



The coat of arms

**Katowice** is the capital of a historical region known as Upper Silesia and the main city of the Silesian Province of Poland. Although Katowice itself has around 320,000 inhabitants, it is part of a 3-million agglomeration of several smaller towns and cities. The region is the most densely populated and urbanized area in Poland, and is sometimes compared to the German Ruhr industrial area.

### The history

Katowice, as well as entire Silesia area has been inhabited by ethnic Silesians from its earliest history. The first traces of settlements on that site are mentioned by Ptolemy in the 2nd century. After the extinction of the Silesian Piast dynasty in mid. 14th century, the region fell into Czech hands, only to become a Habsburg domain two centuries later.

The Katowice itself were founded by the Prussians who took over the Silesia in 1742. City rights were granted in 1865.

After the first World War as the result of three Silesian Uprisings (1919-1921) and decisions of League of Nations commission, Silesia has been divided between Germany and Poland. Katowice remained on the Polish side, however with significant autonomy.

During the September Campaign 1939 Katowice became famous of the fight for "Parachute Tower", defended by volunteer units of boy scouts and Silesian Uprisings veterans.

After the war the city became an important academic and cultural centre. In the years 1950-1959 the population and the total urban area grew significantly, thanks to the process of absorbing many of the neighbouring towns (like Piotrowice, Panewniki, Welnowiec). Shortly afterwards, in 1962, the first retail project in the city opened – the Zenit.

In 1981 Katowice witnessed the dramatic events at the "Wujek" coalmine, where striking workers were attacked by the army and ZOMO police forces, with nine miners being killed in the process of pacification.



Panorama of Katowice  
Worth noticing the two  
mine shafts



The Zenit  
department store

### The city nowadays

The city flourished due to large mineral (especially coal) deposits in the nearby mountains. Extensive city growth and prosperity depended on the coal mining and steel industries, which took off during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. But recently, due to economic reforms, there is a shift away from heavy industry, and towards small businesses.

Today, the city struggles with severe ecological damage to the natural environment that occurred during the post-Second World War time of communist governance and extensive coal mining and metallurgy activities.

Katowice constitute a major cultural centre in the Upper Silesia region. The city has five theatres, the Silesian Philharmonic Hall and several museums, including the Silesian Museum and the Museum of the World's Smallest Books of Zygmund Szkocki. Over twenty higher education institutions complete the picture.

The "Spodek" – a major concert and game hall in the centre of city – hosts prestigious international sport and cultural events. The name Spodek (saucer) resembles the shape of the building.



City centre



Spodek by night



Old pre-war buildings near the railroad station



The "Superjednostka" - pompous example of the past communist period



Nora Jean Brusio during Rawa Blues Festival

### What to see and do

The first thing that might strike the visitors in Katowice is the architecture. Like Łódź and other industrial cities of the 19th century, the city was inhabited by Poles, Germans, Jews and native Silesians, leaving a mixture of styles. Unfortunately many old buildings were demolished in the 1950s to make place for monumental communist modern buildings. Nowadays most buildings reflect the architecture of that period, though there are several remnants of its 19th century impressiveness and numerous examples of modern architecture from 1920s and 1930s exist. The finest examples of Modernism (International Style and Bauhaus inspired architecture) could be easily found in the city downtown. Central Katowice also contain a significant number of Art Nouveau (Secesja) buildings along with the Communist Era giants such as Spodek, Zenit or Superjednostka block of flats.

The Rynek area is now closed to traffic and invite pedestrians on its promenades. Some of the acclaimed music festivals take place in Katowice – the Rawa Blues Festival or Metalmania, to name a few. Those who like night skies, will appreciate the Planetarium and Astronomical Observatory in the Park of Culture and Recreation.

### Retail Projects

The biggest retail magnet in Katowice is undoubtedly the Silesia City Center. It is located on the site of an old coal mine and incorporates the abandoned industrial structures, such as mine shaft and chapel. As a mix-used project, it incorporates the retail (65.000 sq m GLA), apartment area (100.000 sq m) and offices (20.000 sq m). The whole centre refers with the Silesia heritage – names of the alleys are Silesia town names, lighting resembles the coal mine lamps, graphic elements illustrate the industrial past.

The TriGranit development already has won international recognition, including the CEE Quality Award and being in the elite group of the ICSC 2006 finalists.

3 Stawy by Apsys Polska (60 Puławskiego St.) took its name after a picturesque valley with ponds. Anchored by the Geant hypermarket, it hosts over 60 boutiques and restaurants.

The Dąbrówka SC by Cefic, consists of a 30-unit shopping galley, anchored by hypermarket Carrefour and Castorama DIY market. It is located on 200 Roździeńskiego Street.

Not far away (97 Roździeńskiego St.), the Rawa Retail Park is located. Besides the IKEA, twelve home equipment and furniture units await visitors, accompanied by BOMI delicatessen.



Silesia City Center  
The mine shaft is in the background



The entrance in 3 Stawy

### Useful Telephones:

City Information Centre (25a Konstytucji 3 Maja St.) +48 32 259-94-14  
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Katowice Statistics	
Population (2006)	317200
City Area	165 sq km
Density of population	1923 per. / sq km
Working population (2004)	207300
Unemployment rate	7%
Average monthly gross wages & salaries	3521 PLN
GDP per capita	
Commercial companies (2004)	5293

### Katowice Trivia:

- In December 1930 TORKAT – the first artificial ice rink in Poland – was opened
- In 1934 the first Polish skyscraper – the "Drapacz Chmur" – was build in Żwirki i Wigury Street
- In the years 1953-1956 Katowice were known as Stalinogród after the leader of the Soviet Union. The renaming took place just four days after Stalin's death.
- The high level of pollution corresponds with the name Katowice – "kat" in Polish means simply "executioner".