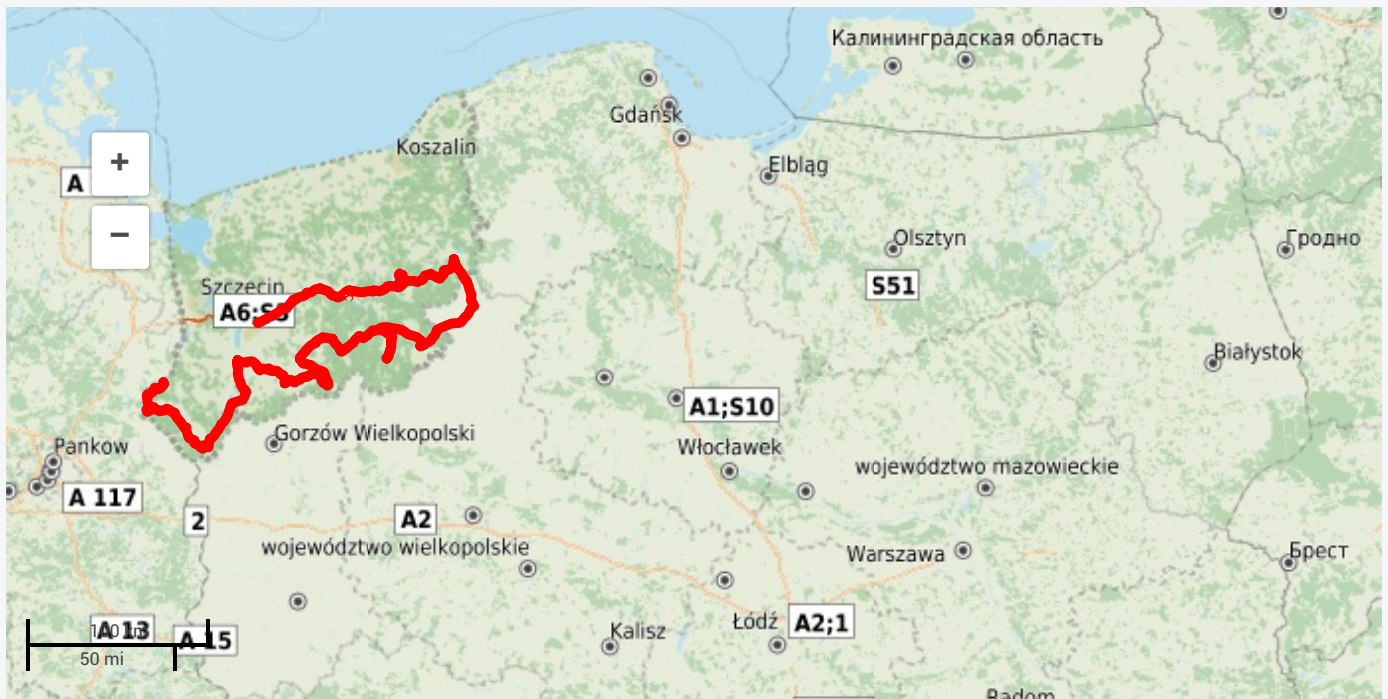


The “Zachodniopomorskie Pojezierza” [the Lakelands of West Pomerania] Trail

Geolocation



The trail leads through the central and eastern parts of the West Pomerania Province. It starts in Stargard Szczeciński and its last stage is located in the village of Zatoń Dolna. The course of the trail: Stargard Szczeciński - Mielenko Drawskie - Drawsko Pomorskie - Siemczyno - Spyczyzna Góra - Szczecinek - Wałcz - Mirosławiec - Tuczno - Drawno - Recz - Choszczno - Bierzwnik - Pełczyce - Przelewice - Pyrzyce - Myślibórz - Chwarszczany - Mieszkowice - Cedynia - Zatoń Dolna.

The trail starts in Stargard Szczeciński, where it is worth seeing the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of the World collegiate church, one of the most valuable historic buildings of West Pomerania. This Gothic church can be seen from all the roads leading to the town. Another interesting historic building is Brama Młyńska [the Mill Gate], built in the early 15th century. It is 28 metres high. Closing the watercourse to the harbour in Szczecinek, the gate had defensive functions, and during time of peace it served as a place where barges were halted and fees collected. It is regarded one of the most unique

DETAILED INFORMATION

THE LENGTH OF THE ROUTE

539 km

THE DIFFICULTY OF THE ROUTE

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buildings of this type in Europe.

When leaving Stargard Szczeciński, one needs to head for Drawsko Pomorskie. During the trip, one is going to reach a fork in the road, where a 16th-century penitential cross is situated. It is 2.5 m tall (about 1 m is sunk into the ground); the span of its arms is 1.45 m. It is the largest penitential cross in Poland and one of the largest in Europe. It was made of a limestone slab. The inscription carved into the cross informs us that Hans Billeke killed Lorenz Mader and begs God's pardon.

In order to reach Mielenko Drawskie, one has to cover 65 km. In the town, there is one of the oldest churches in the commune of Drawsko Pomorskie. Dating back to the second half of the 17th century, a half-timbered, Roman Catholic branch church belongs to the parish of St Paul in Drawsko Pomorskie.

The next point that is worth visiting is the St Paul the Apostle church from 1922 in Drawsko Pomorskie located 6 km away.

Going to Spyczna Góra, it is worth visiting the palace in Siemaczyno, located within a charming park. Leaving Siemaczyno and heading for Spyczna Góra, one needs to go along national road no 20, and then regional road no 171. In Spyczna Góra, there is a high elevation with a beauty spot. The panorama encompasses the central part of the Drawsko Scenic Park, and the visibility range amounts to more than 15 km when the weather is fine. Spyczna Góra is situated 17 km from Siemaczyno, and it is the 121th km of the trail.

25 km from the beauty spot in Spyczna Góra, there is the town of Szczecinek with an incredibly rich offer of water attractions (including the "Bayern" water tram and water ski lift). Another attraction of the town is the mediaeval Castle of Pomeranian Dukes, where currently a conference centre is located. Tourists can have a dinner in the castle restaurant or stay for the night in one of many chambers.

The next stage of the trip is Wałcz, 70 km away from Szczecinek. In Wałcz, among beech forests, on the beautiful Lake Raduń, there is the Central Sports Centre – Olympic Training Centre. The complex has

been prepared for practising both amateur and professional sports. The centre is equipped with a full-size football playing field with stands, air-conditioned conference rooms, sports halls, an indoor 25-metre-long swimming pool, tennis courts, playing fields for volleyball, a boxing hall, as well as boats, canoes, and pedal boats, gym, wellness and rehabilitation back-up facilities.

After getting familiarized with sports attractions of Wałcz, it is time we went to the located 29 km away town of Mirosławiec. There is one of the most interesting museums of the Wałcz Lakeland – the Museum of the Pomeranian Wall. The exhibition displayed in the museum shows how the inhabitants fought for Polishness. The presented history touches upon the issues during times of the House of Piasts, Polish-Swedish wars, Napoleonic era, up to the period after partitions of Poland.

After exploring the history of the Wałcz Lakeland in Mirosławiec, it is worth driving 21 km along regional road no 177 to Tuczno, to the outer edges of the Drawa National Park. It is there where, on the ruins of pre-Slavonic settlement, a beautiful, 13-th century Tuczno Castle is located. It is surrounded by a forest with 400-year-old oaks, wisents, and white-tailed sea eagles.

Another 50 km away, the town of Drawno is located. In 1990, the Drawa National Park was established there. The Park protects river, forest, and lake ecosystems. It is worth taking advantage of water sports attractions – a canoeing trip on the Drawa River. The route is named after Cardinal Karol Wojtyła. It is known of its diversity – at the beginning of the trip, the river is calm and easy for canoeists, while later it turns swift and rushing.

After a tiring canoeing trip, we need a moment of relaxation. It is worth dropping by the town of Recz located just 20 km away, where we may visit the Gothic Christ the King church.

After leaving Recz, going along regional road no 151 for next 14 km, we are going to reach Choszczno. There is the historic Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish church, erected in the 14th-15th century. Since 1993, the sanctuary of St Mary of Perpetual Help is located by the church.

After another 26 km, there is a next town – Bierzwnik with a Cistercian monastery, which is a part of the Cistercian Trail. Currently, there are only two of three wings of a church and a presbytery from the 14th-15th century. Also, the ruins of a granary, belonging to a complex of outbuildings from about 1400, have survived.

Another church on the route is the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary church in Pełczyce, 34 km from Bierzwnik. 22 km further, in Przelewice, there is a dendrological garden established prior to the Second World War. It includes about 1200 species of trees, bushes, and herbaceous plants. Nearby the garden, there is a palace fitted with laboratories, but also with conference rooms and rooms for accommodation.

Heading for Myślibórz, it is worth staying for a while in Pyrzyce. We can see defensive walls from the 13th century and try water from a well built in the place of a holy spring, from which St Otto draw water to baptize local inhabitants.

After the visit in Pyrzyce and going another 31 km, we reach Myślibórz. It is already 440th kilometre of the route. The noteworthy buildings in the town are a Gothic parish church and the Dominican monastery from the 13th century. What has survived from the church and monastery buildings is just the church and the western wing of the monastery.

National road no 23, and then regional road no 127 will lead us to Chwarszczany, a special place, particularly for history buffs. In the town, there is a chapel of the Templar knights from the 13th century. Originally Romanesque, it was pulled down and rebuilt on the same foundations in the Gothic style.

17 km from Chwarszczany there is another interesting town - Mieszkowice, where the early Gothic Transfiguration of Our Lord church, built in the 14th century, is located. There are also defensive walls built at the turn of the 13th and the 14th centuries in the town.

In Cedynia, the next to the last point of the trip, the Czcibor's Mountain can be seen – a place commemorating the victory of Duke Mieszko I over

margrave Hodo. The battle took place on June 24th, 972. At the distance of 4 km from Cedynia, on a picturesque moraine hill, there is a 15-metre-tall monument commemorating the battle and depicting an eagle soaring up to the sky. It is worth climbing 270 stone steps in order to reach the monument and be able to admire the panorama of Germany and the valley of the Oder River from the top.

The last stage of this 539-kilometre-long route is the Dolina Miłości [the Valley of Love] Scenic Park in Zatoń Dolna. The charm of the park is a work of nature and of the passion and hard work of locals. It is an incredible place, perfect for a romantic stroll, but also for a family outing out of town.

COMMENTS

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