

# Małopolska



It's a mystery why Małopolska remains relatively unexplored by international travellers. Pilgrims walk for more than two weeks to pray before the sacred *Black Madonna* painting of Częstochowa, but if they just kept walking they would find a range of surprising attractions, from the quaint to the downright quirky.

This is a region where you can be haunted by a friendly ghost in an underground chalk tunnel, explore the ruins of a castle once connected to another by a sugar-coated corridor, and meet townsfolk who quarrel over who has the right to bake rooster-shaped bread.

While the rest of the continent loudly extols its attributes, this eccentric pocket of Poland is a modest region that quietly polishes its treasures: Renaissance towns, cobblestoned laneways, sidewalk cafés, labyrinthine museums, opulent palaces, alluring castles and primeval forest.

Modern-day Małopolska began to form its complexion centuries ago, and its ancestry is still apparent today. The botanical and zoological interests of 16th-century aristocrats led to the establishment of vast natural estates; today, these are national parks. Ancient trade routes sliced through the region, bringing demographic diversity along with economic prosperity; today there are some 19 ethnic groups among the three million inhabitants. In 1569 the region accounted for almost half the country and now Małopolska is literally 'Little Poland'; it takes up a sizable chunk of the country with 22 districts blanketed over 57 cities and 2630 villages.

Turbulent tides of history, entrenched religious veneration and waves of cultural cosmopolitanism have added colourful layers to the character of Małopolska. The fact that it has maintained its modesty through it all is just another reason to experience it.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Joining throngs of **Black Madonna** (p216) pilgrims in Częstochowa
- Blushing as portraits peer down at you in Kielce's **Palace of the Kraków Bishops** (p218)
- Revelling in the distilled grandeur of **Pieskowa Skała Castle** (p210) in Ojców National Park
- Wishing you had a better phrasebook as you chat to a ghost in the **Chełm Chalk Tunnels** (p248)
- Commenting that 'they don't make them like they used to' at the fairy-tale fantasy of **Krzyżtopór Castle** (p229) in Ujazd
- Wondering why it happened at **Majdanek Extermination Camp** (p237) in Lublin
- Being dwarfed by ancient nature in **Roztocze National Park** (p257)
- Forgetting you're in Poland in the Italian Renaissance town of **Zamość** (p250)



## THE KRAKÓW–CZĘSTOCHOWA UPLAND

When Silesia fell to Bohemia in the mid-14th century, King Kazimierz III Wielki (Casimir III the Great, 1333–70) set about fortifying the frontier by building a chain of castles all the way from Kraków to Częstochowa. It is this 100km stretch that comprises the Kraków–Częstochowa Upland (Wyżyna Krakowsko–Częstochowska).

The plan worked; the wall of castles built on hilltops and ridges was never penetrated by the Bohemians. However, the 1655 Swede invasion destroyed many castles and changed the face of the upland. The conflicts of the turbulent 18th century completed the process of castle destruction, leaving some impressive ruins for the 21st-century traveller.

This upland region is also popularly known as the Jura, having been formed from limestone in the Jurassic period some 150 million years ago. Erosion left hundreds of caves and oddly shaped rock formations, which can still be enjoyed in Ojców National Park, most notably the 25m-high Hercules' club pillar at the base of resplendently restored Pieskowa Skała.

An excellent way to explore the upland is by hiking the Trail of the Eagles' Nest (Szlak Orlich Gniazd), which winds 164km from Kraków to Częstochowa past dramatic hills and countless castles. You needn't lug your camping gear – accommodation is never more than a day's walk away. Tourist offices in Kraków and Częstochowa can provide more information.

### OJCÓW NATIONAL PARK

Perhaps size doesn't matter after all. Ojców National Park (Ojcowski Park Narodowy) may be the smallest in Poland, but it packs two castles, several caves and countless rock-formations into its 21.5 sq km. The flora in the park is beech, fir, oak and hornbeam forest and the fauna a diverse mix of small mammals including badgers, ermines and beavers. This postcard-worthy park is one of the most beautiful areas of the Kraków–Częstochowa Upland.

### Orientation & Information

Most tourist attractions line the road running along the Prądnik River between Ojców and Pieskowa Skała. There is no direct bus

connecting these villages, but the flat 7km between them is well worth walking. The Trail of the Eagles' Nest also follows this road.

Before you embark on your quest, buy a map of the park in Kraków. There are a couple of versions, but Galileo's *Ojcowski Park Narodowy* (scale 1:20,000, 5.90zł from EMPiK) stands out for detailing every trail, road and rock.

The small **PTTK office** (☎ 012 389 2010; <http://ojcow.pttk.pl> in Polish; Ojców 15; 🕒 9am–3pm May–Oct) is in the car park at the foot of Ojców castle.

### Sights & Activities

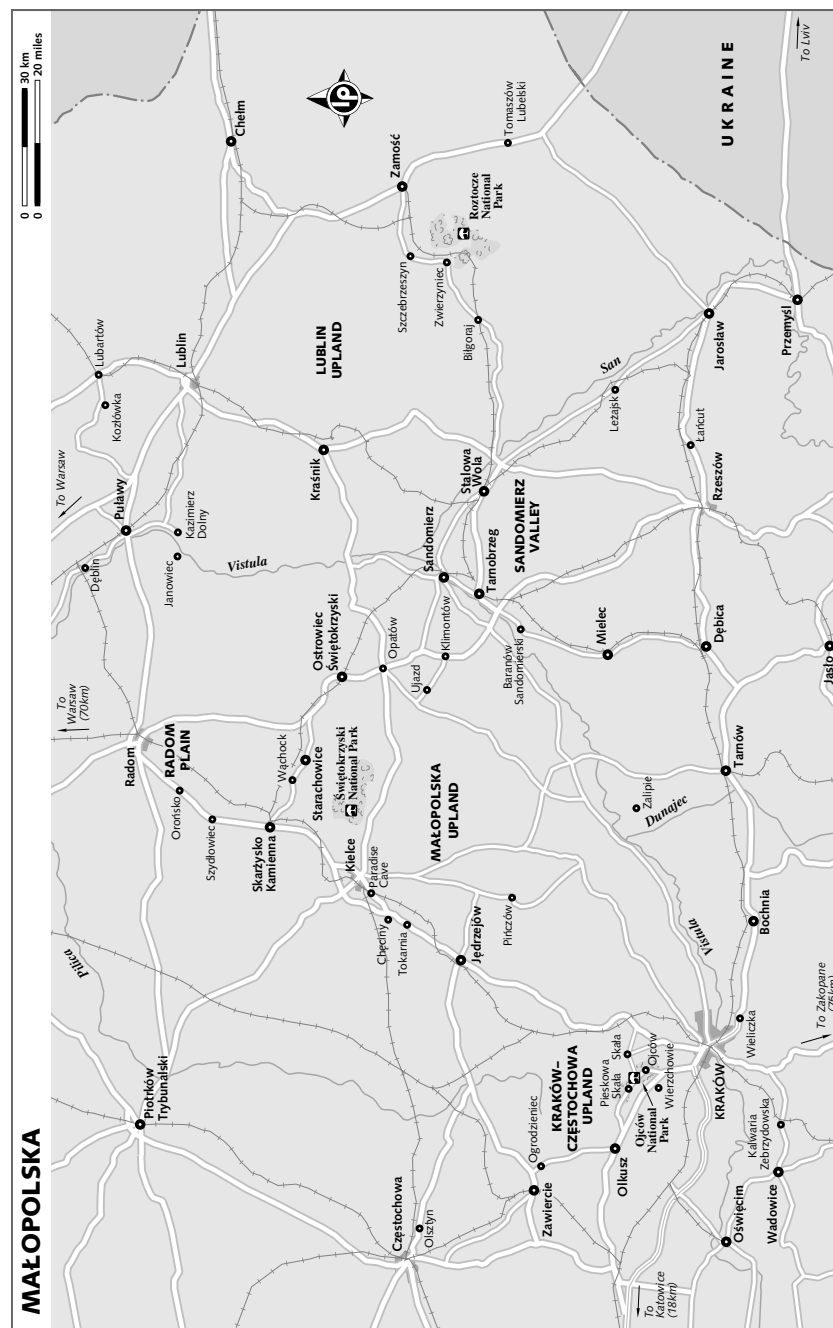
The well-manicured village of Ojców is based in the national park, and is popular with day-trippers from Kraków. There are a couple of museums in town, but the true allure of Ojców is its access to the tourist trails running through the national park.

### CASTLES & MUSEUMS

If you can only do one thing in Ojców National Park, visit 14th-century **Pieskowa Skała Castle** (📍 courtyard 7am–sunset), one of the best-preserved castles in the upland and one of the brightest feathers in Poland's Renaissance cap. To find the Pieskowa Skała Castle, follow the path up the hill into the national park. After WWII (during which it served as a refuge for orphans) the castle was restored to its present glory. Truly an extension of the magnificence of Kraków, Pieskowa Skała Castle was rebuilt in the 16th century in imitation of the royal residence of Wawel and now serves as a branch of the Royal Wawel Castle Museum. Give yourself plenty of time to revel in the richness of the **museum** (☎ 012 389 6004; adult/concession 10/7zł; 🕒 10am–4pm Tue–Thu, 10am–noon Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun May–Aug, 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Oct–Apr, closed Mon), which spans the Gothic 15th century, through the Renaissance and Baroque periods, right up to 19th-century Art Nouveau.

From the castle, the red trail along the road towards Ojców takes you to a 25m-tall limestone pillar; it's called **Hercules' Club** (Maczuga Herkulesa), despite obvious temptations to name it otherwise.

**Ojców Castle** (☎ 012 389 2044; adult/concession 2.5/1.5zł; 🕒 10am–4.45pm Apr–May & Aug–Sep, 10am–5.45pm Jun & Jul, 10am–3.45pm Oct, 10am–2.45pm Nov, closed Mon) was deserted in 1826, and has since fallen into ruin. The 14th-century entrance gate and octagonal tower are original, but there's little



else to explore. The view of the wooden houses scattered across the slopes of Prądnik valley is worth the little money and effort.

Just south of the castle, the **Natural History Museum** (Muzeum Przyrodnicze; ☎ 012 389 2040; adult/concession 2.5/1.5zł; 🕒 9am–4.30pm Tue–Sun mid-May–mid-Nov, 8am–3pm Tue–Fri mid-Nov–mid-May) focuses on the geology, archaeology, flora and fauna of the park. A wooden mansion further south houses modest historical and ethnographic displays in the **Regional Museum** (Muzeum Regionalne; ☎ 012 389 2010; adult/concession 1.5/1zł; 🕒 10am–3pm Tue–Sun).

### CAVES

Stretching over 270m through several passages, **Łokietek Cave** (☎ 012 419 0801; www.grotalokietka.pl in Polish; Grota Łokietka; adult/concession 7/4.50zł; 🕒 9am–3.30pm Apr, 9am–6.30pm May–Aug, 9am–5.30pm Sep, 9am–4.30pm Oct, 9am–3.30pm Sat & Sun Nov–Mar) is accessible from the black trail heading southwards from Ojców Castle and can be visited on a 30-minute tour. Legend has it that before he became king in the 14th century, Władysław Łokietek hid from Czech King Václav II in the cave. Chambers are named for the various uses made of them by Łokietek. The temperature of the cave remains between 7°C and 8°C all year.

Just outside the park boundaries, **Wierzchowska Góra Cave** (☎ 012 411 0721; adult/concession 12/10zł; 🕒 9am–4pm Apr, Sep & Oct, 9am–5pm May–Aug, 9am–3pm Nov) is in the village of Wierzchowice, 5km southwest of Ojców. At 950m long, Wierzchowska is the largest in the Kraków–Częstochowa highlands. Artefacts from the late Stone Age and pottery from the middle Neolithic period were uncovered here during excavations after WWII.

Other caves for enthusiasts include **Dark Cave** (Jaskinia Ciemna; ☎ 012 380 1011; www.ciemna.ojcow.pl in Polish; adult/concession 6/3zł; 🕒 10am–5pm Apr–Nov), close to Ojców and easily reached by the green trail, and the **Bat Cave** (Jaskinia Nietoperzowa; ☎ 012 389 5395; adult/concession 6/3zł; 🕒 10am–5pm), further away along the blue trail. The latter has yielded bones of Arctic animals from the early Stone Age and other animals including the majestic lemming.

### CHURCHES & CHAPELS

About 200m north of Ojców Castle is the frequently photographed **Chapel upon the Water** (Kaplica na Wodzie), which was fashioned

in 1901 from the bathhouse that originally stood in its place. In keeping with its exterior simplicity, the three altars inside are shaped as peasants' cottages. You may sneak a peek inside when the doors open for religious service.

In the hamlet of Grodzisko, 2km north, the road divides: take the left-hand fork skirting the river and look for the red trail branching off the road uphill to the right. It takes you to the small Baroque **Church of the Blessed Salomea**, built in the 17th century on the site of the former 13th-century convent of the St Clare order. The wall encircling the church is adorned with sandstone statues representing Salomea and her family. Behind the church is an unusual carved stone elephant (1686) supporting an obelisk on its back.

### Sleeping & Eating

There are several sleeping and eating options in both Pieskowa Skała and Ojców, and more along the road between them. Ask about private rooms (30zł to 60zł per person) at the PTTK or the **Ojcowianin travel agency** (☎ 012 389 1466, 012 389 2089) in the Regional Museum building. Alternatively, wander along the road between Ojców and Pieskowa Skała and look for 'noclegi' signs.

**Dom Wycieczkowy Zosia** (☎ 012 389 2008; Ojców-Złota Góra 4; per person with shared/private bathroom 25/35zł) You can't beat the value or the vibe at this casual place, just 1km west up the hill from Ojców castle. It offers well-kept rooms, facilities and friendly common areas.

**Zajazd Zazamcze** (☎ 012 389 2083; Ojców 1B; www.zajazdzazamcze.ojcow.pl; s/d/tr 100/140/180zł; 📶) An easy walk from the Ojców turn-off, Zajazd Zazamcze offers bland but airy rooms. The restaurant turns out hearty and wholesome fare in its cosy dining room and boasts a park-worthy garden.

**Camping Złota Góra** (☎ 012 389 2014, 05023 84149; Złota Góra; per adult/under 10yr 5/3.5zł, tent/car/trailer/caravan/motorbike/power connection 4/5/8/10/3/7zł; 🕒 19 Apr–15 Oct) A few hundred metres from Dom Wycieczkowy Zosia, this camping ground has a bonfire at its heart and trees all around. The expanding dining area lures passers-by with its snug seating and fast-flowing beer. It's BYO tent only.

Half a kilometre from Pieskowa Skała Castle is **Agroturystyka Mirosław Głanowski** (☎ 012 389 6212; www.jura.tur.pl/glanowski in Polish; Pieskowa Skała, Podzamcze 2; per person 25–30zł), with a range

of clean rustic rooms, a simple restaurant and camping facilities.

The restaurant-café at **Pieskowa Skała Castle** (☎ 012 389 1103; 🕒 10am–8pm) is accessible without a museum ticket; the restaurant interior is castle-kitsch but the upstairs terrace affords regal views.

Notwithstanding these options, the best place to dine is along the roadside where **home-grown eateries** turn out authentic Polish sausages, goulash, cakes and bread, all made from local produce and served without fuss by the babbling Prądnik River.

### Getting There & Away

The company that once ran direct buses between Ojców and Kraków has fallen on hard times. Affected locals are working hard to reconnect their town, but in the meantime visitors can only get to Ojców by minibus.

The limited direct minibuses leave from the corner of Długa and Kelców streets (near the Drogeria on the corner) in Kraków and arrive at the PTTK office at the base of Ojców castle. At the time of writing, five minibuses departed from Kraków each weekday from 7.45am to 5.20pm, and four returned from Ojców between 6.35am and 6.20pm. Weekend timetables are the same, minus the first bus.

The alternative way to Ojców is via the nearby town of Skała (2.5zł, 30 minutes). From Kraków, take a direct or a Wolbrom-bound minibus to Skała from where regular minibuses leave for Olkusz between around 5am and 8.30pm, passing through Pieskowa Skała (1.5zł, 10 minutes). Ask to be let off at the turn-off to Ojców and walk the 3km into town or walk the picturesque 7km from Pieskowa Skała to Ojców after visiting the castle. To return to Kraków, either catch the direct minibus from the PTTK office, or make your way back via Skała.

It sounds more complicated than it is – don't be deterred.

### OGRODZIENIEC

pop 4500

Claiming prime position on the highest hill of the upland (504m), the ruins of **Ogrodzieniec Castle** (☎ 032 673 2220; admission 3zł; 🕒 9am–sunset Apr–Oct) look like they belong in a medieval-style fairytale. Incorporating natural rock in its foundations and parts of the walls, the fortress was built during the reign of King Kazimierz III Wielki but enlarged in the mid-

16th century by its owner, Seweryn Boner, a wealthy banker from Kraków. Boner employed Italian masters from the royal court to remodel the castle into a Renaissance residence. After exploring the nooks and crannies of this enormous complex, it's easy to believe reports that the castle was once as splendid as Wawel.

The Swedes started the process of ruination in 1655, and the abandonment of the castle by its owners in the 1810s led it to become a tourist attraction.

### Getting There & Away

Buses make for Ogrodzieniec from the town of Zawiercie.

From Częstochowa, there are two buses per day to Zawiercie (6zł, 1½ hours, 6.50am and 2pm), from where you can change for a bus to Ogrodzieniec. Alternatively, take a bus passing Zawiercie on its way to another destination (such as Kielce, Kraków or Jędrzejów).

Trains bound for Katowice from Częstochowa also stop in Zawiercie.

### CZĘSTOCHOWA

pop 246,225

Every year, Częstochowa (chen-sto-ho-va) attracts four to five million visitors from 80 countries, who come to fall at the feet of the *Black Madonna*. Some walk for 20 days over hundreds of kilometres with offerings for the Virgin. Others take a bus from Kraków.

Poland's spiritual heartland is not just for the faithful. The Monastery of Jasna Góra is the country's national shrine and one of the highlights of the region. Since an influx of resources from the EU, renovations are working their way up the main thoroughfare towards the monastery, adding new pride to ancient reverence.

During pilgrimage times – particularly the day of Assumption on 15 August – hordes of devotees become a main attraction for people-watchers, and a deterrent for crowd-weary wanderers.

### History

The first known mention of Częstochowa (believed to be named for the town's Slavic founder Czętoch) dates to 1220. Częstochowa's emergence as Poland's spiritual capital began with the arrival of the Paulite order from Hungary in 1382, who named the 293m hill in the western part of the city 'Jasna Góra'





(Bright Hill) and erected a monastery on top. Believers were drawn to the site for the miracles credited to the *Black Madonna* painting. The fact that Jasna Góra was one of the few places in the country to survive Swedish aggression (1655–66) was attributed to the miraculous Virgin (despite her having been safely stowed in Silesia at the time).

The town's foundational charter was granted in the 14th century under German law by King Kazimierz III Wielki, placing Częstochowa on an important trade route from Russia. Agricultural and industrial development, aided by the Warsaw–Vienna railway line, saw Częstochowa evolve into an established industrial centre by the end of the 19th century. By the outbreak of WWII, the city had some 140,000 inhabitants. Częstochowa became a municipal district in 1933, and in 1998 became the first Polish city to be awarded the coveted European Council Prize of Europe.

Despite communist attempts to destabilise the town's religious spirit with a bout of intense industrialisation, Jasna Góra still proudly towers over the city, with the factory chimneys only slightly sulling the distant horizon.

## Orientation

Social activity takes place along the wide thoroughfare, Al Najświętszej Marii Panny (Al NMP). At the western end is the Monastery of Jasna Góra.

At the time of writing, the spacious Al NMP was being further widened, and local proprietors of restaurants/cafés/shops were making special efforts to match this new elegance.

## Information

There are a number of *kantors* (private currency-exchange offices) and ATMs on Al NMP.

**Bank Pekao** (ul Kopernika 19) Gives cash advances on Visa and MasterCard.

**EMPIK** (☎ 034 361 1717; Al NMP 63/65; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat, 10am–5pm Sun) Bookshop with English-language collection.

**Jasnogórskie Centrum Informacji** (☎ 034 365 3888; www.jasnagora.pl; ul Kordeckiego 2; ☎ 7.30am–7pm May–mid-Oct, 8am–5pm mid-Oct–Apr) Information centre inside Jasna Góra Monastery.

**Miejskie Centrum Informacji** (City Information Centre; ☎ 034 368 2250; www.czystochowa.pl; Al NMP 65; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat) Maps and sights information.

**Multibank** (ul Szymanowskiego 1) Conveniently located 24-hour ATM.

**Xtreme** (Internet Cafe; ☎ 034 368 3689; www.xtreme.net.pl; Al NMP 65A; per hr 3zł; ☎ 7.30am–11pm)

## Sights

### MONASTERY OF JASNA GÓRA

Impressive though it is, the exterior of Jasna Góra gives little indication of the grandeur layered behind its walls. Exploring this functioning monastery gives a fascinating insight into its history, and a deep appreciation for its present-day relevance. Arrive early and take your time.

You are free to wander around the complex at your own leisure (crowds permitting). **Audio guides** (adult/concession 14/10zł in Polish, English, German & Italian) are available for four routes; the most important covers the main sanctuary and takes 45 minutes.

In the oldest part of the complex, the **Chapel of Our Lady** (Kaplica Cudownego Obrazu; ☎ 5am–9pm) contains the revered *Black Madonna* (see boxed text, p216). The picture is ceremoniously unveiled at 6am and 1.30pm (2pm Saturday and Sunday) and veiled at noon and 9.20pm (1pm and 9.20pm Saturday and Sunday). Be sure to note the walls displaying votive offerings brought by pilgrims. Adjoining the chapel is the impressive **basilica** (*bazylika*). Its present shape dates to the 17th century and the interior has opulent Baroque furnishings.

On the northern side of the chapel, paintings in the **Knights' Hall** (sala Rycerska) depict key events from the monastery's history; there's also an exact copy of the *Black Madonna*. Upstairs, the **Golghota Gallery** contains a series of unique paintings by celebrated local painter and cartoonist Jerzy Duda Gracz (1941–2004) whose evocative works are indicative of the monastery's ability to preserve its historical heritage while maintaining modern relevance.

The 106m **belltower** (admission 2zł; ☎ 8am–4pm Apr–Sep), the tallest historic church tower in Poland, offers views over the monastery complex and the expanse of Al NMP. After falling many times over history, the current tower dates to 1906.

The **600th Anniversary Museum** (Muzeum Sześćsetlecia; ☎ 9am–5pm summer, 9am–4pm winter) contains fascinating artefacts, including the founding documents of Jasna Góra from 1382 and a cross made from the steel of the World

## THE BLACK MADONNA OF CZĘSTOCHOWA

Unlike other pilgrimage sites, Jasna Góra has never claimed the appearance of apparitions. Its fame is attributed to the presence of the *Black Madonna*, a 122cm by 82cm painting of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child on a panel of cypress timber, which was crowned 'Queen of Poland' in 1717.

It is not known for sure when or where the *Black Madonna* was created, but some say she was painted by St Luke the Evangelist on a table in the house of the Holy Family. She is believed to have been brought to Częstochowa from Jerusalem via Constantinople. The painting arrived in Częstochowa in 1382.

In 1430, the face of the Madonna was slashed by Hussites. She still bears the scars either because they were left as a reminder of the sacrilegious attack or, as legend has it, because they continually reappeared despite attempts to repair them. Legends about the *Black Madonna's* role in saving Jasna Góra from the Swedish Deluge in 1655 and in keeping the Russians at bay in 1920 are still extolled today. Whatever the truth of the legends, the widespread belief in them is real, as is evident from the votive offerings – from crutches and walking canes to jewellery and medals – which are still presented to the Virgin by devoted pilgrims today.

Trade Centre, destroyed in New York on 11 September 2001. Particularly moving are rosaries made from bread crumbs by concentration camp prisoners. Lech Wałęsa's 1983 Nobel Peace Prize, donated by its recipient, can be found beyond the Father Kordecki Conference Room.

The **arsenal** contains military mementos including spoils of battle, offerings from soldiers and an impressive collection of Turkish weapons from the 1683 Battle of Vienna.

The 17th-century **treasury** (*skarbiec*) contains votive offerings dating back to the 15th century. Since the 17th century, records have been kept of gifts given to the Madonna.

Depictions of Saint Maximilian Kolbe wearing his Auschwitz uniform can be seen throughout the complex. This Franciscan priest was canonised by Pope John Paul II for his stalwart devotion during the Holocaust and the sacrifice of his life for another man.

The monastery's gates are open from 5.30am to 9.30pm.

## OTHER CITY ATTRACTIONS

The 17th-century **St Barbara's Church** (Kościół Św Barbary; ul Św Barbary) is 1km south of the monastery. Its location is believed to have been determined by the spring that emerged here when the *Black Madonna* needed to be washed after it was vandalised (it's still bubbling away behind the church). This legend is depicted on the vault of the chapel.

In the neoclassical town hall, **Częstochowa Museum** (Muzeum Częstochowskie; ☎ 034 360 5631; www.mcz.net-galeria.art.pl; Plac Biegańskiego 45A; admission 3zł; ☎ 11am–5pm Tue–Sun), on Al NMP,

contains paintings of Polish artists as well as extensive documentation detailing the history of Częstochowa and the region at large. Some of the collection is housed in the **Częstochowa Museum outlet** (Park Staszica; ☎ 11am–5pm Tue–Thu, 11am–5.30pm Wed, Fri, Sat & Sun) close to the monastery.

## OLSZTYN CASTLE

A visit to the Olsztyn castle ruins, 11km east of Częstochowa, is a refreshing trip out of town...if you find dungeons refreshing. The castle was built in the 14th century by King Kazimierz III Wielki and fell into ruins after it was destroyed by the Swedes in 1655.

Take city bus 58 or 67 from ul Piłsudskiego opposite the train station. Alternatively, walk along the Trail of the Eagles' Nests, which starts from Plac Daszyńskiego and leads via Olsztyn up to Kraków.

## Festivals & Events

**'Gaude Mater' International Festival of Religious Music** (1–6 May) More than 1000 musicians perform in churches and concert halls for Częstochowa's biggest cultural event.

**Marian feasts** (3 May, 16 July, 15 August, 26 August, 12 September and 8 December) On these days the monastery is flooded by feasting pilgrims.

**Assumption** (15 August) Pilgrims have been travelling by foot to Jasna Góra for Assumption since 1711. Those from Warsaw leave on 6 August for the 250km journey.

## Sleeping

During pilgrimage periods (such as the Marian feast days) book well ahead, or stay elsewhere and make a day trip into Częstochowa.

**Hotel Polonia** (☎ 034 324 2388; www.hotel-polonia.czest.pl; ul Piłsudskiego 9; s/d/tr/q 80/100/130/160zł) Polonia has an old-world foyer and old-fashioned taste. The décor is out of style, but over time its retro charm will kick in and pink will make a comeback. It's clean, quirky and nicely located near the train and bus stations.

**Hotel Sekwana** (☎ 034 324 8954; sekwana@sekwana.pl; ul Wieluńska 24; s/d/tr/q 120/150/180/200zł; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☒) On a quiet, lovely street near the monastery, Sekwana offers a range of rooms, some newer and more spacious than others. Breakfast is included, and is served in the family-friendly onsite Restauracja Francuska, with its French-themed murals.

**Mercure** (Hotel Patria; ☎ 034 324 7001; mer.patria@orbis.pl; ul Popieluszki 2; s/d/ste/apt 295/340/450/550zł; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☒) Renovations sweeping up Al NMP would do well to turn right on Pułaskiego and clean up the entrance of the Mercure. Despite its hackneyed exterior, the Mercure offers good-quality accommodation. Rooms are standard international-hotel style; some have bathtubs.

There are a couple of church-run places that fill up fast despite their tepid tone (feel at home but make sure you're back in at 10pm). **Hale Noclegowe** (☎ 034 377 7224; ul Kłasztorna 1; dm 17zł; ☎ May–mid-Oct) is where genders are divided and facilities shared, while **Dom Pielgrzyma** (☎ 034 377 7564; ul Wyszyńskiego 1/31; s 70zł, d 100–130zł, tr 105–126zł, q 140zł) has a bustling kiosk that gives it a true summer-camp feel.

In summer, you can also try the **youth hostel** (☎ 034 324 3121; ul Jasnogórska 84/90; dm 20–36zł; ☎ Jul & Aug), two blocks parallel to Al NMP (look for small green triangular sign). The smiling green **Camping Oleńka** (☎ 034 360 6066; camping@mosir.pl; ul Oleńki 22/30; car/tent 10/12zł, 4-person bungalow with bathroom 120zł), behind the monastery, has space for around 400 people. Those who forget to bring tents can enjoy great value in the self-contained bungalows.

## Eating

In addition to the cheap eateries near the monastery, an eclectic modern range of eateries have been introduced recently.

**Edo** (☎ 034 324 2233; www.edo.czwa.eu; ul Kopernika 22; mains 8–30zł; ☎ noon–11pm) Edo is a bold attempt at exoticism that seems to be paying off. Modern Japanese décor adds flavour to tempura, salads and sushi dishes, while Polish

waiters in Japanese attire are a new take on the Far East.

**Viking Bar & Restaurant** (☎ 034 324 5768; ul Nowowiejskiego 10; mains 8–30zł; ☎ 10am–10pm) This casual corner bar offers great value meals of pleasing proportions, and has a more refined adjoining restaurant. There are a few outdoor tables when the weather permits. You'll have an English menu at *dzień dobry*.

**Café 29** (☎ 034 361 2355; Al NMP 29; mains 10–30zł; ☎ 10am–10pm Mon–Thu, 10am–11pm Fri & Sat, noon–10pm Sun) Warm on the inside, cool on the outside, Café 29 attracts the sleek young things of Częstochowa, who mellow over smoothies (6zł) and pizzas (from 12zł).

**Sphinx** (☎ 034 366 4185; Al Kościuszki 1; mains 15–35zł; ☎ noon–11pm Mon–Fri, 11am–11pm Sat & Sun) Sphinx is a reliable chain restaurant serving solid meat and salad meals in the pleasant (though often loud) surrounds of Egyptian bling.

**Art Restaurant Stacherczak** (☎ 034 369 3801; www.artrestaurant.pl; Al Kościuszki; mains 15–40zł; ☎ 11am–11pm) An attempt to blend cuisine with culture, the Art Restaurant is a multitiered space offering innovative Asian-inspired platters, standard steaks and food of no particular genesis. The vibe is turned up a treat on weekends with musical performances. Check the website for details.

There are several popular choices along Al NMP:

**A Blikle** (☎ 034 368 0531; Al NMP 47/42; mains 10zł; ☎ 8am–7pm Mon–Thu, 8am–8pm Fri & Sat, 9am–8pm Sun) Dangerously good pastries on the main thoroughfare or in the courtyard.

**Café Milano** (☎ 034 365 4929; Al NMP 57/59; mains 10–25zł; ☎ 7am–11pm) Spanish-run, family-friendly café.

**Cleopatra** (☎ 034 368 0101; Al NMP 71; mains 15–20zł; ☎ 11am–11pm) Kebab, pizza and sandwich staples with a prime view of the monastery.

## Getting There & Away BUS

The **bus terminal** (☎ 034 379 11 4950; www.pks-czestochowa.pl; ☎ information counter 7am–8pm) is close to the central train station and serves many towns in the region including Jędrzejów (10.50zł, two hours) and Opole (11.50zł, two hours).

From Kraków (133km away), there are many buses to Częstochowa (15.20zł, three hours, eight per day, between 6.30am and 9.20pm). Alternatively, there is the faster Polski Express bus (20zł, two hours, three daily), which also heads from Częstochowa to Warsaw (50zł, three hours, one daily).





**Hotel Śródmiejski** (☎ 041 344 1507; www.hotel.srodmijski.pl; ul Wesoła 5; s/d 130/150zł; (P) (Q)) In a quiet lane close to the heart of town, clean and compact Śródmiejski is hard to beat; the fact that it is so freshly refurbished makes prices seem like an opening special. Its restaurant also gets good reviews.

**Hotel Leśny Dwór** (☎ 041 362 1088; www.lesny.dwor.com.pl; ul Szczepaniaka 40; s/d/ste 160/220/350zł; (P)) Roughly 3km southwest of the centre but a world away in every other respect, Leśny Dwór is a quaint hotel opposite Park Baranowski. It offers charming rooms and a restaurant capable of anything from roasting a pig for a party to serving vegetarian meals for a couple of travellers.

**Citi-Hotel** (☎ 041 343 5151; www.citipark.pl; ul Paderewskiego 4c; s/d/tr 180/250/300zł; (P) (Q) (R)) Citi-Hotel is a new business centre with a professional air. Its 35 compact but sleek rooms enjoy good natural light. It's not nearly as personal as nearby Elita, but offers perks like a pool, sauna and Japanese/Korean restaurant downstairs.

**Hotel Elita** (☎ 041 344 2230; www.hotelelita.com.pl; ul Równa 4A; s/d/apt 180/260/360zł; (P)) Elita is a friendly (though not remotely wheelchair-friendly) place at a quiet end of town, which is small enough to feel cosy. Rooms and bathrooms are spacious and spotless. The generous 2pm checkout leaves ample time to get down the stairs.

The uninspiring but adequate **Youth Hostel Wędrownik** (☎ 041 342 3735; ul Szymanowskiego 5; dm 29zł) is 1.5km east of the centre.

## TOP END

**Hotel Pod Złotą Różą** (☎ 041 341 5002; www.zlota.roza.pl; Plac Moniuszki 7; s/d 240/350zł, ste 430-600zł; (P) (Q)) Small but meticulously refurbished rooms shine with rich brown finish. There's no unnecessary ostentatiousness here; it's just a compact, stylish place with an elegant restaurant.

**Hotel Łysogóry** (☎ 041 366 5500; www.lysogory.com.pl in Polish; ul Sienkiewicza 78; s 240-320zł, d 360-520zł, ste 450-760zł; (P) (X) (Q)) Renovations have tried to work in an old-world feel, but the newness translates as modern sterility in the rooms. However, you certainly won't find anywhere newer (or nearer the train station) than this big, shiny establishment.

**Hotel Kongresowy** (☎ 041 332 6393; www.exbud.com.pl in Polish; ul Manifestu Lipcowego 34; s/d/ste Mon-Fri from 260/370/590zł, Sat & Sun from 182/259/470zł;

(P) (X) (Q)) An established business hotel a couple of kilometres northeast of the centre, Kongresowy has all the facilities you'd need to host the General Assembly, assuming delegates were prepared to catch bus 4 or 34 to get there.

## Eating

**A Blikle** (☎ 041 343 2324; www.blikle.pl; ul Sienkiewicza 29; mains 10zł; (X) 9am-8pm) A welcome addition to newly sophisticated Kielce, this bakery-café is pleasant for a high-calorie break and low-energy people-watching.

**Sphinx** (☎ 041 341 5134; www.sphinx.pl; ul Sienkiewicza 48/50; mains 15-35zł; (X) 11am-11pm Sat & Sun) A particularly cosy branch of the popular chain, friendly staff, an English menu and portions fit for a pharaoh make this inexplicably Egyptian-themed restaurant a safe choice for casual dining outside under the umbrellas or inside under the trees.

**Restauracja Prowansja** (☎ 041 344 1144; ul Sienkiewicza 25; mains 25zł; (X) 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat, 11am-10pm Sun) A relaxed Polish, French and Italian restaurant enjoyed by regulars, serving authentic courses including pigs trotters, frogs and snails (though vegetarians won't starve).

**Restaurant Pod Złotą Różą** (☎ 041 343 7880; www.zlotaroz.pl; Plac Moniuszki 7; mains 40zł; (X) 10am-11pm) This hotel restaurant offers upmarket dining in the wood-finished dining room or the charming cobblestoned courtyard. Cuisine is traditional Polish with a sprinkling of international dishes.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Dom Środowisk Twórczych** (☎ 041 368 2053; www.kielcedst.net in Polish; ul Zamkowa 5) One of the best venues in town offers temporary exhibitions and live music (classic through to rock and jazz) in a resplendent but relaxed open-air space at the foot of the palace. Check the online programme or wander past to see what's happening.

**Galery Café** (☎ 041 341 5223; ul Zamkowa; (X) 10am-late) This popular local hangout is a particularly nice place for an afternoon beer.

**Klub Zamkowa** (☎ 041 344 7226; www.zamkowa.pl; ul Zamkowa 2; (X) 11am-1am) A hit-and-miss clubbing experience with old Polish décor and a new Polish vibe.

In addition to these watering holes, stylish bars at pl Walności attract vibrant late-night crowds.

For more highbrow fare, see what the local art-house talents are up to at **Teatr Żeromskiego** (☎ 041 344 6048; www.teatr-zeromskiego.com.pl in Polish; ul Sienkiewicza 32).

## Getting There & Away BUS

The UFO-shaped bus terminal (landed by aliens from a planet entirely devoid of taste) is well organised and conveniently close to the train station.

Buses to Święty Krzyż (3.90zł, one hour, four daily) leave between 6.45am and 3.40pm; for Łódź (25zł to 27zł, 3½ hours, around 15 daily) between 6am and 8.20pm; for Sandomierz (18zł, two hours, 14 daily), between 7am and 7.40pm; and for Kraków (18zł to 23zł, 2½ hours, 13 daily) between 2am and 5.35pm. Check other destinations at the busy **information desk** ((X) 6am-8pm).

The minibus stand (opposite the bus terminal) clearly displays schedules. Minibuses to nearby destinations such as Chęciny (2.5zł, 20 minutes, every half-hour or so) are more constant and convenient than PKS buses. However, minibuses to Kraków (18zł, two hours, every half-hour from 5am to 8.10pm) can fill up fast – a normal bus is a better bet for this trip.

## TRAIN

The train station (the key landmark at the western end of ul Sienkiewicza) services many destinations. There are around 15 trains per day to Radom (22zł, two hours), which continue on to Warsaw (36zł, 3½ hours); 14 trains to Kraków (31zł, three hours); four to Lublin (38zł, three hours); and five to Częstochowa (28zł, 1½ hours).

## AROUND KIELCE Castle of Chęciny

From a distance, the **Castle of Chęciny** (ul Przedborska 14; adult/concession 4/3zł; (X) 9am-5pm) looks like a foreboding tri-chimneyed factory. Closer inspection reveals its impressive hilltop location presiding over the quaint town of Chęciny. The view from one of the towers reveals why the site was chosen as an all-seeing defensive position. Visitors can climb the tower to experience a great view of the surrounding region and pleasant town of Chęciny.

The castle is estimated to have come into existence around 1280, taking its name from

the village. At the turn of the 13th century, the knighthood of the region would assemble here. In 1306, the castle was presented to the then Bishop of Kraków (Jan Muskata) who would later surrender it to royal power. After the death of King Władysław Łokietek (who used the castle as a venue for important political assemblies), Kazimierz III Wielki developed it into a fortress; it is believed that Kazimierz's second wife spent two years here after being repudiated by her husband. Over the years, the castle was used as a residence for widowed wives of Polish kings, a treasury and a jail for high-profile prisoners including the Teutonic Knights captured on the Grunwald battlefield.

In the 16th century, the castle was unable to support the bastions required by new defensive strategies, and so lost its impenetrability. It fell to ruin in the attacks that followed (notably the Swedish onslaught of 1707) and under Austrian rule, which saw parts of the castle demolished. Legend has it that a ghostly 'white lady' can still be seen strolling along the castle walls. She is believed to be an apparition of Queen Bona who once lived at Chęciny Castle.

Today the castle conjures up all of this history. On a gloomy day, clambering along the heavy stone walls is an evocative experience, it's well worth the short trip from Kielce.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Regular minibuses leave Kielce every 20 minutes or so on their way to various destinations. Ask to be let off at the Rynek in Chęciny (2.5zł, 20 minutes) for the castle, which is about 25km from Kielce. Check minibuses bound for Bolmin (13 per day between 6.30am and 7pm), Łukowa (26 per day between 6.10am and 7.30pm), Ostrów (four per day between 9.10am and 5.25pm), Wolica (five per day between 9.10am and 5.25pm) and Zajączków (10 per day between 5.50am and 5.20pm).

To get to the castle, walk the 800m from the Rynek around behind the castle and enter from its rear. From the car park there is a pleasant unpaved and sometimes rocky path through a small patch of atmospheric forest.

## Paradise Cave

If you haven't seen caves before, you'll enjoy **Paradise Cave** (Jaskinia Raj; ☎ 041 346 5518; www.lysogory.com.pl; tours 10zł; (X) 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Aug,

10am-4pm Tue-Sun Mar, Apr & Sep-Nov). However, if you are an experienced spelunker, then a visit to Paradise Cave may be only marginally more thrilling than exploring your garage with a torch in winter.

The paved path through the cave makes for a sanitised 180m loop. The cave is only 8m at its highest point, but some of the larger chambers are truly impressive, not so much for the size of the stalactites but for their sheer density – as many as 200 per square metre.

The 40-minute tours (leaving every 15 minutes or so) are only conducted in Polish. Independent visitors must call in advance to reserve their place.

The entrance building shelters a small cafeteria, and a display depicting the use of the cave by primitive humans before they were required to make telephone bookings.

Beside the car park for the cave, **Zazard Raj** (☎ 041 346 5127; Dobrzącka 26-060 Chęciny; s/d/q 90/120/200zł) is a wholesome place to stay (and eat) with little around it other than the caves.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Better than the irregular PKS buses are the regular minibuses leaving Kielce every 20 minutes or so on their way to various destinations. Ask to be let off at the Jaskinia Raj turn-off (1.5zł, 15 minutes) for the caves. Check minibuses bound for Bolmin (13 per day between 6.30am and 7pm), Łukowa (26 per day between 6.10am and 7.30pm), Ostrów (four per day between 9.10am and 5.25pm), Wolica (five per day between 9.10am and 5.25pm) and Zajączków (10 per day between 5.50am and 5.20pm).

For the caves (which are closer to Kielce than to the centre of Chęciny), walk the 900m from the turn-off on the main road to the well-signed cave entrance. On the way back, hail down a bus passing on its way to Kielce along the main road.

#### Tokarnia

In the village of Tokarnia, 20km from Kielce, is the 80-hectare **Open-Air Museum of the Kielce Village** (Muzeum Wsi Kieleckiej; ☎ 041 315 4171; www.mwk.com.pl in Polish; adult/concession 10/7zł; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar). The skansen (open-air museum of traditional architecture) includes many structures complete with interiors. Particularly interesting is the exhibition dedicated to local woodcarver Jan Bernasiewicz (1908–84).

Give yourself a couple of hours, or maybe more if you have children in tow. In summer there is a café at the entrance to the museum.

Several minibuses from Kielce pass Tokarnia on their way to other destinations, as do five normal buses (3zł, 30 minutes) between 10.40am and 8.40pm on their way to destinations such as Jędrzejów. Get off at the village of Tokarnia and continue in the same direction on foot for around 1km to the entrance of the skansen.

#### Jędrzejów póp 18,000

Records of Jędrzejów (yend-zheh-yoof) date back to the 11th century. The first Cistercian monastery in Poland was established here, but today the pride of Jędrzejów is its **Sundial Museum** (Muzeum Zegarów Słonecznych; ☎ 041 386 2445; Rynek 7/8; adult/concession 10/7zł; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 9am-3pm Oct-Apr, closed public holidays & day following). The sundial collection (reputedly the world's third-largest after Oxford and Chicago) belonged to Dr Tadeusz Przyppkowski whose home became the museum upon his death in 1962. The collection crosses eras (the oldest dating to 1524 measures time at night using the position of the stars) and continents (from as far afield as China, Japan and Australia). Even those who don't know what 'gnomonics' means will find the museum interesting. What's not to like about a cannon-firing sundial? Beyond time-telling technology, the well-preserved lodgings of Dr Przyppkowski are also on show throughout the labyrinthine house. Tours are conducted when there are tourists to conduct. This is not a weather-dependent excursion – all the sundials are indoors.

On the western outskirts of town is the **Sanctuary of the Blessed Wincenty Kadłubek** (Opactwo Cystersów; ul 11 Listopada), 2km from the Rynek, on the road towards Zawiercie and Częstochowa. Founded in 1140, the Cistercian Abbey and Church holds the distinction of having been attended twice by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła before he became Pope John Paul II. It was also here in Jędrzejów that Wincenty Kadłubek (1161–1223) completed his famed *Chronica Polonorum* (Chronicle of Poland); his remains are in a 17th-century Baroque coffin in the side chapel off the southern aisle.

The abbey was appropriated by the Russians in 1819 and it was only returned to the Cistercians after WWII.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Kielce, it's possible to travel the 44km to Jędrzejów by bus (6zł, 30 minutes, every two hours) or train (12zł, 20 minutes, every two hours).

The bus and train stations are next to each other, 2km west of the Rynek and linked to it by an urban bus, which continually loops from the Rynek (where the sundial museum is) to both stations (1.4zł, 10 minutes).

#### ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI NATIONAL PARK

The Góry Świętokrzyskie (shfyen-to-kshis-kee) – literally, 'Holy Cross Mountains' – are not only blessed with natural beauty, but are also steeped in history spanning the ages. The hailed pilgrimage site of Święty Krzyż was first imbued with reverence in the era of paganism. The abbey survived the horror of Nazi occupation, and is one of the highlights of the park today (albeit slightly dishevelled). It features a couple of worthwhile museums.

The national park covers the 15km-long gentle mountain range known as Łysogóry (Bald Mountains), marked in the west by Mt Łysica (612m) and in the east by Mt Łysa Góra (595m). Between these lies a dense belt of fir and beech forest, which covers almost all of the 60 sq km park. Unusual piles of broken *głoborza* (quartzite rock) on the northern slopes hint at how ancient this mountain range is. This is Poland's oldest mountainous geological formation (and lowest, due to erosion over more than 300 million years); it has witnessed the entirety of the country's tumultuous history, and deserves your attention for a full or half day.

Tickets into the **national park** (adult/concession 5/2.5zł) are valid all day and include entry into some museums.

#### Getting There & Away

The park is about 20km east of Kielce. You can get there by bus from the city to three different access points: the village of Święta Katarzyna at the western end at the foot of Mt Łysica; the Święty Krzyż abbey on the top of Mt Łysa Góra; and the village of Nowa Słupia, 2km east of Święty Krzyż.

Generally, visitors to the park enter via Nowa Słupia and walk the 18km trail from there to Święta Katarzyna via Święty Krzyż. Most of the museums are around Nowa Słupia and nearby Święty Krzyż; if you start

in Święta Katarzyna you'll need to ramble quite quickly to get to the museums before they close.

Buses leave every hour or so from Kielce to Święta Katarzyna (6zł, 30 minutes) roughly between 5am and 7pm, stopping at Święta Krzyż on the way. To get to Nowa Słupia (6zł, one hour), take a bus bound for either Jeziórko or Rudki (around 10 per day until 6pm or so).

There are frequent buses from both Nowa Słupia (6zł, one hour) and Święta Katarzyna (6zł, 30 minutes) back to Kielce, but from Święty Krzyż there are only buses every few hours; it may be best to walk along the red trail back to Święta Katarzyna for onward transport.

#### Nowa Słupia

Nowa Słupia and the surrounding region is the largest ancient metallurgical centre discovered in Europe so far. The **Museum of the Holy Cross Ancient Metallurgy** (Muzeum Starożytnego Hutnictwa Świętokrzyskiego; ☎ 041 317 7018; ul Świętokrzyska 59; adult/concession 5/2zł; ☎ 9am-5pm) was established on the site where primitive 2nd-century smelting furnaces (*dymarki*) were discovered in 1955. Since 1967 the process of melting iron ore in *dymarki* stoves has been demonstrated in Nowa Słupia in late August every year.

The **Tourist Information Centre** (Informacja Turystyczna; ☎ 041 317 7626; ul Świętokrzyska 18) in the centre of town can arrange budget rooms in private houses. The PTSM **youth hostel** (☎ 041 317 7016; ul Świętokrzyska 61; dm per person 14zł, d 25-30zł), next to the museum, has 60 beds in double and dorm rooms.

From the museum, the 2km King Way path (Droga Królewska) leads to Święty Krzyż (by car, it's a 16km detour).

#### Święty Krzyż

Święty Krzyż (Holy Cross) mountains take their name from the **Benedictine monastery of Holy Cross**, so called for the segment of Jesus' cross that was supposedly kept here. The abbey is at the top of Łysa Góra (595m) – the second-highest mountain in the range, after Łysica (612m).

The Święty Krzyż abbey has a fascinating history. Most sources estimate that it was built in the 11th century on a site of pagan worship from the 8th and 9th centuries. With the abolition of the Benedictine Order by the



Russians in 1819, the abbey was converted into a prison. After a brief period of restoration, the Nazis reconverted the buildings into prisons. The Gestapo tortured many monks here before transporting them to Auschwitz and thousands of Soviet prisoners were executed and buried in mass graves near the peak. Under communism, the abbey was transferred to the national park and renovations commenced.

The monastery now houses the small **Missionary Museum** (Muzeum Misyjne; ☎ 041 317 7021; admission included in park price; 🕒 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun) featuring some objects collected by missionaries over the years.

On the western side of the abbey, facing a 157m TV tower (the largest free-standing TV tower in Poland), is the **Natural History Museum** (Muzeum Przyrodniczo-Leśne; ☎ 041 317 7087; 🕒 9am-5pm, closed public holidays & day following), focusing on the park's geology, flora and fauna. Just beyond the TV mast, to the right, a short side path leads to some quartzite rocks.

The abbey's **Holy Cross Church** (🕛 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun & holidays) was rebuilt several times over the years. The present-day church and its mainly neoclassical interior date to the late 18th century.

On the access road near the car park, 2km before Święty Krzyż, is **Jodłowy Dwór** (☎ 041 302 5028; fax 041 302 6146; d/tr 150/180zł), a pleasant hotel and restaurant. The Tourist Information Centre in Nowa Słupia (p223) can assist with budget accommodation in private rooms.

## The Trail

The 16km trail between Święty Krzyż and Święta Katarzyna is a physically comfortable and scenically rewarding four-hour walk.

From Święty Krzyż the trail follows the road for the first 2km to the car park (where Jodłowy Dwór is), before branching off and running west along the edge of the forest for around 9km. It then enters the woods, ascends the peak of Mt Łysica and winds down for 2km to Święta Katarzyna.

## Święta Katarzyna

This small village is developing into a local holiday centre with several simple places to stay and eat including the **youth hostel** (☎ 041 311 2006; ul Kielecka 45; dm/d 16/50zł), which offers simple lodging in four- to eight-bed dorms in pleasant grounds. Some double rooms have bathrooms.

The former Dom Wycieczkowy PTTK, **Osrodek Wypoczynkowy Jodełka** (☎ 041 311 2111; fax 041 311 2112; ul Kielecka 3; s with shared bathroom 50zł, d/tr/q with private bathroom 120/165/195zł), offers a range of revamped rooms and a pleasant onsite restaurant.

## THE SANDOMIERZ VALLEY

The Sandomierz Valley (Kotlina Sandomierska) covers an extensive area in and around the fork of the Vistula and San Rivers. In the heart of the valley is Sandomierz – an underrated gem of Gothic grandeur. Nearby are the fantastic fairy-tale ruins of Ujazd castle.

## SANDOMIERZ

pop 24,778

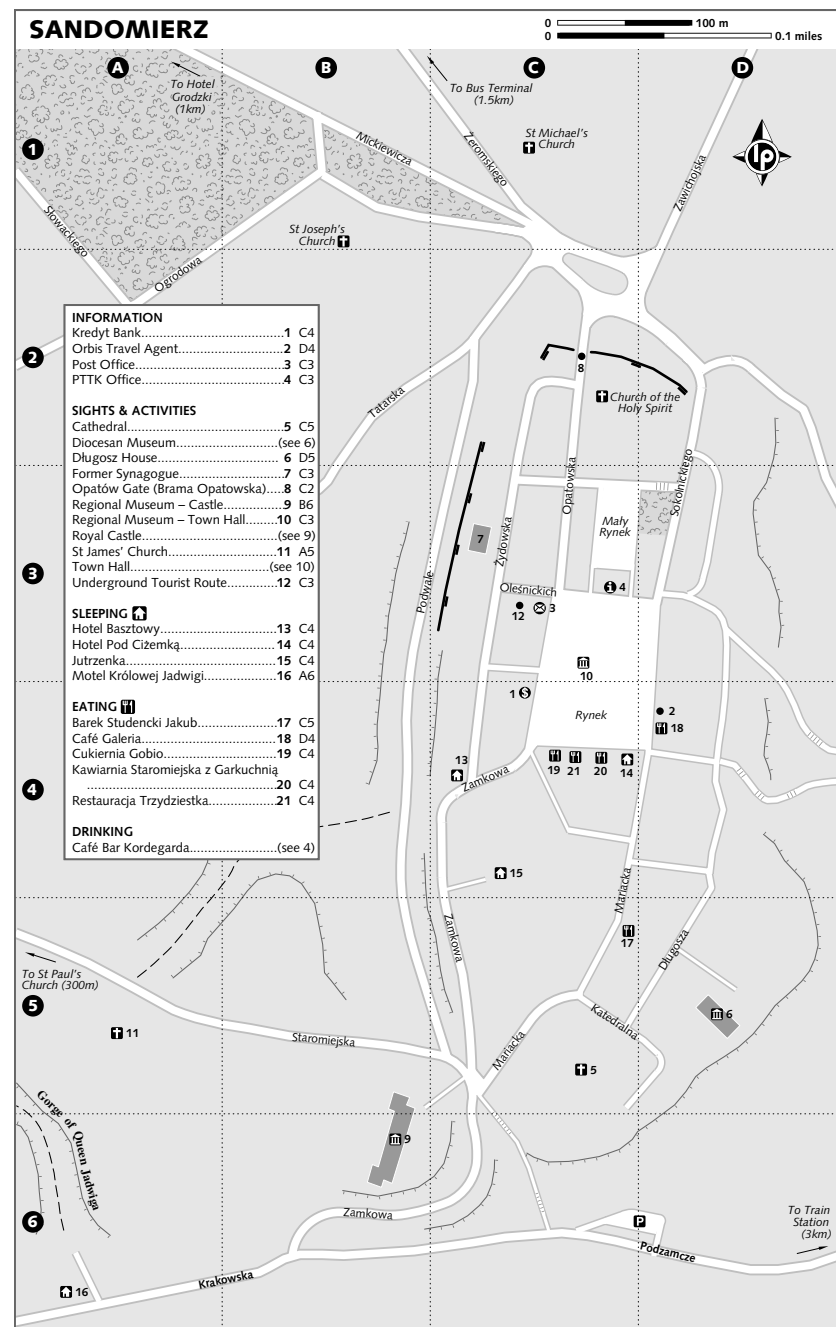
Tourists really should be rolling down the sloping Rynek of Sandomierz and piling up at the town hall. But the grandeur of the old town, with the impressive Gothic town hall propped upright in its centre, remains relatively undiscovered. Immaculate buildings of multiple architectural flavours line undulating laneways as locals nonchalantly wander by, apparently oblivious to their good fortune in not being overrun by hordes of visitors.

## History

No-one is certain of precisely when Sandomierz came to life, but as far back as the 11th century the town was classified (by chronicler Gall Anonim) as a major settlement of the Kingdom, along with Kraków and Wrocław.

In the 13th century, repeated assaults by Tartar raiders meant that Sandomierz had to be resurrected several times, most significantly in 1260 when it was rebuilt uphill at the site it occupies today. During the reign of Kazimierz III Wielki (1333–70), Sandomierz became a significant trade hub and saw the construction of the Royal Castle, Opatów Gate and the town hall. The town prospered until the mid-17th century, the same era that saw the arrival of the Jesuits and the invasion of the Swedes – an onslaught from which it never completely recovered.

After having survived WWII with its historic architecture relatively unscathed, the



next threat came in the 1960s when its most significant buildings started sliding into the river. The soft loess soils on which Sandomierz is built (and from which its underground cellars were carved) began to give way, necessitating a large-scale rescue operation. The injection of concrete and steel into the slippery soil stabilised the city and securely tethered its architectural assets.

### Information

The **PTTK office** (☎ 015 832 2305; www.pttk-sandomierz.pl in Polish; Rynek 12) is of minimal help beyond helping locate rooms in private homes. However, it does sell an English glossy pocket guide to the town (*A guide to Sandomierz* by Andrzej Sarwa, 10zł).

An **Orbis Travel Agent** (☎ 015 832 3040; Rynek 12; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sun), at the lowest point of the Rynek, can help with travel tickets.

There is a **kantor** in the **post office** (Rynek 10). The **Kredyt Bank** (Rynek 5) a few doors south also changes cash. There are also **kantors** on ul Mickiewicza close to the corner of ul 11 Listopada, about 1km northwest of the Old Town.

### Sights

The main entrance to the Old Town and the only surviving gate of the four originally built is 14th-century **Opatów Gate** (Brama Opatowska; ul Opatowska; adult/concession 3/2zł; ☎ 9am-4.30pm summer). You can climb to the viewing platform at the top for a pleasant (though by no means bird's-eye) view of surrounding terrain.

The **Rynek**, distinctive for its slope, is ringed with houses from different stylistic periods. Today, only numbers 10 and 27 have the arcades typical of 16th-century houses. The red rectangular **town hall**, erected in the 14th century, is the oldest building on the Rynek; the white clock tower was added in the 17th century and the sundial on the southern wall (the work of Tadeusz Przypkowski) in 1958. The ground floor houses the **Regional Museum – Town Hall** (Muzeum Okręgowe – Ratusz; Rynek; adult/concession 4/3zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 9am-4pm Tue-Fri & 10am-3pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr), focusing on the town's history.

One of the town's premier attractions is the **Underground Tourist Route** (Podziemna Trasa Turystyczna; ☎ 015 832 3088; ul Oleśnickich; adult/concession 7/4zł; ☎ 10am-5.30pm May-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Apr). The 40-minute guided tour (in Polish) leads through a chain of 30-odd cellars tidily connected over

500m beneath the Old Town. The cellars – originally used for storage and sometimes for shelter during times of conflict – were built between the 13th and 17th centuries. The deepest point is about 12m below ground, but feels like more, because of disorienting twists, turns and Escher-esque staircases. There is an interesting legend about a local girl who tricked the invading Tatar army into the tunnels; the city was saved when the entrances were blocked, burying both the army and the heroic (or perhaps merely misunderstood) girl. The soft-soil cellars undermined the stability of the city and caused near-disaster in the 1960s; the 1964–77 restoration programme reinforced the cellars and reinvented them as a tourist attraction.

Nearby, the 18th-century **synagogue** (ul Żydowska) was virtually destroyed during WWII but remains of 18th- and 19th-century murals partially survived. The former synagogue houses the town's archives.

From the Rynek, take ul Mariacka to the **cathedral** (☎ 015 832 7343; www.katedra.sandomierz.opoka.org.pl in Polish; ul Mariacka; ☎ 10am-2pm & 3-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-4pm Sun & public holidays). Built between 1360 and 1382, this massive church has preserved much of its Gothic exterior, apart from the Baroque façade added in the 17th century. The Russo-Byzantine frescoes in the chancel were painted in the 1420s but later whitewashed, only to be revealed again at the beginning of the 20th century. Also note the impressive Baroque organ gallery of the late 17th century and the marble altar dating to the 18th century.

The quintessential example of Sandomierz's underrated assets, the medieval **Długosz House** (Dom Długosza) was built in 1476 for Poland's first historian, Jan Długosz. Today it houses the **Diocesan Museum** (Muzeum Diecezjalne; ☎ 015 832 2304; ul Długosza 9; adult/concession 4/3zł; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sat & 1.30-4pm Sun & public holidays Apr-Oct, 9am-3pm Tue-Sat & 1.30-3pm Sun & public holidays Nov-Mar), with an exquisitely rich and romantic collection. Visitors are free to wander at their leisure through the glistening rooms and wonder how so lavish a collection of medieval artwork, sculpture, tapestries, clothing, coins and ceramics is so unceremoniously accessible to the humble traveller.

The **Royal Castle**, a few steps downhill from the cathedral, was built in the 14th century on the site of a previous wooden stronghold and was gradually extended during the next three centuries. It now accommodates the **Regional Museum – Castle** (Muzeum Okręgowe – Zamek; ☎ 015 832

### 365 REASONS NOT TO BE MARTYRED

The interiors of Sandomierz Cathedral give a pleasant first impression, but focus on the details beyond the initial ostentatiousness and you discover the macabre side of Sandomierz.

The paintings on the walls of the cathedral are by 18th-century artist Karol de Prevot (1708–37), who was apparently not of a cheery disposition. The four paintings on the back wall under the organ depict historic scenes such as the 1656 destruction of Sandomierz castle by the Swedes. But it is the series of 12 paintings on the side walls that are a real argument for checking ID at the door of this cathedral.

The series, *Martyrologium Romanum*, depicts the martyrdom of the Dominican Fathers and other people of Sandomierz at the hands of the Tartars between 1259 and 1260. The unfortunate subjects are being sawn, burned, hanged, whipped, quartered, sliced, diced and otherwise discourteously treated.

The 12 paintings are supposed to symbolise the 12 months of the year; next to each image of torture a number represents the day of the month. Legend has it that if you find the day and month on which you were born, you'll discover how you're going to die. Happy Deathday to you.

2265; www.republika.pl/mosandomierz in Polish; ul Zamkowa 14; adult/concession 7/5zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri & 10am-6pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-4pm Tue-Fri & 10am-3pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) containing modest ethnographic, archaeological and art collections.

Dating from the 1230s, **St James' Church** (Kościół Św Jakuba; ☎ 015 832 7343; www.sandomierz.dominikanie.pl in Polish; ul Staromiejska; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) is the oldest building in town (but doesn't show its age) and is believed to be the first brick church in Poland. Among few historic objects remaining is the sarcophagus in the presbytery, carved in 1676 out of a single oak trunk. The belfry beside the church holds two of the oldest bells in Poland, cast in 1314 and 1389. The church is along cobblestoned ul Staromiejska.

Continue up ul Staromiejska as far as **St Paul's Church** (built in the 15th century and today a Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque mix) and left into the **Gorge of Queen Jadwiga** (Wąwóz Królowej Jadwigi), named for the queen who was reputedly fond of it. The gorge, with walls up to 10m, is the result of water carving the soft loess soil. Follow it to ul Krakowska or take the first path on the left back to St James' Church.

### Sleeping

#### BUDGET & MIDRANGE

**Jutrzenka** (☎ 015 832 2219; ul Zamkowa 1; s/d/tr 50/100/100zł; ☎) Cluttered with colour and character, the breezy rooms at Jutrzenka are something special. Its proprietors have unconsciously gone all out to fill rooms with fun, each offering a different combination of cluttered bric-a-brac and mismatched

odds and ends. Some rooms have dining tables, another has a giant TV and all have conveniences like kettles. Price depends on variables like size, furniture and proximity to shared bathrooms.

**Hotel Grodzki** (☎ 015 832 2423; www.hotelgrodzki.pl; ul Mickiewicza 38; d with shared bathroom 120zł, s/d with private bathroom 150/190zł; ☎) Serviceable rooms in an uninteresting modern hotel, conveniently located near the bus station 1km northwest of the Old Town. Doubles on the top floor are great value with good light from sloping skylights, and a spotless shared bathroom. Unlimited breakfast is included.

**Motel Królowej Jadwigi** (☎/fax 015 832 2988; www.motel.go3.pl; ul Krakowska 24; d 150-170zł, tr 220zł; ☎) The managers of this quirky motel, a little off the old town, couldn't be more enthusiastic about housing and feeding you. The reception/restaurant area is bric-a-brac on acid; antiques and kooky collectables teeter on every surface. The friendly couple who run it have refrained from injecting the same eccentricity into the tastefully reserved rooms. Inspect before you select; rooms vary in size and style within the same price category.

#### TOP END

**Hotel Pod Ciżemką** (☎ 015 832 0550; www.sandomierz-hotel.com.pl in Polish; Rynek 27; d/ste 250/300zł) Extensively refurbished, Pod Ciżemką is the grandest place in the Old Town. Set in a 400-year-old house, the stylish rooms are commendable renditions of old-world elegance, as is the onsite restaurant.

**Hotel Basztowy** (☎ 015 833 3450; www.hotelbasztowy.pl; pl Ks J Poniątkowskiego 2; s 170-220zł, d/tr/ste

270/330/400 zł; ) Opened in 2003, business hotel Basztowy has maintained its freshness while still achieving a hint of ancient elegance. The restaurant has a fine wood finish, and the billiard room is a nice touch. Some rooms offer a pleasant view.

### Eating & Drinking

**Cukiernia Gobio** (☎ 015 644 5922; Rynek 31a; snacks 3-8zł; 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am to 8pm Sat & Sun) A cheap-as-chips café recommended here primarily for the quiriness of its coffee offerings – anyone for Sandomierz coffee with fresh egg? If you are not feeling that brave, you can't go wrong with a standard coffee or hot chocolate to wash down good-value cakes, waffles or pita bread sandwiches. Far more benign is **Café Galeria** (☎ 0604 907 946; Rynek 25/26; 8am-10pm), which serves a range of teas in cosy quarters.

In the same building as the PTTK Office is the ever-popular **Café Bar Kordegarda** (ul Rynek 12; 10am-last customer), where the funky young things of Sandomierz descend on the Rynek for a casual drink and chat.

For a magical meal, go to **Motel Królowej Jadwigi** (☎ /fax 015 832 2988; www.motel.go3.pl; ul Krakowska 24) where the eccentric dining room is more like a scene from a fairytale than a motel restaurant.

Local favourite **Restauracja Trzydziestka** (☎ 015 644 5312; Rynek 30; mains 10-30zł; lunch & dinner) offers full flavour and full plates. Similar, though a tad more downmarket, is **Kawiarnia Staromiejska z Garkuchnią** (☎ 015 832 3778; Rynek 28; mains 8-15zł; 9am-11pm), which offers simple staples and (an attempt at) an English menu.

### Getting There & Away

**BUS**  
The **PKS bus terminal** (☎ 015 832 2302; ul Listopada 22) is 1.5km northwest of the Old Town; frequent urban buses go there from Opatów Gate.

There are a dozen fast buses to Warsaw (50zł, three hours), which cost roughly the same as the train, and four buses per day to Kielce (17.60zł, two hours).

There are buses to Tarnobrzeg (4zł, 30 minutes, every half-hour) but suburban bus 11 (2.40zł) running along Michiewiczza is more convenient and just as frequent. From Tarnobrzeg, frequent buses go to Baranów Sandomierski (4zł, 50 minutes).

For Ujazd, change at Opatów (5.20zł, 45 minutes, 30km) or Klimontów.

### TRAIN

The train station, 3km southeast of the Old Town, on the other side of the Vistula, is served by city buses to/from Opatów Gate. Four trains run to Warsaw daily (41zł, four hours). There are also daily trains to Katowice (42zł, five hours, one morning train, 243km) and Zamość (33zł, three hours, one evening train, 153km).

## BARANÓW SANDOMIERSKI

### pop 1500

The pride of Baranów Sandomierski, beyond even its sulphur deposits, is **Baranów Castle** (☎ 015 811 8040; www.baranow.com.pl; ul Zamkowa 20; adult/concession 10/6zł; castle park & courtyard 7am-10pm, museum 9am-5pm Tue-Sun, 9am-3pm low season). This Renaissance castle was built at the end of the 16th century for the Leszczyński family, though its tumultuous history spanning many residents means that the façade and interiors are largely the result of restoration work carried out in the 1960s. The architectural detail of Baranów Castle is thought to be the work of Santi Gucci (though only completed after his death) and the stuccowork still preserved on parts of the ceilings is credited to Giovanni Battista Falconi.

The castle was occupied by the Leszczyński family for more than 100 years from 1569 to 1677; the last resident Leszczyński bore a son who would later become King of Poland.

After the brief tenancy of Dymitri Winiowiecki, Prince Józef Karol Lubomirski took over ownership in 1682, and commissioned various alterations under the guidance of Tylman van Gameren. The 19th century brought two major fires to Baranów Castle, one of which caused damage its owners could not afford to repair. The house was sold at auction in 1867 to the Krasicki family, remaining in their hands until the outbreak of WWII. After the war, the castle was transferred to the state-owned Siarkopol sulphur-enterprise (hence the sulphur-extraction exhibit downstairs), and to the Warsaw-based Industrial Development Agency in 1997.

Today, many of the castle's 2nd-floor rooms are open to visitors (guided tours are conducted in Polish only). The cellar also displays archaeological finds, including the remains of the Gothic stronghold discovered during the castle's restoration process after WWII.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Zamkowy** (☎ 015 811 8039; ul Zamkowa 20; s/d in hotel 180/280zł; s/d in castle 250/350zł, ste 300-700zł; ) In the building just west of the castle, Hotel Zamkowy offers pleasant rooms, though its castle rooms are preferable. Weekend rates are attractive, as are the sauna, gym, billiard table and the fact that the hotel can arrange fishing in the pond (for a fee).

**Magnacka Restaurant** (☎ 015 811 8040; ul Zamkowa 20; mains 20-30zł; 11am-11pm) In the basement of the castle, Magnacka Restaurant serves Polish food and modern European cuisine, with traditional feasts on Thursdays.

### Getting There & Away

The train station is well out of the village so it's more convenient to travel by bus.

There's no direct transport to Baranów Sandomierski but minibuses from Sandomierz run to Tarnobrzeg (4zł, 30 minutes) regularly between 6.20am and 5.30pm. Even easier is city bus 11 (2.40zł). From Tarnobrzeg, both regular buses and minibuses pass through Baranów Sandomierski (3zł, 30 minutes) on the way to Mielec and Krasiczyn.

The bus station is close to the Rynek, from where the castle is an easy 1km walk. You shouldn't have to wait more than 30 minutes for a bus back to Tarnobrzeg; some pass the bus stop outside the castle.

### UJAZD

#### pop 1600

**Krzyżtopór Castle** (☎ 015 860 1133; adult/concession 6/4zł; 8.30am-sunset), in the small village of Ujazd (oo-yahst), was commissioned by eccentric governor Krzysztof Ossoliński, and built on his fantastical imagination.

Ossoliński wanted his love of magic and astrology to be incorporated into every aspect of the castle. The architect commissioned to create Ossoliński's dream was Italian Lorenzo Muretto (known in Poland as Wawrzyniec Senes), who worked on the mammoth project between 1631 and 1644.

History and legend offer zany accounts of the castle. It was designed to embody a calendar, with four towers representing the four seasons, 12 halls for the 12 months of the year, 52 rooms for the 52 weeks, and 365 windows for 365 days – plus one to be used only during leap years.

Some of the cellars were used as stables for Ossoliński's 370 white stallions, and

are adorned with mirrors and black marble. The crystal ceiling of the great dining hall is believed to have been the base of an enormous aquarium.

Perhaps the most enchanting report is that concerning the tunnel that ran under it, linking to the castle of Ossoliński's brother. The 15km tunnel to Ossolin was believed to have been covered with sugar so the two brothers could visit each other on horse-drawn sledges, pretending they were travelling on snow.

Sadly, Ossoliński was barely able to enjoy a full calendar year in his playground; he died in 1645 – only a year after the castle was completed.

Among the few details to have survived the past four decades are the stone symbols at the gate: the *krzyż* (cross) representing religious devotion; and the *topór* (axe), as depicted on the Ossoliński family coat of arms. Spend long enough clambering over and under these enormous ruins, and you will be able to imagine the other details.

After damage done by the Swedes in the 1650s and the abandonment of the castle by its subsequent owners in 1770, this dreamland fell to ruin. Since WWII, talk of converting the castle into a military school or hotel has petered out, leaving Krzyżtopór Castle as a landscape for the daydreams of its visitors.

### Getting There & Away

There is no direct transport to Ujazd from major towns like Sandomierz. The major points of access are Opatów (5zł, 40 minutes, 28km) or Klimontów (5zł, 40 minutes, 28km).

From Opatów, there are several buses daily. At the time of writing, buses passing Ujazd left Opatów at 5.50am, 6.20am, 8.30am, 11.20am, 12.30pm, 1.10pm and 3.20pm. Or a taxi to the castle and back costs around 60zł, including half-an-hour waiting time.

## THE RADOM PLAIN

The Radom Plain (Równina Radomska) extends between Małopolska to the south and Mazovia in the north. This gentle area is seldom visited by tourists, but it does attract wanderers who are tuned in to the ebb and flow of artistic movement (the creative refuge of the Centre of Polish Sculpture is here). One of the most expansive skansens in Małopolska is just outside the maturing town of Radom.



**RADOM**

pop 225,149

Unlike most Polish towns, the heart of Radom doesn't beat at its Rynek. Rather, it is to the main thoroughfare of ul Żeromskiego that Radomites go to show that their industrial town does not have an industrial attitude.

The biannual Radom Air Show (during the last weekend of August of every other year) sets the town and the sky above it abuzz with activity.

Little remains of its historical heritage – dating to the Middle Ages – but Radom seems too occupied with its future to be missing its past.

There's a **tourist office** (☎ 048 363 5775; ul Traugutta 3; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 11am–1pm Sat) opposite the train station (near Hotel Poniatowski), which may be able to give you some general guidance.

**Sights**

On the southern side of the run-down Rynek is the **Jacek Malczewski Museum** (Muzeum im Jacka Malczewskiego; ☎ 048 362 2114; www.muzeum.edu.pl; Rynek 11; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ 9am–3pm Tue–Thu, 10am–3pm Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun), named for the Radom-born painter. It contains a large collection of the namesake's work, as well as art by other painters and a small archaeological collection.

The most significant relic of Radom's earliest years is the **St Waencelous church** in the Old Town Sq. Built originally in the 13th century from wood, it was the first parish church of Old Radom. It was used for various purposes (such as a military hospital and psychiatric ward) and completely restored in the 1970s. The main parish **Church of St John the Baptist** was founded by Kazimierz III Wielki in 1360 and altered by numerous people up to the present. The church is located behind Jacek Malczewski Museum.

Some 8km from the centre of town and 1km off the Kielce Rd is the **skansen** (Muzeum Wsi Radomskiej; ☎ 048 332 9281; www.muzeum-radom.pl in Polish; ul Szydłowiecka 30; adult/concession 8/5zł; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat & Sun), which is extensive enough to justify bringing a picnic lunch. Furnished interiors showcase styles from the whole region. Urban buses 5, 17 and K will get you to the turn-off, from where you walk 1km to the entrance. Returning to Radom, turn left back onto the highway; the bus stop is in a small side street 20m or so past the turn-off.

**Sleeping & Eating**

**Hotel Iskra** (☎ 048 383 8745; www.hoteliskra.radom.pl in Polish; ul Planty 4; s/d/tr 110/160/165zł, with breakfast 125/130/210zł; (P)) Hidden by Poniatowski Hotel, the Iskra offers bright, well-maintained rooms big enough to stretch out in. Conveniently located near the train and bus stations.

**Hotel Glass** (☎ 048 340 2585; www.hotelglass.radom.pl; ul Prażmowskiego 17; s/d/ste 108/160/215zł; (P) (Q)) This friendly hotel is named for its glass exterior (it would have been Hotel Pink if it was named for its interior). Standard rooms are unremarkable, but apartments offer distinct sleeping and sitting areas.

**Hotel Gromada** (☎ 048 368 9100; radomhotel.centrum@gromada.pl; ul Narutowicza 9; s/d 200/220zł, apt 300–400zł; (P) (X) (Q) (S)) This generic business hotel has spacious rooms and an onsite restaurant and bar. Apartments are reasonable value given their terrace and kitchen annex. Another branch is located 2.5km west of the town centre.

Pleasant eateries line ul Żeromskiego. For a late afternoon beer, try a café in Park Tadeusz Kościuszki at the eastern end of the pedestrian strip. Closer to the train station, the restaurant at **Hotel Glass** (☎ 048 340 2585; ul Prażmowskiego 17; mains 10–30zł; ☎ 7am–midnight) offers surprisingly tasty Polish fare in its ambient (read: dimly lit) restaurant.

**Getting There & Away**

The train and bus stations are next to each other, 2km south of the city's main street, ul Żeromskiego.

Daily, there are at least 15 trains to Kielce (22zł, 1½ hours, 85km) and around a dozen to Warsaw (22zł, 2½ hours, 100km). For more information, ask at the **information counter** (☎ 6am–10pm) in the train station.

Most buses bound for Warsaw and Kraków (192km) depart in the afternoon. There are around 10 buses leaving for Łódź (135km) between 6am and 6.30pm, as well as several daily buses to Lublin (13zł, 2½ hours) and Puławy (8zł, 1½ hours).

Normal buses pass through Szydłowiec or Orońsko on their way to destinations further afield. More convenient minibuses leave from an area opposite the car park between the bus and train stations.

**OROŃSKO**

pop 1200

A time-slowng slice of historical charm and contemporary creativity, the **Centre of**

**Polish Sculpture** (Centrum Rzeźby Polskiej; ☎ 048 618 4516; www.rzeźba-oronsko.pl; ul Topolowa 1; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ indoor exhibitions & palace 8am–4pm Tue–Fri & 10am–6pm Sat & Sun May–Oct, 7am–3pm Tue–Fri & 8am–4pm Sat & Sun Nov–Apr, park until sunset) is supported by the Józef Brandt Foundation and is established in that esteemed painter's 19th-century estate.

The centre comprises the manor house of Józef Brandt (1841–1915), the museum of contemporary sculpture, and a hotel for creatively inclined visitors.

The Italian neo-Renaissance **Manor House of Józef Brandt** remains as it was when he lived and worked here... assuming he lived and worked extremely tidily. Impeccable interiors are adorned with works by Brandt and his colleagues of the era.

The **museum of contemporary sculpture** is spread throughout the landscaped garden, in the former chapel, orangery and coach house, and the more recently constructed exhibition hall. Temporary exhibitions throughout the grounds are mostly the works of contemporary artists. It is possible to watch resident sculptors at work in the open-air workspace from the terrace of the canteen.

**Sleeping & Eating**

**Sculptor House** (☎ /fax 048 618 4516; ul Topolowa 1; s/d/tr 45/60/70zł; (P)) The centre's Sculptor House in the former granary can accommodate 24 people. There is also a small restaurant for resident artists, and a canteen open to all.

**Getting There & Away**

Orońsko lies on the Radom–Kielce highway and the bus service is frequent (there's no railway). The centre is an easy walk from the bus stop on the highway, from where you can take urban bus K, a PKS bus coming from Szydłowiec, or a passing minibus (2.50zł to 4zł, 30 minutes) back to Radom. Any of these will also let you off at the turn-off for Radom's skansen. For Kielce you will need to change in Skarżysko Kamienna or double back to Radom.

**SZYDŁOWIEC**

pop 12,074

The town of Szydłowiec (shi-dwo-viets) achieved its municipal status in 1470, and until the 19th century was the property of the aristocratic Sapieha and Radziwiłł families. Under their influence, the town prospered through

the excavation of sandstone used in construction – the church being a prime example.

**Sights**

The attractive Renaissance **town hall** seems disproportionately large for the size of the Rynek. It has the look of an impressive white-washed castle, right down to the towers and decorative parapets.

Presiding proudly over the Rynek from its southern side is the 15th-century **church**. The Gothic exterior, built partly from local sandstone, contrasts vividly with its colourful Renaissance interior. Original details to note include the high wooden altar, the polyptych depicting the Assumption and the impressive flat wooden ceiling of the nave, all of which date back to the beginning of the 16th century.

About 500m northwest of the Rynek is a small 16th-century **castle** surrounded by a picturesque moat. Some of its rooms house the **Museum of Polish Folk Musical Instruments** (Muzeum Polskich Ludowych Instrumentów Muzycznych; ☎ 048 617 1789; ul Sowińskiego 2; adult/concession 4/3zł; ☎ 9am–3.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–5pm Sat & Sun). There is no information in English, but there are some lovely instruments to admire all the same. Unfortunately there is nothing interactive for the kids to bang or clang.

Before WWII, 70% of the population of Szydłowiec was Jewish. The town's **Jewish cemetery** is one of the largest in Poland, yet today is a quarter of the size it was when it was founded in 1788. Most of the 2000-odd tombstones are from the 19th century (the oldest from 1831). To get there from the Rynek, head east along ul Kilińskiego, left onto ul Kościuszki (the road to Radom) and after 250m turn right onto ul Spółdzielcza. The cemetery is 100m ahead.

**Sleeping & Eating**

**Youth Hostel** (☎ 048 617 5955; ul Kolejowa 16; dm 25–30zł) The only place to stay in Szydłowiec is the youth hostel, 1km southeast of the Rynek, beyond a colony of dull apartment blocks. Look for the 'noclegi' sign in front of the pleasant house.

**Piwnica Szydłowiecka** (☎ 048 617 0224; Rynek 1; mains 10–20zł; ☎ lunch & dinner) For some central and historical dining, head to this restaurant in the cellar of the town hall.

**Getting There & Away**

The bus terminal (which looks like an abandoned gas station along Route 66) is 1km

north from the Rynek. Only a few buses go straight to Kielce (6.80zł, 1½ hours, three or more daily). If you're going to Radom (2.5zł, 45 minutes, every half-hour), minibuses are preferable; they leave from behind the PKS building and pass Orońsko on the way.

Forget the train – the station is 5km east of town.

## THE LUBLIN UPLAND

Stretching east of the Vistula and San Rivers up to the Ukrainian border is the Lublin Upland (Wyzłyna Lubelska). Lublin, its biggest city, still bears the scars of WWII but carries itself with dignity these days. The area also boasts (though not loudly enough) Kazimierz Dolny, a quaint town on the banks of the Vistula that attracts weekenders looking to escape the city – and the 21st century. Also worth visiting are the town of Zamość and the nearby village of Zwierzyniec, both built on the Renaissance dreams of Jan Zamoyski.

### LUBLIN

pop 362,247

Lublin's centre has emerged into the new century with revived confidence, and the locals are out in droves to enjoy it. The Rynek is ringed with bars, cafés and restaurants, which have new-world attitude while still respecting their old-world location. Step through Krakowska Gate to pick up the pace on ul Krakowskie Przedmieście, with its parade of pepped-up Poles and perky holidaymakers.

After many years spent lagging behind other towns of equivalent size, Lublin has relaunched itself as the bustling leader of its region. After its painful history, Lublin's ability to laugh again is a testament to its character as a true survivor.

### History

Not only has this city witnessed some of history's most harrowing chapters, it has also been the instigator of social movements, and the setting for some of the country's most landmark events.

The area was likely settled as early as the 6th century, becoming an important trade centre and fortification by the 10th and 11th centuries. The city was destroyed and rebuilt many times in efforts to protect Poland from invading Tatars, Lithuanians and Ruthenians. The city received its municipal charter in

1317, and the castle was built soon afterwards by Kazimierz III Wielki. It was in Lublin in 1569 that the union between Poland and Lithuania was formed, creating the largest state in Europe at the time.

In November 1918, the first independent government of Poland was formed here, which soon handed power over to Józef Piłsudski. Lublin became a Nazi headquarters for Operation Reinhardt, the beginnings of Hitler's 'Final Solution'. It was also in Lublin that the provisional communist government was installed by the Soviets in July 1944 during the last stages of WWII. Lublin is considered by some to be the true birthplace of Solidarity – the avalanche of strikes against the communist regime that spread throughout Poland in 1980, eventually leading to the Gdańsk agreements. Since WWII, Lublin has expanded threefold to become the biggest city in Małopolska and the most significant industrial and academic centre in Eastern Poland.

### Orientation

Your explorations are likely to be limited to the compact Old Town. The New Town stretches west along the main thoroughfare, ul Krakowskie Przedmieście.

The train station is 2km south of the centre, but the busy PKS and minibus terminals are next to each other on the northern edge of the Old Town, a skip from the castle.

### Information

Plenty of *kantors* and ATMs line ul Krakowskie Przedmieście and adjacent streets.

**Bank Pekao** ul Krakowskie Przedmieście (Map p233; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 64; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat); ul Królewska (Map p233; ul Królewska 1) Cash advances on Visa and MasterCard.

**EMPIK** (Map p233; ☎ 081 534 8286; Galeria Centrum, ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 40; ☎ 9.30am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–6pm Sat, 10.30am–4pm Sun) Abundant travel information (in Polish), ample maps, and English-language novels, newspapers and magazines.

**LOIT Tourist Information Centre** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 4412; www.loit.lublin.pl; ul Jezuitska 1/3; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun May–Sep, 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–3pm Sat Oct–Apr) Extremely helpful English-speaking staff, souvenirs for sale and lots of brochures, including handy city walking-route companion tourist routes of Lublin.

**Main post office** (Map p233; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście; ☎ 9am–5pm)





**Net Box** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 5220; www.net-box.end.pl; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 52; per hr 4.5zł; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-9pm Sat, 2-9pm Sun) Internet access, behind post office.

**Post office** (Map p235; ul Grodzka; ☎ 9am-4pm)

**www café** (Map p235; ☎ 081 442 3580; 3rd fl, Rynek 8; per hr 3zł; ☎ noon-8pm) Internet access. Follow signs to PITK.

## Sights

### CASTLE

Despite its relatively friendly façade, the 14th-century **castle** has a grim history. It was rebuilt as a prison in the 1820s and remained so until 1954. During WWII more than 100,000 people suffered here at the hands of Nazi occupiers before being transported on to extermination camps. Hundreds of Jewish and Polish political prisoners had survived here until July 1944, only to be shot mere hours before the Red Army liberated the city.

Since 1957, the castle has housed the **Lublin Museum** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 5001; www.zamek.lublin.pl; ul Zamkowa 9; adult/concession 6.50/4.50zł, free Sat; ☎ 9am-4pm Wed-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun), with a collection ranging from silverware and porcelain to woodcarvings and weaponry. The particularly impressive art includes big names (such as Jacek Malczewski) and big pictures, such as the detail-rich *Lublin Union of 1569*, depicting the merging of Poland and Lithuania. Jan Matejko's seminal work was hidden in various places throughout WWII, and now takes pride of place in the very building where the landmark union took place.

Also worth seeing in the foyer of the castle is the curious **Devil's Paw**, imprinted on the 17th-century table of the Royal Tribunal. The legend explaining its existence relates to a widow who was avenged by a team of devils after being unjustly treated by the Royal Tribunal.

At the eastern end of the castle is its most prized asset – the exquisite 14th-century **Chapel of the Holy Trinity** (Map p235; adult/concession 6.50/4.50zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun), featured on many postcards (the photographers must have snuck in a flash and a wide angle lens). The chapel is covered from floor to ceiling with polychrome Russo-Byzantine frescoes. Painted in 1418, only to be later plastered over, they were rediscovered in 1897 and painstakingly restored over a hundred-year period. These are possibly the finest examples of medieval wall paintings in the country, so colour-rich you could lick the paint off the walls.

### OLD TOWN

The winding streets of the Old Town are full of life, with new cafés and restaurants opening, but don't wander after dark. Areas around the bus stop and bus terminal should also be approached with caution in the early hours.

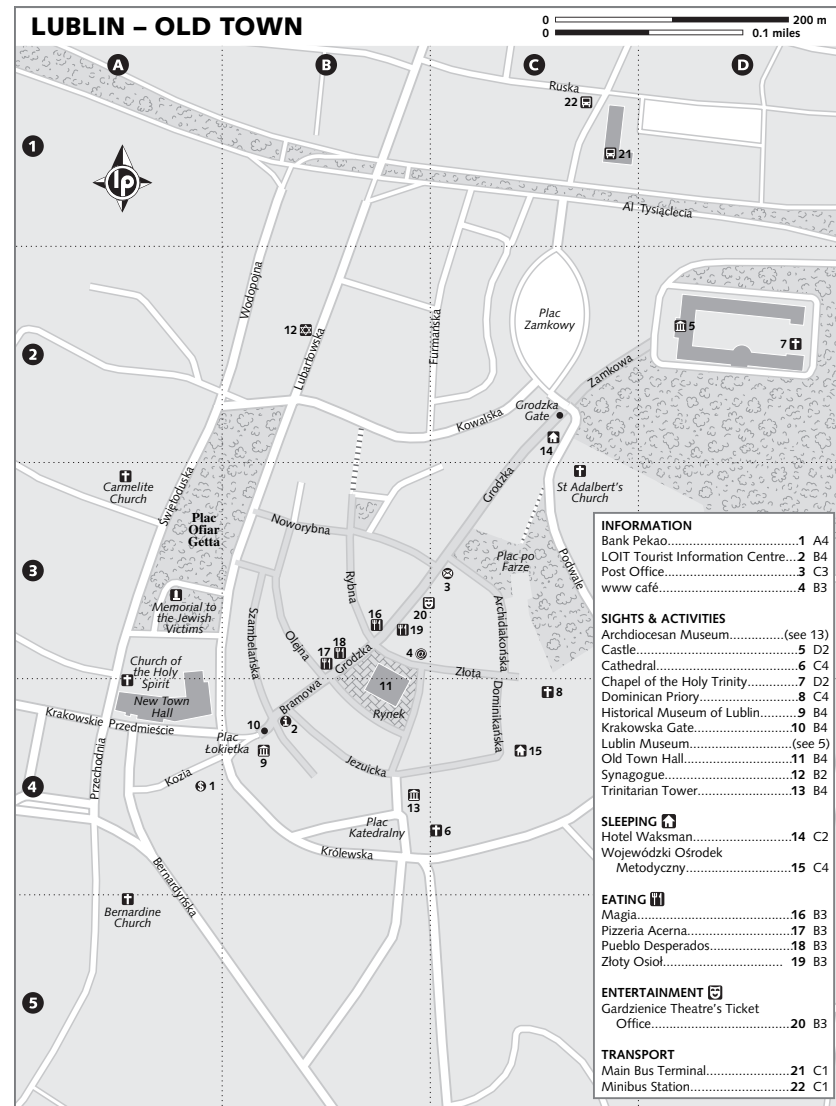
Some of the buildings in the historic quarter surrounding the Rynek have lovely restored façades. At the Rynek's centre is the 1781 neo-classical **Old Town Hall** (Map p235).

The only significant remnant of the fortified walls that once surrounded the Old Town is the 14th-century Gothic-style **Krakowska Gate** (Brama Krakowska; Map p235). It received its octagonal Renaissance superstructure in the 16th century, and its Baroque crown in 1782. Inside the gate (accessed from its eastern wall) is the small **Historical Museum of Lublin** (Muzeum Historii Miasta Lublina; Map p235; ☎ 081 532 6001; Plac Łokietka 3; adult/concession 3.50/2.50zł; ☎ 9am-4pm Wed-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun), which displays documents and photographs relating to the town's civic history.

For an expansive view of the Old Town, climb to the top of **Trinitarian Tower** (1819; Map p235), which houses the underrated **Archdiocesan Museum** (Muzeum Archidiecezjalne; Map p235; ☎ 0695 475152; Plac Katedralny; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct). The chaotic layout of artworks in hidden nooks and crannies, combined with the lack of English explanations, means that you can discover ancient artefacts in the haphazard manner of Indiana Jones.

Next to the tower is the 16th-century **cathedral** (Map p235; Plac Katedralny; ☎ dawn-sunset), formerly a Jesuit church. There are many impressive details to behold, including the Baroque *trompe l'oeil* frescoes (the work of Moravian artist Józef Majer) and the 17th-century altar made from a black Lebanese pear tree. The painting of the Black Madonna is said to have shed tears in 1945, making it a source of much reverence for local devotees. The acoustic vestry (so called for its ability to project whispers) and the **treasury** (skarbiec; ☎ 10am-2pm & 3-5pm Tue-Sun) behind the chapel are also worth some attention.

Originally a Gothic complex founded by King Kazimierz III Wielki in 1342, the **Dominican Priory** (Kościół Dominikanów; Map p235; ☎ 081 532 8990; www.domikanie.lub.pl in Polish; ul Złota 9) was rebuilt in Renaissance style after it was ravaged by fire in 1575. Two historic highlights inside the church are the Chapel of the Firlej Family (1615), containing family members' tomb-



stones; and the Tyszkiewicz Chapel (1645–59), with impressive Renaissance stuccowork. For an insight into 18th-century Lublin, note the large historical painting, *The Fire of Lublin*, which depicts the 1719 fire (in the Szaniawski family chapel to your right as you enter the church). The Dominican Basilica was closed by the Russians in 1886; the monks returned

just before the outbreak of WWII only to be expelled again by the postwar communist regime. The building was finally returned to the Dominicans in 1993.

### MAJDANEK

Some 4km southeast of Lublin's centre is Majdanek extermination camp, where tens



of thousands were murdered. The site is now the **Majdanek State Museum** (Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku; off Map p233; ☎ 081 744 1955; www.majdanek.home.pl; Droga Męczenników Majdanka 67; admission free; 🕒 8am-6pm Apr-Oct, 8am-3pm Nov-Mar), founded only four months after the camp's liberation – the first of its kind in the world. Unlike other extermination camps, the Nazis went to no effort to conceal Majdanek. Coming from the main road, the sudden appearance of time-frozen guard towers and barbed-wire fences interrupting the sprawl of suburbia is disquieting. The details are all the more confronting; gas chambers are open to visitors, and many of the prisoners' possessions are on display. The 5km walk through the museum starts at the Visitor's Centre, passes the foreboding Monument of Fight & Martyrdom, through parts of the barracks and finishes at the guarded mausoleum containing the ashes of many victims. Children under 14 are not permitted to visit the museum.

A short film (3zł) can be viewed at the visitor's centre when there is a minimum of five people.

Trolleybuses 23 and 156 (2zł) along ul Królewska, slightly south of Plac Łokietka, go to the entrance of Majdanek.

### JEWISH RELICS

The first census in 1550 shows that 840 Jews lived in Lublin; 200 years later they had grown into the third-largest Jewish population in Poland, and before WWII around 30% of Lubliners were Jews.

The climax of the time-old plight of the Jewish community in Lublin came when the Nazis entered the town on 18 September 1939. A visit to Majdanek extermination camp (opposite) will help you understand what happened next. Of approximately 42,000 Jewish Lubliners, only a few hundred are believed to have survived the Holocaust.

There is a marked tourist route dedicated to monuments and buildings of relevance to Lublin's Jewish heritage. Ask the tourist information office for further information.

The only **synagogue** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 0922; ul Lubartowska 8; 🕒 exhibition 1-3pm Sun, other times by appointment) to survive of the 38 that functioned before WWII is in an early 20th-century building, which bears no distinguishing features of a synagogue. It contains a modest exhibition of old photographs, books in Hebrew and ritual objects. Enter the gate from the street

and take the door on the right leading upstairs to the 1st-floor synagogue.

The **old Jewish cemetery** (off Map p233), established in 1541, has 30-odd readable tombstones. The oldest dates from 1641 and is the oldest Jewish tombstone in Poland in its original location. The graveyard is on a hill between ul Sienna and ul Kalinowszczyzna, a short walk northeast of the castle. It is surrounded by a high brick wall and the gate is locked. Contact **Mrs Honig** (☎ 081 747 8676; Apt 7, ul Dembowskiego 4) at her home, 200m north of the cemetery; she lets visitors in (leave a donation).

The **new Jewish cemetery** (off Map p233; ul Walecznych), founded in 1829, is the resting place of 52,000 Jews buried here until 1942. The cemetery was destroyed by the Nazis during WWII (who used tombstones in the construction of parts of Majdanek extermination camp) and is still in the process of being restored. Broken tombstones form a wall around the cemetery. The graveyard and the small museum can be visited during daylight hours. There is a 24-hour guard on duty.

### SKANSEN

The well-designed **skansen** (Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej; off Map p233; ☎ 081 533 8513; www.skansen.lublin.pl; ul Warszawska 96; adult/concession 8/4zł; 🕒 9am-6pm), 5km west of the centre on the Warsaw road, covers an undulating terrain of 25 hectares. Appearing as a traditional village of numerous buildings with fully equipped interiors, there is a fine manor house, a windmill, an Orthodox church and a carved timber gate (1903) designed by Stanisław Witkiewicz. The skansen hosts various temporary displays and cultural events.

To get there from the centre, take bus 18, 20 or 5 from Al Raclawickie.

### Sleeping

In a recent bid to attract more international tourists, many hotels in Lublin have given themselves an extra coat of polish.

### BUDGET

**PTSM Youth Hostel** (Map p233; ☎/fax 081 533 0628; ul Długosza 6; dm/tr 26/35zł) A modest, well-run, all-year hostel 2km west of the Old Town (accessible by trolleybus 150 from the train station, and buses 5, 10, 18 and 57 from the bus terminal). You will find the youth hostel 50m up a lane off ul Długosza in the heart

### THE EXTERMINATION CAMP OF MAJDANEK

Majdanek was built in 1941 under the orders of Heinrich Himmler in a bid to further Hitler's plans of eastern expansion. Over the following years it was extended (by a prisoner workforce); Jewish Lubliners were transported there from the Lublin ghetto in early 1942. The camp was run by the SS, and acted as a training ground for many of its most notorious members, including some of the most infamous female SS storm troopers.

The camp was initially intended to hold 250,000 prisoners at a time. The defeat of the German army on the eastern front thankfully meant that only 20% of the project was completed. And yet Majdanek came to be one of the Nazis' largest extermination camps. Estimates vary, but most recent research suggests that 80,000 people from some 30 countries lost their lives at Majdanek – most but not all were Jews. Gas chambers were the primary means of murder, followed by starvation, exhaustion and mass executions, the most unfathomable of which took place on 3 November 1943.

Perhaps more confronting than the scale of death are the horrific details; bodies were initially burned on open-air grates made of truck chassis, until a purpose-built crematorium was completed in 1943, capable of cremating up to 1000 bodies a day. All possessions were confiscated from prisoners upon entering the camp, gold and silver teeth were removed from dead bodies, human ashes were used to fertilise the camp's field, Jewish tombstones were used to pave roads, and 730kg of human hair left Majdanek for use in the manufacture of fabrics.

When the Red Army entered the camp on 23 July 1944, the Nazis only had time to destroy the crematorium; thousands of inmates and copious evidence of Nazi atrocities remained, making it the most well-preserved extermination camp. Majdanek was opened as a museum before many others had ceased operating.

of the university district. Bed clothes cost 6zł extra.

**Wojewódzki Ośrodek Metodyczny** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 9241; www.wodn.lublin.pl in Polish; ul Dominikańska 5; beds 50zł) Not strictly a hotel, the Teacher Training Centre sometimes lends a bed to travellers. Good-value rooms (with two to five beds) are quickly snapped up, so book ahead. Look for the 'Wojewódzki Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli' sign outside.

**Dom Nauczycieli** (Map p233; ☎ 081 53 8285; ul Akademicka 4; s/d/tr/q from 90/110/195/148zł) Nauczycieli offers you quaint, adequately furnished rooms with basins and clean, comfortable shared bathrooms. The overall atmosphere is that of a safe, open and bright college dorm.

**Camping Marina** (off Map p233; ☎ 081 745 6910; www.graf-marina.pl in Polish; ul Krężnińska 6; camping per tent 8zł, vehicle 3zł, chalet for up to 5 people 100zł; 🕒 May-Sep) The Marina is serenely located on a man-made lake in a recreation area 8km south of the Old Town. Bus 8 from the centre takes you there.

Far away from Lublin's good bits, only use **Hotel Piast** (off Map p233; ☎ 081 532 2516; ul Pocztowa 2; s/d/tr 45/62/81zł) in the event of late arrival or early-morning departure. It's 2km south of the centre.

### MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Motel PZM** (Map p233; ☎ 081 533 4232; motel@pzm.lublin.pl; ul Prusa 8; s/d/tr/apt 120/160/249/350zł; 🕒 📺) The carpeted corridors and dowdy exteriors of the PZM thankfully don't reflect the clean, bright and vigilantly maintained room interiors. The PZM is an easy walk to the bus station and the Old Town; it's hard to find this sort of value in the centre.

**our pick Hotel Waksman** (Map p235; 081 532 5454; www.waksman.pl; ul Grodzka 19; s/d 180/200zł, s/d apt 240/260zł; 🕒 📺 📺) Hotel Waksman deserves the blue ribbon for many reasons, not least of which is its location at the historic juncture of Grodzka Gate. Each standard room (named 'yellow', 'blue', 'green' or 'red' for its décor) deliberately has its own individual character; there's even a water bed in the red room. The two apartments occupying the top floor are very special; they offer ample space for lounging or working, and views over both the Old Town from the front of the building, and the castle from the back. Relative to its larger competition, the Hotel Waksman is good value.

**Hotel Victoria** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 7011; www.hotel.victoria.lublin.pl; ul Narutowicza 58/60; s 190-280zł, d 220-350zł, s/d apt 280/350zł; 🕒 📺 📺) The 10-storey Hotel Victoria has to be admired. While the

rest of Lublin was renovating to create old-fashioned elegance, Victoria went the other way with bold modern design. The building exterior is grey, but the open foyer (containing a chic restaurant, 24-hour bar, ATM and a small shop) is a warm red. Rooms are clean but don't live up to the foyer – the standard rooms are on the small side. Wireless internet is only available in the foyer.

**Grand Hotel Lublinianka** (Map p233; ☎ 081 446 6100; www.lublinianka.com; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 56; s/d economy 260/300zł, standard 380/420zł, ste 500/540zł; 📞 📺 📺) What was the Commercial Chamber of Lublin 100 years ago is now the grandest place to stay in Lublin. The classic foyer of this four-star hotel isn't at all overbearing and the same stylish minimalism translates to the calming pastel rooms. Marble bathrooms in suites include bathtubs, but even the economy guest is entitled to use the Turkish bath and sauna. The terrace café in the open-air centre of the building is a plus.

**Hotel Europa** (Map p233; ☎ 081 535 0303; www.hoteleuropa.pl; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 29; s/d/tr/ste 290/380/430/960zł; 📞 📺 📺) Hotel Europa offers old-world charm without too many frills. The building dates to the 1860s, but high-ceilinged rooms have been tastefully renovated to incorporate refined furniture. The pleasant onsite restaurant and bar are assets, but hardly necessary given its bull's-eye location along energetic Krakowskie Przedmieście. Weekend rates can bring down the price by as much as 100zł.

**Mercure Unia Lublin** (Map p233; ☎ 081 533 2061; www.mercure.com; Al Racławickie 12; s/d standard 295/355zł, s/d superior 325/385zł; 📞 📺 📺) There is nothing lacking in facilities, but lots lacking in character at the Mercure. Despite the drab exterior, people stay for the location and business conveniences in the pastel-pale rooms. Breakfast costs an extra 30zł.

## Eating

For fine dining in the Old Town, see what's cooking around the Rynek. If you're in a more modern mood, take a walk along ul Krakowskie Przedmieście.

**Złoty Osioł** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 9042; www.zlotyosiol.pl; ul Grodzka 5a; mains 10-25zł; 🍷 noon-midnight) Just northeast of the Rynek, Złoty Osioł offers traditional ambience and extraordinarily good-value traditional meals. There are delicious fish dishes, slightly bizarre drink selections

(like hot dry wine with jelly), and daily meal sets for the indecisive. The restaurant is set in a candlelit cellar with an annexed cosy green courtyard. Folk music concerts are occasionally held here.

**our pick Magia** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 3041; www.magia.lublin.pl; ul Grodzka 2/Rynek 1; mains 15-65zł; 🍷 noon-last customer) Like its menu, Magia's atmosphere is eclectic; there are numerous vibes to choose from throughout the warren of dining rooms and its large outdoor courtyard, with each area decorated with a touch of magic. The chef uses only fresh ingredients to create dishes ranging from tiger shrimps and snails to deer and duck, with every sort of pizza, pasta and pancake between. Prices are spread through the spectrum of budgets, so you can venture through multiple courses or eat lightly just to rent yourself a piece of the atmosphere.

**Oregano** (Map p233; ☎ 081 442 5530; ul Kościuszki 7; mains 20-45zł; 🍷 noon-11pm) This pleasant, upmarket restaurant specialises in Mediterranean cuisine, featuring pasta, paella and seafood. There is a well-organised English menu, and the chefs aren't scared of spice.

For some laid-back dining and pleasant people-watching in the Rynek, try the following places:

**Pizzeria Acerna** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 4531; Rynek 2; pizza from 11zł; 🍷 11am-10pm Mon-Thu & Sun, 11am-midnight Fri & Sat) Popular pizza and pasta.

**Pueblo Desperados** (Map p235; ☎ 081 534 6179; Rynek 5; mains 10-27zł; 🍷 9am-10pm Mon-Thu, 9am-midnight Fri & Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Mexican fare in the heart of old Poland.

## Drinking

**Tamara Café** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 1023; www.tamara.cafe.pl in Polish; Krakowskie Przedmieście 36; mains 15-35zł; 🍷 11am-last customer). This café, restaurant, pub and wine bar takes the latter very seriously. The food is an indecisive mix of Mexican, Mediterranean and Asian fare lovingly infused with fresh flavour, but it's all just a prelude to alcohol. If you're a cultured wine connoisseur, just feel like a cocktail concoction in the courtyard, or are a hungry tippler who wants some vodka with (or in) your meal, this is the place to pull up a chair.

**Johnny's Irish Pub** (Map p233; ☎ 081 534 9566; www.johnnys.lublin.pl; ul Narutowicza 9; mains 15zł; 🍷 10am-late) Johnny's serves hearty pub food in a multi-level, partially open-air dining area crowded with jovial drinkers each night.

**Caram'bola Pub** (Map p233; ☎ 081 534 6380; ul Kościuszki 8; pizzas 16zł; 🍷 11am-midnight Mon-Thu, 11am-2am Fri & Sat, noon-midnight Sun) is yet another friendly place for a casual beer and some pub food.

## Entertainment

The tourist office can tell you about events around town. Also, the free monthly *Lublin w Pigułce* and the local daily *Kurier Lubelski* contain event listings.

## NIGHTCLUBS

**Hades** (Kawiarna Artystyczna Hades; Map p233; ☎ 081 532 8761; www.hades-lublin.pl in Polish; ul Peowiaków 12; 🍷 noon-11pm) This local entertainment venue offers live music some nights, a club night on Fridays and the annual Hades Jazz Festival every year. Before late-night spirits kick in, Hades is a restaurant (mains 10zł to 20zł).

Down a small courtyard off ul Narutowicza, **Club Koyot** (Map p233; ☎ 081 743 6735; www.clubkoyot.com; ul Krakowskie Przedmieście 26; 🍷 noon-late Mon-Fri, 4pm-late Sat & Sun) features live music most nights.

## THEATRES

The main drama venue in town, **Teatr im Osterwy** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 4244; www.teatrosterwy.pl in Polish; ul Narutowicza 17; 🎫 box office noon-7pm Tue-Sat, 6-7pm Sun) features mostly classical plays.

**Filharmonia Lubelska** (Map p233; ☎ 081 743 7824; www.filharmonialubelska.pl in Polish; ul Skłodowskiej-Curie 5) is a large auditorium that stages classical and contemporary music concerts. In the same building, **Teatr Muzyczny** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 7613; www.teatrmuzyczny.pl in Polish; ul Skłodowskiej-Curie 5; 🎫 ticket sales 1-5pm) hosts a range of musical events with a strong modern attitude.

Performances are in Polish at **Teatr im H Ch Andersena** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 1628; www.teatr.andersena.pl; ul Dominikańska 1; tickets 15zł) but the puppets of Hans Christian Andersen can be enjoyed in any language. Check the website for show times.

Founded in 1977, 28km southeast of Lublin, **Gardzieniec Theatre** is renowned in artistic circles for energetic, heady performances. Under the guidance of artistic director and founder Włodzimierz Staniewski, dramatic montages derive inspiration from gatherings with indigenous communities throughout and beyond Poland. Check whether they are in town at the **ticket office** (Map p235; ☎ 081 532 9840; http://gardzieniec.art.pl; ul Grodzka 5A).

## Getting There & Away

Numerous transport links make Lublin a convenient transport hub.

## BUS

The main bus terminal (Map p235) is just north of the Old Town, across from the castle. Slightly west behind the main bus terminal on ul Ruska is the well-organised minibuses station (Map p235), which dispatches buses all over the region and slightly beyond.

Normal buses go to Warsaw (21zł to 40zł, 3½ hours, every hour) between 3am and 10pm. Minibuses are faster and cheaper (30zł, three hours, every 30 minutes). Polski Express buses (41zł to 50zł, every two hours) go direct to Warsaw airport between 5am and 5pm.

Minibuses to Kazimierz Dolny (7zł, one hour, every 30 minutes, 60km) are more efficient than normal buses (18zł, 2½ hours, every 30 minutes). Normal buses to Puławy pass through Kazimierz Dolny. Minibuses also service Zamość (15zł, two hours, every 30 minutes or so).

There are around 10 daily buses to Sandomierz (15zł, 100km).

## TRAIN

The main **train station** (off Map p233; ☎ 081 94 36; ul Gazowa 4) is linked to the Old Town by trolleybus 160 and several buses including 13 and 17.

There are around 16 trains per day to Warsaw (20zł, 3½ hours) and a couple to Kraków (40zł to 115zł, five hours). Tickets can be bought at the train station or at **Orbis Travel** (Map p233; ☎ 081 532 2256, ticket bookings 081 532 5402; ul Narutowicza 33A; 🍷 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat).

## KOZŁÓWKA

The hamlet of Kozłówka (koz-woof-kah), 38km north of Lublin, is famous for the sumptuous late-Baroque **palace**, built in the mid-18th century. The residence was acquired by the Zamoyski family in 1799, and today houses the **Museum of the Zamoyski Family** (☎ 081 852 8300; www.muzeumzamoyskich.lublin.pl; adult/concession 16/8zł, free Mon; 🍷 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-3pm Nov & Dec). The museum features original furnishings (much of which was replicated from originals in Versailles) and an impressive collection of ancestral paintings, mostly from the 17th to 19th centuries. There are

### SOCIALIST REALISM – ART AS A POLITICAL TOOL

According to official credo, socialist realism was 'a creative way of transferring Marxism into the realm of art'. According to history, it was the reduction of art to propaganda. Socialist realism originated in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and by the mid-1930s was the only accepted style in visual arts, architecture, film, music and literature. After WWII, it spread throughout the Soviet-controlled eastern bloc.

When the communist regime felt itself sufficiently entrenched in Poland, it formally implemented socialist realism in 1949. Though it remained official artistic doctrine only until 1955, an enormous collection of work was produced in this brief period.

The artwork was intended to promote communist ideology, and its creators strove to instil socialist culture through artistic means. Artists could not express themselves individually, and were obliged to transmit official dogma in pseudo-artistic form. Given that its intended audience was the masses, the messages it conveyed had to be widely accessible and inspire optimism and motivation for the new order. The most common images were of communist leaders and key historical events, but the glorification of labour was also popular; bricklayers were portrayed gallantly at work and young women smiled heroically as they drove tractors.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the lunacy quickly subsided in Poland. The central storage facility for the works – which were discreetly removed from public view – was at Kozłówka (the palace wasn't opened until 1977), where selected pieces can be viewed today.

20 hectares of park surrounding the palace, and the garden has the manicure of classical French design.

The complex is also noted for the **Socialist-Realist Art Gallery** (adult/concession 6/3zł, free Tue; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-3pm Nov & Dec). It has an overwhelming number of portraits and statues of revolutionary communist leaders (mainly from the years 1949–56), and idealised proletarian scenes of farmers, factory workers and so on, striving for socialism.

You can stay at the agrotourist **Rzadcówka farm** (☎ 081 852 8220; [ekkomaccy@wp.pl](mailto:ekkomaccy@wp.pl); d/tr 70/90zł); call ahead to confirm availability and current prices. Or you can stay in some rooms throughout the palace complex (☎ 081 852 8300), such as the old guardhouse. Call ahead for details and prices.

### Getting There & Away

The usual departure point for Kozłówka is Lublin, but this is not as convenient as it could be, given that there is one morning bus at 8.30am (5zł, 50 minutes, 40km).

A bus heads back to Lublin at around 3.30pm, and another at around 6.30pm. Double-check bus timetables before you visit the museum so you can plan your departure accordingly.

If you get stuck, take a minibus to Lubartów from where there is more regular transport back to Lublin.

### PUŁAWY

pop 49,295

There is very little of interest in Puławy (poo-wah-vi) beyond the park and palace complex, so it's best explored as a day trip from Kazimierz Dolny or Lublin.

The aristocratic Czartoryski family brought Puławy into its golden age at the end of the 18th century. Izabela Czartoryska, wife of Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, exhibited a collection of valuable items in Sybil's Temple and the Gothic House, thus creating Poland's first museum in 1801. Izabela was so committed to imbuing Puławy with character that she is believed to have helped lay the bricks of Sybil's temple with her own hands, and even hired a hermit to dwell near the palace to lend it atmospheric authenticity!

The family was forced to flee Poland after the failed November Insurrection of 1830, abandoning its estate, which fell into the hands of the tsar. The art collection had been secretly moved to Paris, and was brought back to Poland in the 1870s; it now comprises the core exhibits of the Kraków Czartoryski Museum.

After WWII, a nitrate combine was erected near Puławy, making it something of a drab industrial town.

### Information

Maps showing the location of important sights are displayed at entrances to the landscape

park. The **PTTK office** (☎ 081 886 4756; [www.oddzial.pulawy.pttk.pl](http://www.oddzial.pulawy.pttk.pl) in Polish; ul Czartoryskich 6A) at the entrance to the palace complex can help you get your bearings in the extensive park grounds.

There are several *kantors* in the centre, including a few on ul Piłsudskiego. **Bank Pekao** (Al Królewska 11A) is close to the palace.

### Sights

The centrepiece of the complex is **Czartoryski Palace**, built by Tylman van Gameren between 1676 and 1679. It was altered many times before becoming the sober, late-neoclassical rendition it is today. It's lost its regality in recent years, and is now a functioning agricultural research institute that is not open to visitors.

The **landscape park** (admission free; ☎ to sunset) surrounding the palace was founded in the late 18th century by Princess Izabela. It's a typical romantic park of the era, incorporating several pavilions and buildings. The park is pleasant enough, though more bedraggled than many others. Northwest of the castle, along the Vistula, are some **caves** (adult/concession 2.50/2zł; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Apr-Oct), created when Izabela decided to enlarge the site of lime rock excavation in 1791. Tickets and torches are available at the PTTK Office.

The **Regional Museum** (☎ 081 887 8674; ul Czartoryskich 6A; adult/concession 4.3zł; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun), 200m north of the palace, features ethnographic and archaeological exhibits, plus temporary displays, some of which are related to the Czartoryski family. Between May and October, parts of the museum's collection are displayed in **Sybil's Temple** (Świątynia Sybilli) and the **Gothic House** (Domek Gotycki), both dating to the early 19th century.

About 200m to the west on ul Piłsudskiego, **Czartoryski Chapel** (built 1801–03) was modelled on the Roman Pantheon. The domed interior has lost its original furnishings and decoration.

### Sleeping & Eating

Puławy is best explored as an easy day trip. In the centre are drab hotels of the concrete-box persuasion.

**Centrum Szkoleniowo-Kongresowe** (☎/fax 081 887 7306; [www.hotel.iung.pulawy.pl](http://www.hotel.iung.pulawy.pl); Al Królewska 17; s/d without breakfast 120/150zł, apt with breakfast 235zł; P) A billion times better than the drab concrete boxes is this bright business hotel with no-fuss furniture and its own bistro-style restaurant.

It's conveniently located 250m from the gates of the palace.

**Youth Hostel** (☎ 081 886 3367; fax 081 888 3656; ul Włostowska 27; dm 18-38zł) The 118-bed hostel is 2km from the centre on the Kazimierz Dolny road. Rooms are a chaotic explosion of colours and furniture; ask to see a few to choose one that's bright and spacious. A few extra złoty will get you your own bathroom or breakfast and dinner. Very basic self-cooking facilities are available. Don't come back into the centre if you're heading for Kazimierz – catch the bus near the hostel's entrance.

### Getting There & Around

#### BUS

The PKS bus terminal is in the city centre. Buses to Lublin (7zł, 90 minutes) depart every half-hour, but less frequently to Warsaw (19zł, three hours). Both destinations are also serviced by Polski Express, with seven departures a day to each.

Other buses go to Radom (8zł, two hours, five daily) and Łódź (17zł, 2½ hours, four daily). There are four morning buses to Lubartów, which will let you off at Kozłówka.

Kazimierz Dolny (3.20zł, one hour, every hour) is well served by PKS. Minibuses (2zł, 50 minutes) are less frequent but faster. Check the schedule of suburban bus 12 in front of the terminal and take whichever goes first. Similarly, if you're headed for Janowiec, choose between a normal bus and city bus 17.

#### TRAIN

The town has two train stations: Puławy and Puławy Miasto. The latter is the main one and is closer to the centre, though still 2km northeast. It is serviced by city buses; otherwise use taxis.

Trains for Lublin (15zł, 1½ hours) leave virtually every hour, but centre-to-centre buses are more convenient. Trains to Warsaw (31zł, two hours) run every other hour. Several fast trains go to Radom (18zł, two hours) and on to Kielce (22zł, three hours), from where transport to Kraków is regular. For Kraków it is more efficient to change in Dęblin (10zł, 20 minutes, every half-hour).

### KAZIMIERZ DOLNY

pop 4000

Kazimierz Dolny has various assets: it's picturesquely situated on the banks of the Vistula, it's surrounded by dense green countryside,



it's tightly packed with historical buildings and it boasts bread in the shape of roosters.

The buildings in this Lilliputian land are so charming that they appear to have survived the tides of history untarnished. In truth, the town suffered greatly at the hands of various aggressors, but has now revived into a fashionable weekend destination for people seeking respite from the city.

## History

Earliest accounts of settlement in the region refer to a wooden cloister along the Vistula in 1181. The town was formally founded in the 14th century by King Kazimierz III Wielki who built a castle and gave the town its municipal charter. The town was called Dolny (lower), to distinguish it from the town of Kazimierz upriver, which is today part of Kraków.

Kazimierz Dolny became a thriving trade centre, with grain, salt, wood and oxen being shipped to Gdańsk and further on for export. The 16th and 17th centuries were particularly prosperous, and a number of splendid mansions and granaries were constructed. By 1630, Kazimierz Dolny's population had risen above 2500.

High times came to an end with the Swedish Deluge, the Northern War and; later, the cholera epidemic of 1708. The displacement of the Vistula bed towards the west accelerated the town's economic decline, allowing Puławy to overshadow it in the 19th century as the trade and cultural centre of the region.

At the end of the 19th century attempts were made to revive Kazimierz Dolny as a tourist centre, but the two world wars caused serious damage to the town. Since the end of WWII (which all but annihilated the town's Jewish population), preservation efforts have gone a long way to restore the historical character of Kazimierz Dolny, which is believed to attract more than one million visitors each year.

## Information

Useful amenities are at or near the Rynek. There's a *kantor* in the **post office** (ul Tyszkiewicza 2) and an ATM in the back wall of the same building. There is also an ATM diagonally opposite the PTTK Office (at the Houses of the Przybyła Brothers) and another on the wall of Piekarnia Sarzyński.

**Biblioteka Miejska** (☎ 081 881 0305; bibliotekakazimierz@poczta.onet.pl; ul Lubelska 32/34; per hr 2zł; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Internet access in local public library.

**PTTK office** (☎ 081 881 0046; pttk\_kazimierz\_dolny@poczta.onet.pl; Rynek 27; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri & 10am-5.30pm Sat May-Sep, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2.30pm Sat Oct-Apr) Can assist with private rooms (30zł to 60zł), maps and brochures.

## Sights

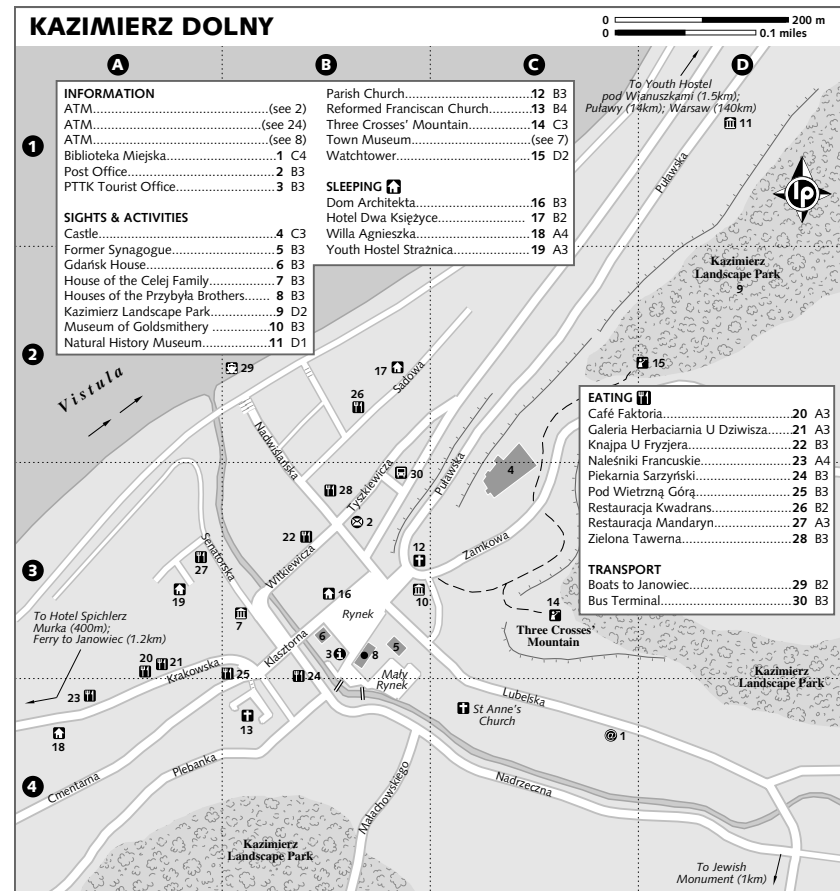
The main **Rynek** of Kazimierz is distinct not only for the wooden well at its centre, but also the diverse architecture around it. The finest of these merchants' houses are the two connecting **Houses of the Przybyła Brothers** (Kamienice Przybyłów), built in 1615 by brothers Mikołaj and Krzysztof with rich Renaissance mannerist façades. Decorations depict the brothers' patron saints, St Nicholas (guardian of traders) and St Christopher (guardian of travellers). Also on the Rynek are the Baroque-style **Gdańsk House** (Kamienica Gdańska) from 1795, and several characteristic arcaded houses with wooden-tiled roofs from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Though thriving market days of old have long since past, homage is still paid to Kazimierz's culture of commerce; a small market selling secondhand goods and tourist trinkets is in **Mały Rynek**, southeast of the Rynek. The town also hosts a farmers' market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The **House of the Celej Family** (Kamienica Celejowska), built around 1635, contains the **Town Museum** (☎ 081 881 0104; ul Senatorska 11; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr, closed public holidays & day following). Quaint though the archaeological specimens are, the real highlight here is the gallery showing the town's artistic portrayal by artists who have returned over the years to refine their skills and share their perspectives on this small pocket of Poland.

The tiny **Museum of Goldsmithery** (Muzeum Sztuki Złotniczej; ☎ 081 881 0081; ul Zamkowa 2; adult/concession 6/4zł; ☎ 10am-1pm Mon & 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr) seems overpriced for its size, but some of the gold and silverwork collection is captivating. Jewellery lovers will be particularly enraptured with the unique modern designs upstairs.

The **Reformed Franciscan Church** (Kościół Reformacji; ☎ 081 881 0118), on the nearby hill, was built at the end of the 16th century but lost its original style with subsequent Baroque and neoclassi-



cal decorations. The Franciscan brethren were compelled to leave the church twice in history: first between 1866 and 1928 when the tsar ordered the annulment of the order; and later under the Nazi occupation, when the Gestapo appropriated the complex.

The Gothic **parish church** presiding over the Rynek was built in the mid-14th century but remodelled when Renaissance taste swept through Poland. The ornate wooden organ from 1620 sounds as lavish as it looks; organ recitals are often held here. Note the Renaissance stalls in the chancel and the stucco decoration of the nave's vault, a classic example of the Lublin-Renaissance style typical of the region. Be sure to raise an eyebrow at the stag-antler chandelier.

Further along ul Zamkowa is what is left of the **castle** (adult/concession 2.20/1.60zł, including entry to watchtower). Originally built in 1341 as a stronghold against the Tartar incursion, the castle was extended in the 16th century and embellished further during the Renaissance. The castle fell into ruin after its partial destruction by the Swedes; the remaining fragments offer a pleasant view over the town and the Vistula. The **watchtower**, 200m uphill, was built a century before the castle and over the years served as a fortress, watchtower, light-house and prison. There is a panoramic view from the top of the 20m structure.

The path to the right slightly uphill from the parish church, leads to the **Three Crosses' Mountain** (Góra Trzech Krzyży; admission 1zł). If you're

coming from the watchtower, take the path to the left. There is some historical debate about the relationship between the crosses and the plague, which decimated the population of the town in 1708. It's doubtful whether human remains found at the site when the crosses were erected in 1852 belong to plague victims. Some historians believe that the site was referred to as 'cross mountain' long before the cholera epidemic. Whatever the origins of its name, the mountain affords sensational views.

The 18th-century **former synagogue** off Mały Rynek on ul Lubelska was originally wooden. It was rebuilt in brick in the 18th century and became a cinema after WWII. Just behind is the reconstructed wooden building, which once housed the kosher butcher. There is little to signify that this area was once the Jewish quarter.

The most overt reminder of the Jewish legacy of Kazimierz Dolny is the **Jewish Monument** in front of the old cemetery. The Nazis murdered some 3000 Jews from the town and its surrounds and desecrated the old cemetery. The Jewish Monument was assembled in 1984 from several hundred tombstone fragments collected here. The monument is just over 1km from the Rynek, on the road to Opole Lubelskie.

On the opposite side of town on the Puławy road, the **Natural History Museum** (Muzeum Przyrodnicze; ☎ 081 881 0326; ul Puławska 54; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr, closed public holidays & day following) is housed in a large, finely restored granary from 1591. Though there is little information in English, kids will enjoy seeing the range of birds, animals and insects (albeit stuffed). Of particular interest is the video showing the process of taxidermy (animal stuffing, which, it turns out, is far less gruesome than it sounds) and a busy beehive whose occupants are blissfully oblivious to the fact that they live in a Big Brother beehive. Note the intricate wooden structure supporting the roof on the top floor; it's an exquisite example of 16th-century engineering, joining beams with pegs rather than nails.

Only a few **granaries** have survived out of nearly 60 built in the thriving 16th and 17th centuries during a boom in the grain trade. In addition to the one containing the Natural History Museum, there are two other fine examples. One on ul Puławska (containing Youth Hostel Pod Wianuszkami) was initially

built in the 1780s from local rock but was rebuilt between 1978 and 1986 to serve its current purpose. The other on ul Krakowska (containing Hotel Spichlerz Murka) was built in 1636 but restored from 1949 to 1951 by architect Karol Siciński.

### Activities

In 1979, the area around Kazimierz was decreed the **Kazimierz Landscape Park** (Kazimierski Park Krajobrazowy). Many walking trails have been traced in its 15,000 hectares, winding through the distinct gorges of the region.

There are three easy short trails known as *szlaki spacerowe* (walking routes) signposted in yellow, green and red, and three significantly longer treks called *szlaki turystyczne* (tourist routes) marked in blue, green and red. Almost all these routes originate in the Rynek. The tourist office sells maps of the park and its trails.

### Festivals & Events

The highly acclaimed **Festival of Folk Bands & Singers** takes place in the last week of June. For more than 30 years, performers from the region have gathered at Mały Rynek in traditional garb to perform folk music from eras (and tastes) gone by.

The less raucous **Film & Art Festival** in late July lasts for around a week, and consists of musical concerts, art exhibitions and indoor and outdoor screenings of foreign and national films.

### Sleeping

There are options aplenty in Kazimierz, but advanced bookings are essential on weekends in spring and summer. The most common accommodation is rooms in private houses (30zł to 60zł), some of which are run like small hotels. The PTTK office on the Rynek can help with this, or just wander through town looking for 'pokoje' (rooms) or 'noclegi' (accommodation) signs.

### BUDGET

There are two efficiently run youth hostels in Kazimierz Dolny, which both include breakfast. **Youth Hostel Strażnica** (☎ 081 881 0427; www.straznica.kazimierzdolny.pl in Polish; ul Senatorowska 25; dm 38zł) is a rare centrally located youth hostel a skip from the Rynek. Some double rooms offer good light and there are spacious common areas to spread out in. Larger and pret-

tier but 1.5km out of town, **Youth Hostel pod Wianuszkami** (☎/fax 081 881 0327; ul Puławska 80; dm/d 38/90zł) is located in an old granary.

### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Spichlerz Murka** (☎ 081 881 0036; ul Krakowska 59/61; s/d 90/160zł) Divided over two buildings, with lush green surrounds, the Murka is replete with old wood and solid furniture and the larger Spichlerz is a converted granary that offers easy access to the Vistula, spartan but cosy rooms and barbecue facilities. Sometimes (depending on weather and mood) campers are allowed to stay in the grounds. The main Spichlerz building also boasts a restaurant and bar.

**Willa Agnieszka** (☎ 081 882 0411; willaagnieszka@wp.pl; ul Krakowska 41a; s/d 140/190zł; ☎) The intimate 12-room Willa Agnieszka is crisp and shiny. This place books out in a flash on weekends; call ahead. There's also an onsite restaurant.

**Dom Architekta** (☎ 081 883 5544; www.dom-architekta.pl; Rynek 20; d from 220zł; ☎) This sleek establishment offers the style and atmosphere you would expect from an architecturally oriented hotel; there is plenty of open space to enjoy, sleek lines, soothing tones and a bull's-eye location right on the Rynek.

**Hotel Dwa Księżycy** (☎/fax 081 881 0833; ul Sadowa 15; s/d/ste 220/250/420zł; ☎ ☎ ☎) The 'Two Moons' is a popular place on a quiet street where you can immerse yourself in the pace of Kazimierz Dolny. Some rooms are bigger than others in the same price category (with separate sitting areas), while apartment rooms in the main building have private balconies. The onsite restaurant often has live music. If you require internet access, request a room in the main building where wireless connection is more reliable. Prices include parking and breakfast.

### Eating & Drinking

Kazimierz certainly has no shortage of cafés and restaurants; most are around the centre but not all are at the Rynek.

**Piekarnia Sarzyński** (☎ 081 881 0643; www.sarzyński.com.pl in Polish; ul Nadrzeczna 6; mains from 6zł; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) This bakery institution releases freshly baked aromas and trademark bread-dough roosters into Kazimierz Dolny each day. From breakfast right through to dessert, Sarzyński bakery offers an epic range of pastries, breads, cakes and hearty meals.

**Knajpa U Fryzjera** (☎ 081 881 0426; ul Witkiewicza 2; mains 15-35zł; ☎ 9am-midnight) For funky flavour fusions in a weathered old hair-salon, U Fryzjera is a prime choice for breakfast, lunch or dinner. For the first meal of the day, perhaps try the 'Day After Sick Kitten' breakfast.

**Pod Wietrzną Górą** (☎ 081 881 0640; www.wietrzna-gora.pl in Polish; ul Krakowska 1; mains 15-40zł; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) Right on the junction of ul Krakowska and Ul Cmentarna, Pod Wietrzną can be expensive; meal price is calculated by weight and the slices of meat are generous. Otherwise, the meals are pleasant, as is the popular beer garden.

**Restauracja Mandaryn** (☎ 081 881 0220; www.mandaryn.kazimierzdolny.pl in Polish; ul Senatorowska 17; mains 20-30zł; ☎ 11am-late) Only vaguely oriental but all class, the Mandaryn serves Polish and international cuisine from one of the town's more varied menus.

**Restauracja Kwadrans** (☎ 081 882 1111; ul Sadowa 7a; mains 20-40zł; ☎ 10am-last customer) In a solid wooden building with a high-ceilinged terrace, Kwadrans demonstrates a love of clocks and heavy food. There are slim pickings for vegetarians but those more inclined towards venison will be pleased. There are some hearty breakfasts on offer.

**Zielona Tawerna** (☎ 081 881 0308; ul Nadwiślarska 4; mains 30-50zł; ☎ noon-late) An old rustic house converted into a stylish restaurant with mismatched antique furniture, art on the walls, rugs on the floors and candles on the tables. There are many dining rooms to choose from throughout the creaking building and smooth tunes add a country-chic vibe to the 'Green Tavern'. Meals, from the meaty mains to the vegetable platter, are lovingly prepared. Ingeniously, half-sized dishes can be ordered at 70% of the full price. Desserts and drinks are creative too – hot beer anyone?

Two picture-perfect places that celebrate, nay, worship the decadence of hot beverages are **Galeria Herbaciarnia U Dziwisza** (☎ 081 881 0287; ul Krakowska 6; teas from 3zł; ☎ breakfast & lunch) and nearby **Café Faktoria** (ul Krakowska 6B; coffee 4zł; ☎ 10am-9pm). The former is a civilised taste of an era when tea was a pastime; it boasts more than 100 varieties of tea leaf and an appealing range of calorie-rich accompaniments. In a similarly saccharine vein, Café Faktoria is a veritable temple to coffee and its loyal companion, chocolate; thrilling concoctions of both are brewing in various pots on the stove.



### COCK-A-DOODLE-DOUGH

Spend any time in Kazimierz Dolny and you will soon wonder why its townspeople have such a proclivity for rooster-shaped bread. After seeing enough of it, you will find yourself wanting to try some. When you do, you will discover that bread tastes like bread no matter how it's shaped, and promptly return to your initial question: why?

Though its taste may be as bland as, well, bread, the rooster has an interesting history in Kazimierz. In the middle of last century, a rooster is believed to have averted certain disaster by warning the townsfolk of an approaching devil. This, combined with local bread-weaving traditions, resulted in the rooster's heroic portrayal in dough.

After a golden era in the 1950s, when rooster-shaped bread was baked all over town, tensions suddenly surfaced. In 1996, Piekarnia Sarzyński, convinced that its many years promoting the product and winning awards for its rooster renditions entitled it to exclusive rights, registered the rooster as its company trademark. The other bakers in town were outraged and demanded that the courts reinstate the rooster's status as the cultural (culinary?) property of the Kazimierz public.

Eight years later, the court released the rooster back into the public domain. But patent or not, no-one can bake a bird like Sarzyński's (p245).

Further along the road, **Naleśniki Francuskie** (☎ 081 882 0335; ul Krakowska 26; crepes 4-10zł; ☎ noon-9pm Mon-Fri, 11am-10pm Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) offers sweet and savoury crepes in casual compact surrounds.

### Getting There & Around

Kazimierz can be conveniently visited as a stop on your Lublin-Warsaw route, or as a day trip from Lublin. There's no railway in Kazimierz but there's a decent bus service.

Cyclists can acquire a map of bike routes in the area from the PTTK office and some small shops.

### BOAT

In summer, pleasure boats run to Janowiec (one in the style of a Viking ship, minus oars and whips) on the opposite side of the Vistula – ask at the wharf at the end of ul Nadwiślańska.

There's also a **car and passenger ferry** (☎ 0602 858898; per person 3zł; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri & 8am-9pm Sat & Sun May-Sep), which takes five minutes and departs 1km west of Hotel Murka Spichlerz.

### BUS

The PKS bus and minibus terminal is about 100m north of the Rynek. There are normal buses to Puławy (3.20zł, 45 minutes, every half-hour) and urban bus 12 can take you directly to the Puławy train station. The latter is more convenient because it stops closer to the castle than the minibus or PKS buses do.

There are around 14 minibuses per day to Lublin (7zł, 1½ hours, roughly every hour) be-

tween 6.20am and 5pm; and some to Zamość (10zł, 1¼ hours).

There are five or so daily fast buses to Warsaw (22zł, 3½ hours), or change for the train in Puławy. Private bus operators also run services from the bus station for Warsaw; tickets can be purchased on the bus for **Halo Express** (☎ 0602 664419), which has six buses to Warsaw daily; or **Anmar** (☎ 081 748 7335; www.anmar.info.pl in Polish), with four buses to Warsaw daily. Check times through the PTTK Office.

### JANOWIEC

pop 1200

The village of Janowiec (yah-*no*-vyets), 2km upstream on the other side of the Vistula from Kazimierz Dolny, is best known for its **castle**, which is now part of the **Janowiec Museum** (☎ 081 881 5228; www.muzeumnadwiślanskie.pl in Polish; ul Lubelska 20; adult/concession 8/6zł; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 10am-2pm Mon, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun Nov-Apr). Inside the grounds of the castle, visitors can climb a few levels to viewing platforms offering a wide perspective of the castle and the surrounding countryside. Various rooms show exhibitions and contemporary 'art'.

The castle was built in the first half of the 16th century by Italian architect Santi Gucci Fiorentino, at the request of Mikołaj Firlej. It was furnished in 1537 and in the second half of the century Andrej Firlej converted the castle into a Renaissance residence. Through many years and owners (including the Tarło, Lubomirski and Osłowski families), the castle grew to more than 100 rooms and became one

of the most splendid in Poland. The Swedes began the process of ruination and two world wars completed the castle's demise. Under communism, it was the only private castle in Poland; it was finally handed over to the state in 1975 by its last owner, Leon Kozłowski.

The castle is still in ruins, but intense renovations have restored some rooms and revived external painted decorations. Upon entering the castle, note the red-and-white striped walls. This is not the work of a prankster graffiti artist; it is, apparently, how the castle was originally dressed.

In the park beside the castle is a **manor house** from the 1760s (another part of the museum), which offers insights into how Polish nobility lived. Among the outbuildings surrounding the manor is an old two-storey granary with an interesting **ethnographic exhibition** featuring old fishing boats, ceramics, tools and household implements.

It's also worth going down to the to Janowiec village at the foot of the castle to see its mid-14th-century Gothic **parish church**, extensively rebuilt in Renaissance style in the 1530s. Inside is the tomb of the Firlej family, carved in the workshop of Santi Gucci from 1586 to 1587.

### Sleeping & Eating

The PTTK office in Kazimierz Dolny (see p242) will know about the availability of private rooms in Janowiec, but it's probably more rewarding to spend the night in Kazimierz.

The following are some delightful dining choices near the Rynek.

**Mackowa Chata** (☎ 081 881 5462; ul Sandomierska 2; mains 10-15zł; ☎ 10am-10pm) A charming affair with an intimate terrace where passers-by and local fixtures idle. The **pierogi** (Polish dumplings) are particularly tasty.

**Restauracja Serokomla** (☎ 081 881 5240; ul Sandomierska 24/Rynek 12; mains 10-20zł; ☎ lunch & dinner) Less low key, Restauracja Serokomla sells souvenir-style condiments and decadent cakes (think chocolate, cheese, cookie and crumble) as well as solid meals in solid surrounds.

There is a kiosk and café inside the castle grounds and some eateries buried in the park in front of it.

### Getting There & Away

Normal buses and urban bus 17 from Puławy (3.20zł, 40 minutes, every half-hour) drop you off at the Rynek. From there walk uphill

from the distinct pink parish and follow the discourteously small blue sign to the unpaved path to the castle.

You can visit Janowiec from Kazimierz Dolny by pleasure boat or **ferry** (☎ 0602 858898; tickets 3zł; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm Sat & Sun), which takes five minutes. From the ferry on the Janowiec side, the most straightforward way to the castle is to walk the flat 2.5km to Rynek. Returning to the ferry, you can follow the small trodden path (in front of you, to the right as you leave the castle) along the ridge of the park, walking towards the Vistula. When you reach the perplexing fork in the path (near a middle-of-nowhere restaurant), make your way down the steep rocks, where a rope has been tethered to assist your descent. If you're not game for this, return to the Rynek and take the main road to the Vistula (follow the signs to the 'Prom').

### CHEŁM

pop 72,600

Chełm (pronounced hewm) isn't experiencing the same sort of facelift that other towns in the region are undergoing. It remains a quiet town with little accommodation on offer, so Chełm is best explored as an easy day or half-day trip from Zamość. Visitors come to experience its proudest asset – the chalk tunnels. The centre is compact and easy to explore on foot.

Chełm is about 70km east of Lublin, 25km from the Ukrainian border. Interestingly, the town sits on an 800m-thick layer of almost pure chalk, a natural phenomenon that has both wreaked havoc and been the source of the town's economic development. It has since been tamed into a tourist attraction. There is also a cathedral sanctuary, which is a pleasant place for a stroll.

Though Chełm's Jewish population was lost during WWII, the Jewish community has left its legacy in various ways. Curiously, the good people of Chełm once featured in Eastern European Jewish jokes in the same way the Irish were the protagonists of English jokes!

### History

Chełm was founded in the 10th century and; like most towns along the eastern border, shifted between the Polish Piast crown and the Kyivan duchy on various occasions. King Kazimierz III Wielki eventually got hold of the area in 1366 and King Władysław Jagiełło established a bishopric here some 50 years later.



Around this time Jews began to settle in the town, and swiftly grew in numbers – by the end of the 18th century, 60% of the town's population was Jewish.

As happened elsewhere in the country, Chełm's golden era ended in the turbulent 17th century. Later came the Partitions, and the town fell under Austrian and later Russian occupation. It wasn't until WWI that Chełm began to recover as part of independent Poland, only to be cast down again by the horrors of WWII two decades later. This included the mass execution of Jews, whose population had grown by that time to about 17,000.

## Information

**Kantors** and ATMs are in reasonable supply; try along ul Lwowska and Lubelska. The **main post office** (☎ 082 565 2236; ul Sienkiewicza 3; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–2pm Sat) is north of Plac Łuczowski. There is a smaller branch on the square itself.

**Bank Pekao** (Al I Armii Wojska Polskiego 41) South of the centre.

**Chełmski Ośrodek Informacji Turystycznej** (☎ 082 565 3667; www.itchełm.pl; ul Lubelska 63; ☎ 8am–4pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat & Sun) Excellent source of local information, offering a number of very useful brochures.

**EMPIK** (☎ 082 564 0144; ul Lubelska 61; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun) Sells some foreign-language books, newspapers, magazines and a good range of maps.

**Internet Caffe** (☎ 082 564 0980; ul Szkolna 51; per hr 3zł; ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Fri, 8am–3pm Sat) Centrally located internet.

## Sights

The city's star attraction is the **Chełm Chalk Tunnels** (Chełmskie Podziemia Kredowe; ☎ 082 565 2530; ul Lubelska 55A; adult/concession 9/6zł; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun), an array of chalk passages hewn out by hand about 12m below ground level. The chalk mine – reputedly the only one of its kind in the world – began in medieval times. By the 16th century, the chalk extracted here was renowned throughout the country. Over the years, the tunnels expanded in size and complexity, and by 1939 a multilevel labyrinth of corridors had grown to 15km. During the 19th century, chalk extraction ceased and the tunnels were only explored by adrenalin junkies. Authorities decided to convert the tunnels into a tourist attraction, creating a 300m long passage for the purpose; unfortunately, these plans did not eventuate. During WWII the prepared route served as a

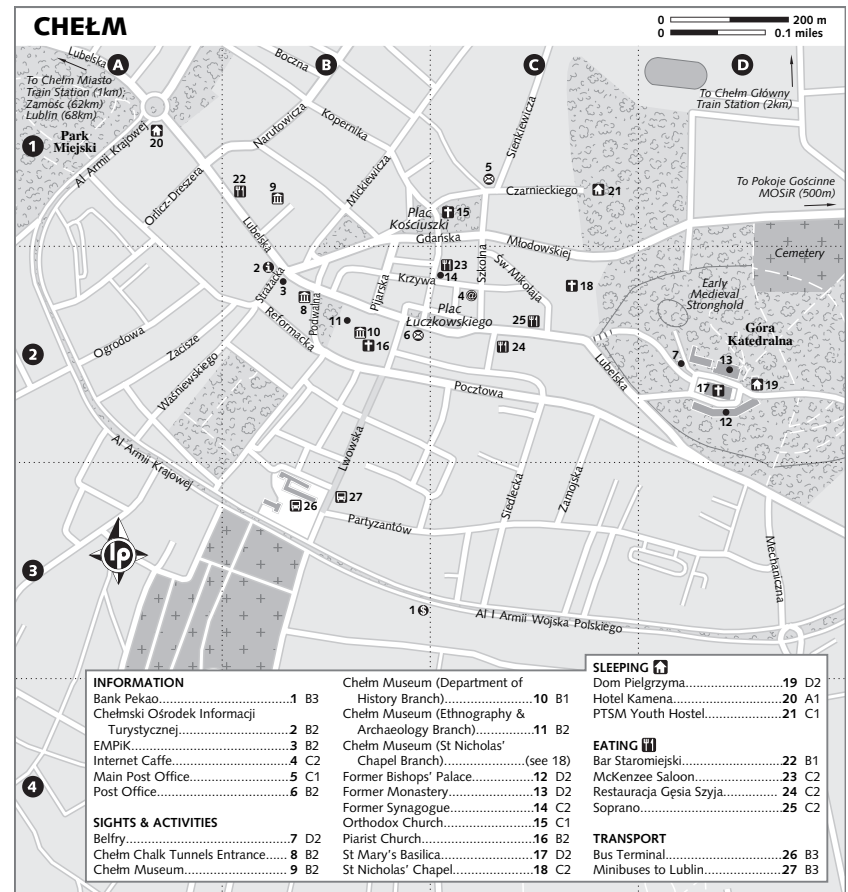
shelter for many of the town's Jews, but was eventually destroyed by the Nazis. Increased above-ground traffic in the 1960s served as a reminder of the tunnels' existence when parts of the street collapsed. Authorities reinforced sections, except for an 1800m stretch that was opened as a tourist route.

All visits are guided (in Polish only) in groups; tours depart at 11am, 1pm and 4pm daily and take less than an hour. The temperature in the tunnels is 9°C year-round, so come prepared. The friendly and endearing matter-of-fact ghost haunts the tunnels (in Polish only), and is a quirky highlight of the tour.

The hill in the middle of Chełm (once the location of the first settlement and stronghold) is today crowned with the sparkling white **St Mary's Basilica** (Bazylika Mariacka). It's surrounded by a complex of religious buildings that were once a bishop's palace and a monastery. The gardens around the park are low-maintenance but widely used. The late-Baroque basilica was remodelled in the mid-18th century on the site of the 13th-century church that originally stood here. Handed to the Catholics in the interwar period, the St Mary's parish itself was founded in 1931. The sober interior lacks much decoration, except for the silver antependium at the high altar depicting Polish knights paying homage to Our Lady of Chełm. The icon of the Madonna overlooking the altar is a replica; the original was removed by the Russians during WWI and is now in Ukraine. The freestanding 40m-high **belfry**, originally built in the 19th century in the Orthodox style, was later given a partial neoclassical makeover.

Also wander past the former **Piarist Church** (Kościół Pijarski), off Plac Łuczowski, a late-Baroque church built in the mid-18th century on an oval design. Once you enter the massive ornamented doors, you'll find yourself ensconced in colour. Wall paintings cover every square centimetre of the walls and vaults. This *trompe l'oeil* decoration was executed in 1758 by Józef Mayer – the same artist who embellished Lublin's cathedral – and the furnishings are all in Rococo style. Today it's the parish church.

The former monastery next door houses the **Chełm Museum** (Muzeum Chełmskie; ☎ 082 565 2693; ul Lubelska 55; adult/concession 3/2zł, free Thu; ☎ 10am–4pm Tue–Fri, noon–4pm Sat & Sun), containing modern Polish painting, natural-history displays and temporary exhibitions. Other outlets of the



museum open during the same hours and charge the same admission, or you can buy a combined ticket to all four sites (adult/concession 6/4zł). The **ethnography and archaeology branch** (ul Lubelska 56a) displays the museum's collection of archaeological finds dating from the Stone Age onwards and stages ethnography and temporary exhibitions. The **Department of History branch** (ul Lubelska 57) houses documents and photographs relating to Chełm's past. The third one, **St Nicholas' Chapel branch** (ul Św Mikołaja 4), showcases religious art from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Concerts of classical music are occasionally held here.

Of the scarce Jewish relics to have survived is the easy-to-miss **former synagogue** (ul Kopernika 8), on the corner of ul Kopernika and

ul Krzywa. There once was a larger synagogue in addition to this one, but it was destroyed in WWII. This remaining synagogue, built between 1912 and 1914, houses offices and is not open to the public. A few steps north on Plac Kościuski is the neoclassical **Orthodox church**, built under tsarist rule from 1840 to 1852.

## Sleeping

Chełm's accommodation options provide a strong argument for not staying overnight. It's better to day-trip from Lublin or Zamość. But if you do decide to stay, here are a few good budget options.

**PTSM Youth Hostel** (☎ 082 564 0022; ul Czarnieckiego 8; dm 30zł) This hostel has seen better days, but is pleasantly situated in a welcome patch of

greenery. It's well signed by the green triangle symbol, but not well staffed. Outside 5pm to 10pm, Chełmski Ośrodek Informacji Turystycznej (the Tourist Information Office) may be able to contact someone to welcome you.

**Pokoje Gościnne MOSiR** (☎ 082 563 0286; ul 1 Pułku Szwoleżerów 15a; d/tr/q 65/77/90zł) A simple budget hotel next to the city stadium beyond Góra Katedralna, it offers basic rooms with shared bathrooms.

**Dom Pielgrzyma** (☎ 082 565 3656; ul Lubelska 2; dm/s/d 25/50/100zł) An interesting accommodation choice within the cathedral sanctuary (which closes at 9.30pm), the 'Pilgrim House' – in a former Basilican Monastery – demands appropriate solemnity. If no-one answers the door, look for someone at the church.

**Hotel Kamena** (☎ 082 565 6401; www.hotelkamena.pl; Al Armii Krajowej 50; s 110-160zł, d 170-240zł, tr 210zł, apt 250-350zł; P) Kamena charges more than it should for rooms haphazardly strewn with furniture and lined with mud-brown carpet, but it's a straight-up, no-fuss, impersonal hotel, which is here if you need it for a night.

## Eating

Plac Łuczowskiego isn't particularly well used. Most of the main eating and drinking takes place along Lwowska where there are a few coffee bars, pizzerias and the like.

**Bar Starmiejski** (☎ 082 565 4340; ul Lubelska 68; mains 5-10zł; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) There's something comforting about the staying power of Starmiejski. This local favourite Polish-style milk bar serves cheap traditional fare in traditional Polish surroundings.

**McKenzie Saloon** (☎ 082 565 6464; ul Mikołaja Kopernika; mains 15-25zł; ☎ 9am-11pm) This shiny, new whip-cracker of a restaurant with attached kebab bar offers good quality and large quantities in prairie-inspired surroundings; you can eat your steak under the tarp of a wagon.

There's also a couple of vaulted cellar choices serving pizza and Polish fare:

**Restauracja Gęsia Szyja** (☎ 082 565 2321; ul Lubelska 27; mains 10-20zł; ☎ lunch & dinner)

**Soprano** (☎ 082 565 0860; ul Lubelska 8; mains 10-30zł) Well thought-out ambience.

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

The bus terminal is on ul Lwowska, 300m south of Plac Łuczowskiego. There are PKS

buses to Lublin (10zł, 1½ hours, every 1½ hours), and more frequent private minibuses (9zł, one hour, every hour) departing from just outside the terminal. Half a dozen buses a day run to Zamość (10zł, 1½ hours), plus several private minibuses (9zł, 70 minutes). From Zamość there are regular minibuses to Chełm (9zł, 70 minutes) from 8am onwards. The last minibus back to Zamość leaves Chełm at around 6pm.

There are a couple of daily fast buses to Warsaw (30zł, four hours, 229km).

## TRAIN

The town has two train stations: Chełm Miasto 1km west of the Old Town, and Chełm Główny 2km to the northeast. Both are serviced by urban buses. Trains to Lublin (1zł, 1½ hours, 70km) run every hour or two, and there are three fast trains per day to Warsaw (40zł, four hours, 247km); all these trains stop at both stations.

## ZAMOŚĆ

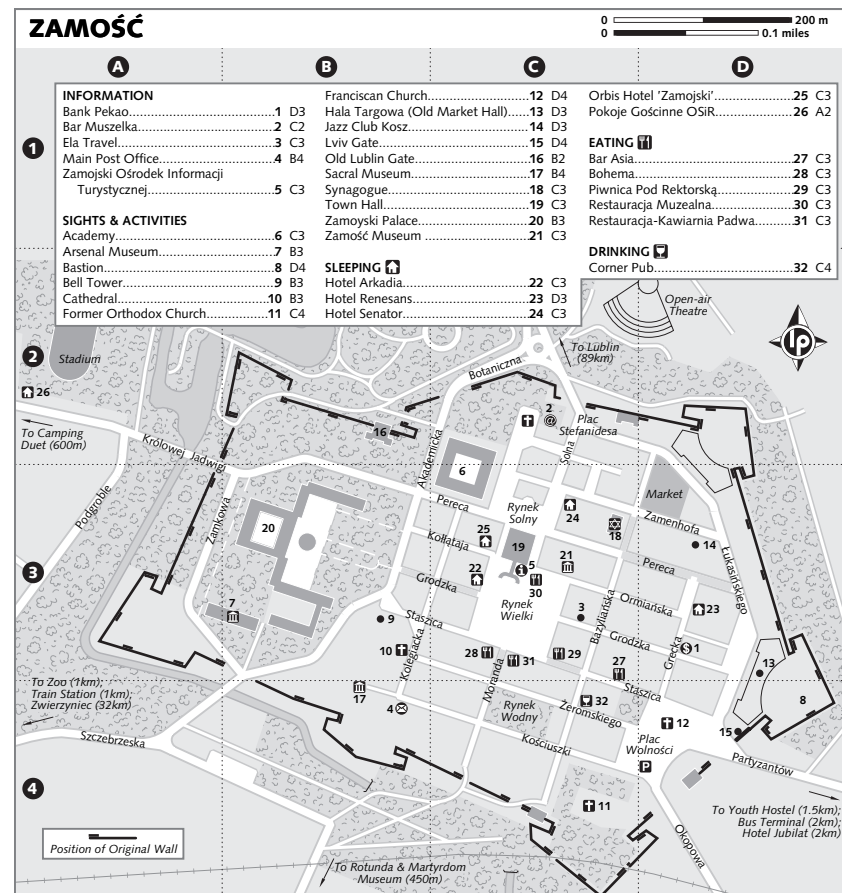
pop 65,423

The self-proclaimed 'Pearl of the Renaissance' and 'Padua of the North', Zamość (*zah-moshch*) has never been known for its modesty. The latter name derives from its Italian designer, Bernardo Morando, a Paduan native who brought his architectural vision to life in the middle of the Lublin Upland in the late 16th century.

Artistic exaggeration notwithstanding, this Renaissance town has earned its accolades; it escorted more than 100 architectural monuments through the ages relatively unharmed, it refused to surrender to Swedish invaders in the 17th century, it resisted being renamed 'Himmlerstadt' under Nazism and it earned a place on the Unesco World Heritage List in 1992. In short, Zamość is worth a visit.

## History

Zamość began as something of a Renaissance-era housing estate. When Polish Chancellor and commander-in-chief Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605) decided to build a perfect city, he looked to Italy rather than neighbouring Russia for artistic inspiration. Architect Bernardo Morando was commissioned to build Zamoyski's dream, and in doing so created a model city showcasing leading Italian theories of urban design. The project began in 1580, and within 11 years 217 houses had



been built, with public buildings following soon afterwards.

By the end of the 16th century, the town's beauty – and its location on the crossroads of the Lublin-Lviv and Kraków-Kyiv trading routes – attracted international settlers including Armenians, Jews, Hungarians, Greeks, Germans, Scots and Italians.

The fortifications built to protect the city and its inhabitants were tested many times. The Cossack raid of 1648 proved little match for the strength of Zamość. Its impregnability was confirmed again in 1656, when Zamość boldly withstood the Swedish siege, along with Częstochowa and Gdańsk.

After a period of Austrian rule, Zamość fell to tsarism. It was during this time that the

city took its heaviest aesthetic beating. The Russians adapted many of the town's most splendid buildings for military purposes and almost entirely demolished the fortress walls in 1866, leaving only the ruined fragments that remain today. Zamość's modelling days were over.

Zamość was a key target of Hitler's plan for eastward expansion; German occupiers intended that some 60,000 Germans would be settled here before the end of 1943 (current German president Horst Köhler was born near Zamość after his parents had to resettle here). Due to fierce resistance by the Polish Underground, the determination of the people of Zamość, and eventually the arrival of the Red Army, the number of Germans to



relocate into the town barely reached 10,000. However, the Jewish population was brutally expelled from the town and its surrounds.

After Poland's admission to the EU in 2004, funds poured in and are being invested to enhance Zamość's appeal and ensure its longevity. The Old Market Hall and Bastion (No 7) are undergoing extensive renovations to make way for still more cafés and restaurants. There is even talk of restoring a segment of the moat and offering hot-air balloon rides over the Old Town. It's a big dream, but Zamość is no stranger to those – construction works taking place all over town suggest that this proud city might just pull it off.

### Information

Most bank and internet facilities are located around the Rynek or not far from it.

**Bank Pekao** (ul Grodzka 2) Changes cash and advances on Visa and MasterCard.

**Bar Muszelka** (☎ 084 636 6009; ul Solna 7; per hr 3zł; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Fri, 11am–10pm Sat) Internet facilities.

**Ela Travel** (☎ 084 639 3001; licorbizamosc@poczta.onet.pl; ul Grodzka 18; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat) Can organise international bus, train and air tickets.

**Usługi Ksero + Internet** (☎ 084 639 2932; Rynek Wielki 10; per hr 3zł; ☎ 7.30am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat) Internet access.

**Zamojski Ośrodek Informacji Turystycznej** (☎ /fax 084 639 2292; Rynek Wielki 13; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun May–Sep, 8am–4pm Mon–Fri Oct–Apr) Very helpful tourist service in the town hall with maps, brochures and souvenirs. *Zamość – a short guidebook* (8zł), and the free brochure *A Walk around Zamość* are possibly worth picking up. Staff can arrange walking tours of the town in various languages. There is also a computer for respectful gratis internet use.

### Sights

What with being a model city and all, Zamość is an ideal place to arbitrarily wander.

Don't get your hopes up about fortifications surrounding the town – the Russians turned the city walls to ruins. The best surviving segments are at the eastern end of town where intense renovations are under way to restore former glory.

### RYNEK WIELKI

The Old Town is 600m long, 400m wide and surrounds a main square of exactly 100m by 100m. Look out for plaques on key buildings

around **Rynek Wielki**, which offer succinct information about the buildings' former use. The Italianate Renaissance Rynek is lined with arcaded burghers' houses (arcades were made compulsory by Jan Zamoyski himself). Each side of the Rynek (bar the northern side dominated by the lofty pink town hall) has eight houses bisected by two main axes of town; one runs west–east from the palace to the bastion, and the other joins the three market squares north to south.

The **town hall** was built between 1639 and 1651, and features were added and extended in the mid-17th century: its curving stairway came in 1768. Zamoyski didn't want the town hall to overshadow the palace or interrupt the view, and so unusually placed it on the northern side of the square rather than the centre. In summer, a bugle is played at noon from the 52m-high clock tower.

Originally, all the houses in the square were topped with decorative parapets, but these were removed in the 1820s; only those on the northern side have been (and still are being) restored. As these houses once belonged to Armenian merchants, you will find some distinct motifs on their façades. Two Armenian houses now shelter the **Zamojski Museum** (Muzeum Zamojskie; ☎ 084 638 6494; www.museum-zamojskie.one.pl in Polish; Rynek 24/26; adult/concession 6/3zł; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue–Sun), with intriguing displays like a scale model of the 16th-century town and a letter to Jan Zamoyski from his architect, Bernardo Morando, with a hand-drawn plan of the square and names of the first occupants of each building. Also on display are archaeological finds such as Gothic treasures found in cemeteries in the Hrubieszów Valley. Note the original wooden ceilings and decorations around the windows and doors.

Continue walking through the arcades of the square to admire some other fine buildings; on the southern side take particular note of No 21, which dates back as far as 1590, and quintessentially Italian styled No 25. Also note the stuccowork in the vestibules, such as at No 10. The old pharmacy at No 2 dates back to 1609.

### SOUTHWEST OF THE RYNEK

The **cathedral**, just southwest of the Rynek, was built by Morando (around 1587 to 1598) as a votive offering and mausoleum for the Zamoyskis. The exterior of the building changed dramatically in the 19th century, but

the interior maintained many original features. Note the authentic Lublin-Renaissance-style vault, the stone and stuccowork, and the unusual arcaded organ loft. In the high altar is the rococo silver tabernacle of 1745. Jan Zamoyski's tomb is under the black marble in the chapel at the head of the right-hand aisle. The stairs next to the chapel lead to the family crypt.

Behind the church is the former vicarage from the 1610s with its splendid ornate doorway. It leads to the **Sacral Museum** (Muzeum Sakralne; ul Kolegiacka 2; admission 1zł; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat & Sun May–Sep, 10am–1pm Sat & Sun only Oct–Apr), featuring a collection of religious art accumulated by the church.

Back outside the church, you can climb the freestanding **bell tower** (admission 1.5zł; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Sat May–Sep), though the terrace is not high enough to offer a bird's-eye view of the Old Town. This present tower was built from 1755 to 1775 after the original timber tower went up in flames. It contains three bells: Wawrzyniec (170kg), Tomasz (1200kg) and the largest, Jan (4300kg). You may need to ask for the key to the bell tower at the Sacral Museum.

### WEST OF THE RYNEK

West from the collegiate church, the **Arsenal Museum** (Muzeum Arsenal; ☎ 084 638 4076; ul Zamkowa 2; adult/concession 5/2.50zł; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue–Fri) displays a modest collection of cannons, swords, muskets and other military hardware. Various temporary exhibitions are also held here.

In the 1830s, **Zamoyski Palace** (Pałac Zamoyskich) became a military hospital, but now houses government offices and is closed to the public.

### NORTHWEST OF THE RYNEK

Just north across ul Królowej Jadwigi is the **Old Lublin Gate** (Stara Brama Lubelska), a partly ruined brick structure. Just after its construction in 1588 it was walled up in 1604 to commemorate a victorious event: Austrian Archduke Maximilian (a claimant to the Polish throne) was taken prisoner by Jan Zamoyski in the battle of Byczyna and triumphantly 'escorted' into the town through the gate. He is the last person to have walked through it.

To the east of the gate is the **Academy** (Akademia), recognised for making Zamość a thriving academic centre. The Academy was opened in 1595 with an impassioned appeal by Jan Zamoyski for young Poles to educate

themselves. The Baroque structure retained little character after tsarist times.

### SOUTHEAST OF THE RYNEK

On the eastern edge of the Old Town is the **Hala Targowa**, the old Market Hall and prime site of massive renovation works to rejuvenate existing shops and cafés and add new attractions. The market is adjacent to the best surviving **bastion**, No 7. Walking tours of the walls can be arranged in various languages through Zamojski Ośrodek Informacji Turystycznej, but plans may be disrupted by renovation works. The entrance is by the **Lviv Gate** (Brama Lwowska), built in 1599 as the main eastern access gate. It still retains some original decorations, including a Latin inscription concerning the foundation of the town, and the Zamoyski family coat of arms.

Opposite the gate is the **Franciscan Church** (Kościół Franciszkański; Plac Wolności). When it was built (between 1637 and 1655) it was reputedly one of the largest and most beautiful Baroque churches in the country. In 1784, the Austrian Empire abolished the Franciscan order, throwing the church into the hands of fate. It was converted to a hospital, an arms depot under the Russians, a museum and cinema between the two world wars, and an art college after WWII before finding its way back into the hands of the Franciscans in 1993.

Further south is the **former Orthodox Church**, built in the 1620s by Greek merchants and complemented by a fortified tower half a century later. The church was rebuilt several times but the original stucco decoration of the vault remains.

### THE JEWISH QUARTER

The area around the Rynek Solny and ul Zamenhofa was once the heart of the Jewish quarter. Jews were granted permission to settle in Zamość in 1588, and by the mid-19th century accounted for 60% of the town's 4000 people. By the eve of WWII their numbers had grown to 12,000 (45% of the total population). In 1941 they were moved to the ghetto formed to the west of the Old Town, and by the following year most had been murdered in extermination camps.

One block east of Rynek Solny is the Renaissance **synagogue** (ul Perea 14; donation appreciated; ☎ 9am–1pm Mon–Fri, 10am–5pm Sat & Sun) built between 1610 and 1618. One of the two side



rooms off the main hall was destroyed during Nazi occupation, and the interior stripped of its fittings. The synagogue is the subject of a restoration project. Note the surviving stucco decoration and the reconstructed decorative parapets.

Interestingly, the site of **Jazz Club Kosz** was once a Jewish bathhouse – the large hall downstairs was once used for ritual bathing.

### BEYOND THE OLD TOWN

Roughly 450m southwest of the Old Town is the **Rotunda** – a ring-shaped fort 54m in diameter surrounding a circular yard. The rotunda was built in the 1820s as part of the defensive infrastructure of the town, but during WWII the SS converted it into an interrogation centre. Some 8000 people from the Zamość area are believed to have been murdered here and their bodies burnt in the courtyard. The graveyard surrounding the rotunda is the resting place of people who were killed here, including Polish soldiers and members of the Polish underground. Since 1947, the rotunda has been the **Martyrdom Museum** (☎ 0606 952433; Droga Męczenników Rotundy; ☞ 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm Sat, 8am–10pm Sun May–Sep, 7am–3pm Mon–Fri Nov–Apr), containing various tributes to the victims of Nazi atrocities. Walking through the various cells (particularly by yourself) can be a disturbing and desolate experience.

Zamość has a small **zoo** (Ogród Zoologiczny; ☎ 084 639 3470; ul Szczepieszka 8; adult/concession 5/3zł; ☞ 9am–7pm Apr–Sep, 7am–3pm Oct–Mar) with small enclosures. There are some interesting exotic species, but many look homesick. A visit might be worthwhile if you have children in tow who need a break from all the history.

### Festivals & Events

The **Zamość Theatre Summer**, organised by **Zamojski Dom Kultury** (☎ 084 639 2021; www.zdk.zamosc.pl in Polish), takes place from mid-June to mid-August with dramatic open-air performances on the Rynek in front of the town hall.

Every year, the manager of **Piwnica pod Rektorską** (☎ 0502 578442; www.kosz.zam.pl; Rynek 2) and formerly of Jazz Club Kosz, organises jazz and blues events in Zamość. They include the **International Meeting of Jazz Vocalists** in September (with performances and competitions between jazz singers from the region and far beyond); as well as **Jazz on the Borderlands** in May, and **New Cooperation** in August.

### Sleeping

Though accommodation in Zamość caters for most budgets, the range isn't what you would expect from a town of this aesthetic fame. Nevertheless, there are some solid accommodation options available.

### BUDGET

**Camping Duet** (☎ 084 639 2499; www.duet.virgo.com.pl in Polish; ul Królowej Jadwigi 14; s/d/tr/q 70/85/110/135zł; ☐ ☞) This conveniently located camping ground, about 1.5km west of the Old Town, has neat bungalows for up to six people, tennis courts, a restaurant, a sauna and a Jacuzzi. In summer it can be crowded with happy holidaying families.

**Pokoje Gościnne Osir** (☎ /fax 084 638 6011; www.osir.zamosc.pl in Polish; ul Królowej Jadwigi 8; dm/s/d/tr/q incl breakfast 24/90/125/150/180zł; ☐) Hardly a conventional place to stay, but the price is low and it's close to the centre. You may feel like you're trapped in a primary school sports day in the 1980s with a room overlooking a sports hall, but this can be a fun way of engaging with the real Poland. The onsite kiosk can also be handy.

The simple but functional **youth hostel** (☎ 084 638 9500; ul Zamojskiego 4; dm 15–20zł; ☞ Jul & Aug) is in a school not far from the bus terminal, 1.5km east of the Old Town.

### MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Hotel Jubilat** (☎ 084 638 7630; www.hoteljubilat.pl in Polish; ul Wyszyńskiego 52; s/d/apt without breakfast 120/145/260zł; ☐) The Jubilat is conveniently located next to the bus station. Its exterior appearance does little to recommend it, but inside you'll find a fitness centre, restaurant and recently refurbished bathrooms. Despite its lack of internet access, the Jubilat offers better value than more central options.

**Hotel Arkadia** (☎ 084 638 6507; makben@wp.pl; Rynek Wielki 9; s/d/tr 100/150/190zł; ☐) With super prices and a superlative location on the Rynek, Arkadia fills up fast. The scruffiness of this tiny seven-room establishment only lends it charm – and keeps the prices reasonable.

**Hotel Renesans** (☎ 084 639 2001; www.hotelrenesans.pl in Polish; ul Grecka 6; s/d/apt 125/170/200zł; ☐ ☞) From the people who brought you the Jubilat comes the Renesans. The exterior is something of a train wreck, and doesn't seem worthy of the three stars it wears, but the rooms are comfortable, clean and central. Prices drop if you skip breakfast.

**Hotel Senator** (☎ 084 638 9990; www.senatorhotel.pl; ul Rynek Solny 4; s/d/ste 164/229/334zł; ☐ ☞ ☞) The recently opened Senator offers impressive value and more charm than its chain-hotel competition. Rooms have a tasteful aesthetic with even standard rooms offering impressive space. The onsite restaurant, with its own fireplace, aims for medieval mellow (and looks just a bit like a medieval theatre set). The expansive breakfast buffet costs 25zł. Weekend discounts add to the ambience.

**Orbis Hotel 'Zamojski'** (☎ 084 639 2516; zamojski@orbis.pl; ul Kołłątaja 2/4/6; s/d/ste 190/264/389zł; ☐ ☞ ☞) Occupying three interconnected houses, the Orbis is a reliable choice that offers conventional professionalism. Some rooms are bigger than others, some have more reliable internet access, and some offer better views. The downfall of the Orbis is that the old-world charm of the hotel's exterior has not been matched with modernised interiors. There is an onsite fitness club.

### Eating & Drinking

There is a growing number of eateries scattered throughout the Old Town, most with dining areas in cellars downstairs and on the Rynek upstairs. Many of them magically pumpkin-pop into bars or clubs at night.

**Bohema** (☎ 084 638 1414; ul Staszica 29; ☞ 11am–late) This super-slick underground bar (also with Rynek seating) not only offers live music but also turns out some sophisticated food; pancake concoctions are the breakfast of champions. Poetry could be written about the unsurpassable hot chocolate with chilli (possibly the best 7zł you'll spend in Poland).

**Corner Pub** (☎ 084 627 70 694; www.corner.boop.pl; ul Żeromskiego 6; ☞ 11am–last customer) Every town needs an Irish pub, and this brand new place has already become Zamość's. It's far classier than the real deal, and has regular live music.

**Bar Asia** (☎ 084 639 2304; ul Staszica 10; mains from 8zł; ☞ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri, 8am–3.30pm Sat) For some fast and filling soup/dumplings/cabbage-style food, head to this old-style milk bar.

The following places offer seating right on the Rynek or in atmospheric cellars underneath it:

**Restauracja-Kawiarnia Padwa** (☎ 084 638 6256; ul Staszica 23; mains 7–14zł; ☞ lunch & dinner) Hearty Polish fare opposite the town hall.

**Piwnica pod Rektorską** (☎ 084 638 1942; mains 10–20zł; ☞ 10am–midnight) Polish-style hamburger/piegoli-style snacks and sometimes jazz downstairs.

**Restauracja Muzealna** (☎ 084 638 7300; ul Ormiańska 30; mains 10–25zł; ☞ lunch & dinner) A better class of Polish cuisine. The goulash is an essential order.

### Getting There & Away

#### BUS

The **bus terminal** (☎ 084 638 4986; ul Hrubieszowska 11) is 2km east of the Old Town but well serviced by city buses O and 3. Bus stands along Partyzantów and at Plac Sfeanidesa are convenient for the latter.

Private minibuses leave for several destinations from the stand right opposite the bus terminal; check the timetable for details of departures.

Buses to Lublin (12zł, two hours, every half-hour) run roughly between 5am and 6pm. There are also plenty of minibuses (10zł, two hours, every half-hour). There is an afternoon bus to Puławy (16zł, 2½ hours, 1.15pm) via Lublin.

There are a few buses to Kraków a day (21zł to 35zł, four to five hours), and there are four buses daily to Warsaw (32zł, five hours). There are only three buses to Sandomierz (20zł, three hours) in the morning.

There are two morning buses to Rzeszów (16zł, three hours) and one to Przemyśl (17zł, 3½ hours).

There are frequent normal buses and minibuses to Zwierzyniec (3.50zł, 40 minutes, 32km), the entry point for Roztocze National Park. Alternatively, from ul Akademicka in the centre of town, take a bus headed to either Biłgoraj or Nisko, which may be passing through Zwierzyniec.

#### TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 084 084 9436; ul Szczepieszka 11) is about 1km southwest of the Old Town; walk or take the city bus. There's a 5.30am train to Lublin (28zł, 2½ hours, 116km) – there are others, but they take more than eight hours. Similarly with the morning trains to Warsaw (46zł, 5½ hours, 293km), forget the second one, which takes 11 hours. There are a few morning trains to Kraków (46zł, seven hours, 318km).

### ZWIERZYNIEC

pop 3800

Given what a raging success Jan Zamojski's model city Zamość turned out to be, it's no surprise that his country getaway also came up trumps. Zwierzyniec (zyeh-zhi-nyets),

32km southwest of Zamość, is picture perfect. In the 16th century, the visionary Zamoyski created a game reserve in this area, which has since become a national park (see opposite). The family's summer palace was erected soon afterwards, around which a small town began to grow. A chapel was later built on one of the tiny islands opposite the palace, and remains the cherry on the cake of Zwierzyniec (since the palace was dismantled in 1833).

### Information

There is a small **tourist office** (☎ 084 687 2660; zokir@poczta.oneta.pl; ul Słowackiego 2; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat May & Sep, 8am-7pm Mon-Sat & 9am-5pm Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr), located in the centre of town, which may be able to help you find private rooms. Alternatively, ask at the tourist office (p252) in Zamość.

### Sights

Today Zwierzyniec is the gateway to the Roztocze National Park. It houses park management and on the southern edge of town, roughly 1km from the bus stop, the **Education and Museum Centre** (Muzeum Przyrodnicze; ☎ 084 687 2066; ul Plażowa 3; adult/concession 3.50/2.50zł; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct, 9am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr, closed Mon, public holidays & day after public holidays). The museum can be crowded with hikers beginning their journey and school kids queuing for souvenirs – try to get there early. Many short walks starting here offer a nice slice of the park. A particularly pleasant one is the Bukowa Mount didactic path (2.6km, two hours), which leads through some lush fir forest and fine specimens of Carpathian beech wood.

On the way to the Education and Museum Centre, you may see a striking wooden building that looks something like a Swiss chalet. This **plenipotentiary's villa** was built in the late 19th century as a rendition of the 17th-century gates that once led to the Zamoyski's menagerie. It now houses Roztocze National Park Management.

The only significant and authentic structure remaining from the Zamoyski's residential complex is the **Chapel upon the Water** (Kaplica na Wodzie). The appeal of this chapel is not its interior but its setting. The small Baroque church sits on one of four tiny islets on the small lake of Staw Kościelny (Church Pond), which was allegedly dug by Turkish and Tartar prisoners

in the 1740s. The church is linked to the mainland by a bridge (which would be more fitting if it were rickety and wooden rather than solid concrete). The lake is halfway between the bus station and the museum.

Near the church is the **Zwierzyniec Brewery**, established in 1806 and still producing excellent beer today, predictably named 'Zwierzyniec'. The brewery itself is not open to visitors, but the small bar at the entrance sure is. It should be mandatory for breweries to be situated in such close proximity to walking trails.

### Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office will be able to help you find agroturystyka accommodation, well-equipped holiday centres and an abundance of local rooms in and around town. In most, longer stays bring the rates down.

**Hotel Jodła** (☎ 084 687 2012; fax 084 687 2124; ul Parkowa 3A; d 58-69zł, tr 87zł) In a large timber villa near the bus stop, Jodła offers small doubles that share facilities with occupants of one other room. There is also a café and a tennis court onsite.

**Ośrodek Wypoczynkowy Anna** (☎ 084 687 2590; www.annazwierzyniec.pl in Polish; ul Dębowa 1; s 60zł, d 80-90zł, tr/q 100/120zł; (P)) Anna offers exceptionally good value all year round. Simply furnished rooms are neat and cosy and the pleasant modern building has its own restaurant. Only the more expensive rooms have private bathrooms, but shared facilities are clean.

**Karczma Młyn** (☎ 084 687 2527; ul Wachniewskiej 1A; s/d 60/80zł) The best place for lunch or dinner offers wholesome Polish fare surrounded by the lush green you'd expect of a national park. The terrace is idyllically situated for a postcard-perfect view of the Chapel on the Water.

There are several pleasant budget accommodation options in the area:

**Camping Echo** (☎ 084 687 2314; ul Biłgorajska 3; camp sites per person 7.50zł, cabins with bathroom per person 20zł, cabins with/without basin per person 16/13zł, cars 2zł; ☎ May-Sep; (P)) Basic three- and six-bed cabins and a snack bar serving simple meals.

**Youth hostel** (☎ 084 687 2175; ul Partyzantów 3B; dm 30zł; ☎ Jul & Aug) Basic 40-bed place in the local school.

**Youth hostel** (☎ 084 687 2366; ul Browarna 1; dm 10-12zł) Dorm rooms close to the lake.

### Getting There & Away

The bus stop is on ul Zamojska, in the town centre north of the lake (if you're facing the

road with your back to the bus stand, follow the road left to the lake). There is a large town map posted nearby, which will help you get your bearings.

Buses to Zamość (3.50zł, 40 minutes, 32km) pass every half-hour or so. There are infrequent buses to more-distant destinations, including Sandomierz and Rzeszów. The train station is about 1km east of town.

### ROZTOCZE NATIONAL PARK

Decreed in 1974, **Roztocze National Park** (Roztoczański Park Narodowy; Park Management Office, Zwierzyniec ☎ 084 687 2066; www.roztozczanski.pn.pl in Polish; ul Plażowa 2, Zwierzyniec; ☎ 7.15am-5.15pm Mon-Fri) covers an area of 79 sq km to the south and east of Zwierzyniec. The site was a nature reserve for more than 350 years as part of the Zamoyski family estate. Following the purchase of a vast stretch of land (complete with six towns, 149 villages and about 1600 sq km of forest) in 1589, Jan Zamoyski created an enclosed game reserve named Zwierzyniec (zoological garden). This was a remarkable achievement at that time, given that this was not a hunting ground but a protected area for various animal species to roam in relative freedom.

Today's national park includes much of Zamoyski's original reserve. Occupying undulating terrain – 93% of which is covered with forest – the park retains much of its primeval character. It also remains geologically active, apparently rising by 2mm a year. The park is crossed from east to west by the Wieprz, one of the least polluted rivers in the region.

### Flora & Fauna

Because Roztocze National Park is home to a diversity of soil types, topography, climate and water sources, an impressive variety of trees grow here, including fir, spruce, pine, Carpathian beech, sycamore, hornbeam, oak, elm and lime. Fir trees in the park grow bigger than elsewhere in the country, some reaching up to 50m high and 4.5m wide. Closer to the ground, attentive visitors will be able to count some 700 species of vascular plant and more than 1000 species of mushroom.

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The park's fauna is just as diverse; it is home to 58 species of mammal including stag, roe deer, boar, fox, marten and badger. Elk, wolves and lynxes have been known to visit from time to time. Look up, and you'll be able to spy some 210 bird species passing overhead; look down and zoom in for a glimpse of some of the 2000 species of beetle inhabiting the park.

Park management has put in place various conservation efforts, including the austere clad 'Mounted Nature Guards' who patrol the park on horseback. In 1979 the beaver was reintroduced into the park and in 1982 the Polish pony – descendants of the tarpan and now the symbol of the park. There is a Polish pony refuge near Echo Ponds. The world's last specimens of tarpan were kept here in Roztocze in the 19th century until they were given away when the estate fell into disarray under tsarist rule.

### Walking Trails

The normal starting point for walks is the town of Zwierzyniec, or more specifically the Education and Museum Centre (opposite), where you can buy booklets and park maps.

The shorter walks (between 20 minutes and two hours or so), called 'educational paths', are clearly marked from the museum. A particularly nice Roztocze sampler is the Bukowa Mount didactic path (2.6km) going south from the museum to the top of Bukowa Góra (Beech Mountain, 306m) along a former palace park lane. The gradient is mild, but there are a couple of hundred steps through the various forest habitats. If you would like to visit the Polish pony reserve near Echo Ponds, there is a very short and easy route (1.2km) from the museum.

The several longer walks are called 'tourist routes', which generally weave from Zwierzyniec through forest terrain to neighbouring villages (such as Florianka, also known for its tarpan breeding). Intersecting paths enable you to return by a different route or cut to another path.

Cycling routes of different durations and arduousness are also marked on tourist maps available from the centre.