

Sightseeing in Płock



Going towards Kościuszki Street, one passes the so-called **'Dom pod Trabami'**, in front of which one can see a **bust of blessed Bishop Leon Wetmański**, who was murdered by the Nazis in the concentration camp in Działdowo and later beatified by Pope John Paul II. In Plac Narutowicza (Narutowicz Square), formerly Rynek Kanoniczny, stand two former canon's houses; one of them is now the **Bishop's House**, and the other one – Gothic in style – is the seat of the **Płock Scientific Society**, which is the oldest institution of this kind in Poland.



One can admire more Gothic buildings in the city and this is why Płock is on the **European Route of Brick Gothic**.



The **Zieliński Library**, located in the classical 'Dom pod Opatrznością' at the opposite side of the square, is a section of the Płock Scientific Society, whose extensive collections include, among other things, Francisco Goya's cycle of 80 engravings titled *Los caprichos*, the original 1543 edition of Nicholas Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Bodies) and a ninth-century manuscript with the Latin text of the biblical Book of Wisdom. Dating back to c. 1600, the building at 6 Narutowicz Square, which used to be the **Bishop's Palace**, has been the seat of the district court since the 19th century.



What is also worthy of visitors' special attention is Stanisław Malachowski Secondary School, colloquially known as **'Malachowianka'**. Dating back to 1180, it is the oldest secondary school in Poland. Originally, it was attached to the Collegiate Church of St Michael, and – in the 17th and 18th centuries – to a local Jesuit College. A lecturer in rhetoric, St Andrzej Bobola was one of the school's eminent teachers whilst blessed Honorat Koźmiński, a Capuchin friar and religious writer, and Ignacy Mościcki, the President of interwar Poland, were among its distinguished students. In the basement, there is the school's museum, which holds Romanesque and Gothic monuments and relics, and its fifteenth-century tower with an astronomical observatory has also survived.



The Płock's residents' favourite meeting place, the **Old Market Square** is frequently visited by tourists attracted by the modern, backlit fountain and the impressive, classical **City Hall**, which was designed by famous architect Jakub Kubicki (the author of the Belvedere and the first design of the Church of Divine Providence in Warsaw). It was in the City Hall that the last session of the Sejm of Congress Poland took place on 23 September 1831. Sounded at noon and 6 p.m. by a trumpeter from the clock tower of the City Hall, the hejnal (a type of bugle call) is accompanied by the life-size **mechanical figures** of Ladislaus Herman and Boleslaus the Wry-Mouthed, which enact the knighting of the latter. Located in the very heart of the city, the Old Market Square is vibrant with life, especially in spring and summer. In winter, an artificial



PŁOCK a city on a pilgrimage route



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skating rink set up in the middle of the square is its main attraction. In the Old Market Square, one can also find the above-mentioned Divine Mercy Shrine and **'Darmstadt House'**, formerly the Berlin Hotel, where E.T.A. Hoffmann, a German writer, composer and precursor of romanticism, lived from 1802 until 1804. Next to 'Dom Darmstadt', which is now a centre for cultural events and co-operation with Płock's twin cities (Darmstadt is one of them), there is the local **Tourist Information Centre** and **Płock Local Tourist Organisation**.

After visiting the Old Market Square, one may find it worthwhile to go to the **Parish Church of St Bartholomew**, which was built in 1356. In the 18th century the church was rebuilt and the baroque entrance porch was built from its market square side. Consequently, the church had to be shortened and the baroque entrance porch was built at the back of the church. Dating from 1640 and early baroque in style, the high altar is the pride of the church.

Situated in Kazimierza Wielkiego Street and built between 1911 and 1914, the neo-Gothic **Cathedral and Monastery of the Mariavite Old Catholic Church** catch tourists' attention mainly due to their soaring outlines. St Maria Kozłowska, the founder of the Church, and three Mariavite bishops are buried in the cathedral vaults. Every year on 15 August, members of the Mariavite Old Catholic Church come to Płock from all over the world to hold celebrations in honour of the Virgin Mary.

Płock has a lot more to offer its visitors. One cannot miss going to the **Mazovian Museum**, which is located in the handsomely restored Art Nouveau tenement house at 8 Tumaska Street. The museum houses the largest collection of Art Nouveau items in Poland, including some works by Laszcza, Mehoffer, Wyspiański, Lalique and Mucha, among others.

Real treasures can be found in the **Seminary Library**, e.g. beautifully illuminated manuscripts dating from the 12th century and a real rarity – a sixteenth-century copy of the Bible translated by Jakub Wujek. The library is located in the vast complex of the seminary, which has a 300-year-old teaching tradition.

Next to the seminary, there is the late-baroque **Church of St John the Baptist**, which was built between 1758 and 1771. The original interior furnishings and rococo woodcarving decoration have survived. In front of the church, stands the **monument to blessed Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski**, a distinguished Bishop of Płock who was murdered in the Nazi concentration camp in Działdowo and later beatified by Pope John Paul II. Płock is **Władysław Broniewski's** hometown. The tenement at 24 Kościuski Street is his family house. One of the most prominent Polish poets of the 20th century, Broniewski spent the early years of his youth in this house. A few hundred-year-old massive oak, which is mentioned in Broniewski's poems a number of times, dominates

Płock – a weekend full of excitement



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the yard behind the house. The oak is a natural feature of historic importance.

The **monument to Marshal Józef Piłsudski** which stands in Obronców Warszawy Square commemorates the strong bonds between the city and the Marshal, the first Honorary Citizen of the City of Płock. Piłsudski honoured the city of Płock with the Cross of Valour for the bravery which its residents demonstrated in the war against Bolshevik Russia in 1920; there are only two cities which were honoured in this way, namely, Płock and Lvov. The heroes who were killed in that war are buried in the necropolises of Płock. One of them was founded in 1780, i.e. 10 years earlier than the Powązki cemetery in Warsaw.

After doing some sightseeing, one can relax on the bathing beach at **Lake Sobótka** – which is the small lake in the old river bed of the River Vistula, located at the foot of Płock's escarpment – walk on the river pier. Sailing enthusiasts are bound to enjoy the attractions offered by the nearby small yacht marina.



Going sightseeing in Płock by a train-like vehicle with two passenger cars called **'Ciuchcia Tumaska'** is a great idea for both children and adults. The vehicle takes them directly

to the **zoo**, located on Płock's picturesque escarpment. The zoo, in which about 3,500 animals (350 species) can be seen, is amongst the best zoos in Poland. The visitors can see giraffes, penguins, lions, and the smallest monkeys in the world – tamarins and marmosets. Also, it is a home for the Victoria Crowned Pigeon, the biggest pigeon in the world, and Marta, an 80-year-old alligator, the oldest animal living in the European zoos.

Tourist Information Centre
8 Stary Rynek Street, tel. +48 24 367 19 44, fax +48 24 367 19 32
e-mail: cit@plock.eu, www.itplock.pl

Office For Tourist Traffic Services
4 Tumaska Street, tel./fax +48 24 262 26 00, +48 24 262 84 00
e-mail: pttk-plock@wp.pl, www.pttk-plock.pl

Płock Local Tourist Organisation
8 Stary Rynek Street, tel./fax +48 24 364 99 90
e-mail: biuro@turystykaplock.eu, www.turystykaplock.eu

Divine Mercy Shrine
14/16 Stary Rynek Street, tel. +48 24 262 58 83
www.milosierdzie.plock.eu

Cathedral Basilica
2 Mostowa Street, tel. +48 24 262 34 35
www.katedraplocka.pl

Mariavite Old Catholic Church
27A Kazimierza Wielkiego Street, tel. +48 24 262 30 86
www.mariawita.pl

Diocesan Museum
3A Tumaska Street, tel. +48 24 262 26 23
www.muzeumdiecezjalneplock.pl

Catholic Centre in Sikórz near Płock
(accommodation in the boarding school in summer and winter holidays)
tel. +48 24 261 28 30 • www.liceumkostka.pl

The photos were taken by: Halina Pluciennik, Piotr Augustyniak, Marek Czarnojć, Cezary Dziecielski, Jan Waćkowski, Aleksander Niewieński, archive of the Congregation of the Nuns of Our Lady of Mercy
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PŁOCK
a city on
a pilgrimage route

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PŁOCK

a weekend full of excitement and positive energy

As early as the beginning of the 17th century, Andrzej Świącicki wrote, 'Płock is superior to all the Mazovian cities in antiquity, beauty of location, reverence for its magnificent cathedral church and the episcopal see'. Also, Płock used to be called 'the city of churches'. The importance of the centuries-old city of Płock as 'a special place in the history of our homeland, in the history of the Church, and in the history of holiness' was emphasized by Pope John Paul II a number of times. 'I rejoice that I was given the opportunity to visit Płock – one of the capital cities of our country during the Piast dynasty and an ancient episcopal see' were the words with which John Paul II greeted the inhabitants of Płock during his fourth pilgrimage to Poland on 7 June 1991. The Divine Mercy Image was towering over the Pope's altar that day as it was here in Płock that Saint Faustina Kowalska had her private divine revelation in which she saw the Merciful Saviour, who asked her to produce the world-famous image. Płock is one of the cities on 'the luminous trail'. A lot of prominent figures are connected with the city, namely Saint Andrzej Bobola and blessed Father Honorat Koźmiński – both connected with Stanisław Małachowski Grammar School – Saint Faustina and two clergymen beatified by John Paul II – Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski and Bishop Leon Wetmański. Moreover, Płock is the capital of the Mariavite Old Catholic Church. The city is the only place in Europe where a cathedral of the Mariavite Old Catholic Church can be seen. The founder of this Church, sister Maria Franciszka Kozłowska is buried in the cathedral.



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PŁOCK - OLD TOWN



- THE LEGEND:**
- 1 CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
 - 2A DIOCESAN MUSEUM – FORMER BENEDICTINE ABBEY AND THE REMAINS OF THE MAZOVIAN PRINCES' CASTLE WITH TWO TOWERS
 - 2B DIOCESAN MUSEUM – THE BUILDING FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY
 - 3 PŁOCK SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
 - 4 BISHOP'S HOUSE
 - 5 'DOM POD TRĄBAMI'
 - 6 GUARDHOUSE
 - 7 DISTRICT COURT
 - 8 ZIELIŃSKI LIBRARY
 - 9A MAZOVIAN MUSEUM
 - 9B MAZOVIAN MUSEUM – GRANARY
 - 10 TUMSKA STREET
 - 11 GRODZKA STREET
 - 12 STANISŁAW MAŁACHOWSKI SECONDARY SCHOOL
 - 13 DIVINE MERCY SHRINE
 - 14 OLD MARKET SQUARE
 - 15 CITY HALL
 - 16 'DARMSTADT HOUSE'
 - 17 PARISH CHURCH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW
 - 18 CATHEDRAL AND MONASTERY OF THE MARIAVITE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH
 - 19 CHURCH OF ST DOMINIC
 - 20 WŁADYSŁAW BRONIEWSKI'S FAMILY HOUSE
 - 21 HIGHER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
 - 22 MONUMENT TO MARSHAL JÓZEF PIŁSUDESKI
 - 23 PENITENTIARY
 - 24 THE ZOO
 - 25 AMPHITHEATRE
 - 26 LAKE SOBÓTKA
 - 27 PLEASURE BOAT HARBOUR
 - 28 MOTOR BOAT HARBOUR
 - 29 'CIUCHCIA TUMSKA'

Sightseeing in Płock

PŁOCK a city on a pilgrimage route



'In my mind, I am on this luminous trail on which Saint Faustina Kowalska prepared herself for the acceptance of God's message of Divine Mercy; the trail leading from Łódź and Warsaw through Płock and Vilnius to Cracow,' said Pope John Paul II during a Holy Mass celebrated on the Błonie Common in Cracow on 18 August 2002.



It was John Paul II that canonised humble **sister Faustina Kowalska** from the Congregation of the Nuns of Our Lady of Mercy. On 22 February 1931, right here in Płock, 26-year-old Faustina had her first divine revelation. In her vision, she saw the Merciful Saviour, who expressed His wish to have the Feast of Divine Mercy established in the Church. The wish was eventually fulfilled once the famous Divine Mercy Image with the inscription 'Jezu, ufam Tobie!' (Jesus, I trust in You!) had been produced and the Pope had established a new feast in the Church – the Divine Mercy Sunday.



Sister Faustina was beatified on 18 April 1993 and canonised on 30 April 2000 by John Paul II. Places connected with the life of the Saint are visited by pilgrims from all over the world.



The **Divine Mercy Shrine**, in which the Divine Mercy Image and the relics of St Faustina are shown, is located in the convent of the Congregation of the Nuns of Our Lady of Mercy at 14/18 Stary Rynek Street. In the small square situated next to the convent, one can see the statue of the Merciful Saviour. **Saint Faustina Museum** is located in the former bakery where sister Faustina worked whilst in the convent from 1930 until 1932. While the original bread oven has survived in the historic basement, the kitchen and St Faustina's cell had to be reconstructed. The museum houses numerous memorabilia and documents connected with the Polish Saint and mystic.



This holy place is currently being expanded; the small shrine is going to be replaced with a sanctuary (see the visualization on the left) with a capacity of about one thousand.



Płock is proud of its affiliation with the group of **Papal Cities**. Pope John Paul II, a great Apostle of Divine Mercy, visited the city on 7-8 June 1991 during his fourth pilgrimage to his homeland. He celebrated a Mass in the Cathedral and another one in the square in front of the stadium; the focal point of the field altar was a huge icon of the Merciful Saviour (2.2m x 5m), which now can be seen in the Church of St Joseph in Górna Street.

The Pope's meeting with some prisoners in the **Płock Penitentiary** was one of the special events of this pilgrimage. It was the first time that the Pope had visited a Polish prison; such a visit never took place in Poland again. 'During my papal ministry, I have visited prisons and prisoners in Rome, Italy and other countries a number of times. Yet, this is my first visit to a prison in Poland,' he said. There was also an informal meeting with young people during which John Paul II was standing in the window of the Bishop's House, where he stayed overnight. The meeting resembled the Pope's meetings with young people in Cracow as the atmosphere was as congenial as in Franciszkańska Street (which is where the Bishop's Palace in Cracow is situated); 'I am very happy that I can talk to you standing in the window. Previously, this was possible in Cracow only,' the Pope said. Designed by Gustaw Zemła and standing next to the Cathedral, the **monument to John Paul II** commemorates the Papal pilgrimage to Płock; there is the Divine Mercy Image on the Pope's vestment and the inscription 'Pozdrawiam całe Mazowsze' ('Greetings to the people of Mazovia) is carved in the pedestal.

One will fail to get to know Płock's cultural heritage and atmosphere if one does not visit the historic buildings located on Tumskie Hill. One can start from the **Cathedral Basilica** of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Consecrated in 1144 and frequently rebuilt, it is one of the oldest cathedrals in Poland. The remains of Ladislaus Herman and his son Boleslaus the Wry-Mouthed, who ruled Poland from 1079 until 1102 and from 1102 until 1138 respectively (Płock was the capital city at that time), lie at rest in the Royal Chapel. It is also worthwhile to see replicas of the famous Romanesque bronze doors (the so-called 'Drzwi Plockie') and get to know its history.

Located in front of the cathedral, the former Benedictine abbey and the remains of the Mazovian Princes' Castle is the seat of the **Diocesan Museum**. Both buildings date back to the 14th-16th centuries and have two Gothic towers, which are called 'Noble' and 'Clock'. The museum houses a priceless collection of sacred art including the unique herm of St Sigismund (patron saint of Płock), which is a gift from King Casimir the Great dating back to 1370, a chalice and a paten bought by Conrad I of Mazovia, and numerous monstrances. The newest exhibition entitled **'Christ in art'** shows impressive collections of paintings and sculptures, some of which are Gothic. Dating from 1903, the second building of the museum houses a unique collection of robe sashes – i.e. long pieces of cloth worn by Polish nobles around their waist – kept in a specially designed cabinet.

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