

NBP

National Bank of Poland
holds the exclusive right to issue currency of the Republic of Poland.

In addition to **coins and notes for general circulation**, the NBP issues **collector coins and notes**. Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate important historic figures and anniversaries, as well as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture, science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing **occasional 2 złoty coins**, struck in **Nordic Gold**, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

Information on the issue schedule and par value sale of the 2 zł NG coins can be found at the www.nbp.pl/money website.

Collector coins issued by the NBP are sold exclusively at the Internet auctions held in the Kolekcjoner service at the following website: www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl

 KOLEKCJONER

On 17 November 2010, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation a coin of the “Towns in Poland” series commemorating Miechow, with the face value of 2 złoty and struck in standard finish in Nordic Gold alloy.



face value 2 zł • metal CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy • finish standard
diameter 27.0 mm • weight 8.15 g • mintage (volume) 1,000,000 pcs

Obverse: An image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of Republic of Poland. On the sides of the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue: 20-10, below the Eagle, an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ. Along the upper rim, an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The mint's mark: MW under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: A stylised image of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Miechow placed in the centre. On the left, vertically, an inscription: MIECHÓW.

On the edge: The inscription: NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated with stars.

Coin designer: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.

Towns in Poland

In 2009 the NBP launched a series of coins “Towns in Poland”. The coin depicting Miechow is the eighth one in the series.



MIECHOW
17 November 2010



Miechow – “the Polish Jerusalem”

Miechow is a town steeped in history and rich in places of beguiling beauty, admired by locals and visitors alike. It is situated in the Małopolskie Province, 40 kilometres north of Cracow. The view of the town is dominated by the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre with its remarkable tower, crowned by a dome symbolizing the globe and a figure of the Resurrected Christ.

The origins of Miechow go back to 1163, when Jaxa, a magnate of the House of Pomerania (also called House of Griffins) brought to the area monks of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He built a church and a monastery for the congregation and granted them ample land. The church was erected on soil which Jaxa had brought from places apparently trodden by Jesus. Under the prevailing climate of the Crusades, the congregation quickly accumulated wealth. As the monastic community grew, Miechow as a village expanded as well, receiving multiple rights to host markets. In 1290, King Przemysł II granted Miechow town rights based on the Magdeburg rights model. Throughout centuries, the monastery acted as a very particular link between the local community and the Holy City. One remarkable fact is that the Knights built a replica of the Holy Sepulchre in their Miechow church. Moreover, when Jerusalem had been seized by Muslims, the Order procured from the Pope the same indulgences for pilgrims coming to Miechow as those once granted in Jerusalem. This is how Miechow became a destination for pilgrimages from all over Europe, bringing to the town all sorts of people – magnates, knights and commoners alike. Even royal figures came to visit the Holy Sepulchre, sources say; among them Queen Jadwiga, and – as many as 14 times - King Władysław Jagiełło. It should be added that the Knights developed a special liturgy for the Holy Week, elements of which have survived until today. The presence of the monastery was conducive to business activity in the locality, and the town flourished. Since Poland had become the country where the Order of the Holy Sepulchre experienced its strongest growth, Miechow was made the seat of the General of the congregation; the Knights came to be dubbed “Miechovites”. And as appointments to the Order’s superiors usually involved top Church dignitaries, the congregation rose steadily in prestige and power. Among those appointments was Cardinal Andrzej Batory, brother of the Polish king Stefan Batory and a friend of Charles Borromeus, bishop of Milan. Miechow vaults are still enshrining a token of friendship of the saint-to-be, his gift to the Miechovites – a reliquary with an image of the Holy Sepulchre. Another figure with links to Miechow is Maciej of Miechow (1457-1523) – historian, geographer and doctor; an eight-time

dean of the Cracow Academy and author of the first history of Poland to appear in print, who also wrote a geographical description of Central and Eastern Europe and two medical works.

The town’s prestige and economic significance waned in tandem with the struggles of the ailing Polish State. During the partitions, Miechow fell under the Russian authorities, who dissolved the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in 1819 – a fact that ultimately tipped the town’s fortunes. However, the presence of the Order left a clear mark on the place – one vivid memento is the church and monastery compound; another – the town’s coat of arms, charged with a griffin and the Order’s cross. The church has been preserved in an excellent condition. Its main body combines Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque elements, while the whole compound dates basically back to the 14th century. The monastery was laid out in the shape of an elongated rectangle, with Gothic cloisters on the ground floor. The compound encompasses the so-called Castle of the Order’s Generals which, after the current refurbishment is completed, will accommodate the Museum of the Miechow Area.

Miechow – “the Polish Jerusalem” – hosted, throughout the centuries, pilgrims from every corner of Poland and many countries of the world. Like in the old times, the faithful continue to gather here to pray in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. This gives them an opportunity to soak in the grandeur of the late Baroque, three-nave and three-span building comprising some elements preserved from earlier times. The chapel of the Holy Sepulchre is adorned with exquisite murals from the early 16th century which were uncovered and restored in 2009. The significance of the Miechow temple was not lost on the Holy Father John Paul II, who had made many pilgrimages there while still living in Poland. In 1996, he conferred on the church the distinction of a minor basilica.

Last but not least, the vicinity of Miechow was the scene of one of the most tragic battles of the January Uprising of 1863. It was then that almost the entire town went into ruin, except for the monastery grounds. However, the layout of the town today recalls its medieval pattern, especially in terms of the location and shape of the market square, of the Tadeusz Kościuszko square and of the street grid.