

# 7 WAŁBRZYCH

## A BIG TOUR OF THE CZECH-POLISH FRONTIER



The city of Wałbrzych, with a population of over 100,000 people, is situated about 70 km from Wrocław, the capital of Lower Silesian Voivodeship. It is thus a much shorter distance for Wałbrzych's residents to go to the Czech Republic. The country's border is just ten kilometres away, with fewer than fifty kilometres to Trutnov. Located in a shallow valley surrounded by mountains, the city is the ideal destination for nature and sports lovers. There are plenty of hiking trails and cycle routes for both road and mountain bikes in the area. The city became a fully-fledged industrial centre in the early 19th century, thanks to the flourishing mining and weaving industries. The industrial importance of the city was further underpinned in the early 20th century when new glassworks and ceramics factories opened, many of which are still in business today.

**Did you know that...?** A mausoleum commemorating 23 killed members of the Silesian National Socialist Movement was built in the city by the Nazis. The eternal flame of Walhalla was perpetually burning in the middle of the courtyard, and the mausoleum was allegedly the site of a Nazi dark cult. Dozens of secret underground passages were uncovered there, and it is rumoured that the building was connected with the Riese underground factory compound. All that's left of the mausoleum today are ruins.

Legend has it that fleeing Nazis hid a train brimming with stolen gold and other precious objects somewhere near Wałbrzych.

114 930

Wrocław – 77 km

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## MUST-SEE PLACES

The places in the square deserving attention include not only its three oldest houses (The House Under an Anchor, The House with Three Roses and The House under Atlantis), but also a number of wine bars, where even the famous German author Johann Wolfgang Goethe enjoyed a drink or two in the late 18th century. **Thorez, the oldest urban winding tower**, is also worth visiting. It has housed a branch of the **Museum of Industry and Technology** since 1999. The museum covers the historical development of coal mining in the city and its environs. The crown jewel of the city is without a doubt the mystical **Książ Chateau**, which was earmarked to be Hitler's residence (→ p. 40). In the early 20th century, a palm-house was built near the chateau. You can find here around 250 species of plants from various climate zones from practically around the entire globe.



### Stara Kopalnia – The Science and Art Centre in Wałbrzych (Centrum Nauki i Sztuki w Wałbrzychu)

The Science and Art Centre in Stara Kopalnia is the biggest attraction related to industrial tourism in Poland. It is located on the site of a former coal mine called Julia. The revitalization of Wałbrzych's largest mine (completed in 2014), which had employed several thousand miners in its heyday, allowed for the creation of an extraordinary site. This 4.5-hectare area is filled with historic industrial structures, fitted with authentic equipment, and includes a secured machinery fleet site, which is open to visitors. Thanks to tour guides (i.e. miners who used to work in the Julia coal mine), who are now working for the Stara Kopalnia Centre, every visitor can both explore a large section of the mine's infrastructure and learn about certain aspects of the dangerous and demanding work of a miner.

[starakopalnia.pl](http://starakopalnia.pl)

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### NEARBY TRIPS

If you decide to head north from Wałbrzych and go on further towards Poland's inland regions, stop at **Świdnica 1** and **Jawor 2**, where you can visit **unique wooden churches, which have been put on the UNESCO list** (→ p. 48). **Technology enthusiasts can spend long hours in the Museum of Industry and Railways in Jaworzyna.**



Even though Jawor and Świdnica are 30 km apart, they have one unique architectural phenomenon in common – the Churches of Peace. Both of them were put on the UNESCO list in 2001. Both churches were built in the second half of the 17th century after peace had been established at the end of the Thirty Years' War. Ferdinand III of Austria granted the people of Silesia the right to build churches provided that they were made of wood and located within firing range of cannon balls fired from the city walls. Wooden churches, which look modest from the outside but are very ornate on the inside, were therefore built. The church in Jawor can hold 6,000 people, while the one in Świdnica 7,500 people.



### Museum of Industry and Railways in Silesia, Jaworzyna Śląska (Muzeum Przemysłu i Kolejnictwa na Śląsku w Jaworzynie Śląskiej) – 26 km from Wałbrzych

The historic railway park contains objects from 1890 to the 1970s. The collection includes 40 steam engines (made in Poland, Germany, England and the USA), electric and diesel engines, 50 rail carriages and other vehicles dispersed on tracks whose length total 2 km. In the museum, visitors can try out the 'Steam Train Route' – you can ride a Tkt48-18 steam engine or the Czechoslovak motor engine called 'Motorák' dating from 1956. Important railway structures are pointed out during the rides, such as a water crane, oil and sand repository buildings, an assembly channel, a trap door, etc. The museum also includes a collection of antique Harley-Davidson motorcycles – the largest in Poland (the 1924–1984 models have been restored and all run). The Museum of Automotive Toys can also be found there.

[muzeumtechniki.pl](http://muzeumtechniki.pl)

### Myśluborski Gorge (Wąwóz Myśluborski w Parku Krajobrazowym Chełmy) – 54 km from Wałbrzych

The Chełmy Protected Landscape Area Wąwóz Myśluborski (Myśluborski Gorge) is the only place in Poland where a specific rare variety of fern grows. There is a 4.5-km-long educational trail and a 9 km long cycle path in the Protected Landscape Area.



If you head west from Wałbrzych, you'll find **a Cistercian monastery compound in Krzeszów** (→ p. 47) and **an underground compound in Walim and Gluszyca** (→ p. 61), where you can solve yet another mystery from the Second World War. Visitors are drawn to the south and south-east of the city, particularly by the underground network of tunnels built by the Nazis.



In **Wojślawice**, located east of Wałbrzych, you can explore one of the most important dendrological gardens in Poland – the local **arboretum**.

### Wojślawice Arboretum – 56 km from Wałbrzych

The arboretum stretches over an area of 65 hectares and is located at 250–275 metres above sea level. About 2,500 species of woody plants and 3,500 species of other plants are found here. There is a large collection of rhododendrons, lilies and box-trees in the garden. Wojślawice Arboretum has a long-lasting tradition, as a romantic park has stood on this site since 1821. The park was transformed into a rhododendron garden 60 years later. The garden was nationalized after 1946 and was run as a state-owned farm for some time; then it was redesigned into its current state.



**📍📖** The Local Cuisine Trail – The Tastes of Lower Silesia (Szlak kulinarny – Smaki Dolnego Śląska)

## REGULAR EVENTS

### APRIL–SEPTEMBER

The Flower Festival at Książ Chateau (Festiwal Kwiatów na Zamku Książ)  
MTB Sudeten Zone Cup, Wałbrzych

### MAY–SEPTEMBER

Concerts of Peace, Jawor

### MAY

The Medieval Fair at Grodno Chateau

### JUNE

The Lower Silesia Soup Festival (Dolnośląski Festiwal Zupy w Jedlinie-Zdrój)

### JULY

Castle Party at Bolków Castle

