

Masuria – time to breathe for business

**The Great Masurian
Lakes District**

**Accommodation
17,000 beds**

231 facilities, including:

- 1 hotel ★★★★★
- 6 hotels ★★★★☆
- 17 hotels ★★★☆☆





The Great Masurian Lakes 2020 was founded in 2015, based on the belief that „together we can do more“. With the combined forces of local governments around the Great Masurian Lakes, we have been able to make significant changes in the entire region. Our joint activities have accelerated the development of the region and its ever richer and more attractive tourist offer.

By launching the local economic information system, various revitalisation activities and modernizing the infrastructure, we encourage businesses to invest in the broadly understood tourism industry in Masuria.

The aim of the Great Masurian Lakes 2020 is to create optimal conditions for the development of tourism. At the same time, we will protect the greatest treasure of the region – its unique natural heritage.

Masuria is a region with great prospects for both the authorities and investors. The tourist season lasts all year round, the spa character of Masurian towns and the high quality of life of the residents are the vision that guides local government officials and is implemented through joint ventures.



GROWING ACCESSIBILITY OF MASURIA

Although the geographical location of Masuria is still the same, in the last decade the Land of the Great Masurian Lakes has become infinitely more accessible to the residents of Warszawa, Silesia, and even other European countries. We owe this primarily to the construction of road infrastructure, the development of railways and the Olsztyn-Mazury airport, as well as the Wi-Fi network that is already present almost everywhere in the region and which knows no borders.

The history of the Olsztyn-Mazury airport goes back to pre-war times. It had been used only sporadically until in the 21st century it found an investor with a vision and ambition. On 20 January 2016, the modern airport was officially opened. At first only flights to Berlin were offered, but soon the number of connections increased and included such destinations as Kraków, Wrocław, Munich, Warszawa, London, Oslo, Dortmund, Cologne, Bremen and Burgas. The number of passengers using the airport is over 150,000. In this way, the first airport in north-eastern Poland made the region previously considered a remote province more accessible from many places in Europe. Regular seasonal cruises and charter flights translate into concrete results: growing use of hotel, catering and recreational facilities in the entire region, and – for some of the business people – the choice of Masuria for their company headquarters location.

Olsztyn-Mazury Airport is the second airport in Poland enabling private jet passengers to use GA Premium services. They are designed to provide business customers with access to priority check-in while maintaining the highest quality of service.

It is possible thanks to the so-called special zones in a restricted area of the airport. They allow for the minimization of passenger and luggage screening procedures while ensuring the necessary safety standards.

The modernization of roads allows you to reach Masuria from Gdańsk and Warszawa in just over two hours. All thanks to the S7 expressway that connects Kraków, Warszawa and Gdańsk. Soon, the traffic system will be complemented by new sections of the S8 and S16, ensuring the transport of goods in the north-south and east-west directions.

Those who prefer travelling by train can take one headed for Giżycko, Pisz or Ruciane-Nida and travel very comfortably. Development plans for the coming years also cover other railway junctions in the region.

Masuria is connected with the Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation by as many as 9 border crossings – by road (Bezledy, Gołdap, Gronowo, Grzechotki), rail (Braniewo, Głomno and Skandawa) and sea (Elbląg and Frombork).





STANDARDS WORTH STARS

The hotel offer in Masuria adapts to global trends and tries to exceed the expectations of its guests. Accommodation can be easily found in a barn, an elegant palace, a country cottage or high-class designer interiors. Organizers of business trips and people working remotely love the green asylum in north-eastern Poland.

The common feature of the Masurian hotel offer is its continuously growing standard. Modern clients know what they want and so the hosts try to outdo each other in ideas how to satisfy their guests' requirements.

Let's start with the most obvious hotels – those whose standard is measured with stars.

In 2010, there were only seven four-star hotels and one five-star hotel in the entire Warmian-Masurian Province. Today this number has grown to twenty-two four-star and four five-star hotels. Most of them are located on the Great Masurian Lakes. Many significant business events take place in the hotels of this class – conferences, galas and banquets.

The Hotel Gołębiewski in Mikołajki remains the only hotel in Masuria that provides comfortable accommodation for over a thousand guests at a time. The hotel offers over 700 rooms and suites. It has everything that is expected from a hotel of this class: from restaurants and cafes, through the Tropikana water park, SPA rooms, floating equipment, to an all-year-round ice rink and a ski slope. When designing the building, the investor foresaw also something else: 9,000 m² of exhibition and conference space. Although until

recently the Hotel Gołębiewski had a monopoly on all business events, today it loses some of its potential clients to other facilities, which can accommodate slightly smaller groups of guests. One of them is the five-star Hotel Mikołajki, which impresses at first sight with its location. Partially built on the Bird Island on Lake Mikołajskie, it offers several dozen top-class rooms and suites with beautiful views of the lake. From those on the ground floor, guests go out directly onto the pier, often to their own yacht moored there. Great architecture, beautiful interiors and consistency with the Masurian landscape make this place a real gem. The hotel also has a carefully tailored business offer, including a high-class conference and presentation space as well as a number of attractions for its guests.

However, business groups are looking for various spaces. The four-star Zamek Ryn hotel was built in the mid-14th century by the Teutonic Knights as a bridgehead for armed expeditions to Lithuania. The intimate St. Bruno hotel in Giżycko has a similar history. Both hotels, apart from rooms, offer conference facilities, as well as a spa and a swimming pool. St. Bruno's business offer is complemented by an attribute quite rare in Polish hotels: a Tesla car charger.

The Mrągowo Resort & Spa, a four-star hotel in Mrągowo, is also worthy of attention, which, built along with an amphitheater on Lake Czos, has become a favorite place for festival participants. Due to a large spa and extensive recreational facilities, the hotel welcomes families from all over Poland all year round. Hotel Marina Śniardwy Resort & SPA in Nowe Guty in addition to car rental, attracts



guests with a beach, pier and six-person Dutch houses located right on the lake.

The number of stars is not the only determinant of the standard and popularity. The quality of many three-star facilities satisfies even the most demanding guests. A good example is the Ognisty Ptak hotel on Lake Świącajtę near Węgorzewo. It consists of a building with rooms of various sizes and fifteen comfortable bungalows with fireplaces. The investor referred to the local tradition not only with the name (this was the name of the fastest ice-boat in Masuria), but also with the character of the building and its winter attraction, i.e. ice-boats.

In the era of the Internet, ratings on tourism websites are more important than stars. On booking.com the two-star Hotel Joseph Conrad from Pisz has the highest guest rating among all the aforementioned hotels. This hotel is located at the beginning of the Great Masurian Lakes Trail, on the southern shore of Lake Roś, just 5 meters from the shore. In addition to rooms, it has a conference room, separate summer houses and a lakeside hostel for sailors.



BUSINESS NEEDS SILENCE

Company trips are not always events organised by large enterprises and corporations. Meetings outside the office are becoming increasingly popular regardless of size or industry. Organisers of such trips prefer quiet, restored Prussian mansions and palaces, which also provide space for creative and conceptual work. Prussians left behind a lot of palaces, manors and public buildings, which dilapidated over the years, but then found investors who restored them to their former glory, and now they take on a completely new character.



Folwark Bielskie, located in a small village on the border of Masuria Garbate, consists of three restored historic buildings, which combine tradition and modernity. There is also a converted barn with spacious rooms and a common area.

Soon the family seat of the Lehndorfs, with new owners, will reappear on the map of the region as the renovation of their 17th-century palace in Sztynort has started. After many years, the building and an extensive park with oak avenues have been opened to the public. Another property of the Lehndorf family – Hunter's Manor – is located next to the forest. Moved from Sztynort to the edge of the Piska Forest and carefully rebuilt, the wooden manor house has a small cinema room and a restaurant serving seasonal traditional dishes. In this area there are buildings with rooms and apartments as well as two original old-town houses. The whole has been recreated with great reverence and decorated in the old style. There are no TV sets in the entire facility – the hosts offer board games instead.



ACTION AND REST

In the age of remote work, for many people, an agritourism facility or a home guesthouse with fast Wi-Fi becomes an ideal place to perform their work duties. Closeness to nature, peace and clean air are conducive not only to work, but also quick regeneration. A good example of such a place is an agritourism facility on the Kal Peninsula called Ranczo Robertówka. It offers several apartments, studios and a Dutch house. It also has its own shoreline and a pier. Another unique, lakeside facility is Hotel Jabłoń in Pisz, whose intimate location, training and exhibition space with a view of the forest and the lake are only some of its numerous advantages.

If you look for a house or a cottage for rent, you will find them, for example, in Wrony near Giżycko. These are three houses with a private port and a beach on Lake Tajty. Another interesting place of this type is a group of seven 4-person log cabins at Lake Bodnie in Rydzewo. Each has its own garden and terrace located just 20 meters from the lake.

The accommodation offer is not limited to large facilities on large, interconnected lakes; there are also facilities situated near small ones, and there is still place for more. An example of such a luxurious offer for a group of 8 guests is Lake House Dom Poręby by the small lake Dobrynek. It has a living room, the entire wall of which is made of windows, an 80-meter terrace and a very well-equipped kitchen. Those looking for even more intimate places will find them, for example, in Gałkowo, in the agritourism farm called Pan Tu Nie Spał. It offers 3 rooms in a conver-

ted barn, an orangery with a summer cinema and a large garden with a traditional banya.

What connects most of the intimate facilities in Masuria is love for nature, which can be found in the surroundings and on the plate. The hosts often serve meals only from local produce, and they also make various specialties themselves. The owners of Robertówka produce cheese, in Chrosiówka you can taste homemade sourdough bread and rennet cheese, and in Gościniec Boćcianowo – preserves from their own garden. Every year, fish connoisseurs gladly return to Bogaczewo, where Rybaczkówka, famous in the entire region, is located. In Agrozagadka, located in the same town and also worth visiting, you can buy ecological specialties. For many years, Słowiczówka in Ukta, on the other hand, has been particularly famous and recommended for its regional dinner. In atmospheric guesthouses, there is usually an opportunity to meet the hosts personally, which for many people is very important.

Undoubtedly, the Masurian tourist offer focuses on the „here and now” experience. It tempts with flavours, aromas, conversation and everything that is sensual, pristine and derived from nature. In our technology-dominated, hectic and noisy world, Masuria becomes a slow-down paradise for tourists from all over Poland and Europe. Not to mention an important health-promoting quality of the region – its clean air, which according to the estimates of the Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, is four times cleaner than in Warszawa and as much as twelve times cleaner than in Karków.



SEASON THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

For several years, Masuria has recorded a steady increase in tourist traffic, and the hospitality industry is constantly developing. Currently, there are over half a thousand accommodation facilities in the entire province, of which approximately 25% are hotels with the highest occupancy rates per year. The rich recreational infrastructure allows tourists to enjoy attractions also in the off-season. At the moment, four- and five-star facilities record around 50% occupancy over a 12-month period. This is a satisfactory result, but the ambition of business people and local government officials is the season that lasts all year round.

To achieve this, the local governments want to expand the available tourist attractions – so that Masuria has something to offer at any time of the year. The summer sailing offer is already being increased by adding e.g. free sailing workshops while in winter, in Ekomarina in Giżycko, under the supervision of experienced instructors, you can learn iceboating. In turn, fans of skating can use the indoor ice rink at the Masurian Ice Sports Centre in Giżycko during the winter and summer holidays.

There is still space in the region for large hotels with extensive recreational facilities that would provide guests with relaxation and entertainment regardless of the weather or the season. The next initiative is not new, but still relevant. It is the establishment of a fishing centre, because there is no bad weather for anglers. The third is to use the potential of bicycle routes. They turn out to be quite suitable for cross-country skiing, because although in Poland there is less and less snow each year, there are still abundant snowfalls on our “Cold Pole”.

Silver tourism, i.e. the one dedicated to senior citizens, is another area in which Masurian investors see hope and one that will also open the market of goods designed for the elderly.

There used to be over 240 health resort in Poland, today there are just over 45, and the demand for this type of service is constantly growing. Masurian communes can therefore invest in this type of infrastructure in order to be considered health resort reviving pre-war traditions.



TRAINING WITH A BONUS

A quarter of a century ago, multinationals introduced to Poland the idea of business events. At that time, Masuria was still considered a sailing province, good for holidays, not necessarily for business. Today, it is a region that attracts corporate communities, business people and people fleeing the agglomeration to regain harmony and balance.

The gates of Masuria opened for the corporate events market quite recently, and this was due to two key factors: accessibility and hotels. The developed road infrastructure and the construction of the airport allowed quick travel from Warszawa and a convenient flight from Kraków. New hotels in Masuria outclassed many facilities built in the nineties. Architects of recreational facilities want to fit into the extraordinary landscape of the region. In many cases, the very shape of the hotel, the facade and the way of arranging the surroundings delight the guests. They come not only to work and train, but also to take a break from the hustle and bustle, replenish their energy, log out of the omnipresent Internet, and finally get a second wind.

Thanks to the constantly expanding offer of available attractions, Masuria competes with Pomerania and the south of Poland. In forests, you can play field games, do geocaching, survival, participate in bicycle rallies, or organize increasingly popular mushroom picking or herbal workshops. The water is conducive to regattas, dragon boat

competitions, canoeing, as well as fishing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and diving lessons. Horse riding enthusiasts will not be bored either. Among the many excellent studs it is worth mentioning the Ferenstein Stud in Gałkowoów, owned by Karolina Ferenstein-Kraśko. On the other hand, fans of unusual experiences can enjoy a bird's eye view of the Land of Great Lakes from a balloon, motor-glider or light aircraft. The annual Mazury AirShow in Giżycko attracts aviation fans from all over Poland, and the international air rallies held at the airports of Warmia and Masuria are becoming more and more popular.

Moreover, the changing climate means that the open-air season starts in May and ends only in November. Many people say that there is no bad weather, only bad clothes. In winter Masuria offers tourists beautiful cross-country skiing routes, three slopes for downhill skiing in Mrągowo, Mikołajki and the village of Okrągłe. You can also take part in snowkiting competitions and iceboating regattas, which are held every year in Giżycko.

It is no wonder then that the number of company cars coming to Masuria is constantly growing. The faster technology and civilization develop, the more we miss what we have sacrificed for them. Here we find nature and peace, but also comfort and convenient access to Wi-Fi, which allow us to combine work and leisure.



DON'T MISS THIS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY!

The Masurian event calendar abounds not only with music festivals, picnics and cabaret shows, but also events dedicated to business. They are attended by business people and scientists – leaders of various industries and experts in their respective fields.

Particularly noteworthy regular annual events are the Masurian Water Sports Fair combined with the Post-Season Water Equipment Fair. You can meet dozens of exhibitors from all over Poland and Europe. There are thousands of visitors to the Port of Stranda in Giżycko at that time. In turn, the Gastro-Hotel Fair is an event that takes place every year in five Polish cities, famous for their increased tourist traffic, and has already held in Mikołajki many times.

The organizers of many industry events choose Masuria because of the charm of the region and the hotels that are perfectly adapted to such events. The Gołębiowski Hotel hosted, inter alia, AB Innovation Days, i.e. the most important

household appliances and audio/video devices fair in the distribution industry, organized by AB SA. – the largest supplier of consumer electronics in Central and Eastern Europe. In turn, in the magnificent courtyard of the Ryn Hotel, regular trade fairs for the meat, catering, telecommunications, internet and furniture industries are held. It is also a meeting place for scientists and the production of television programmes such as the Master Chef final.

When planning an integration trip, it is worth first looking at the rich calendar of Masurian events. They can become an additional attraction of your stay in Masuria. Enthusiasts of small events may be interested in e.g. the Local Good Food Fair „On Saturday in the orchard”, the Masurian Fair tempting with locally arranged flavours and varieties, or the Christmas Variety Market „Beautiful & Delicious”, whose aim is to promote good quality products, supporting local creators and craftsmen and building neighbourly and business relations.



 **Great Masurian
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Association

Free copy

ul. Kolejowa 6
11-730 Mikołajki
+48 515 576 658

biuro@mazurytobiznes.pl
www.mazurytobiznes.pl



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