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## Szydłów - the Polish Carcassonne

**According to the legend, the name of this charming town comes from the name of a local brigand called Szydło. You can admire a medieval city arrangement there. A vast square, low-rise buildings, no crowds and the ever-present tranquillity bring a feeling that the time has suddenly stopped.**

The first mentions of Szydłów in writing appear in the 12th C. Later, king Władysław Łokietek (Ladislaus I the Elbow-high) greatly contributed to its development of by giving the city a location law in 1329.

Due to a very well-preserved medieval urban arrangement and city walls, the town has been called the Polish Carcassonne. The walls built in the 14th C. from the local limestone were

1080 metres long and up to 1.8 metres thick. Another security device, built by the commission of king Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great), was a moat along the southern part of the wall, the remains of which have survived till nowadays. The castle was several times rebuilt in the 15th and 16th C., after the fires which stalked the building. Another rebuilding took place in the 17th C. due to the damages after the "Swedish Deluge". In the 1723 the prefect Józef Załuski renovated it, nevertheless, in the end of the 18th century the deteriorating castle was abandoned.

In 1946 a restoration and conservation of the building has started. Nowadays, one can already admire the Knights' Chamber, the Treasury, which is presently the residence of the Regional Museum, and the Cracow Gate. In the southern part of the city square there is a late-Gothic synagogue, erected in 1564 - now a residence of the Municipal Culture Centre. When being in Szydłów, you must also see the St. Władysław (Ladislaus) Church, built in 1355. It is one from the king Casimir's "atonement" sanctuaries cycle, founded after the king sentenced to death (by drowning in a well) his canon, Marcin Baryczka, who delivered him some unfavourable news. Not only the history of the church is fascinating, as its inside also draws attention. Through centuries Szydłów has been tormented by several fires, the worst of which took place in 1541 and destroyed the whole city as well as the castle.