

The region of Kielce, the northern part of Little Poland, is situated between the rivers Vistula and Pilica. Because of the landform features, it can be divided into the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, which are the culmination of the Kielce-Sandomierz Upland, in the north, and the southern part – the Nida Basin.

Świętokrzyskie Mountains are a number of latitudinally stretching ranges. The most important are: Łysogóry – the central range with the highest hills: Łysica (612 m asl.) and Łysa Góra (595 m asl); Jeleniowskie – the highest hill is Szczytniak (552 m asl); Klonowskie – Bukowa Góra (483.6 m asl); Masłowskie – Klonówka (472.6 m asl); Tumlińskie – Góra Wykieńska (400.7 m asl), Oblęgorskie – Góra Sieniewska (448.8 m asl); and the ranges: Dobrzyszowskie, Orłowińskie, Cisowskie, Ociesęckie.

The central part of the Nida Basin is the wide valley of the Nida, delimited by the Solec Basin and Szaniec Plateau in the east, and by Jędrzejów Plateau and Miechów Upland in the west.

The main rivers in the region are the **Nida** (151 km), with its tributaries: Łośna, Bobrza and Mierzawa, and the **Kamienna** (138 km).

Paradise Cave is a typical travertine cave originated in calcium carbonate. Although small - it differs among polish caves thanks to rich and well-maintained travertine formations. It belongs the very few caves that are illuminated by an optical fibre and opened for tourists under guide's protection.

The length of the tourist route is **180 metres**. It starts from a pavilion in which a thematic exhibition devoted to the Karst has been staged. The visitors can see and admire some specimens found during the archeological excavations, including flint implements used by the Neandertal man inhabiting the cave 40 000 years ago and bones of prehistoric animals. In the museum there is a reconstruction of Neandertal family camp with three natural size wax figures.

On leaving the pavilion, the tourists enter an artificial underground passage which plays the role of a lock protecting the cave's microclimate. After 21 metres they come to a special **Entrance Cavern** linking three lines of corridors of the caves. In the upper part of the cavern, there was a narrow cleft through which the discoverers squeezed to the cave. The next one, **Cavern of Rubble**, is the largest chamber of the cave. Here the tourist can see huge boulders which fell off the roof and were later covered with dripstone. A beautiful travertine column called **Harp** deserves special attention of the visitors, the more so as, if illuminated, it lets the light through. In **Column Chamber** glamorous travertine columns rise up to meet stalactites suspended from the roof, numerous fossils corals cling to the walls as well as small lakes, sinter bowls and rice-fields are scattered here and there at the bottom of the cave. The great rarity is pisolites which are loose travertine formations in the shape of balls called "Cave Pearls". The bridge over one of the lakes takes the visitors to a **Chamber of Stalactites** where there are hundreds of stalactites at various formation stages. Their number reaches 200 per square metre. The last part of the cave the tourists visit is a **High Chamber** which extends to a height of 8 metres above pathway

Paradise Cave was first discovered in 1963/64. It is under protection as a natural reserve because of rich travertine formations, scientific and didactical virtues. It also a protected archaeological post. The cave opened for tourists in 1972.

- **Paradise Cave**

LENGTH 240 m.

DENIVELATION 9,5 m. (-1,5+8)

HEIGHT OF ENTRANCES 250, 256, 259 m. asl

SITE OF ENTRANCE Malik hill near Kielce

It is second most beautiful cave in Poland. Because of rich drippings and archeological discoveries of appearance of Neanderthal men cave is reserve. Raj was found in September 1964. In June 1972 150 m. cave route was opened for tourists.

Raj cave is a horizontal cave system with many nice speleothems. Despite its small size it is regarded one of the most beautifully decorated caves in Poland. There are said to be as many as 200 stalactites hanging from every square metre of the ceiling. Beneath rather common columns, flowstones, waterfalls and underground lakes, there are also **cave pearls**, spherical deposits limestone deposits which are rather rare.

Paleolithic remains were found in the cave. The remains of **Neanderthal man** are the reason why this cave is protected. They are more than 50,000 years old.

The tour uses an artificial entrance tunnel and another artificial tunnel between two ends of cave passages allows a round trip inside the cave. The cave has a small exhibition of speleothems, archaeological and paleontological finds.

(<http://www.showcaves.com/english/pl/showcaves/Raj.html>)

- **The Sanctuary of the Holy Cross Tree Relic and Museum of the Missionary Oblates of the Virgin Mary**

Łysiec mountain, nowadays referred to as Święty Krzyż mountain was especially liked by witches ages ago. The folk legend has it that during their Sabbaths witches practised witchcraft and organised hellish parties and dances. There are the Remains of a stone rampart surrounding the top of the mountain and dating back to around 9th century. Nowadays Święty Krzyż is famous in Poland and abroad for the Benedictine monastery and its Relics of the Święty Krzyż Tree. The monastery, now hosted by the Missionary Oblates, can boast of its 1000 years' history. Visitors and pilgrims can see a Classicist church dating back to the 18th century and the chapel of the Oleśnicki Family containing the shrine with pieces of the Holy Cross tree and a sepulchral crypt in its vaults. It is worth visiting the Museum of the Missionary Oblates of the Virgin Mary as well as seeing the exhibition of the Świętokrzyski National Park. Tired visitors may try the monastery cuisine and drop in an old pharmacy, now a cafe, not only to have a cup of coffee or tea, but also to buy traditional herbal medicines.

- **Royal Castle in Chęciny**

Chęciny is a town located relatively close to Kielce on the route Warszawa – Kraków. The town underwent development owing to its deposits of precious metals such as lead, silver or copper. The picturesque panorama dominated by a Gothic castle soaring over the town and erected around 1300 on a high mountain referred to as Zamkowa Mountain. There you can meet the ghost of the Queen Bona or watch one of a large number of knight tournaments held in the castle. The historic town also has a lot of other monuments of architecture. It is worth visiting, among others, an early Baroque cloister of the Benedictine Sisters, a church and monastery of the Franciscans founded by the king Casimir the Great in 1368, a parish church erected in the first half of the 14th century as well as a Renaissance-style former inn building referred to as Niemczówka. It is worth noting that Chęciny used to be a town inhabited by numerous people of Jewish origin, which was reflected in a late-Renaissance synagogue erected in the first half of the 17th century and a Jewish cemetery.

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,781,royal_castle_in_checiny.html)

- **The Complex of Palaces in Kurozwęki**

In the second half of the 14th century in Kurozwęki they erected a castle referred to in a document dating back to 1400 as "castrum Curoswank". At the turn of next centuries the castle was rebuilt several times and given representative character finally to be converted at the end of the 18th century from an originally dwelling building with a defensive character into a Baroque and Classicistic residence. Presently you cannot miss the castle edifice located in the complex of parks and palaces with its richly decorated five-axle facade and galleried courtyard. It is worth visiting the interior of the Palace in Kurozwęki with its dungeons and stay for a night in its stylish chambers, hothouse or annex. A unique attraction is a herd of over 80 American buffaloes in, which can be admired from the interior of "safari buffalo" carriage. Active leisure lovers may go horse-riding, cycling, play paint-ball or try a rope slide. There are also knight fights, artillery and ancient dancing show organised upon request.

"Popielówka" Boarding House ul. Zamkowa 3, Kurozwęki, 28-200 Staszów

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,784,the_complex_of_palaces_in_kurozweki.html)

- **"Krzyżtopór" Castle**

"Krzyżtopór" Castle erected by Wawrzyniec Senes in the years 1631–1644 in Ujazd had been the largest castle in Europe until the Versailles castle was built. Krzysztof Ossoliński, the voivode of Sandomierz and a founder of the "palazzo in fortezza" – a palace in the fortress – wanted to impress his contemporaries. Therefore he erected the monumental complex of palaces built in a pentagon bastion fortress modeled on a calendar. The castle had as many windows as there are days in a year, as many chambers as there are weeks, as many rooms as there are months and as many towers as there are seasons of the year. Horses in stables had marble troughs and looked at themselves in crystal mirrors. In one of the rooms an aquarium with exotic fish functioned as a ceiling. Ossoliński spent the amount of 3 million Polish zlotys on the castle with its cubic capacity of 70 000 m³ and covering the area of 1.3 hectares. Presently "Krzyżtopór" Castle ruins enchant with their beauty and magnitude and they once again start to live during numerous tournaments and knight fight shows held there. Krzyżtopór Castel in Ujazd, The commune of Iwaniska

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,783,krzyztopor_castle.html)

- **The Ethnographic Park of the Museum of Kielecka Village in Tokarnia**

The main exhibition of the Museum of Kielecka Village is the Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia, which is located on the E77 route leading from Kielce to Cracow. In the picturesquely located in the Czarna Nida river bend over 70-hectare area, the most

treasured vintage buildings from the turn of the 18th and the 19th centuries wooden architecture from the territory of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, the Krakowsko- Częstochowska Upland, Sandomierska Upland and Nidziańska Basin have been gathered. These are e.g. homesteads, small-town buildings, a manor house, farm buildings, country industry monuments and sacred buildings. The most interesting places to visit are: the manor house in Suchedniów dating from 1856, the manor granary in Złota built in 1719 and the baroque Church dating from 1761 dedicated to the Madonna of Consolation of Rogów on the Vistula. Interiors of the nineteenth-century cottages and craftsman's workshops, the chemist's, the small shop and the tailor's, the exhibition of a village school from the interwar period, the collection of sculptures on the exhibition called To preserve for posterity. Jan Bernasiewicz - the creator of the sculpture garden as well as temporary exhibitions, e.g. Wheat is being ground... Windmills and wind milling on the Land of Kielce... are displayed. The Museum organises numerous cyclic folk events, such as The Fireman Picnic (in May), Smelting of Lead, The Forest Days and Świętokrzyski Agrotouristic Fair (in June), The Harvest Festival (in August), The Sunday in the Open-air Museum (in September), The Christmas Fair (in December), etc. (http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,1137,the_ethnographic_park_of_the_museum_of_kielecka_village_in_tokarnia.html)

Kielce, the biggest town in the northern Little Poland, is the capital of the Świętokrzyskie Province. Its characteristic feature is the substantial difference of ground levels – from 260 to 400 m asl. Within the boundaries of Kielce, there is a greater variety of geological formations than in any other European city. There are five nature reserves in Kielce: Ślichowice, Kadzielnia, Wietrznia, Biesak (inanimate nature) and Karczówka (a landscape reserve). : <http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/tourism>

- **The Palace of Cracow Bishops (National Museum), Kielce, Poland**

Description: The Palace of Cracow Bishops, constructed on Bishop Jakub Zadzika's initiative in the years 1637 - 1641 is a brilliant and valuable example of Polish residences from the Waza epoch. Although there were certain redecorations made in 19th C., the palace maintained its original shape, elevation decorations and its original interior decor. Since 1971 it has been a branch of the National Museum. In its rooms on the ground floor it houses a gallery of Polish painting, presenting among others valuable paintings of our best painters from the period of the 17th to the 20th century: J. Malczewski, S. Wyspiński, J. Kossak, A. Gierymski, S. Witkiewicz. The gallery ranked sixth in the country. On the representative first floor you can admire valuable 17th and 18th-century paintings, furniture, tapestry and other arts, creating the atmosphere characteristic of a contemporary Magnate house. In the rooms there are unique, richly polychromed beam-framed floors, frescos, marble fireplaces and portals. The most beautiful are especially plafonds made at Thomas Dolabelli workshop presenting the fire of Moscow in 1612, the reception of the Swedish legates in 1635 and the trial of the Arians in 1638. In the palace you can also see a marvellous gallery of decorative art., the military objects exhibition, the Marshal Józef Piłsudski Sanctuary and temporary exhibitions. (<http://www.odyssey.com/travel-tips/15437.html>)

- **Cathedral of the Assumption of Virgin Mary**

In 1171 the Bishop Gedeon founded a collegiate church under the invocation of the Assumption located on Wzgórze Zamkowe. It was a Romanesque-style temple. It was rebuilt and extended several times throughout ages to finally resemble an early Baroque three-aisle basilica. In the interiors of the Cathedral it is worth seeing the Gothic triptych, referred to as "the triptych of Łagiewniki", depicting a crowning ceremony of the Mother of God and the baroque main altar designed by Fontana. There you can also find a painting depicting the Gracious Mother of God of Kielce with her Child. Tourist may also see the cathedral treasury and descent into the underground crypt of the bishops of Kielce. (http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,721,the_cathedral_in_kielce.html)

- **St. Adalbert's Church in Kielce, Kościół św Wojciecha**

18th century Roman-Catholic church of St. Adalbert (Wojciech) in Kielce.

Otoczona ponad stuletnimi drzewami świątynia umiejscowiona jest pomiędzy ulicą Bodzentyńską, a Aleją IX Wieków Kielc, przy Placu Św. Wojciecha.

To najstarszy kościół w Kielcach, a zarazem jedyny zabytek, związany w swych początkach z osadą przedlokacyjną. Pierwszy drewniany wówczas kościółek ufundowany został w końcu XI lub początkach XII w. Wzniesiono go przy osadzie, która dała początek Kielcom. Pierwotnie teren otaczający kościół użytkowano jako cmentarz. W roku 1763 na miejscu drewnianej świątyni wybudowano barokowy, murowany kościół ufundowany przez kustosa kieleckiego Józefa Rogallę.

Obecna świątynia została wydatnie powiększona w latach 80-tych XIX wieku.

W zachodniej części, tuż koło zewnętrznego muru otaczającego kościół, stoi figura Chrystusa Frasobliwego (tzw. "latarnia zmarłych") z 1732 r. - pozostałość po cmentarzu. Wznosi się ona na okrągłym, kamiennym słupie o wielobocznej podstawie. Przez otwory, wpadające światło oświetla znajdującą się wewnątrz, wykutą w piaskowcu, postać Chrystusa Frasobliwego. Na cokole latarni umieszczony jest częściowo zatarty napis: ANNO D (...) 1732 D 28, CIAŁA LUCKIE NA TEM MIEJSCU SPOCZYWAJACE UPRASZAJA POBOZNOSCI WASZY (...)POZDROWIENIA ANIELSKIE.

Na zewnątrz po stronie prawej od wejścia głównego stoi pomnik świętego Wojciecha, odsłonięty w 1997 roku. Na placu przed kościołem zachowano fragment muru, przed którym Niemcy publicznie rozstrzelali w 1943 r. zakładników - żołnierzy AK.

Adres: Plac Św. Wojciecha 9

(http://www.kielce.pl/mk/spacer.php?pan_id=1081-1001-1044)

- **The Monastery on Karczówka**

Karczówka is a picturesque hill located in the western part of the city of Kielce and topped with a beautiful post-Bernardine monastery founded by the Bishop Marcin Szyszkowski and dating back to the 17th century. The early baroque church was erected in the years 1624–1628 and extended in the years 1629–1631, when a monastery with its cloisters and outbuildings were added. The church vestibule has retained its foundation plaque dating back to 1626. As far as the interior of the temple is concerned, it is worth seeing the St. Barbara's Chapel with its interesting Baroque sculpture of the patron saint of miners, which is placed in the altar. The sculpture was made of galena ore extracted near Karczówka. The hill covered with forest is not only a landscape reserve, but an excellent observation point as well. Standing on the hill you can admire the panorama of the city and, weather permitting, you can also see further ranges of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/pl/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,850,karczowka.html)

→ **Museums:**

- **The Museum of Stefan Żeromski's School Years in Kielce**

Stefan Żeromski was particularly connected with the Kielce region. He was born in Strawczyn, near Kielce, spent his childhood in Ciekoty, lived in Kielce and studied at the local grammar-school. Today, the building houses the Museum of Stefan Żeromski's School Years, which exhibits some family souvenirs, items connected with school and studies, pictures of the writer's family members, friends and sweethearts as well as the first editions of his works. The Świętokrzyska land is present in nearly all works of Stefan Żeromski. Many of them are set in Kielce. One can find some descriptions of the local landscape and the town itself in "The Labours of Sisyphus", "A Story of Sin", "Homeless People" and "The Fir Forest".

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,617,the_museum_of_stefan_zeromski_s_school_years_in_kielce.html)

- **The Museum of Toys and Play in Kielce**

The Museum of Toys and Play was established in 1979. In June 2006 it received a new seat and its name. The most precious part of its collection constitutes historical toys and, among them, dolls dating back to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and 20th century lead soldiers, a German miniature sewing machine, an overhead projector, doll rooms, doll furniture sets as well as foreign and Polish building blocks. The oldest exhibit of the museum is a German wax doll dating back to the end of the 18th century. The Museum also houses such interesting permanent exhibitions as A Merry Company, Tea-time, An Exhibition of Teddy Bears, In the Grandmother's Attic, An Electric Railway Toy, In the World of Automobiles, An Exhibition of Lego Building Blocks, The Świętokrzyski Market Stall, My Theatre etc.

(http://swietokrzyskie.travel/en/informator_turystyczny/co_zobaczyc/o,838,the_museum_of_toys_and_play_in_kielce.html)

→ **Nature reserves:**

- **Jan Czarnocki Reserve in Ślichowice**

A strict reserve of rock formation (inanimate nature), area 0.55 ha. Established in 1952. Situated on the edge of a large housing estate. The reserve is a former quarry, located in the western part of the city on the hill Ślichowica.

- **Kadzielnia**

A strict reserve of inanimate nature, area 0.6 ha, established in 1962. Situated in the centre of Kielce, in the southern part, between the streets: Krakowska, Gagarina, Legionów and Pakosz.

The Frasnian large bioherm, bedded limestones and the Fammenian carbonates crop out in the abandoned quarry. The Kadzielnia Limestone (Kadzielnia-type bioherm) represents mud-supported mound rich in microbios, corals and

stromatoporoids. It is cut with neptunian dykes filled with Frasnian and Fammenian limestones. Slope of the mound is covered with Detrital Limestones (Detrital Stromatoporoids Beds) - calcarenites and calcirudites bearing above mentioned and other fossils. Both units are flanked and partly covered by micritic Manticoceras Limestone of Upper Frasnian, which compensated morphological depression. The Frasnian carbonates are overlain by the Lower Fammenian: thin Cheiloceras Limestone and thick marly-shale unit. Organic buildup, biodetrital carbonates and Manticoceras Limestone were formed in northern part of the Kowala shallow - an elevation near northern margin of the Moravia-Małopolska shelf, that gradually deepened and differentiated during the Frasnian. The Fammenian marls and limestones developed in deeper basin. Many fossils: corals, brachiopods, goniatites, moluscs, stromatoporoids, crinoids, ostracods, trilobites, tentaculites, foraminifers, conodonts, other microbios and fishes have been studied here (type locality). Variscian and post-Variscan hydrothermal veins of calcite-barite-galena mineralization occur here. After uplifting in the Paleogene, limestones were strongly karstified. Numerous paleokarst forms (26 caves on 2-3 levels) developed mainly in Neogene and Pleistocene, although Permian-Triassic age of sinkholes was also geologically argued. Early Pleistocene vertebrates were found in karst fills.

(<http://www.iop.krakow.pl/geosites/opis.asp?id=48&je=en>)

- **Wietrznia**

A semi-reserve of inanimate nature, area 17.95 ha. The reserve of Wietrznia was established in 1999. Situated in the south-eastern part of Kielce, about 3 km from the centre, in Wojska Polskiego Street

(http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/tourism/nature_reserves/)

→ Culture:

Theatres

- **Stefan Żeromski Theatre**

Existing since 1945, it is located in a period house of the second half of the 19th century, where formerly the Hotel Polski was located. It gives several premieres every year. Apart from its own repertoire, the theatre invites other companies with their production. Some of the performances staged in the edifice in Sienkiewicza Street are world premieres of Polish contemporary playwrights. At the end of each season, there is the Wild Rose Poll, when the public awards the best actors and the most popular performances.

- **Puppet and Actor Theatre “Kubuś”**

One of the most modern and beautiful theatres for children in Poland. Awarded many times at festivals of puppet theatres at home and abroad. Visited by about fifty thousand of the youngest spectators per year. In its repertoire, it also has performances for older audience. The theatre gives performances outside its home stage as well.

- **Kielce Dance Theatre**

A showpiece of our city is the Kielce Dance Theatre, established in 1995 by Elżbieta Szlufik, a talented director and choreographer, winner of the 1999 City Award. The young dancers have already performed for the audience in Kielce and on other stages in the shows: “Feelings”, “Quo vadis”, “On the other side of dreams”, “The Man and the Women”, “To be or to take” and “Rhapsody in Blue”. The dancing duo Agnieszka Grzela and Maciej Borowski are world vice-champions in the category of show dance. They have also won the World Cup and vice-championship of Europe. For a few years, children and teenagers from the Dance and Grace School “Step by Step” have belonged to the country’s leading groups. They often win medals and distinctions at domestic and international competitions in the categories of formations, couples and soloists. Dancers from the School of Ballroom Dance “Cha-Cha” and from the Świętopokrzyski Dance Club “Jump” are also establishing their strong position.

Kielce Cultural Centre, pl. Moniuszki 2B

- **Theatre “ECCE HOMO” (Artistic Association)**

Theatre “Ecce Homo” was organized in 1996 in the State Schools of Visual Arts in Kielce on an initiative of Tadeusz Maj and Marek Tercz. The theatre uses the formula of performance combining all areas of art (visual arts, music, text, movement), creating their own artistic language.

The theatre has been noted and awarded, as well as invited to some major festivals. The theatre won the first prize at the all-Polish presentation of Fine Arts Theatres in Bydgoszcz in 2000 for the performance "Apocalypse". It is also an initiator of an all-Polish review of alternative theatres.

(<http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/culture/theatres/>)

Galleries

- **Gallery of Contemporary Sacred Art**

Presented in the gallery are works of outstanding Polish artists. e.g. Tadeusz Kantor, Władysław Hasiór, Jerzy Nowosielski, Jerzy Bereś and Adam Czapla: sculptures, paintings, installations and photographs. Apart from the permanent exhibition there will be temporary presentations, symposiums, meetings, concerts and performances dealing with the topic of the sacrum.

Gallery of Contemporary Sacred Art in the "Washerwoman's House"

25-009 Kielce, ul. Zamkowa 5/7

- **Bureau of Art Exhibitions**

For over 30 years the Bureau of Art Exhibitions has run the Gallery "Piwnice" (Basement). The gallery, located in the city centre, organizes numerous interesting exhibitions showing the vintage of the local artistic circle of over a hundred people, as well as presentations of other artists from Poland and abroad.

Kielce, ul. Leśna 7

- **Gallery of the Union of Polish Artists**

Located at ul. Sienkiewicza 29, presents pictures of well-known Kielce artists, e.g. Małgorzata Bielecka, Krzysztof Jackowski, Marek Wawro and Zbigniew Kurkowski.

- **Union of Polish Artists**

The Union includes nearly 70 artists from Kielce and the region. Annual exhibitions of the Kielce branch of the Union are a perfect opportunity to compare the works and their authors, and to assess artistic condition of this milieu.

Union of Polish Artists, Branch in Kielce ul. Zamkowa 5, Kielce

- **Union of Artists-Sculptors**

Includes 28 artists, who recapitulate their artistic achievements organizing annual plein-air workshops. In the Art Workshop "Wietrznia" artists have perfect opportunities to work in the material.

Kielce, ul. Wojska Polskiego 103

- **Gallery of Contemporary Art "Winda"**

Temporary exhibitions. So far, presented have been paintings by Kora Jackowska and Kamil Sipowicz, Aleksander Jasin and Bartłomiej Michałowski.

Kielce Cultural Centre, Pl. Moniuszki 2B

- **Adam Wolski's Gallery**

Located in Kielce at ul. Sienkiewicza 10/12a. Presents canvases of contemporary artists, mainly representing the region of Świętokrzyskie.

- **Gallery of Old and Modern Art "Factoria – a Warehouse of Art"**

The Gallery presents works of Polish graphic artists, painters, sculptors, e.g. Franciszek Starowieyski, Jacek Sroka and Krzysztof Skórczewski.

ul. Wesoła 50

- **Gallery "Factoria"**

Displays, among others, engravings by Aleksandra Makowska, Artur Ganczarek, engravings and paintings by Jan Opaliński.

ul. Sienkiewicza 45)

(<http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/culture/galleries/>)

Cultural centers

- **Kielce Cultural Centre**

Working since 1992, it is one of the country's most modern edifices built for the needs of a theatre and a philharmonic orchestra. The Centre conducts versatile activities including artistic productions, publishing, exhibitions and concerts. The Centre has a large hall with a revolving stage and an auditorium for 700, and a little hall seating 200. The Centre organizes many concerts, theatrical and operatic performances, cabaret shows and operettas.

Based in the building is the Oskar Kolberg Philharmonic. KCC provides patronage for many cultural activities in the town. Kielce Cultural Centre, pl. Moniuszki 2B

- **Provincial House of Culture**

The edifice was erected in 1935 as Józef Piłsudski House of Military Preparation and Physical Education. Now the House conducts cultural activities for the town and for the Świętokrzyskie Province (many artistic clubs, festivals, reviews of artistic achievements, tournaments and competitions).

The House accommodates a Cultural Centre of the Blind, covering the whole country with its activities. Apart from the stately rooms (lined with Kielce marble), in the premises there is a sports hall.

Józef Piłsudski Provincial House of Culture, Kielce, ul. Ściegiennego 6

- **House of Artistic Circles**

Located in the historic mansion of Tomasz Zieliński, a 19th century promoter of culture. Since 1985 the House has dealt with the broadly understood popularization of art and culture (exhibitions, concerts, meetings with artists and symposiums). In the premises you can marvel at the Romantic arrangement of the interior, including the beautiful Poniatowski room, many reliefs and sculptures in the garden of 1854. There is a cafe and a restaurant.

House of Artistic Circles, ul. Zamkowa 5

- **Provincial Public Library**

Belonging to Poland's major libraries, it has 14 branches in the city. Its resources amount to nearly 550 thousand volumes, including a valuable collection of old prints. The library serves over 54 thousand readers, making available to them over 1.2 million volumes per year.

http://www.um.kielce.pl/en/culture/cultural_centres/

Music

- **The Świętokrzyska Philharmonic**

Oskar Kolberg Świętokrzyska Philharmonic is based in the building of the Kielce Cultural Centre. It continues the tradition of the Kielce Symphonic Orchestra founded in 1933.

Among popular musical events are jazz concerts in Tomasz Zieliński's mansion, concerts of classical music from the series "The Castle Nights" held in the historic interior of the Palace of Kraków Bishops, and the Scouts' Festival of Culture of School Youth, held every year since 1974. In the summer you can attend concerts of rock and folk music in the city park, or sea shanties on the artificial lake.

The Concert Brass Band of the Świętokrzyska Philharmonic was founded in 1996 and works under the direction of Jan Tokarz, a French horn player of the Świętokrzyska Philharmonic. The orchestra plays popular music, famous hits of the 20th century, soundtrack music, and classical music too. The orchestra performs in Kielce, in holiday and health resorts and in schools.

Salon Music Ensemble "Animato" was started in 1991 by the violinist and violin teacher Andrzej Zuzański. The ensemble is mostly made up of musicians connected with the Świętokrzyska Philharmonic. The repertoire of "Animato" consists mainly of waltzes, csardases, polkas, marches, suites, gallops and soundtrack music.

Some of the most remarkable composers, conductors and musicians working in Kielce are: Mirosław Niziurski, Karol Anbild (the author of the anthem of Kielce), Andrzej Zuzański, Jan Burek and Jerzy Mikuśkiewicz. Apart from their artistic work, they are active organizers of musical life, teachers in Kielce school of music and in the Institute of Music of the Świętokrzyska Academy.

Kielce and the region gave also many stars of Polish pop music. Connected with our town are Andrzej "Piasek" Piaseczny, Krzysztof "KASA" Kasowski, Włodzimierz Kiniorski, Monika Salita, Liroy and the group Mafia.

Legends

A very popular legend about the origin of Kielce is connected with Mieszko, the son of Boleslaus the Brave.

Over 900 years ago the place where the capital of the region is now located was covered by vast forests, abounding in game and attracting hunters. Prince Mieszko was one of them. Chasing an animal, he left his company, reached an unknown clearing, and, fatigued, fell asleep in the grass. He dreamt that he was attacked by brigands who wanted to pour poison into his mouth. He was losing his strength when he saw Saint Adalbert in his dream. The saint raised his crosier and drew on the ground a winding line which turned into a stream. The prince woke up and saw a spring nearby. The water was as clear and tasty as it was in his dream. Mieszko recovered his strength and quickly found his companions. When he was leaving the clearing, he noticed the huge white tusks of an unknown animal, perhaps a boar. The prince announced he would build a town with a church in that place. Soon St Adalbert's church was erected in the clearing, the stream whose water returned strength to Mieszko was called Silnica ('Strong Water'), while the name of the settlement was Kielce, to commemorate the mysterious tusks ('kieł' in Polish).

Other legends claim that the town owes its name to the founder, belonging to the noble family of Kiełcz. Some derive the name Kielce from the Celts, who stayed in this area during their wandering around Europe. There is also a hypothesis that in Old Polish the word reflected the jobs of people who used to live here and who were busy making mud huts, or, according to another theory, making iron tips for arrows and spears. Some even connect Kielce with the production of tar, which in our ancestors' dialect was called 'pkiel', while 'pkielce' simply meant a settlement of tar makers.

It seems that it is impossible to give a certain origin to the name of Kielce. You can believe the old legends or not, but it is good to know them.