



Busko-Zdrój is a town in the Świętokrzyskie Province of Poland, the capital of the Busko District and today having a population of around 35,000. Historically, the origins of the settlement of Busko can be traced back to the 12th century when shepherds settled around the local church of St Leonard's. In 1185, a knight called Derslaw, the owner of Busko and its surroundings founded a convent for Norbertine nuns on his lands, to whom he left his property upon his death in 1241. King Bolesław V Wstydliwy granted the convent revenue privileges in 1251 which allowed it to use the natural mineral waters found there. This is the first recorded use of the waters from Busko. The town of Busko was granted civic rights in 1287 and because of its advantageous location on trade routes the town received the right in 1412 to hold a weekly market and two trade fairs a year. The 15th and 16th centuries were a boom for the town as it became famous as a trading centre and for its cloth production. In 1922 the public spa resort was identified as having a character of general interest.

Today the town of Busko-Zdrój is a rapidly growing recreation and sanatorium resort and administrative centre. The surrounding villages meanwhile are a valuable agricultural region and dominated with the cultivation of fruit and vegetables but the most fashionable sphere of operation amongst the larger farms is agri-tourism.

Busko-Zdrój is one of Poland's major spa centres. It is located in the southern part of the Province, about 50km south of Kielce and 80km north of Kraków. It lies at an altitude about 220m and 250m above sea level in a region known as the "Ponidzie" which extends to the slopes of the "Wojczansko-Pinczowski Rise". The city has wonderful ecological conditions as there is no industry in a 50km radius. Certain elements of the spa can be found on the southern edge of the town.

Busko has a lowland climate, moderately stimulating, with continental characteristics. Extreme temperatures can reach as high as 60°C but the average annual temperatures are between 7°C and 8°C which are some of the highest in Poland. Busko-Zdrój belongs to the "medium-dry" types of spa as the annual relative humidity is between 71% and 80% and with approximately 1151 hours of sunshine annually is one of the sunniest spa centres in the country. The bioclimatic conditions in Busko-Zdrój are essential for the accurate treatment of many diseases, especially patients with impaired systemic circulation.

The greatest wealth of the Busko lands is the mineral waters and the mud which are natural therapeutic agents. The waters extracted from the wells at the spa fall into two categories, sulphur and a combination of iodine and bromide. The former is among one of the rarest mineral waters and its healing properties makes Busko-Zdrój one of a few unique spa centres in Europe. Sulphur penetrates the skin into the bloodstream and assists with the healing of

tendons, ligaments, cartilage, bones and other internal organs. The iodine and bromide waters are used for certain diseases of the circulatory system and autonomic nervous system. The selenium present in this water is necessary to maintain healthy heart muscles and blood vessels.

Walking and sightseeing are treated as medicinal agents, supporting the treatments in Busko. A wonderful spa garden designed in the 19th century is an area of attractive walks. The park, with many species of unique trees and the adjoining pine forest form an ideal base for sports and outdoor activities. For tourists, there are three marked trails of varying degrees of length and difficulty which are suitable for cycling in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter months. Further themed cycle trails are planned which will follow in the footsteps of secular and sacral architecture as well as nature.



„Busko Zdrój Phone: +48
Resort" 413703200
28-100 E-mail: rezer
Busko-Zdrój, wacja@ubz.p
 |
ul. F. Web:
Rzewuskiego www.uzdrowi
1 skobusko.pl

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