

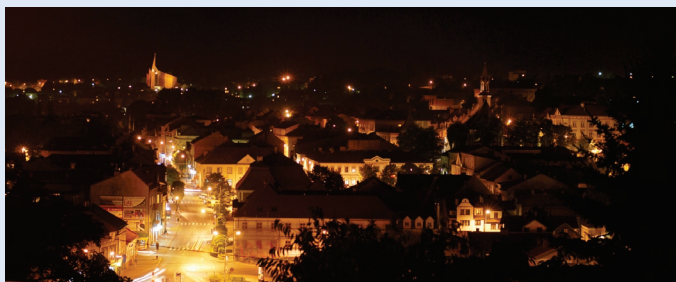


**Bochnia** is one of the oldest towns of Little Poland (foundation charter from 1253), situated on the Raba River, between the Sandomierz Basin and the Karpaty Foothills, approx. 40 km from Cracow. This location determines the town's excellent picturesqueness.

The area is undulating in its southern part, whereas the north is flat. Hills with compact forest complexes, cutting into the very town together with the close neighbourhood of the Niepołomice Forest provide Bochnia with unique charm. The ecologically clean region, the Spa of Salt Mine operating on the basis of the oldest European salt mine, a well developed hotel base, an indoor swimming pool, interesting surroundings (Nowy Wiśnicz, Lipnica Murowana, Chełm) as well as the close neighbourhood of the Beskidy Mountains (Laskowa-Kamionna, Krynica, Muszyna are popular tourist and leisure regions) account for Bochnia's significant attractiveness.



Bochnia enchants with abundance of greenery and the town centre with a marketplace which has been preserved unchanged since the Middle Ages. Casimir the Great watches the town from a monument erected in the middle of the Market Square, whereas 800-year-old history emerges from every corner of the town derived from salt. 16<sup>th</sup> century's streets lead to the most interesting places in Bochnia, such as majestic, attracting numerous pilgrims St. Nicholas Basilica with the miraculous painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Bochnia, or a museum. Situated at the Market Square, a former Dominican monastery presently the museum should be a highlight of any art lover's tour for its rich collection of the Polish painting.



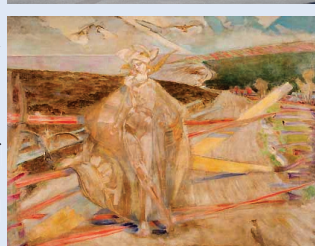
## IT IS WORTH VISITING

**The Salt Mine of Bochnia** – founded approx. in 1248. The rock-salt mine is one of the oldest continuously open (salt was mined here until 1990) industrial plants in Europe. As a consequence of mining operations, a labyrinth of salt corridors and chambers was created here. Visiting the salt land takes approx. 1.5–2 hours and covers, among others, Sutoris- the oldest shaft from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, treadmill chambers, Mysiur stable for horses that used to work in the mine plus picturesque St Kinga's chapel. Apart from a tourist and historical route, the mine also offers a more difficult tourist and geological excursion which leads through the oldest excavations of the mine. The air in the mine contains a big quantity of sodium chloride, which makes it almost ten times cleaner than air on the surface. Due to the specific microclimate of salt chambers, in 1995 a health-resort was established here in order



to treat upper respiratory tract diseases. It offers, among other things, therapeutic and rehabilitation stays, health holidays and overnight stays at 280 underground accommodation places. The huge 'Ważyn' sanatorium chamber, located at the depth of 250 m, is not only a dormitory – one can also dance here at the underground disco, make use of a mini-bar or... play football in a real football pitch. Owing to the President of the Republic of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski's decision the Bochnia Salt Mine became the Monument of History. At present there are attempts to enrol it in UNESCO list.

**The Museum of Prof. Stanisław Fischer in Bochnia** – is located in the historic monastery of the Dominicans (the oldest fragments date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century), presenting, among others, a collection of ancient sculpture and folk painting characterised by religious subject matter, a collection of the Polish painting (canvases by Olga Boznańska, Tadeusz Makowski, Jacek Malczewski, Leon Wyczółkowski) as well as drawings and engravings (among others by Jan Matejko, Stanisław Wyspiański and Józef Mehoffer) plus numerous mementoes connected with the person of Holy Father John Paul II.



## ACCOMMODATION

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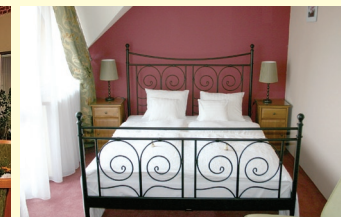
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