

Following history



Klimatyczny
Kołobrzeg



Salty beginnings – not only Wieliczka

Food without salt is like a wedding reception without frolics. As early as in the 7th century, the inhabitants of a small settlement on Salt Island, without going underground and making arrangements with Skarbek, made salt from brine springs existing in Kotobrzeg. Small salmon-pink salty crystals, as expensive as gold, were unparalleled, nearby and further away.

First occurrence and fall

The medieval Europe first heard of Kotobrzeg in the year 1000, thanks to Emperor Otto III and famous Polish Duke Bolesław Chrobry. The wise Piast and friendly German met at the congress in Gniezno and decided to establish a diocese in Kotobrzeg. At the same time, twin dioceses were also established in Kraków and Wrocław. Even though the diocese on the Baltic collapsed after only a few years, tourists from Wrocław and Kraków feel so well in Kotobrzeg, and inhabitants of Kotobrzeg are not overawed by the cities in the south. Christianity did not win the hearts and souls of the inhabitants of Kotobrzeg and its surroundings. The pagan salt satisfied the palates, religion was not very



popular. Pomerania regained independence from Poland, and the gard on the Parsęta River disappeared from the pages of history. The people grew wealthy, ate fresh sea fish and animals from the forests. They decorated their clothes with amber and were prosperous. Unable to bear such a situation, Bolesław Krzywousty launched an armed expedition to subordinate the unruly and rich Pomerania. And he was successful – Piast's armed warriors captured the gard of Kotobrzeg. Bolesław was paid homage, and also riches, by the duke.

End of a gard – beginning of a town

The 13th century marks the end of the system of medieval towns. West Pomerania becomes crushed and crowded. Every year, there are more and more German settlers and colonists from Western Europe, who transplanted new forms of government. It became evident that the gard system would no longer manage and in 1255 the owner of Kotobrzeg lands and bishop of Kammin produced a document founding the gard as a new town under Lübeck law. A new town emerged within the area of the centre of today's Kotobrzeg.

War times

Peaceful and affluent life of the inhabitants did not last long. In the 16th century the town almost disappears in the storms of the Thirty Years' War. After a hundred years war is again hungry for Kołobrzeg, this time the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Russians reach out for the town three times, besieging the red walls. Two generations later, in 1807, Napoleon's army fights over the fortress on the Parsęta. Ruins, death, and destruction again.



No longer a fortress

The dust falls, brine springs keep welling up. The first part of the 19th century is the time of rebuilding the town after a damaging war. Kołobrzeg ceases to be a fortress, a target for war operations. At last, the sea hums soothingly, the wind is not ominous, white beaches tempt with loose sand, and brine springs are appreciated for their health values. Kołobrzeg becomes a health resort. Treatment centres and health resorts spring up. Former military facilities carry out civil purposes. More and more inhabitants, who decided to put down roots, arrive in the town, and so do the first patients. Outbreak of World War I disturbed the functioning of the resort. After World War I the town recovers again and for twenty years is a pearl in the crown of health resorts. To the Kołobrzeg part of the Baltic come people from Germany, Poland, and France. It is the done thing to be in Kołobrzeg. The European 'monde' and other parts of society spend the summer in the health resort.



Fortress again

World War II reaches Kołobrzeg again. On 1st September 1939 resorts are ready to accept wounded soldiers. In the night of 3 to 4 March the fortress commander, Colonel Fullriede declared a state of siege. A ten-day battle begins, with Polish and Russian troops attacking the town. On 18 March the Germans surrender, and the town gets married to Poland.



Two seas

It is estimated that Kołobrzeg was destroyed in over 90 percent. The pioneers, who came to Kołobrzeg, do not know which one is bigger, the humming sea or the sea of bricks. A long rebuilding process of the town begins. There are created the foundations for the Polish administration, first Polish names of the streets and final crackdown on the German history of the town. The Polish Kołobrzeg again becomes a health resort, a place for treatment and putting down roots. The survived monuments are rebuilt, old survived trees are taken care of, and the shape of parks and greens is restored. Soon, Kołobrzeg again becomes a town of roses and a soldier's song.

Old times and New Old Town

In the 1980's construction of the so-called New Old Town began, which is now the centre of Kołobrzeg. It perfectly matches the town hall and the cathedral. In Kołobrzeg, here and there, the medieval atmosphere is felt, and the good ghosts of the past sneak. In the modern buildings the inhabitants and visitors live, work, rest, and have a good time. Like in the old days, the Baltic hums, like in the old days brine springs well up, and let's keep it that way.



The most important monuments

Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Monumental, but not overpowering, five-nave church, erected at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. The architecture of the basilica is an example of Pomeranian Gothic. The building is simple and without ornaments. In the period from the 16th century to March 1945 the basilica was a protestant church. From the 17th century to the 20th century it was repeatedly destroyed during military operations. There are some mementoes from the wars: cemented cannon balls taken from Kotobrzeg battlefields of the Thirty Years War, Seven Years War, and Napoleonic siege. They were to warn the inhabitants of future conflicts. But they didn't. The basilica was severely damaged during World War II. Its present shape is the result of decades of efforts and renovations made by subsequent parish priests.





It is really an exceptional church building. It is the only church with five naves. The specific nature is outlined by four clear bent pillars. No, it's not an optical illusion or a tourist trick; their deviation from the perpendicular is about 60 centimetres. Fortunately, the pillars no longer tilt. Without fear that the pillars might collapse, you can start sightseeing and watching the exhibits. The most precious monuments are: a bronze baptismal font from 1355, the oldest Gothic stalls in Poland, late Gothic triptychs and an enormous chandelier from 1523, called the Schlieffens' Crown. On the walls you can also admire the remains of an old polychromes.

On sunny days you can enjoy fabulously colourful stained glasses, which are only beginning to make their name as monuments.





Town hall

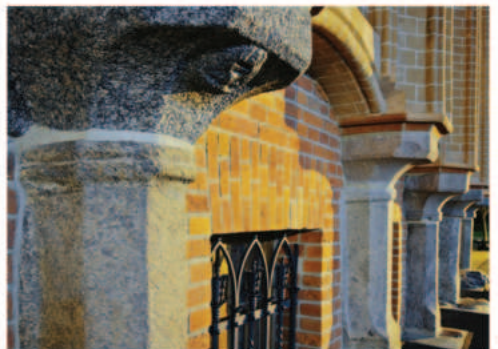
It has always been the most important secular building in the town. The present shape of the building, however impressive and interesting, has nothing in common with the first town hall from 1380. The showpiece of Kołobrzeg of that time was a proof of the town's wealth, economic and cultural success. Burghers are in the lead, it was declared by bricks, gates, and ornaments. Napoleon's armies, unresponsive to the beauty and prestige of the walls, burnt the burghers' pride to ashes. On what was left, a new town hall was built in the years 1829-1832. It was designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, an outstanding and solid architect. We do not know if little Karl used to play with wooden knights and building blocks, but his imagination was fabulous. The building resembles a medieval castle. Ornamented with turrets and battlements.





Nowadays, it houses Municipal Tourist Information, Modern Art. Gallery, the Town Council Office, Registry Office, and Europe Direct offices. In the basement there is Patria Colbergiensis Museum.

On the north-east side (to put it differently - at the back) there are preserved some architectural details of the medieval town hall. Among the pillars, on which the building's avant-corps rests, there is set a 16th c. pillory known as Adebear's Column. It can be recognized by a capital with a carved mask - a legend links it to the Kotobrzeg alderman, Jakub Adebear. Adebear's task is to grant any wishes. Referring to finance, love, family, school, etc. You just need to caress the stone face with a smile and a pure heart. The more ardent (and supple) ones kiss the face. Kotobrzeg chronicles are silent on the matter if a kiss strengthens Adebear's efficiency.



Merchant tenement house from the 15th century

What Kołobrzeg looked like in the times of Hanseatic prosperity you can imagine when looking at this building. It can be easily overlooked in the row of young sisters from the 20th century. This late Gothic merchant tenement house belonged to the Schlieffen family. The merchant and his family lived and worked in this house. Downstairs was a big hall and a business room. Upstairs, there were the bedrooms. The tenement house also has a large basement, where the family stored food products and, most presumably, beverages. Thanks to numerous restoration works the tenement house survived in an almost unchanged shape until World War II. During the war it was destroyed, but in the years 1957–1963 it was faithfully reconstructed. At present, it houses a branch of Museum of Polish Arms, in which temporary and permanent exhibitions are organized.



Powder Tower

To be exact, it is Fuse Tower, but trained guides and scrupulous history lovers know it. This is the only fully survived defensive structure in town from the whole defence system from the 15th century (the proper Powder Tower was destroyed in gunpowder explosion which occurred when a lightning set fire to it during a spring storm. Thanks to it we know what the weather was like on 3rd May 1652). The tower has four storeys. The elevation facing the park features arrow slits. And even though since 1945 its interior has been converted several times, you can imagine that service in the tower was not way easy. Woe betide the tall ones and the obese ones. Earlier, that is after World War II, it hosted a tourist accommodation (!) and a café. Now, it has a private owner.

Church of St. John the Baptist in Budzistowo

Small, subtle and mighty at the same time. Mentioned in sources as early as in the year 1222. The oldest brick building of sacred architecture in the Middle Pomerania. The brick little church has not always been the apple of worshippers' eye. In the reformation period it was destroyed and renovated only in 1670. During Kołobrzeg siege the church was devastated by Russian troops. Then, it was destroyed by French troops, who plundered the bell tower and sold both bells. It was rebuilt again in 1824. Services are still held in the church.



Braunschweig Palace

One of the most colourful and for some time the only pink building in the town. Built in the 17th century, probably in 1808, it is in Empire style. Although it is a palace, it was built by a merchant as a dowry for his daughter Alma. So why not Alma's palace? Simply because Miss Plüddemann got married to Heinrich Braunschweig, a merchant and a ship owner, who in one go gave his wife a name and a palace (the name was polonised). It is a real three-storey palace, with a ball room with a plafond, a stylish balcony and decorations. Already before the World War II the palace was to be turned into a museum. Renovation had even begun, but the war interfered with the plans of museum professionals, builders, and the world. It was not so rosy after the war, the building was taken over by the Office of Public Security, later the Court and prosecutor's Office. It was only in the 70's of the 20th century that a complete renovation was made and since 1977 it has been the seat of Museum of Polish Arms. Here, you can also learn, for example, a strickle was used for, check the height of 16-century knights and assess the beauty of a girl named Flora. One of the few public places which smells of floor paste and where you can walk in your shoes.





Knight Academy – the wheel of history

It was one of the first military schools in Europe. From 1665 to 1701 the noble youth had fence practice and learnt horseback riding. An idea for creating a Knight Academy had emerged two years earlier, when the town was a fortress. The building, just like the academy, faced changing fortunes. However, in the background there always were young people, military character, and discipline. The last students took their cadet's backpacks in 1716 when Friedrich Wilhelm I moved the school to Berlin. Following the Knight Academy and Cadet School the hall building was changed into an arsenal. The roof and the upper storey did not withstand the Soviet missiles in March 1945. However, the solid outer walls survived. The survived arsenal, now called Knight Room, in the 1960's was taken over by Kleks, i.e. Socialist Youth Club. Young people cleared and tidied the site of rubble, created a summer cinema and a concert hall. It was only in the 1970's that the Knight Room was renovated, covered with a roof and after adaptation for sports purposes it was called Knight Hall. Knight Room was used for catering. Both facilities are used for functions intended then. Knight Room, now Music Club, hosts concerts, cultural events, exhibitions of work by young artists. Knight Hall hosts basketball, volleyball, and handball matches. School competitions and various tournaments.

Remains of Kołobrzeg fortress fortifications

Estuary Fort – a lighthouse at present

Height - 26 metres, weight? (you should not ask about it), a range of its light glare 26 nautical miles. This is Her Brightness the Lighthouse. Built in 1945 at the sight - of Estuary Fort, which in the years 1770-1774 defended the port entrance. It is available to visit throughout the year. The vault houses a unique museum of minerals. When there is fog or a snowstorm, when visibility is reduced and satellites fail to co-operate, a buzzer is the only rescue. The lighthouse buzzer calls in Morse code. Seamen understand the broadcast sound 'K' for Kołobrzeg without any translator. In 1945 the lighthouse was blown up by German sappers because it was an excellent landmark for Polish artillerymen during the battle of Kołobrzeg in March 1945. Shortly after the war the construction of a new lighthouse began. To erect it, there were used the foundations of huge fortress constructions (the former lighthouse was situated in front of the fort; the present one is situated on its central platform). In 1979-1981 a major renovation of the lighthouse was carried out, among others they replaced the lantern, which is its highest part and its heart. It is the lantern that the light comes from. Lighthouse keepers' chronicles mention that when ascending the lighthouse observation deck, it is worth counting the steps. Most often, this task goes to the youngest conquerors of the giant.





Morast Redoubt in Yacht Port

Liked by fortifications lovers; an obligatory part of tours, militarists, and hunters of old buildings. Morast Redoubt, built on Salt Island, together with Estuary Fort, created a key element of the defence of the port and estuary of the Parsęta River. Redoubt was built in the 70's of the 18th century. It was built following the French art of fortification. It has a pentagonal shape; it consists of an earthwork, a brick wall from the side of the town, with adjacent 4 buildings (a large one and three small ones) and part of a ditch filled with the water from the Parsęta. All of it was made of brick, on a stone foundation, and covered with earth. In the wall there are numerous firing ports to fire with small weapons and two ports to fire guns. A wooden gate, just like a small gate (now a secret shortcut to the toilet), were strengthened with iron bars. The main gate was specially strengthened, and you could enter the redoubt over a drawbridge. Today there is no bridge, there are only traces left of its fastening. The survived gate, after lying in a shed for years, was renovated and a rejuvenating therapy. Two hundred-year-old beauty looks great, it does not resemble the touched stars from magazine covers, yet it impresses with its beauty. Particularly that most of its part are original. Today, Morast Redoubt houses a Yacht Port tavern.







Salt Redoubt

Built in the years 1832–1836, it was part of the defense system of the port. It resembles a telescope with a folded filling tube. Typical of a redoubt: it has its moat, earthworks, and two vaulted buildings. In the walls there are archery silts. Some people notice ornamented cornice, others – the shape of the earthworks. It is an interesting and a mysterious place. Surprisingly, the Redoubt has been preserved in a very good condition till today. Its hosts and guardians are scouts, sometimes it is besieged by pirates, but that's another story.



Wolf Fort and amphitheatre

On the sight of today's amphitheatre there used to be Wolf Fort. It was a part of defensive fortification of the port from the east. Built in 1806, after numerous problems and war-and-battle-and-political tribulations it was changed into an amphitheatre in 1925. To build it, military elements of the fort were used (the front wall). Till today, from the side of the moat in Fredro Park, there were preserved the casemates of this fort with a visible entrance. The amphitheatre was very popular between the wars. Also, after the war the amphitheatre was an important and popular place of music meetings. This great, legendary facility, after alteration and thorough renovation in 2002 it revived.



Stone Rampart

At first sight it is nothing special, but also here history will not let you forget it. Red bricks on the seashore is no coincidence; they are parts of fortifications of Kołobrzeg fortress, built in the years 1832–1836. The rampart was adjacent to Wolf Fort, creating a complex of eastern fortifications of Kołobrzeg. But it suffered the same fate as Wolf Fort and lost its defensive character. In 1887 it was adapted to recreational purposes, but also for catering. In the pre-war resort it was one of the most popular places with tourists. Not much is left from its former glory, although catering, music, and fun do quite well in this place.



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