Wloclawek
History, Maps, Photos

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Wloclawek is located in the Kujawsko – Pomorskie Voivodeship in central Poland along the Wisla River.
Large Tourist Map in Wloclawek
The History of Wloclawek

- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Wloclawek is first mentioned in a papal document from Pope Eugene III in 1148. The Latin word used was Vladislaviensis.
- Later, the town was called Vladislavienis et Pomeraniae (Wloclawek and Pomerania).
- The town may have been named after Wladyslaw I Herman, or his grandson Wladyslaw II the Exile, or also Vladislav II of Bohemia.
- Around 1265 it was granted town rights by Casimir, Duke of Kujawy.
- The town was constantly invaded by the Teutonic Knights in the 13th century, and eventually it was completely destroyed. In 1466 a treaty called “The Peace of Torun” was signed with the knights, and Wloclawek began to flourish once again.
Over 25 granaries were constructed along the river along with a new customs house.

In the late 18th century Sweden invaded many times and Wloclawek suffered massive destruction. Reforms in the late 18th century reestablished the town and it enjoyed prosperity again.

The 19th century brought great economic development, and many new industrial plants were built. These plants produced paper, farm implements, hardware and the country’s largest cellulose factory.

Wloclawek was a major shipping port in the 1800’s and early 1900’s. Farming and industry flourished & many products such as grain, fruits and vegetables, wood, and ceramics were exported.

A major railway was constructed in 1862, between Warsaw and Bydgoszcz, creating another means of transporting goods.
During the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, a large Jewish population inhabited the region. Many factories were owned by Jewish men.

In 1939, after the Nazi invasion of Poland, Wloclawek became the first town where Jewish people were forced to wear the Star of David arm patch. 1000’s of Jewish men, women and children were sent to the Lodz Ghetto, and eventually killed.

From 1939-1944 the town was called Leslau. During WWII a large part of the town was destroyed, as the battles raged across northern Poland. First it was the Nazi moving east towards Russia, then with the Russians heading west, driving the Nazi back towards Germany.

After the war, the country was controlled by the Communist government, based in Russia. Slowly, the town was rebuilt, and farming and industry grew, and life resumed again.

In the 1960’s, the town flourished again. A dam was built on the Wisla, and Hydro-electric power was created, along with a host of new factories.
Wloclawek Flag and Crests
Wloclawek Today

http://www.naszwloclawek.pl/galeria/zawisle1/slide.html
House on Brzeska street

photo; PKO via Wikipedia
Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of Mary

Construction began in the year 1340

Photo; pl.wiki Kolanin
Saint Witalis Church - 1330
Church of John the Baptist
1538
Father Jerzy Popieluszko was a Catholic priest and strong opponent of communist rule in Poland. He preached to this end from his pulpit and his sermons, broadcast over Radio Free Europe, were heard all over Poland. He was very famous among the Polish people.

Despite warnings from the government and his own Bishop, he continued to preach his opposition.

On October 19, 1984, Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a Catholic priest and staunch defender of Polish freedom, was kidnapped near the city of Torun by 3 communist police officers.

He was brutally beaten and murdered then thrown off the bridge at the dam in Wloclawek into the Wisla river. His body was discovered on October 30th.

The 3 officers were arrested, tried in open court and convicted of their crimes, but were later released.

Photo: http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl
Father Popieluszko’s funeral was held on November 3rd, and over 250,000 people attended, among them was Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.

Today, a memorial plaque resides at the bridge.

Photos: www.wikipedia.com
View from base of bridge towards city

photo:jamzewsizazamcze via Wikipedia
Wloclawek, once a major shipping port

- In the 19th & early 20th century, Wloclawek, situated on the Wisla river, was a major inland shipping port. Products were distributed throughout Poland and some neighboring countries.
- Some of the main products shipped in the 1800’s were wood, minerals, ceramics, farm tools, and farm produce.
In the 19th century, industrial manufacturing flourished, and the Wisla continued to be a means of transporting products.

WWII, and after many years under Communist rule, the river was dammed and large volumes of industrial waste were dumped into the Wisla, causing a pollution problem that exists today.