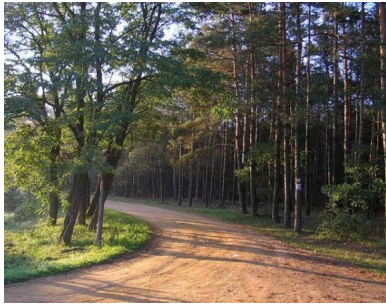


WARSAW'S GREEN LUNGS - THE KAMPINOS NATIONAL PARK



The Kampinos National Park, dubbed the green lungs of Warsaw is visited by more than 1 million tourists every year. Not only its unique flora and fauna attracts the visitors but also its rich history.

Warsaw is one of the few big European cities that has several hundred square kilometers of unspoiled nature in its vicinity. **The Kampinos National Park lures hundreds of thousands visitors every year.** The park, dubbed as the green lungs of Warsaw, has been the witness of many important moments of Polish history.

According to Magdalena Kaminski, the spokeswoman of the park, it is an area with rich biodiversity. Numerous animal species and plants could be found in the park. Local pine woods that grow on sand dunes, moors and wetlands are home to 16,500 species of animals, which is actually a half of the whole Polish fauna. Thirty one kinds of mosquitoes bother the walkers in the park during spring and summer. Lynxes, beavers and elks were successfully reintroduced in here.

West winds bring fresh air from the 380 square kilometer park to the capital. "Thanks to the fresh air local people call the national park the green lungs of Warsaw. People are well aware that thanks to the park they can enjoy cleaner air," said Kaminski.

The woods welcome approximately a million visitors every year. The park is often visited not only by nature lovers but also skiers and bikers as well as tourists interested in the history of the area. According to Kaminski, soldiers of the anti-Russian revolt in 1863 were hiding here as well as Polish soldiers during the World War II. Nazi German soldiers brought here various political prisoners, resistance fighters, and Polish intellectuals to be executed.

However, the Kampinos National Park has also seen more positive events. The world famous Polish pianist and composer, Fryderyk Chopin, was born here in the village Zelazowa Wola. The place is thus very popular among Chopin's fans especially this year which is the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth.

Date: 2010-05-24

Article link:

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