery, and traditional houses delight with colourful shutters and intricate decorations cut out by old carpentry masters.



House in the land of open shutters,
photo by I. Czajkowska

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Multimedialne
Centrum
Informacji
Turystycznej**
(Brama Pałacu)

**Tourist
Information
(Palace Gate)
Туристическая
информация**
(в воротах дворца)

otwarte
open
открыт

10:00-18:00

Logo of Białystok
Białystok

TOURIST INFORMATION POINTS

Multimedia Tourist Information Centre at the Great Gate of the Branicki Palace, 1 Kilińskiego Street, open in the tourist season: May - September

FB: Informacja turystyczna w Białymstoku

Regional Tourist Information Centre - Podlasie Regional Tourist Organization, 6 Malmeda Street

www.podlaskie.travel

phone 503 356 482

Tourist information point at the 'Podlasie' School Youth Hostel, 7B Piłsudskiego Avenue

www.hostelpodlasie.pl

phone 85 652 42 50

Tourist Information Centre at the Promotion and Tourism Section of the Municipal Office in Białystok, 1a Kościelna Street

www.odkryj.bialystok.pl

phone 85 879 71 49

Tourist guides around Białystok and the region - PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) Regional Branch in Białystok, 53 loc 3/3 Sienkiewicza Street

www.bialystok.pttk.pl

phone 85 74 45 650

TOURIST SOUVENIRS

Cepelia. Store of the Folk Arts cooperative, 3 Grochowa Street
phone 85 724 12 56

Creo, ul. Suraska 6

FB: Sklep CREO

phone 85 745 40 08

Galeria Pod Aniołami (Gallery Under Angels), 15 Lipowa Street

FB: Galeria Pod Aniołami

phone 600 924 254

Ojczyzna Pamiątki z Polski i Białegostoku Store (Home-land Store - Souvenirs from Poland and Białystok), 15/1 J. Piłsudskiego Street

FB: Sklep Ojczyzna

phone 509 544 123

Sljedzik Pamiątki/Souvenirs, 13 J. Kilińskiego Street (entrance from the side of Jana Pawła II Square)

www.sljedzik.pl

phone 739 001 001

ACCOMMODATIONS

CATEGORIZED ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

- ***** **Royal Hotel & Spa**, 11 Kościuszki Square
www.royal-hotel.pl, phone 85 831 18 01
- ***** **Branicki Hotel**, 25 Zamenhofa Street
www.hotelbranicki.com.pl, phone 85 665 25 00
- ***** **Best Western Cristal Hotel**, 3/5 Lipowa Street
www.hotelcristal.com.pl, phone 85 749 61 00
- ***** **Gołębiewski Hotel**, 7 Pałacowa Street
www.golebiewski.pl/bialystok, phone 85 678 25 00
- ***** **Traugutta Hotel**, 3 Romualda Traugutta Street
www.hoteltraugutta3.pl, phone 85 677 73 33
- **** **Aristo Hotel**, 15 Kilińskiego Street
www.aristohotel.pl, phone 85 740 89 00
- **** **Dworek Tryumf Hotel**, Księżyno, 1 Klepacka Street
www.dworek-tryumf.pl, phone 85 663 29 18
- **** **Dwór Czarnckiego Hotel**, Choroszcz, 54A Porosły Colony
www.dworczarnckiego.pl, phone 85 66 37 400
- **** **Esperanto Hotel**, 10 Legionowa Street
www.hotelesperanto.net, phone 85 740 99 00
- **** **ibis Styles Hotel**, 25 Piłsudskiego Avenue
www.ibisstylesbialystok.pl, phone 85 877 25 00
- **** **Leśny Hotel**, 77 Jana Pawła II Avenue
www.lesny.bialystok.pl, phone 85 651 16 41
- **** **Silver Hotel**, 97 Kopernika Street
www.silverhotel.com.pl, phone 85 744 88 11
- **** **3 Trio Hotel**, 3 Hurtowa Street
www.hotel3trio.pl, phone 85 745 40 50
- ** **BOSiR Hotel**, 5 Wołodyjowskiego Street
www.miejskoaktywni.pl/s,hotel-bosir,13.html, phone 85 749 62 00
- ** **Pod Herbem Hotel**, 49 Wiejska Street
www.hotel-podherbem.pl, phone 85 742 24 30
- ** **Podlasie Hotel**, 6, 42 Pułku Piechoty Street
www.hotelpodlasie.pl, phone 85 675 66 00
- ** **Santana Hotel**, 55 Baranowicka Street
www.hotelsantana.pl, phone 85 743 77 00
- ** **Turkus Hotel**, 54 Jana Pawła II Avenue
www.turkus.jard.pl, phone 85 662 81 00
- * **Turystyczny Hotel**, 4 Transportowa Street
www.jard.pl, phone 85 745 51 58
- * **Nad Zalewem Hotel**, Wasilków, 94-98 Białostocka Street
www.jard.pl, phone 85 718 52 40

OTHER ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES In the city centre

Apartamenty City, 8 Artyleryjska Street
www.apartamentycity.pl, phone 570 560 299

Orthodox Culture Centre, 5 św. Mikołaja Street
www.ckp.bialystok.pl, phone 85 744 30 10

Gościnną Kamienicą (Hospitable House), 24 Sienkiewicza Street
www.goscinnakamienica.pl, phone 85 831 15 55

Student Dorms of the Białystok University of Technology,
14 Zwierzyniecka street
www.akademiki.bialystok.pl, phone 85 746 97 20

Sweet Dream Accommodations Hostel,
1 Ks. A. Abramowicza Street, phone 517 177 752

Guest Rooms at WSE, 14/3 Zwycięstwa Street
www.wse.edu.pl/pl/o-wse/co-nowego/2017/01/noclegi
phone 533 886 834

Guest Rooms at WSFiZ, 40 Ciepła Street
www.pokojegoscinnie.bialystok.pl, phone 602 579 201

'Podlasie' School Youth Hostel, 7B Piłsudskiego Avenue
www.hostelpodlasie.pl, phone: 85 652 42 50

Villa Pastel, 24a Waszyngtona Street
www.pastel.kasol.com.pl, phone 85 748 60 60

Villa Tradycja, 5 Włókiennicza Street
www.villatradycja.pl, phone 85 652 65 20

Outside the city centre

Adeo Hostel, 26 Żwirki i Wigury Street
www.adeohostel.pl, phone 85 732 37 35

Badders Badminton Club, 14 Jagiełły Street
www.badmintonbialystok.pl/willa-badders, phone 694 610 016

Titanic Conference and Banquet Centre, 16D Pogodna Street
www.ckbtitanic.pl, phone 85 742 92 46

Gościniec Nadawki, 23 Nadawki Street
www.folwarknadawki.pl/noclegi/o-nas, phone 785 350 350

Santorini Hostel & Restaurant, 26 Antoniuk Fabryczny Street
phone 785 119 695

Belweder Hotel and Restaurant, Choroszcz, Porosły-Kolonia 1H
www.restauracjabelweder.pl, phone 85 651 08 14

Sosnowe Zacisze, Ignatki Housing Estate, 20 Leśna Street
www.sosnowezacisze.pl, phone 85 710 22 54

SPA Zdrojówka, Kleosin, Horodniany 47
www.zdrojowka.pl, phone 517 169 413

Villa Alris, 23 Wolyńska Street
www.alrisnoclegi.pl, phone 795 002 913

Villa Margo, 21 A Baranowicka Street
www.villamargo.pl, phone 606 844 606

Villa Marcella, 64 Zwierzyniecka Street
www.willamarcella.pl, phone 664 943 313

Villa Marcella De Lux, 22 Konduktorska Street
www.willamarcella.pl, phone 884 085 003

Villa Nova, 52 Kawaleryjska Street
www.villa-nova.com.pl, phone 511 331 212

Villa Tanona, 1 Skalna Street

ww.tanona.pl, phone 85 661 00 23114

Zajazd Irina (Irina Inn), 58 Kawaleryjska Street

www.zajazdirina.com, phone 85 663 27 55

Zajazd PW Koluch (PW Koluch Inn), 100 Wysockiego Street

www.koluch.cba.pl, phone 511 586 790

Zajazd Wiking (Viking Inn), 1 Leśna Street/ highway to Augustów 2

www.jard.pl/zajazd_wik.html, phone 85 743 69 51

WHERE TO EAT IN THE CENTRE OF BIALYSTOK

Panteon Tavern, 2 Mickiewicza Street

www.panteon.bialystok.pl, phone 85 732 11 10

Good Food 24 h, 9 Kilińskiego Street

www.goodfood24h.pl, phone 85 743 66 24

Koku Sushi, 7/1 Kilińskiego Street

FB: @kokubialystokkilinskiego, phone 535 600 677

7 Methods, 7/1 Kilińskiego Street

FB: @7METHOD, phone 570 713 719

Mandarino, 8 Kilińskiego Street

FB: @ristorante.mandarino, phone 85 742 44 44

Maison du Café, 10 Kilińskiego Street

FB: @MaisonBialystok, phone 533 333 327

Chilli Pizza, 12 Kilińskiego Street

www.chillipizza.pl, phone 730 555 777

Tartalina, 12 Kilińskiego Street

FB: @tartalinabialystok, phone 504 181 338

Z Drugiej Strony Rynku (On the Other Side of the Market),

6 lok. 1 Legionowa Street

FB: Z Drugiej Strony Rynku, phone 883 702 884

Astoria, 4 Sienkiewicza Street

www.astoriacentrum.pl, phone 85 665 21 76

Bar Słoneczny (Sunny Bar), 5 Sienkiewicza Street

www.barsloneczny.pl, phone 85 743 58 15

Pizza Hut, 3 Sienkiewicza Street

FB: @PizzaHutBialystokSienkiewicza, phone 22 536 36 36

Koku Sushi Rynek (Koku Sushi Market), 3 Sienkiewicza Street

FB: @kokubialystokrynek, phone 722 131 001

Savona Pizza Club, 8/1 Kościuszki Square

www.savonapizza.pl, phone 785 555 455

Gospoda Podlaska, 18 Kościuszki Square

www.gospodapodlaska.eatbu.com, phone 609 496 606

Roxy Burgers, 20 Kościuszki Square

www.roxyburgers.pl, phone 732 837 587

Bella Vita, 22 Kościuszki Square

www.bellavita.pl, phone 85 742 22 07

Tygiel, 28 Kościuszki Square

FB @restauracjaTygiel, phone 730 903 008

Esperanto Cafe, 10 Kościuszki Square

www.esperanto-cafe.pl, phone 85 742 60 31

Browar Stary Rynek & Restauracja Monte Carlo (Old Market Brewery & Monte Carlo Restaurant), 11 Kościuszki Square

www.royal-hotel.pl, phone 85 831 18 01

The Sherlock Holmes, 13 Kościuszki Square

www.publondon.pl, phone 728 988 801

Bar Podlasie, 15 Kościuszki Square

phone +48 85 742 25 04

Pijalnia Czekolady E. Wedel (E. Wedel Chocolate Drinking Room),

17 Kościuszki Square

FB: Pijalnia Czekolady E.Wedel Białystok, phone 85 742 06 47

Akcent Cafe, 17 Kościuszki Square

FB: @kawiarniaakcent, phone 85 742 19 33

Ratuszowy, 1 Lipowa Street

FB: @ratuszowyrest, phone 601 583 020

Szklanki i Talerze (Glasses and Plates), 32 Kościuszki Square

FB: @szklankinarogu, phone 790 789 900 116

Sioux, 32 Kościuszki Square

www.sioux.bialystok.pl, phone 85 651 51 51

Babka, 2 Lipowa Street

FB @Babka.Bialystok, phone 690 273 707

Kartaczownia Pani Jadwiga (Mrs Jadwiga's Cepelinai Eatery),

2 Lipowa Street, entrance from the passage at Spółdzielcza Street

FB @kartaczownia, phone 85 740 68 51

Elvis Burger, 9 lok.7. Białówny Street

www.elvisburger.pl, phone 796 251 122

Głodny Wilk (Hungry Wolf), 10 Spółdzielcza Street

FB: Głodny Wilk Spółdzielcza, phone 575 144 525

Multibrowar, 8 Malmeda Street

www.multibrowar.com, phone 85 743 20 72

GramOFFon, 17. Malmeda Street

FB: @kawiarnia.gramoffon, phone 782 932 228

Tanoshii, 1 Lipowa Street

www.tanoshii.com.pl/bialystok, phone 85 744 54 64

Bułka z masłem, 4 Lipowa Street

www.bulkazmaslem.eu, phone 720 880 008

Tokaj, 7 Malmeda Street

FB: @tokajrestauracja, phone 85 742 08 07

Neobistro Kwestia Czasu, 1 Niezależnego Zrzeszenia Studentów Square

FB: @restauracjakwestiaczasu, phone 733 004 381

Gorący Trójkąt (Hot Triangle), 12 Lipowa Street

www.goracytrojkat.pl, phone 575 394 566

Naleśniki Jak Smok (Pancakes Like a Dragon), 12 Lipowa Street

www.njs.pl, phone 502 227 127

Futu Sushi, 12 Lipowa Street

www.futusushi.pl, phone 690 990 212

Dwa Światy (Two Worlds) Food & Wine, 12 Lipowa Street
www.dwaswiaty.com.pl, phone 690 009 718

Restauracja Oliwa, 2 Grochowa Street
www.restauracjaoliwa.com.pl, phone 607 905 777

Piu di Pizza, 3 Grochowa Street
www.piudi.pl, phone 501 507 401

Bar Merino, 6 Grochowa Street
www.barmerino.pl, phone 502 130 114

Hokus Pokus, 37 Lipowa Street
www.hokuspokus.pl, phone 660 869 545

Trattoria Czarna Owca (Black Sheep), 24 Lipowa Street
www.trattoriaczarnaowca.pl, phone 85 744 55 45

Sztuka Mięsa, 11 Krakowska Street
www.sztukamiesa.com.pl, phone 85 742 07 40

Mazel-Tov, 8A Św. Rocha Street
www.mazeltov.pl, phone 537 537 509

Horyzont Restaurant & Lounge Bar, 14/16 Legionowa Street
www.horyzontbialystok.com, phone 694 975 360

Restauracja Kawelin, 10 Legionowa Street
www.kawelin.pl, phone 85 740 99 02

La Bella, 26a Akademicka Street
FB: @LaBellaRestauracja, phone 85 742 22 20

Pawilon Towarzyski (Sociable Pavilion), 30 Akademicka Street
FB: @pawilontowarzyski, phone 664 464 777

Baristacja, 7 Sienkiewicza Street
FB: @BaristacjaKawiarniaPiekarnia, phone 696 103 001

Krowarzywa, 14 Sienkiewicza Street
www.krowarzywa.pl, phone 784 933 375

Miodosytnia, 26 Sienkiewicza Street
FB: @miodosytniakawiarniabistro, phone 85 307 01 13

Bar Grodno, 28 Sienkiewicza Street
www.bargrodno.pl, phone 607 959 400

Cechowa, 6 Warszawska Street
www.cechowa.com.pl, phone 85 722 29 16

Trattoria Gallo Nero, 30B Warszawska Street
www.gallonero.com.pl/bialystok, phone 85 710 44 44

Stare Bojary, 2 Słonimska Street,
FB: Stare Bojary Restauracja, phone 537 374 737

Green – vegetarian friendly

Red – regional cuisine