



AllWays

Szczecin, Poland

www.allwaystraveller.com



Szczecin is ready to come into its own

The port city of Szczecin is located on the Oder River in northwest Poland.

When Poland rejected Communist rule for a democratic future in the early 1990s, Warsaw, Poznan, Krakow and Gdansk were the first to become ready and able to welcome international visitors.

The city of Szczecin needed more time to establish itself as a short break destination but, in recent years, has made a genuine commitment to laying the foundations of its tourism infrastructure.

It now offers a warm visitor welcome in a fascinating city with excellent accommodation and dining options.

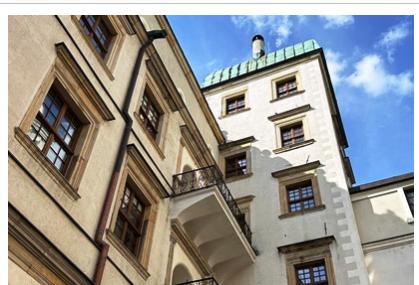
This makes Szczecin an alluring and rewarding city break destination in its own right.

It can also be paired with day trips to the seaside resorts along the bracing Baltic Sea coastline or as a base for discovering the fine wines being produced in West Pomeranian wineries.

Finally, Szczecin sits just 14km from Poland's western border with Germany and 100 km from Berlin, which makes the German capital a day trip option by train.

<https://visitszczecin.eu/en>

Ashley Gibbins
Commissioning Editor
AllWays traveller



The river remains the lifeblood of this city

While Szczecin is a thriving port city, the riverfront has seen a genuine regeneration and renaissance

By Ashley Gibbins

Our first visit to Poland, a city break in capital Warsaw, proved to be one of our most interesting, moving and rewarding trips in recent years.

(See *AllWays Traveller* to Warsaw below).

It also made Ann and I determined to see more of the country at the earliest opportunity.

Szczecin was suggested while we were considering some of the more obvious Polish short break destinations.

Two questions came quickly to mind. Where is Szczecin, and how do you pronounce it?

As to its location, Szczecin sits on either bank of the Oder River in the northwest of Poland and very near to the country's border with Germany.

And as to how to pronounce the place, it's *Sch-hetch-in*, which I admit took a bit of practice and caused a few understanding grins along the way.

A fascinating city

It was always the river trade that provided Szczecin, with its wealth and importance and a much sought after status.

Over the centuries years it has been ruled Pomeranian Dukes and by Sweden, Denmark and France.

In 1720 the city and surrounding area became a part of Prussia, and from 1871 it belonged to the German state and was known as Stettin.

Wartime devastation

World War II changed everything with much of this German city destroyed by Allied bombing and the street-to-street fighting between the forces of the Third Reich and the Russian Red Army.

With defeat of the Nazi regime, the city was subsumed into Poland and renamed Szczecin.

It then had to endure another 44 years within a dour, Communist controlled Poland shackled to the Soviet bloc.



The state-owned shipyard, which inherited the assets of the former German shipbuilding giant AG Vulcan Stettin, became the dominating industrial focus of the city, which saw very few international visitors.

In the 1970s and 1980s, it was the shipyard that became a hub for the anti-Communist resistance in Poland and the emergence of the Solidarność (Solidarity) movement.

This led to Poland becoming a western-European facing, democratic country in 1989, and now a member of the European Union and NATO.

The Szczecin shipyard closed in 2009 and work gradually began on the regeneration of the area.

The riverfront renaissance

And while Szczecin remains a thriving port, riverfront has seen a genuine regeneration and renaissance.

The towering river cranes provide an industrial artistic installation in their own right and the regenerated Chobry Embankment is a magnet for locals and visitors alike.

With opening of the wonderful Maritime Science Center prof. Jerzy Stelmach, in 2023, Szczecin has one of the most enjoyable museum experiences anywhere.

This *AllWays Traveller* to Szczecin offers a guide to what else there is to do in this fascinating city.





A walking tour of Szczecin is the first step

Anyone who has read our other *AllWays Travellers* will know the importance we place on getting a tour of the destination we are visiting, and as early in our trip as possible.



In addition to getting to know the place, it provides compass points for the rest of the stay.

If possible, we look to get a personal guided tour but, if not, joining a group or taking an open top bus tour is also a great start to any trip.

In Szczecin we were lucky enough to find Jacek Woch who met us at our hotel (the Ibis Styles Stare Miasto - see below) just after we had checked in.

Jacek gave us an initial background on the city and its place in history overview of Szczecin and had us practicing how to say the city's name

It was then off on a two-hour walking tour of Szczecin.

Apart from taking in everything one would want to see here, it gave us the chance to pepper Jacek with questions, which were eagerly answered. Our first afternoon with Jacek on this really set us up for the stay.

The 'new' old town

We started in Szczecin's Castle Boroughs and Stare Miasto - the 'new' old town.

New because Allied air raids during the end of the last war all but destroyed the city's historic lower town area.

Post war reconstruction of this area saw rebuilding in the style of what was destroyed, without replicating the original old town, as was the case in Warsaw.

That said the area, just a few steps from the river front, has a character all its own.

The two squares are lined with bars and restaurants along with wine and art and craft shops.

This is the place to dine 'al fresco' on warm balmy evenings.

Szczecin Cathedral

It was then on to grand Szczecin Cathedral, a Gothic cathedral built between the 12th and 14th Centuries.

The cathedral's tower, an exact replica of the original, has 360-degree views of the city and surrounding countryside.

One of the old town's distinctive landmarks it has a triptych with reliefs from the 14th century and a crucifix from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries.

The Philharmonic

With its metal and glass façade, the Mieczysław Karłowicz Philharmonic building stands out from those around it.

Designed by Catalonian architects it has become an iconic feature of the city.

In addition to the programme of concerts and performances there are guided tours of the building during the summer months.

<https://filharmonia.szczecin.pl/en>

The Pomeranian Dukes' Castle

Finally, in the old town we get to the stunning Pomeranian Dukes' Castle, which has five wings and two courtyards.



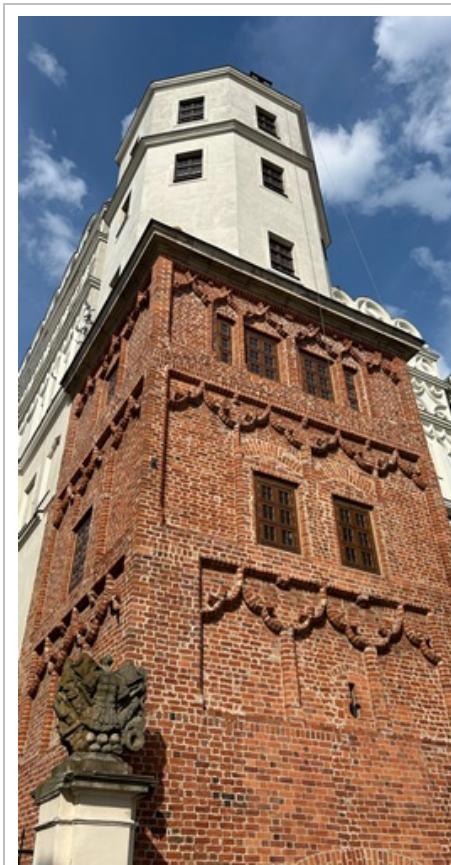
Now a cultural institution it hosts an ongoing series of cultural events, concerts and theatre performances and regular exhibitions that highlight the history of West Pomerania.

There is a panoramic terrace on the rooftop of the northern wing, with great views over the river.

The Castle is undergoing a major renovation that, when completed, will create a tremendous attraction for the city.

<https://zamek.szczecin.pl/en/>

From here we take the short walk to the Chrobry Embankment - the Odra River boulevards and then the riverfront.



Jacek Woch

More information

Jacek Woch
Szczecin Convention Bureau
convention@zstw.szczecin.pl



The Chrobry Embankment and the riverfront

It is no wonder that citizens of Szczecin and visitors are drawn to pedestrianised boulevards on either side of the Oder riverfront.



Much has been done, in recent years, to make this the place to stroll or relax in one of the bars, restaurants or enjoy something from food trucks found here.

The Sailors Avenue here is a permanent outdoor exhibition of sculptures of famous captains, a sailor's cat, barrels of fish and navigation devices.

The Chrobry Embankment

The Chrobry Embankment is a grand observation terrace overlooking the river and it is here you will find the National Museum which includes displays of national heritage, artworks and maritime exhibits.

<https://muzeum.szczecin.pl/en/>

MS Joanna

To appreciate the river's industrial heritage there is the chance to take a river cruise aboard the MS Joanna.

The hour-long cruise on the Oder River is a great way to see the majestic working cranes that are still an essential part of Szczecin life.

<https://msjoanna.pl/en/one-hour-cruise-in-the-port-of-szczecin/>



A visit to this Maritime Center really is a must

And finally, when in the riverside area, a visit to the Prof. Jerzy Stelmach Maritime Science Center in the riverside area of Szczecin is one of those 'absolute musts'.



Opened in 2023, it is a modern educational institution helping children, and the child in us all, to discover the secrets of science and technology in the most interesting and enjoyable 'hands-on' way.

If you thought physics, mathematics, astronomy, geography and technology were dull or difficult to understand, you only have to see the fun the kid's just loving learning about it in the Maritime Science Centee.

And us adults just itching to have a go as well.

There are exhibits related to shipping, waves, wind, fishing and port life along with a state-of-the-art planetarium that is the most modern and awe-inspiring anywhere.

Jerzy Stelmach was a physicist, astrophysicist and cosmologist and 'populariser' of science and Professor at the University of Szczecin.

More information

<https://centrumnauki.eu/>



The Museum of Technology and Transport

The Museum of Technology and Transport is full of vintage and more recent vehicles that Poles used to be so much in love with.

Among the displays is the WFM motorcycle called 'uncle's Frank motorbike', the Fiat 126p known as 'the Fatal Imitation of an Automobile for Tourists' and a '1-passenger 2-door 6-time overpaid car' or 'the coughy'.

Its older brother, the Fiat 125p, was 'the clumsy one' and the Jelcz bus was called 'the cucumber', and there is also a 'Fritz' GT6 tram.

A visit is well worth an hour or so of your time, particularly when combined with a stroll in the very attractive park that is found across the road from the museum.

More information

<https://en.muzeumtechniki.eu/>





The Centre of Slavs and Vikings

The Centre of Slavs and Vikings in Wolin is an accurate recreation of the village that would have stood here from the 9th to 11th century covering the Viking Age and early Middle Ages.

Wolin, during this period, was a blooming trading centre of some 9000 people, which made it one of the largest cities in this part of Europe.

Some 27 buildings have been built by faithfully using the method of constructions and type of tools use by inhabitants here over 1000 years ago.

They are filled with replicas of the furniture, tools and everyday objects from Viking times with some the permanent homes of the reenactors working and living here.

It really does give the chance to learn so much the everyday life and times in the settlement.

There are 'live history lessons', the chance to learn ancient crafts, taste the food and experience how it feels to wear the warriors armour.

The reenactors totally committed to what they are creating here and can answer any and every question about this Viking and Slav settlement.

Needless-to-say, children get as much from visiting the Centre as much as adults do.

Festival of the Slavic and Vikings

The Festival of the Slavic and Vikings takes place over a weekend at the end of every July and early August.

It sees Viking reconstructors descend on Wolin to spend three days building replica camps, preparing food using traditional methods, along with making pots, weaving cloth and forging jewellery and chainmail armour.

The major attractions are the genuinely realistic staged battles between hundreds of warriors.

Adjoining the Centre is a small hotel offering the chance to get a more comfortable 'Viking experience'.

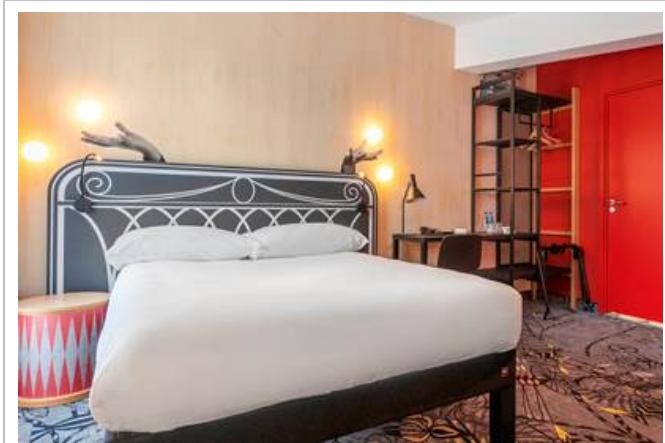
It is located some 90-minutes drive from Szczecin, with a direct rail link from the city's railway station.

And very well worth a visit.



More information

<https://jomsborg-vineta.com/en/>



The Ibis Styles Stare Miasto, Szczecin

Bright, colourful, clean and comfortable, the new Ibis Styles Stare Miasto is a welcome addition to the historic town of Szczecin.

By Ann Mealor

Being close to the Oder River, the Maritime Science Centre and the Pomeranian Duke's Castle this hotel is the ideal base for discovering the city.

Centrally located on one of the pretty cobbled squares, the circus themed Ibis is cheerfully decorated with plenty of objets d'arts to catch your attention.

The bright, airy lounge has a Victorian penny farthing bicycle hanging on the wall, side tables looking like musical drums and low hanging lampshades forming a rainbow trail across the ceiling.

The comfy chairs and sofas are brightly patterned in vivid blues, reds and yellows, a mural of a juggling clown fills one of the walls and the traditional circus 'diamond' pattern is everywhere.

Great attention to detail

Great attention has been paid to detail and small things are fun to spot, like the billiard balls for handles on the, cereal jars like carousels, tiny strips of bunting strung along the shelves and a little wooden dog standing on an upturned coffee mug.

The bedrooms

The bedrooms continue the 'Big Top' party theme too.

Our room, overlooking the old town, had a ceiling painted in red and white stripes.

The lights above the bed were like round juggling balls being tossed into the air by two painted hands either side of the headboard.

Our room was spacious and comfortable with a large walk-in shower, complimentary tea and coffee and a great view across the square.

Breakfast

Each morning, during our stay, we enjoyed a delicious buffet breakfast.

There was so much to choose from including salad, fresh fruit, creamy scrambled eggs, cold meats, crusty breads, hot pasta, sausages, pancakes, croissants, cake, cereals, jelly, cheese and pickled herring.

The list goes on.

Everything was well presented, and dishes quickly replenished when empty.

On a couple of sunny afternoons, we sat outside and sipped chilled cocktails taking in the picturesque surroundings and enjoying the glorious weather.



More information

<https://all.accor.com/ssr/app/ibis/hotels/szczecin-poland/ibs/index.en.shtml>

Places to dine in Szczecin



<https://plentyrest.pl/>

Dining out a delight in Szczecin

There is a great choice of high-quality restaurants and brew pubs in Szczecin, which makes eating out a real pleasure.

All the restaurants we visited, and there were quite a few, were of a very high standard and had their own individual charm and character.

The common theme was great food, well cooked and presented, a fantastic choice of cocktails, some delicious Polish wines and beers and friendly and knowledgeable service.

You can't go wrong dining at any of them and you are likely to leave wanting to return. We did, however, have a favourite, which was the Plenty Restaurant and apartments, and just a short stroll from our hotel.



Plenty

Plenty

Plenty is a chic, fine-dining restaurant with views of the Old Town.



This is the place to go for a long leisurely lunch or a candle-lit evening meal writes *Ann Mealor*.

It has a relaxed yet sophisticated atmosphere with white linen tablecloths, fresh flowers and polished wine glasses. It is modern in design with clean lines and large windows letting in ample natural light.

The menu is interesting and varied. Vegans and vegetarians are well catered for and all the fresh seafood and meat is provided by local suppliers.

Seasonal dishes are always available and definitely worth a taste.

Fortunately for us, it was asparagus season, so we made the most of it.

For starters, we shared fat fingers of flavour filled white asparagus drizzled with a light hollandaise sauce. This was followed by a chunky tuna tartare with crunchy pink peppers on a smooth green bed of crushed avocado.

We also had to try the beetroot soup – a must in Poland. Here is was a healthy, deep purple, refreshing gazpacho, decorated with feathery snippets of dill and made with natural yoghurt and keffir. All very good for the gut.

The main event was fish – for me, a substantial piece of catfish on a pea puree with a salad of avocado and tomatoes and for Ashley, John Dory on a silky cauliflower puree with a tangy orange sauce.

We really didn't want to miss out on dessert as they all looked so tempting, so we shared a small piece of meringue, Basque Cheesecake and chocolate cake made with Baileys liquor.

The whole meal was delicious – including the recommended white wine, a fruity and floral Solaris from a local vineyard. We liked it so much we bought a bottle from the wine shop to take home with us.

Staff here were so friendly, knowledgeable and attentive - they really enhanced our dining experience.



There is 'plenty' to like about this restaurant and we hope we get the opportunity to dine here again.

For those want to rent an apartment during a stay in Szczecin there are three stunning self-contained options here including a stunning rooftop apartment.

More information

<https://plentyrest.pl/>

Brower Wyszak

Brower Wyszak is found in the fifteenth century gothic basement of the old Town Hall writes Ann Mealor



This brew pub has bags of atmosphere with its beautiful, high vaulted brick ceiling and polished copper vats.

Its craft beers have won many awards and choosing just a few to try is difficult.

The food here is excellent and the chefs take great pride in their culinary work, ensuring that guests don't just come here for the beer.

We again tried the delicious in season asparagus, but this time as a creamy soup for me and with a fried egg for Ashley.

For mains I had well presented, mouthwatering Beef Sirloin steak on green asparagus, topped with a knob of truffle butter and a grilled tomato, my favourite steak of the visit.

Ashley had a roasted halibut in a tarragon sauce, topped with bubbling mozzarella cheese, cherry tomatoes and crispy sliced baked potatoes, great comfort food.

I also enjoyed my best Mojito here too.

More information

<https://browarwyszak.pl/>

Spizarnia

This restaurant is very homely and is full of rustic pantry charm with wooden beams, floors, tables and whitewashed plaster walls.

It serves traditional Polish cuisine with a modern twist writes Ann Mealor.

All ingredients are sourced locally so that they are at their freshest when the chefs are preparing the dishes.

I had a juicy beef tenderloin steak, perfectly cooked for me – well done without being dry or tough, and a crisp, green salad.

Ashley decided on the smoked fish salad with pickled lemon and olive oil.

It was a nice touch getting a complimentary sample of Szczecin Paprikash, which is a pate of herring, rice, tomato paste, vegetable oil, onion and spices, to try as an appetiser before the main course.

It was a welcome treat.

More information

<https://spizarniaszczecinska.pl/>



Mala Tumska

A cosy restaurant with a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, Mala Tumska offers a casual yet intimate eating experience.



With soft background music combined with the gentle chatter of diners, it feels like having dinner at a friend's house *writes Ann Mealor*.

The spicy cod soup with tomatoes, chilli peppers and dill served with homemade bread was very satisfying and my beef tenderloin steak with a fresh green salad was cooked just to my liking.

The hot crunchy French fries got a big thumbs up and the oven baked cod fillet with jasmine rice and fried kale went down very well.

A great place to spend an evening going through the extensive cocktail list.

[More information](#)

<https://www.malatumksa.pl/>



Brower Pod Zamkiem

This is a traditional brew pub serving good quality, hearty fare.



Situated in an historic part of town, which was almost completely destroyed during the Second World War, the brewery was built from scratch in 2001.

Shiny, copper brewing vats, concrete floors, high ceilings and wood and brick bars all work to give the restaurant an earthy atmosphere.

As you would expect, there are many quality craft beers to choose from including Pils, Wheat, March and daily specials.

The food is good too, and pork ribs come highly recommended as does the salmon with superb sweet potato fries.

The vegan feta cheese, cashew and pear salad was a tasty combination, and the portion size was very generous, and you can also get sharing platters here too.

[More information](#)

<https://www.browarpodzamkiem.pl/>

Nowy Brower

This is another great brew pub pairing craft beers – and a decent selection of wines and cocktails – with food.

The menu offers traditional Polish dishes as well as pizzas, pastas and burgers.

We had the oven baked trout with almonds and tomatoes served with a simple salad and hot French fries.

It was the only place we saw whole trout on the menu, and I'm really pleased we took advantage of it!

[More information](#)

<http://nowybrowar.pl/>

A snapshot of Szczecin



If you like Szczecin

AllWays Traveller to Warsaw



Warsaw is soaring upwards and onwards

Warsaw, the Polish capital, is a vibrant, confident and outward looking city that welcomes visitors with genuine warmth. This is very much in contrast to the city's relatively recent history. Warsaw was ravaged during World War II with Poland itself repressed, as a Soviet bloc country, for forty plus years afterwards. Eagerly embracing democratic change in the early 1990s, Warsaw has transformed itself into a modern, cosmopolitan city to remember. Discovering Warsaw, today, it is easy to understand why the city was voted European Best Destination of the Year 2023.

www.europeanbestdestinations.com





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Warsaw was ravaged during World War II with Poland itself repressed, as a Soviet bloc country, for forty plus years afterwards.

With democratic change in the early 1990s, Warsaw has embraced its new lease of life and has come truly into its own. Discovering Warsaw, today, it is easy to understand why the city was voted *European Best Destination of the Year 2023*.

Warsaw is a city of great historic and cultural heritage, with splendid parks and gardens, fine dining opportunities and an excellent transport network.

The old town is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The city also wholeheartedly embraces Frederick Chopin as its favourite son.

More information
www.go2warsaw.pl

AllWays Traveller to Warsaw : <https://www.allwaystraveller.com/continents/europe/warsaw-is-soaring-upwards-and-onwards>

AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



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www.allwaystraveller.com



The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

www.itwalliance.com



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