

Polska



**Informator
Regionu
Międzyrzecza Podlaskiego**

**The guide-book
for the Międzyrzec Podlaski region**



BOGDAN KARWOWSKI

21-404 Wylany – stable. The owner offers horse riding for children and adults and lessons of horse riding.

REV. ANDRZEJ MAJCHRZAK

21-404 Celiny – phone: (+4825) 796 10 09 – lover and keeper of horses. The priest of Polish Cavalry Regiment Association.

JADWIGA I WALDEMAR CZAJKA

21-302 Brzozowica Duża 212, phone: (+4883) 372 35 07

Offer: summer house for a family (5 persons), chaise rides, mushrooms in surrounding forest, farm owned nursery available for fishing. Meals on request of the tourists. Accommodations during spring and summer. Access by: PKS Lublin – Białystok; PKP Warszawa – Terespol.

STANISŁAWA KOT

Żakowola 24, Poprzeczna street, phone: (+4883) 372 25 54.
Accommodations for six persons during summer season.

7. Tourist routes

Route No 1

Międzyrzec Podlaski

The History of the city

The town of Międzyrzec Podlaski has a very long history, first, in the 14th century as a village and gradually growing to its present day size. Through the ages, many families owned the estate of Międzyrzeczczyna and the main noble families are as follows: Chamca, Nassutów, Nasutowiczów, Zabrzezińskich, Zbaraskich, Tęczyńskich, Daniłowiczów, Opalińskich, Czatoryskich and Potockich. It is due to these estate holders for the growth of the town in historical heritage. In 1430, on the present grounds of St. Nicholas, the first wooden church was built funded by Nicholas Nassuta.

The whole estate was situated on the borderlands between the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and vital trade routes passed through. During the abolishment of Jews from the Great Duchy of Lithuania, a majority of Jews settled in the town, where they became the major financial structure for the region.

They were mainly at the beginning tradesmen, bankers, whilst time flowed by they started production of goods, like wickled items and fur, which was exported abroad.

After the third partition of Poland in 1795, Międzyrzec Podlaski was governed by Austria. During the years of 1809 to 1813, the region was in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, then after 1815 in the Kingdom of Poland.

In 1823, Międzyrzec Podlaski was connected with Warsaw and Brest with a harden road and in 1867 by rail.

During 1874 and 1875, terror struck the town when Russian troops enforced Russification and the confiscation of the Catholic Church's properties. The people of the town were forced to convert to the Eastern Orthodox Faith. This led to bloodshed.

During the First World War, on the 11th – 16th of August 1915, a major battle was fought between the Austrian and Russian forces, just outside of town, near the village of Tulińów. Presently near the village there is a war cemetery.

On the 15th of November 1918, during the disarmament of German soldiers, a unit of German soldiers fleeing from Biała Podlaska, known as the Death Hussars, enter the town of Międzyrzec at night and massacred the Polish soldiers, stationed there, and civilians. Around 100 people were killed. A monument commemorating the event stands on the Square.

During the two World Wars, Międzyrzec Podlaski had time to heal its wounds from the last war and to develop to a larger town. In 1920, the population reached 20 thousand, which the majority of the population, around 70%, formed the Jewish community.

The Second World War brought more devastation than the First. 50% of the buildings were destroyed and the whole Jewish community was murdered off. At the end of the war, there was only a population of 6,000 left.

Sightseeing of the City

Market square – St. Joseph Church – St. Nicholas Church – St. Peter and Paul Church – palace and park complex – catholic cemetery – Jewish cemetery.

The proposed sightseeing trail, through the town of Międzyrzec Podlaski, is 2,5km long and may take about 4 hours walking time.

We begin the sightseeing tour on the John Paul II Square in the centre of the old town. Around the Square there is a uniform style of

architecture from the 18th century. The actual square had its beginning in 1440.

On the west side of the Square you can see the building, known as "Under the Clock", being built in 1929 and in the early '80s was the offices for the town authorities.

On the north side of the Square, we can enter the gate leading towards the St. Joseph's church. The church was built on the site of the old wooden Orthodox Church, St Nicholas, and was finished in 1784, by order of Duke August Czartoryski. St Joseph was designed in a cross configuration with a 3-sided closed presbytery; the southern elevation has a baroque gable. The roof is decorated with obelisks and niche and with a small bell tower. Inside, there are three baroque altars constructed in the late 18th century. After the Second World War period, two stained – glass windows were added to the presbytery and having the following design: Holy Virgin Annunciation and Assumption, they were designed by S. Powalisz from Poznań.

At the east side of the square stands a former palace belonging to the Czartoryski family, which was built in the beginning of 19th century. The front so the splendour of the times with its four columns supporting a triangular front with semi-circular windows.

On the Square, the monument commemorating the massacre in 1918 is not the original monument erected in 1929 as the German troops, stationed her during the Second World War, and destroyed it. The monument was reconstructed in 1959, by Józef Cichoń from Krasnystaw, a pupil of the famous Polish artist Xavery Dunikowski.

From the eastern corner of the Square, a little side street, Łukowska St., leads of towards the church of St Nicholas. Jan Nasutowicz built this Church in 1477. Being in a basilica style, it was modified many times. After the fire in 1752, the church was rebuilt and extended by the Duke August Czartoryski, the Estate holder at the time, using the famous architect Ch.P. Aigner.

The interior design, with its five altars, baptismal font and pulpit, are in rococo style from 18th century. Szymon Czechowicz painted the picture of St. Nicolas as a curtain covering for the picture of the Holy Mother of Everlasting Assistance. In the remaining altars, there are old pictures, which were rescued during the 1752 fire. On the grounds, you will find a Baroque belfry and a cemetery wall built in 1747.

Presbytery house at 6 Łukowska St., was also rebuilt after the fire. In front of the presbytery house grows old of the oldest oak trees in the area.

Many famous Polish people, who were the priests, worked in St. Nicholas's parish. These were the following: in 1636 Jan Brożek – who was later a professor and rector in the Academy of Kraków; in 1740, Andrzej Załuski – who established the first public library in Poland, in 1802 Adam Kukiel – a scientist, who is buried in the church and an inscription devoted to him is on the outside wall of the church; in 1800 Grzegorz Piramowicz – the secretary of National Education Commission; in 1976 – Adolf Pleszczyński – meritorious explorer of the region.

At the curate's house, a building which was the former parish school and chapel, was built during the period of 1825 – 55 and designed by F.M. Lanci. It was funded by August Potocki. This L-shape building has a front gallery supported on four wooden columns.

Returning back towards the Square, you can turn right down the main street, Lubelska St., which this will lead you across the river Krzna, you will enter the new town. Farmers and craftsman settled this area in the 16th century.

If we carry on walking, we will pass the Gen. Władysław Sikorski High School, on the left-hand side, and behind that the baroque style St. Peter and Paul's Church. Duke August Czartoryski built the church in 1782-1784. The church has a single nave and a 3-sided closed presbytery. The picture of St. Peter and Paul was painted by J.P. Kuźmiński as a curtain covering for the painting of the Holy Mother with Child. The belfry originates from the same period as the church.

Further on, on the same side, you can see the Estate holders palace and park, which its last owners was the Potocki family in 1944. On the lane leading to the Palace, you can see the folk sculpture of St. Florian.

The present building was rebuilt in the 20th century by architect Dygat, close to the locations of two former buildings, which were destroyed in 1830 and during "the Międzyrzec massacre" on November 1918. The palace is surrounded by a park, which has elm, chestnut and other trees aged between 60 to 200 years. The park has been designed in an English style by Lanci and Mańkowski, but was devastated during the war.

Then we return back toward the Square again, but passing the Square we reach Warszawska Street and we turn right. On the left-hand side, you will see the towns Hospital, which was rebuilt in 1929.

This area was the main Jewish estate, known as Szmulowizna, there you will still find factories, which were earlier owned by the Jews, for example the bristle processing plant, tanning industry and furriery. During the war this area was converted into a ghetto and then completely destroyed by the Germans. The Bristle and Brush Products Company maintains the tradition in this industry, which made Międzyrzec, before the war, known as the bristle processing capital in Poland.

If we carry on, on the left-hand side, you will see the catholic cemetery, established in 1807 by the priest Kukiel. In the cemetery, the 1839, octagonal St. Roch's chapel was built in place of the earlier chapel.

On the other side of the road from the catholic cemetery, you will find the Jewish cemetery, which was established in 1810. For this type of cemetery in Poland, it is rare to see remaining Jewish monuments and tombstones. Some of the most interesting pieces are the macewas incorporated in the walls. It was due to the Jews, who lived in Międzyrzec and survived the Holocaust that reconstructed some of monuments and erected a symbolic monument on the collective grave. There are inscriptions in Hebrew and English on the gate entrance of the cemetery commemorating the Jewish victims.

Objects out of sightseeing route

The Old horse post building. Three buildings grouped around rectangular yard. In 1824, the post station in Międzyrzec became a junction station. Tsar Alexander II, whilst travelling to Warsaw, in 1856, stopped here.

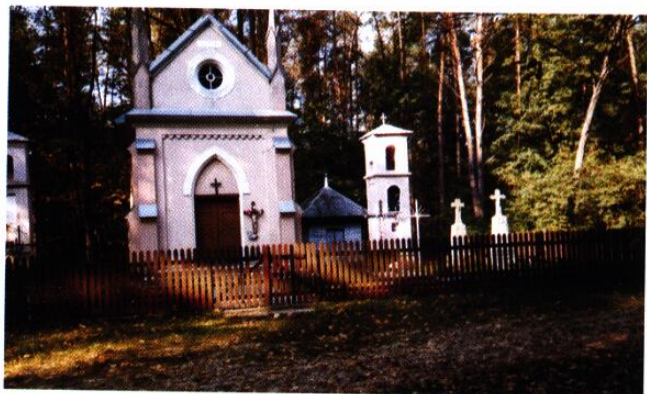
Other interesting buildings:

Henryk Marconi designed – **The Dairy Co-operative Building**, on Warszawska St., in the first half of 19th century; it was then later many times reconstructed.

The Railway station building was erected in 1867, during the same time when rail was introduced to the town.

The Primary School Building (actually Secondary School) built in 1925 partially reconstructed in seventies.

The Border Stone (between Poland and Lithuania) on Partyzantów Street – the stone has a coned roof and an iron cross on the top.



Sanktuarium św. Antoniego - Turów
The sanctuary of St. Anthony's - Turów



Macewy w murze cmentarza żydowskiego - Międzyrzec Podlaski
The macevas in the wall of Jewish cemetery in Międzyrzec Podlaski



Pomnik przydrożny - Manie
The monument in Manie