



WOLSZTYN

the commune



WOLSZTYN

A town attractive in terms of landscape and culture, clean and full of flowers, kind inhabitants and effective entrepreneurs, Wolsztyn can attract both investors and tourists.

In the region, there are small and medium-size businesses; they include construction, furniture, car and installation companies as well as producers of windows, doors and garage doors.

Tourists are particularly attracted by a steam locomotive shed, unique in whole Europe. It is still active and operates tourist train services. The Shed has been transformed into a cultural institution of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) self-government. Its priority is to resume mainline steam-hauled trains on regularly scheduled passenger services to Poznań, Leszno, maybe even Krotoszyn. In the town, there are also museums: Robert Koch Museum (a Nobel laureate), or Marcin Rożek Museum (a sculptor). Nearby, there is a post-Cistercian monastery complex in Obra.

The two lakes that Wolsztyn is located between offer active leisure to its inhabitants and tourists. They can also use a constantly updated sports and recreation infrastructure, a swimming pool, a skate park and outdoor fitness facilities.

Welcome to Wolsztyn commune – it is worth discovering!

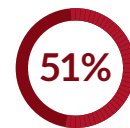


30 000 inhabitants
Wolsztyn commune

13 000 inhabitants
Wolsztyn town



249,64 km²
Wolsztyn commune area



agricultural area



forests



Distance from other towns:

LESZNO 0.50h  → 60km

POZNAŃ 1.20h  → 70km

ZIELONA GÓRA 0.50h  → 60km

LOCATION

The town and commune of Wolsztyn are located in the south-western part of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Province, neighbouring Lubuskie Province in the west.

The commune is situated on the border of Poznańskie and Lubuskie Lake Districts. Thanks to its post glacial terrain, numerous forests, lakes, and monuments as well as its sports infrastructure, the commune is considered a tourist attractive region.

The commune has existed in its present shape since 1999 and is part of Wolsztyn County together with two neighbouring communes of Siedlec and Przemęt. It has a population of approximately 30 000. The town of Wolsztyn itself has over 13 000 residents. The commune covers the area of 249.64 km², 51% of which is farmland and 37% are forests.

The main centre is Wolsztyn, which is both the commune and county seat. The town is situated 70 km far from Poznań and 60 km from Zielona Góra. The most important part of the transportation system is national road No. 32 from Poznań to Zielona Góra. The A2 motorway, which is less than 25 km from Wolsztyn, makes communication with Germany, Europe and other parts of Poland easier.

Although the oldest visual image of the city crest comes from the 16th century, it has probably remained unchanged since the foundation of the town. The crest depicts Madonna and Child. This fact implies the town founders' relations with the Cistercians, who started settling in Wolsztyn region in the 13th century and among whom the cult of Mary was common. The city crest, although slightly modified throughout centuries, has remained the same.



TOWN HISTORY

The traces of early human settlements and artefacts found around the present locations of Obra, Karpicko and Kębtowo prove that the area of Wolsztyn commune was already inhabited in the Neolithic period (around 5500-1900 BC). In the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, the Lusatian culture appeared in the area. Archaeologists still find numerous traces of Lusatian settlements. In the early Middle Ages (7th and 8th centuries) fortified settlements surrounded by embankments were built near today's Gościeszyn, Chorzemin and Kębtowo.

First records of place names in documents appeared in the Middle Ages. The oldest one from 1155 refers to Niatek. The other ones are younger: Obra is mentioned in 1231, Komorowo in 1285, Kębtowo in 1288. The beginnings of Wolsztyn are not exactly known. Some historians date them back to the 13th century and relate them to the settlement of Komorowo. Others believe that the town was founded about 1380 between the settlements of Niatek and Komorowo and its founder was Perygryn Komorowski, the heir of Komorowo village. The town was located on the Magdeburg law and its town privileges were renewed twice in history. First time, they were renewed by Andrzej Sepieński, the owner of Wolsztyn, when he attempted to reconstruct the town after a fire in 1469. Second time, also after a fire, in 1518, when the town hall and all the documents got burnt, the Hłowiecki brothers (Andrzej and Jan), the owners of Wolsztyn, received the confirmation of the previously granted town rights from king Sigismund I of Poland in 1519.

Originally, the town was probably called Olsten, because this name appears in a record from 1424, which for the first time mentions not only the mayor of the town but also the townsmen and the church.

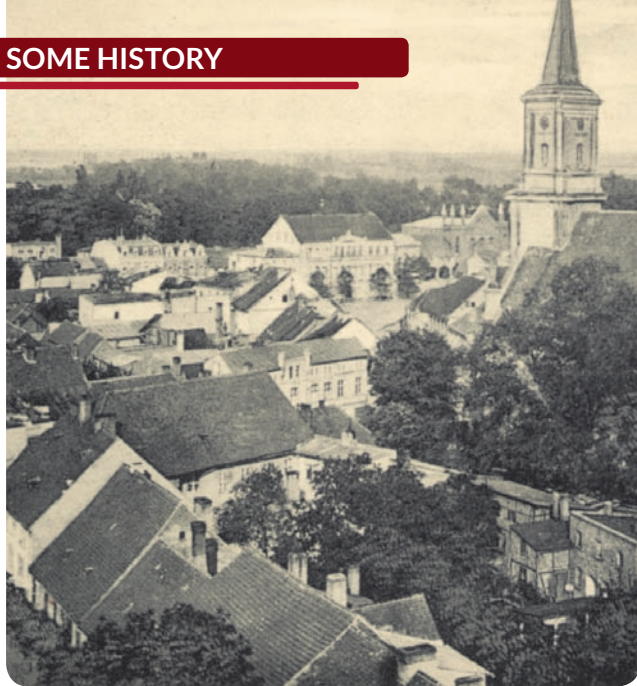
Certainly, the name derives from German, although originally different name versions were used. It settled about the second half of the 15th century and most often was written as Wolstin, Volstyn or Wollstein. It probably derives from two German words (die Wolle – wool and der Stein – stone), which has its historic and economic justification. In the Middle Ages, Wolsztyn used to hold wool fairs and the measurement unit was the so called wool stone (Wollestein), equal to about 14 kilograms.

The new town was a centre of craft and trade for the inhabitants from the surrounding areas. Its location on the main route from Poznań to Lower Silesia and Lusatia as well as wool trade and cloth manufacture led to its rapid growth. Originally, there were only 3 markets and a weekly fair. In the 16th and 17th centuries, there were already 11 markets, out of which the most important ones still remained the markets for wool.

As a result of religious wars and the Thirty Years' war, many Protestants from neighbouring Silesia started to arrive in Wolsztyn in the 17th century. Their protector was the heiress of Wolsztyn at the time, Anna Miękicka, who in 1642 founded for them a wooden church. Another wave of religious dissenters arrived after 1656, when Piotr Powodowski, the owner of Wolsztyn at that time, ensured their right to freedom of religion.

For several centuries, Wolsztyn remained a privately owned town. From 1443 till the end of the 15th century, it belonged to the Sepieński family and then it became the property of the Hłowiecki family. In 1507, it was divided between the two lines of the family. Starting from 1575, one part of Wolsztyn belonged to the house of Powodowski and the other one to the Miękicki family, starting 1637. It was the family of Powodowski who eventually merged the two parts. The town remained in their possession until 1671. In the years of 1671-75, Wolsztyn was a property of the Górajski family, and after them until 1728, it belonged to the family of Niegolewski. After them, until 1890 it stayed in the hands of the Gajewski family and then, until the outbreak of the Second World War, it was the property of the family of Mycielski. It is worth mentioning that Wolsztyn remained a private town until 1834, when, as a result of the Prussian reforms, the owners lost their rights to the town income (they received compensation), although they kept the formal title of the Lords of the Manor.

The life of Wolsztyn in the 17th and 18th centuries was marked by fires and plagues, which made the town fall to decline and then recover from devastation. The town was seriously damaged in the fire of 1634, and in 1656 the army going through Wolsztyn during the Polish-Swedish War brought the plague. In 1691, another fire damaged part of the town, but this time witchcraft was to blame. Two women accused of the



crime were burned at the stake. Another five women shared the same fate in 1700. The next disaster came in the years of 1709-10, when an epidemic of bubonic plague devastating Europe arrived in Wolsztyn. The black plague killed then 1 400 people. In 1728, the town faced another serious fire, which again damaged it severely.

In 1793 as a result of the Second Partition of Poland, the town with its neighbouring areas came under the Prussian rule. In 1807, it was incorporated into the Duchy of Warsaw, and eventually under the provisions of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it became part of the Grand Duchy of Posen. Administratively, from 1793 to 1919, Wolsztyn was located in Babimost District.

According to the findings of the Prussian Indaganda, a survey of cities conducted by the Prussian authorities in 1793, Wolsztyn was a property of widowed Duchess Gajewska and had a population of 1 416 inhabitants, mainly Poles. There were 193 houses, one of them made of brick, and the streets were paved. There was a town hall, churches (Catholic and Lutheran), a chapel located next to the town owners' manor house, a school, a brewery, an inn, public baths, and 11 windmills. The inhabitants' main occupation was craft. There were 60 shoemakers, 20 tailors, 16 cloth manufacturers, 13 furriers, 9 bakers, 6 butchers, and 30 merchants trading cloth and flour. All year round there were 11 active markets and a fair every Friday.

The 19th century started tragically. On September 19th, 1810, the most serious fire in the whole history of Wolsztyn broke out. Within a few hours, the fire destroyed the town hall, the Evangelical church, the synagogue, the tower of the Catholic church, the brewery, and 164

out of 225 houses. The reconstruction of the town took three decades. It was carried out according to the site development plan made by architect Scholz in 1811. The site plan is considered the oldest preserved document showing the site arrangement of Wolsztyn. The current old town buildings, the town hall and the Evangelical church (now a Catholic church of the Lord Ascension) date back to that time.

Despite such a tragic beginning, the 19th century brought Wolsztyn prosperity. Although formally it was located in Babimost District, Wolsztyn was the seat of the most important institutions: landrat's office (governor), municipal court, lands tribunal, as well as administration and education institutions. The second half of the 19th century brought the development of industry. Many factories were opened, including a winery, sawmills, a cigar factory, a factory of agricultural machinery. In 1886, the town was connected with Zbąszyń with the first railway line (lengthened to Leszno in 1895 and to Sulechów and Poznań via Grodzisk Wielkopolski in 1905).

Wolsztyn returned to Poland in 1919 under the resolutions of the Treaty of Versailles.

Before that happened, Wolsztyn was liberated by the Polish insurgents of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Uprising, who captured the town in a daring attack on January 5th, 1919. In due course, the town became a concentration point for the insurgents before further fights for Kargowa and Babimost. Today, a statue of the Wielkopolska Insurgent, sculpted by Agnieszka Lisiak-Skórka, commemorates these events. It was erected on the market square in front of the town hall on February 16th, 2014, on the 95th anniversary of the Allied-German cease-fire in Trier, which put an end to the uprising.

Two figures are particularly important for the Wolsztyn history of the uprising, lieutenants Stanisław Siuda from Błotnica and Kazimierz Zenkteler from Poznań, a commander of the insurgent divisions in the western front. In a meeting with Zenkteler in already freed Grodzisk Wielkopolski, Stanisław Siuda came up with a daring plan of liberating Wolsztyn and Rostarzewo. The decision was made to attack Wolsztyn at night on January 4th and 5th.

The insurgent divisions left Rakoniewice and were to attack Wolsztyn from three sides simultaneously. The first division was to attack from the south (omitting Rostarzewo), the second - from the north, along Berzyńskie Lake, preventing the potential retreat of the enemy. The third division, after capturing Rostarzewo, was to move to Wolsztyn from the east. The insurgents entered the town in the early morning of January 5th, from the direction of Lipowa Street.

After the fights which enabled the insurgents to capture a big part of the town (including the market square and a part of today's 5 Stycznia Street until the Evangelical church), the Germans proposed negotiations. As a result, an agreement was reached pursuant to which both

SOME HISTORY



the insurgents and the German army were to leave the town. Another clause of the agreement stated that the whole Babimost district would not be manned either by the Polish or German soldiers. When the terms of the agreement were announced by Kazimierz Zenkteler in the market square in the presence of about 1 000 insurgents, an argument started. The insurgents did not intend to respect the agreement terms and spontaneously attacked the western part of the town. The fights started again. The Germans, whose Grenzschutz division had entered Wolsztyn on January 1st, used cannons and machine guns. It was only the insurgents' attack from the side of Berzyńskie Lake behind the railway tracks and the upcoming insurgent troops that broke the German defence. The Germans retreated in panic to Sulechów. Starting January 8th, the Poles began taking over the administration in Wolsztyn.

In 1920, Wolsztyn became the capital of newly formed Wolsztyn County, covering the area of 814 km². However; this frontier county did not have much chance to develop. The town, which before the First World War was inhabited also by Germans and Jews, in the interwar period was in 90% populated by Poles. In 1938, it had 4 880 residents.

After the outbreak of World War II, Germans entered the town on September 7th, 1939. The occupation lasted until the Red Army liberated the town on January 26th, 1945. The occupation period was marked with tragic events like persecution of the Polish population, arrests, mass executions, and deportations to concentration camps or forced labour. On a former farm in Komorowo, the Nazis set up a Prisoner-of-War camp – Stalag XXI C Wollstein. Originally, the prisoners detained there were

only Poles. They were later joined by English and French POWs, and after 1941 also by Soviet ones. Today, a memorial stone and a plaque issued in 1971 commemorate the 4 000 POWs who lost their lives here.

After WW II, Wolsztyn resumed the County seat within the borders of Poznań Province. In 1948, its population reached almost 5 000 residents. Due to the administration reform of 1975, when counties were closed and communes were introduced, the former Wolsztyn County was divided between the Provinces of Poznań, Leszno and Zielona Góra. The town and the commune of Wolsztyn became part of Zielona Góra Province for many years. Only after another administration reform of January 1st, 1999, was Wolsztyn County restored. It is now part of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Province and includes the urban-rural commune of Wolsztyn as well as the communes of Siedlec and Przemęt. It covers the area of 680 km² and has a population of 56 000 inhabitants.

Today, Wolsztyn has 13 000 residents. It is both an industrial and service town with highly developed furniture, food and metal industries. It is a crucial centre of education, culture and tourism.





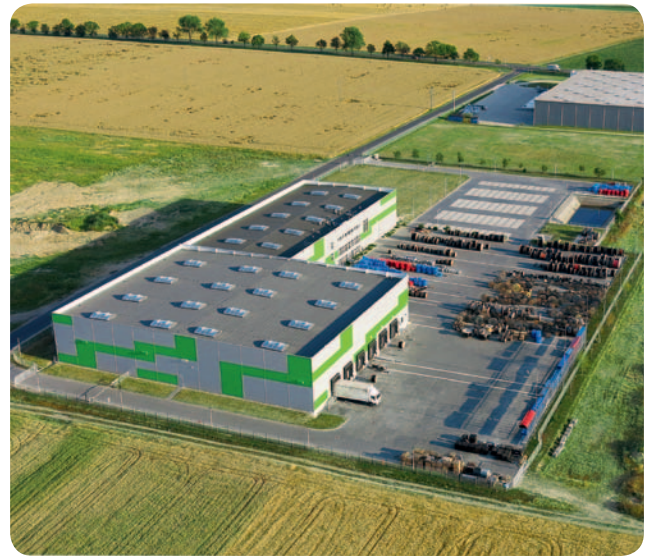
INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE AND CONSTRUCTION

Wolsztyn has a good technical infrastructure, which may be the basis for potential investors. A well-developed sewerage network system with a sewage treatment plant, electricity, gas and water supply networks make it possible for the commune to offer investors serviced land for future investments.

Thanks to the favourable infrastructure and investment friendly atmosphere, many new facilities (including services) have been developed in several industrial areas. The examples of areas developed in compliance with the environmental laws are Komorowo and Powodowo near Wolsztyn. Other areas zoned for industrial and retail purposes are being prepared in Berzyna.

Wolsztyn commune is an industrial, service and cultural centre. The foundation of the local economy are small and medium-size manufacturing, trading and service companies. They can rely on constant supply of qualified workforce thanks to the high number of graduates of technical colleges, business schools, and local vocational schools.

The economic situation of the commune bodes well for the future due to the skilful use of the geographical, social and infrastructural opportunities as well as creating growth opportunities for the existing and new businesses. One of the main assets of the commune is its location



next to the national road connecting Poznań and Zielona Góra as well as easy access to the western border.

The natural conditions of Wolsztyn commune are favourable for agriculture development and obtaining high yields. Rape growing, vegetables (especially asparagus and onions), mushrooms as well as pig and poultry farming are of particular importance.





TOURISM AND RECREATION

The commune is situated on the border of poznańskie and lubuskie lake districts. Thanks to its post glacial terrain, numerous forests, lakes, and monuments as well as its sports infrastructure, the commune is considered a tourist attractive region.

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History lovers will find here historic temples (in Wolsztyn and Obra), palaces surrounded by parks (in Wolsztyn, Chorzemin, Gościeszyn, Wroniawy), a heritage park with the architecture of historic Wielkopolska countryside (in Wolsztyn), outstanding museums devoted to famous figures such as Robert Koch, a Nobel laureate, and Marcin Rożek, a sculptor (both in Wolsztyn). The jewel on the map of historical treasures is of course the famous Wolsztyn Steam Locomotive Shed.

Forests, lakes, the Obra River canals, the picturesque Dojca River, old trees alleys, historic palace parks and protected areas attract many nature lovers, especially those who appreciate peace and quiet of natural surroundings. Suffice to say; over 37% of the commune's area is covered by forests and the landscape of the region is varied thanks to the presence of 8 lakes. One of the interesting rivers flowing through the commune is the Dojca, which winds through forests and meadows. It joins Wolszyńskie and Berzyńskie lakes in the Wolsztyn tunnel valley. The expanding infrastructure, including cycle lanes and marinas for water sports enthusiasts, makes leisure in Wolsztyn Region more and more attractive every year.





COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Wolsztyn partnerships with foreign towns and communes have a long tradition. The cooperation takes place in many areas from youth and sports teams exchange programmes, through meetings of local government representatives to cooperation of social activists.

COOPERATION WITH LÜBBEN

The cooperation with the German town of Lübben has the oldest history. Its beginning dates back to 1990. The similarity and closeness of the two towns (180 km) facilitate various common activities. During the celebration of the 15th anniversary of signing the partnership agreement between Wolsztyn and Lübben in 2008, a square in Wodna Street was opened and named the Square of Town Partnership.

COOPERATION WITH MAASBREE / PEEL EN MAAS

The cooperation with the Dutch commune of Maasbree resulted from individual friendships and relationships, especially of craftsmen. It led to signing a partnership agreement. As a sign of friendship between Wolsztyn and the Dutch town of Maasbree, a monument in the shape of a braided knot (by a Japanese sculptor Shikichi Tajiri) was unveiled in the market square. As a result of Maasbree merging with several other Dutch communes, a new commune formed and adopted the name of Peel en Mass. It continues the partnership with Wolsztyn.

COOPERATION WITH BAD BEVENSEN

The opening of the borders enabled cooperation between Wolsztyn inhabitants and the homeland association of Heimatkreis Wollstein e.V from Bad Bevensen in Germany. The partnership agreement from 2002 between the Homeland Association and Robert Koch Museum tightened the cooperation, whose good example is the support for the Wolsztyn hospital, which the hospital has been receiving from the Association for many years. Other examples include the reconstruction and renovation of Robert Koch Museum, the renovation of the church tower clock and subsidising the exchange of the roof tiles on the tower of the former Evangelical church, now a Catholic church of the Lord Ascension.

COOPERATION WITH DOMONT

The cooperation with the town of Domont near Paris was initiated in 1996, although the partnership agreement was signed several years later. In order to commemorate this event, an oak was planted in the Wolsztyn Market Square. The cooperation covers numerous areas such as mutual town promotion, support for various associations' activities, development of cultural, tourist and economic exchange. What is also worth mentioning are the relations maintained by the Rotary Clubs from both partner towns.

COOPERATION WITH NEUNKIRCHEN

Since 1986, Neunkirchen has been partners with Lübben. Thanks to the involvement of Lübben town authorities, Wolsztyn established relations and signed a sports cooperation agreement with Neunkirchen. Its main purpose was to support youth sports exchange. In the years of 2008-2010 the cooperation expanded, which resulted in signing a partnership agreement.

COOPERATION WITH LITYN

The partnership between Wolsztyn and its eastern neighbour Lityn in Ukraine has the shortest history. Lityn is the capital of Lityn Raion, which is part of Vinnytsia Oblast. The partnership agreement was signed in 2011 and its purpose is to promote bilateral relations. In particular, they regard culture, sport, education, health, social matters, environmental protection, youth exchange, cooperation of associations and exchange of local governments' experience.



Wolsztyn



at full steam!



Wolsztyn Administration Office and Tourist Information

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www.wolsztyn.pl; [fb.com/gciwolsztyn](https://www.facebook.com/gciwolsztyn)

Purchase of regional souvenirs:

Shop MASTER, ul. 5 Stycznia 39, Wolsztyn

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