

The Way of St James

The famous proverb says that all roads lead to Rome. Indeed it was so up to the tenth century, until a rival appeared - the Santiago de Compostela. A few centuries later Dante Alighieri divided Europe's pilgrims into three groups: those heading to the Holy Land (the *palmeros* or *palmieri* in commemoration of those greeting Christ with palm branches), to St Peter's tomb in Rome (*romeros* or *romani*, i.e. "the Romans") and those going to the resting place of St James – the *peregrini*. And this Latin word was later adopted by European languages: *pelerin*, *pilgrim*, *Pilger*, *pielgrzym*. It seems that the Polish word *peleryna* [meaning *cloak* or *cape*] also traces its origins to this Latin word. Likewise the word *zakiet* [meaning *jacket*] is the Polonized version of the French name for James – *Jacques*.

The *peregrini* were originally knights heading to fight the Moors on the Iberian Peninsula. Later on merchants and urban dwellers would link their pious journey with the opportunity to do business. Diplomatic journeys of crowned heads and aristocracy were also the norm. Also criminals would go on long pilgrimages as a form of penance... Up to the fifteenth century Santiago de Compostela was one of the most visited

places on the continent, receiving up to 500 thousand pilgrims each year.

Among those traveling to Compostela were also pilgrims from Poland. In year 1379 the king of Aragon, Pedro VI, granted safe conduct to four knights riding horseback to the tomb of St James, they were: Stanislaus de Vederkere, Swenthoslaus de Schubyn, Clemens de Mokrsko and Jacobus Cztan, courtiers of the king of Poland, Louis (I) the Great. Silesians also went on pilgrimage. Among them was Piotr Rindfleisch from Wrocław, starting his journey in Antwerp in 1506.

The same year, the town council of Wrocław wrote letters of recommendation for Jan Wenczel from Luban and Jerzy Scheibnitz from Widawa, also traveling to Compostela. Among the memoirs of pilgrims traveling to Santiago up to the year 1600, three were written by Silesians. Chapels and Churches dedicated to St James built from the XII century onwards (mostly along main roads) give further evidence of the presence of the cult of St James in Silesia.

In the following centuries, marked by religious wars and revolutions in Western Europe, the importance of Compostela diminished. However, the characteristic emblem carried by

those traveling to Compostela, the shell, remained recognised.

Across those few centuries, the Camino joined cities, regions and countries, becoming the "skeleton" of Europe. Pope John Paul II drew attention to this during his visit to Santiago de Compostela on the 9th of November 1982: "The whole of Europe found itself because of this souvenir of St James, in the centuries when Europe was forming into a uniform and united spiritually continent. *Find yourself! Be yourself! Discover your beginnings. Breathe life into your roots (...) Pay to the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and pay to God what belongs to God*".

In 1986 the Council of Europe named the Camino the first European route of great cultural importance and Santiago itself – the Cultural Capital of Europe. The Council of Europe appealed to authorities, institutions and citizens to support the reconstruction of the Camino's pilgrim routes and the preservation of the natural wonders and historical buildings along the routes. The cooperation of towns and regions lying on the route is also of significance.

The Silesian Camino is the first reconstructed route in Poland,

linking the pilgrim centre of St James in Jakubów near Głogów with Zgorzelec. It was opened in July 2005 thanks to the initiative of the "Brotherhood of St James" and the help of the "Franciscan Village Foundation". Jakubów - only a small town today, but serving as the Santiago of Silesia since the middle ages - became its starting point. The local church founded in 991 and the nearby spring of St James are witnesses to the cult of the Apostle - the patron of pilgrims, travelers and seekers.

The Silesian Camino has grown over the last few years - in 2006 its white shells led the way from Gniezno to Głogów through Poznań and Leszno (forming the Greater Poland Way); by spring 2007 - also from Mogilno to Gniezno and by spring 2008 - from Zgorzelec to Prague. This way the pilgrim route, which in the XVI-th century led pilgrims from Kuyavia, Greater Poland and Lower Silesia to Santiago, was reborn.

This guide describes the Lower Silesian Way of St James. The Credential is an integral part of this booklet, acting as proof of completion of the stages of the pilgrimage by the pilgrim. Certificates confirming the completion of the Polish stage of the Camino de Santiago can be obtained from the tourist

information point in Zgorzelec, just before the border crossing on the Staromiejski Bridge.

This guide also contains a list of lodging-houses available to pilgrims carrying the Credential. The list is updated regularly and can also be found on-line at www.bractwoswjakuba.pl and www.camino.net.pl. The second website also contains information about other legs of the Camino in Poland. They are all intended for those wanting to rediscover their spiritual side. Something must change while traveling, through tiredness, in our feeling of dependence on the weather and others, when we discover we belong in some way to the, usually caring, reality in which "we live and move and exist" (Acts 17,28), when sensitivity becomes "richer" and when an unknown before wind flows through the heart and mind. Change, even if initially unnoticed by us, will enter into our way of thinking and feeling.

So let this be a good journey.

Buen Camino!

Jakubów (0 km / 3303 km to Santiago)

There is an information board in front of the sanctuary gate, with information about pilgrim routes in Europe and Lower Silesia. It was here that on the 24th of July 2005 the first leg of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela – the Lower Silesian Way of St James was opened.

From here we turn left and we reach a junction with the main road, we turn left and walk with a field path by cemetery to **Maniów**.

On leaving Jakubów we go southwest towards the visible elevator tower of the “Sieroszowice-Polkowice” copper mine. Since 20.06.2007 it is officially called “St James”.

Reaching this road we turn left, and with this asphalt road we arrive at crossing with a busy main road no. 229. In this point there is a marked pedestrian crossing. We recommend to exercise special caution by crossing the road.

We enter the village Jerzmanowa where on the first crossing we turn right and with a sidewalk we go until exit the village.

Behind the village there is a motel “Zajazd Jerzmanowa” (about 250 metres behind the cemetery), here we turn left to the street leading us to the premises of a new housing estate. We walk this street until the forest wall, here we turn right and by the forest border we go until reaching the forest path. Here we turn left.

The forest path heads for Golowice. After passing a few buildings we enter the forest again and turn right (with the

green bike route) before reaching the forest ranger's house. We follow the green bike route for the next 4 km. After crossing the Stegna stream, after approx. 800 metres we come to forest crossroads on which (leaving the green route) we turn right in the direction of **Żuków**, from where a marked asphalt road leads us to Grodowiec.

Grodowiec (20 km / 3283km)

From Grodowiec, the route leads southwards, along a road to Tarnówek. After a few hundred metres, after the car park, at the edge of the forest it turns right. After approx. 1 km, next to a cross the road turns right again in the direction of **Komorniki**.

The local church of St Mary Magdalene in Komorniki (rebuilt in the 80s after being in ruin for 350 years) is worth noting. The remains of the classicist palace of the von Rother family are also nearby.

From there, the road follows the blue route to **Trebez** and after passing through it, after some few hundred metres, leads to the right, into the forest. The forest path (look out for the markings of the Way) leads to a bike route perpendicular to the path - here we turn left and, after passing the cemetery and railway tracks, we enter Polkowice.

Polkowice (30 km / 3273 km)

After crossing the railway tracks, Spokojna Street changes its name to Kolejowa Street and leads us to Dąbrowskiego Street. After turning right with the blue foot route, we cross 3-go Maja Street and reach the town square with the town hall and the nearby Church of St Michael the Archangel.

From the town square, Gdańska Street leads us west. At the end of the street a wide pavement leads down to a junction (with lights) with the very busy national road No.3. After crossing it we enter Polkowice Dolne, south of which - behind old court buildings - is the new industrial zone.

Promptly after the railroad crossing and the first premises there is a forest. Here we turn left and walk with a forest path, straight all the way until the end of the forest.

When exit the forest we go straight several hundred metres (we can see the premises on the left already) and next we turn left to the village **Nowa Wieś Lubińska** reaching the crossroads.

Here we turn right and after walking tens metres we arrive at the chapel. After passing the chapel, we turn right and after passing **Parchów** we cross the road from from Polkowice to Chocianów.

After a few hundred metres , we enter the village of

Pogorzeliska.

Pogorzeliska (44 km / 3259 km)

From the Church of St Jack, we leave Pogorzeliska by the road leading in the direction of Chocianów. Having reached the road from Polkowice to Chocianów, there's an exit after the bridge - downwards along the red bike path in the direction of the forest. After about 2 km in the forest we see the markings of the red bike route which leads us into Chocianów, having crossed once more the road from Polkowice. A rubble road leads us to a crossing with the railway line, after which we turn left into Żymierskiego Street. At the next crossing we turn right into Ratuszowa Street which leads to the town square (Plac Wolności) - the centre of Chocianów.

Chocianów (51 km / 3252 km) [p20]

Signs of the Way of St James lead us from the square to Parkowa Street, behind which is a park and palace complex. Turning right, along the edge of the park, we reach Kościuszki Street, leading to Chojnów. At the edge of Chocianów, when the road clearly turns left, we go right into the forest (following the red bike route) onto an almost ideally straight road called Torflinia.

Torflinia leads the Lower Silesian Way of St James through one of the largest forest complexes in southwestern Poland: Bory Dolnośląskie. The complex will accompany us for the next 20 km; so will the green foot route. After leaving Torflinia, there are a few smaller paths at the edge of the forest, which lead us into Nowa Kuźnia.

Nowa Kuźnia (57 km / 3246 km)

All this time we're walking along the green foot route, which, straight after the second bus stop leads left onto a field road. The road leads us to the railway line from Legnica to Żagań. We walk round Modła station's grounds and reach the first buildings of Modła by following the green and yellow routes as well as remains of the old railway line. Ignoring signs of other foot routes (they depart west to connect with the Camino on the other side of the village), we go south with the main road.

Modła (63 km / 3240 km)

The Lower Silesian Camino departs Modła by leaving the asphalt road and going right just behind the church and former palace buildings, just like the green route coming in from the other side.

The Camino and green route lead southwest through a forest.

After passing a large clearing, at the crossroads go straight. At the next forest crossroads go south by turning slightly to the left. After a few hundred metres the Camino and green route lead on to an open slope which leads down to the buildings of the village Osla.

Osla (70 km / 3233 km)

A country road leads us south out of Osla. The road is about 400 metres east (to the "bottom" of the village and then right) from the church. It's also possible to leave the village by the sandy-rocky road opposite the church and then bypass from the east the former Soviet military airport.

The Lower Silesian Camino crosses the A18 Motorway from Wrocław to Berlin by a small viaduct. The widening gravel road leads us to the outskirts of **Szczytnica**, which we first bypass from the north (first asphalt road to the right, and then left after the railway crossing), and after passing St Anthony's church, we go diagonally left. Here we leave the green route. The clearly visible field road leading southwest leads us to the first buildings of Tomaszów Bolesławiecki, at the edge of which, we gently turn left entering an asphalt road from Krzyżowa, from which the red bike route also comes in. After

about 300 metres we cross the historic Via Regia (today's busy national road No. 4) for the first time (take care on the pedestrian crossing). We then turn right and reach an old bridge.

Tomaszów Bolesławiecki (81 km / 3222 km)

After crossing the old bridge on the Bobrzyca river, the Camino turns left, in the direction of Warta Bolesławiecka. However, after a while, after the transformer station, it leads rightwards, slightly uphill in the direction of the "Borowski" glass works, which it bypasses, leaving them to the right. A clearly visible field road leads to the edge of a forest and then along the edges of it, in an approximately constant distance from National road No. 4, and reaches the remains of the old railway line.

Kruszyn (86 km / 3217 km)

The Lower Silesian Camino leads through the Southern edge of Kruszyn, near the old Kruszynek grange, which, after the closure of the railway line from Bolesławiec to Nowa Wieś Grodziska, lost much of its importance.

The Lower Silesian Camino bypasses the centre of Kruszyn and the Gnodów housing estate from the south, reaches a cluster of newer houses and turns mildly to the right onto a

street. It then crosses the asphalt road and leads to the grain elevators visible in the distance, entering the administrative borders of Bolesławiec. Just after the fence of the elevators, we turn right, like the green route and next, going straight to the west cut across a small forest and enter the town via Piastów Street. At the junction with Spółdzielcza Street, when the green and blue routes lead rightwards, we go straight into Buczka Street, and then almost intuitively slightly left into Asnyka Street, of which Sierpnia '80 Street is a continuation. Here we can see the modern building of the district council towering on the left and behind it, the Sanctuary of the Assumed Mother of the Church.

Bolesławiec (90 km / 3213 km)

We leave the town square of Bolesławiec, with its picturesque houses (mostly rebuilt after World War II) via Prusa Street and, after a short while, turn left into Karpecka Street, which leads to Zamkowy Place. From the church, we follow Partyzantów Avenue, which leads us again to Prusa Street and then to Zgorzelecka Street which leads us to a bridge on the Bóbr river. Next to a church, the Camino turns left (watch out for the traffic) into Zabórze Street, which, after 2.5 km once more, but only for a moment leads us back to National Road No. 4.

On the other side, we see a large cemetery gate. The cemetery is the resting-place of Russian soldiers who died in the Bolesławiec area during Napoleon's campaign in 1813 as well as Soviet soldiers who died in World War II.

About 100 metres after passing the cemetery, the Camino descends left onto a wide sandy road, which leads into a pinewood. With the yellow foot route named after L. Piątkowski, we reach the first buildings of Mierzwin. At the first junction, after emerging from the forest, we turn left (watch out for the lorries from the nearby sand-pit) and just after passing the bridge and bus stop – right, onto the main village street. Follow the street to a junction next to a small chapel.

Mierzwin (99 km / 3204 km)

Having passed the chapel, near the end of the asphalt road and Mierzwin's last houses, the Camino goes slightly uphill and turns left onto an old southbound road visible among the trees. After reaching a perpendicular asphalt road, we turn right in the direction of Zabłocie. After 700 metres, before the Smogórsko housing estate, near a tall energy mast, we leave the asphalt and turn left onto a clearly visible southbound gravel road. After a

few hundred metres this road meets another field road coming in from the east – here we turn right and at the next crossing of field roads – left, going further away from the Smogórsko buildings. The gravel road leads us further southwards (in good weather we should see the Karkonosze mountain range) to the asphalt road from Ocice to Nowogrodzic – here we turn right in the direction of a small forest. After passing the forest and a group of houses, still following the road to Nowogrodzic, we reach a right turn, before which stands a quite large roadside chapel. Just behind it, we turn left onto a, rocky at first, field road, which leads us to the first houses of Nowogrodzic. We turn right onto an asphalt road and then, next to a white roadside chapel with a statue of Our Lady - left onto another parallel street. Having turned into it, after a few hundred metres we reach a road from Bolesławiec and going leftwards, we reach the town square via the town's main street. From this point, for the next 20 km (until departing Henryków) the Camino leads along asphalt roads, which should be taken into account when choosing appropriate footwear.

Nowogrodzic (108 km / 3195 km)

Having passed the town square in Nowogrodzic, we still follow the main street in the direction of Lubań, and after about

150 metres after the railway crossing, we turn left (with the yellow bike route). With this road, leading along the eastern bank of the river Kwisa, we go through Nawojów Śląski, already belonging to the Lubań district. Along the way, the clearly visible steep hill to the left of the road is worth noting. It holds a settlement from the early middle ages (VIII – XI century) of the area of about 26x40 metres. Still following the river Kwisa, we see from afar the towers of Lubań and we reach Uniegoszcza, the only Silesian part (from 1977) of this Upper Lusatian town.

Lubań (121 km / 3182 km)

After crossing the bridge on the Kwisa, the Camino leads along Lwówecka Street (take care near its leftward turn behind the sports hall) into the town centre, to 3 Maja Square. Turn right, next to the city council headquarters, in the direction of the visible round tower and enter Bracka street, the town's promenade.

After passing the town hall's tower, the Camino leads left and out of Lubań's old town via Ratuszowa Street. The yellow shells of Via Regia lead through Zgorzelecka Street, however the Lower Silesian Camino leads down a longer, by about 2 km, route passing the new church of St James to the Piastów

housing estate. The Via Regia shells lead to the church of the Holy Trinity and the Magdalene monastery.

After the junction of Zgorzelecka and Kopernika Streets (here is where the old Hospital of St James used to be; today on our left we have a supermarket and on our right – a motel) we reach a dual carriageway leading to Zgorzelec. Due to the traffic, it is best to cross the road near the PKS (bus) depot (this is the town's last pedestrian crossing on road No. 30). On its left is the Millennium Cross erected in 2000 and the building site of St Hedwig's church.

Following the road to Zgorzelec we pass the road heading to Żagań and after about 300 metres, exactly where the road narrows to a single carriageway, we turn right into **Pisarzowice**.

On reaching the parish church of the Motherhood of Our Lady, the Camino turns right into a very quiet asphalt road leading to Henryków's cemetery. After reaching the road leading through the village, we turn left, to the west, entering the ER-4 bike route, which will keep us company through the next 17 km, until we reach Łagów near Zgorzelec.

Henryków (128 km / 3175 km)

The western end of Henryków is the home of Poland's, and

possibly even central Europe's, oldest tree. The 1250-1300 year old yew tree (taxus baccata) remains in good form despite being damaged during the Napoleonic wars, in 1945 and during a wind-storm in 1990.

Having passed Henryków's yew tree, we leave the village via the main road and after passing the bus stop, enter onto a westbound forest path. After coming out of the forest, we turn right near the cemetery and reach an asphalt road, which weaves to the left leading us into Sławnikowice.

Sławnikowice (133 km / 3170 km)

After passing the church and the palace's farm buildings, the Camino turns right and, like the ER-4 bike route, via an asphalt road leads to Gronów. At the village's main junction, the Camino turns left just to turn right after a short while onto an avenue of oaks.

Gronów (136 km / 3167 km)

The avenue leads us out of Gronów, next it leads us (with the ER-4) through the tiny villages of Łakocin and Pokrzywnik. Pokrzywnik has retained a small XIX century country manor. At the road fork near the cross, we turn slightly to the right in the direction of Łagów. We don't reach Łagów's buildings, but

turn right onto a clearly visible westbound field road. It leads us under the A4 motorway. On reaching a curving asphalt road, we descend right and walk between breeding ponds and reach Jędrzychowice's buildings within a few minutes. After walking under a flyover we cross the junction in the centre of the village and turn left after a few dozen metres in the direction of the visible church.

Jędrzychowice (146 km / 3157 km)

Leaving the church in Jędrzychowice, we go down, passing the cemetery wall on our right and after about 200 metres meet the road leading to Zgorzelec again. We go in the direction of the viaduct and cross the A4 motorway and then the railway line from Zgorzelec to Wrocław. From here the road to Zgorzelec is straightforward. St James' shells lead us via a slightly longer route through the centre of the town, however if we follow Bolesławiecka Street, we can reach the banks of Nysa Łużycka and the Staromiejski bridge in 15 minutes, where the Lower Silesian Way of St James turns into Żytawska Way and Via Regia meets with the Ecumenical Pilgrim Way.

Zgorzelec (149 km / 3154 km)

On entering the borders of Zgorzelec, the Camino leads us

down Bolesławiecka Street and turns left at the edge of a little forest onto a road leading to an intriguingly shaped modern church. Its shape refers to an open book with an upward facing spine. The patrons of the church – St Joseph the Worker and St Barbara remind us that we're in a mining town, even though the "Turów" mine is almost 30 km away. Further, ks. Kozaka Street leads us to the junction next to the administrative authority's offices and then down Kosciuszki Street to the junction with Daszyńskiego, Piłsudskiego (leading to the border checkpoint Görlitz-Zgorzelec) and Bohaterów Getta Streets (turning left here would lead us to the church of St Boniface – the town's main church). This way we reach the centre of Zgorzelec.

Before we reach the banks of Nysa Łużycka, we turn left on Kościuszki Street into Daszyńskiego Street, which runs along the border with Germany and leads to the Staromiejski Bridge.

Zgorzelec-Görlitz Staromiejski Bridge (151 km / 3152 km)

There are a few ways by which we can reach St James' Cathedral from the Staromiejski Bridge. In order to see a bit more of the city that competed for the title of Cultural Capital of Europe 2010 (Essen ended up winning), we can go down Neissestr. (just before entering the town square, it's worth

noting the "Bible House" on the left) then through Untermarkt with the town hall (try staring at the clock for a minute...) and the oldest renaissance house in Germany: Schönhof is near the town hall, on the corner of Obermarkt and Brüderstr. The picturesque Brüderstr. leads to the upper square, Obermarkt (with its evangelical, formerly Franciscan, church of the Holy Trinity), from which we turn left into Steinstr. leading to Marienplatz (here the Gothic Frauenkirche and the Dickerturm are worth noting, as well as one of the most beautiful department stores in Germany). Next we cross Postplatz with its "Mushelminne" (the girl with a shell) fountain and finally go down Jakobstr. (St James Street). After walking under the railway bridge we go uphill in the direction of the 70-metre tall tower of St James' Cathedral. If we continued along Zitauerstr., we'd reach Prague after 180 km and eventually Santiago. All along the way we'd have our well-known companions - white shells with a red cross.

Buen Camino!

ACCOMMODATION

The addresses given in bold are non-commercial places where the payment for our stay depends on our generosity – these

places are recommended to pilgrims in first instance. At the other addresses it's possible to negotiate the price, on showing our Credential. It would be a good idea to phone the place we intend to stay at in advance. In order to receive a 25% discount in youth hostels, a PTSM or international IYHF card is needed.