



WARSAW

A SUBJECTIVE GUIDE TO THE CITY



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Warsaw

OddUrbanThings.com



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Must-see Museums

In Warsaw, there are more than 70 museums you can choose from. Some of them are free all year around, others are free for the whole month of November and most are free at least one day per week. Here is a list of what I think are the best museums in Warsaw, with an indication of when you can enter free of charge.

The Royal Castle

The royal Castle in Warsaw is an experience you will hold dear in your heart for a long time. First built in the 14th century, the castle went through some dreadful times. As you may already know, the Royal Castle – and the entire old town in Warsaw – was completely destroyed by Nazi Germany during WWII and rebuilt later on.

To be honest, I was a bit put off by the Royal Castle being a reproduction of the original. But I couldn't be more wrong. The rebuilt Royal Castle symbolizes Warsaw's tenaciousness and its will to exist.

“Warsaw is today nicknamed “Phoenix” because it “was burned to the ground only to rise again from the ashes”. The Royal Castle is THE emblem of Warsaw, and you would be mistaken if you considered this castle unauthentic.”



Today, the Royal Castle is an interesting museum which hosts:

- a permanent exhibition about the life of the castle,
- the castle route, which is composed by 32 incredibly reconstructed rooms. It also hosts a collection of paintings and furniture,
- and the Lanckoroński Collection, which hosts, among other great pieces, two Rembrandt paintings.

I wrote more about the [Royal Castle here](#).

The entrance is 30PLN (about 6-7 EUR), FREE on Sundays and the whole month of November.

The Royal Castle is open all year around with a few exceptions.

Find out more on the [official website](#).

The Uprising Museum



The Warsaw Uprising museum covers a dark chapter of the 20th-century, of which I knew very little about. And if you are not Polish, you may not be familiar with it either. The museum recreates the atmosphere, history and struggles that Varsovians went through in the attempt to liberate Warsaw from the Nazi occupation in 1944.

The Warsaw Uprising is one of the darkest moments in recent history, yet it is often overlooked by the western society. Warsaw was almost completely annihilated and hundreds of thousands of people died for their freedom.

“90% of Warsaw was destroyed in WWII and the population dropped from 1.3 millions in 1939 to 162.000 in 1944*. Poland suffered the most casualties in terms of [percentage of the population](#) (17% of the population died) during WWII.”

It is a hard task to create an exhibition about such tragedy. I believe that the curators of the museum did an outstanding job. The Warsaw Uprising museum is one of its kind and will offer an experience hard to forget.

The entrance is 20 PLN (or about 4-5EUR), FREE on Sunday.

Find out more on the [official website](#).

[I wrote more detailed article here.](#)



*source: STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF WARSAW 2016, <http://warszawa.stat.gov.pl>

POLIN Museum



The POLIN – also called “Museum of the History of Polish Jews” – lies on the grounds where the Jewish district used to be in pre-war Warsaw. It opened its doors in 2013, for the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

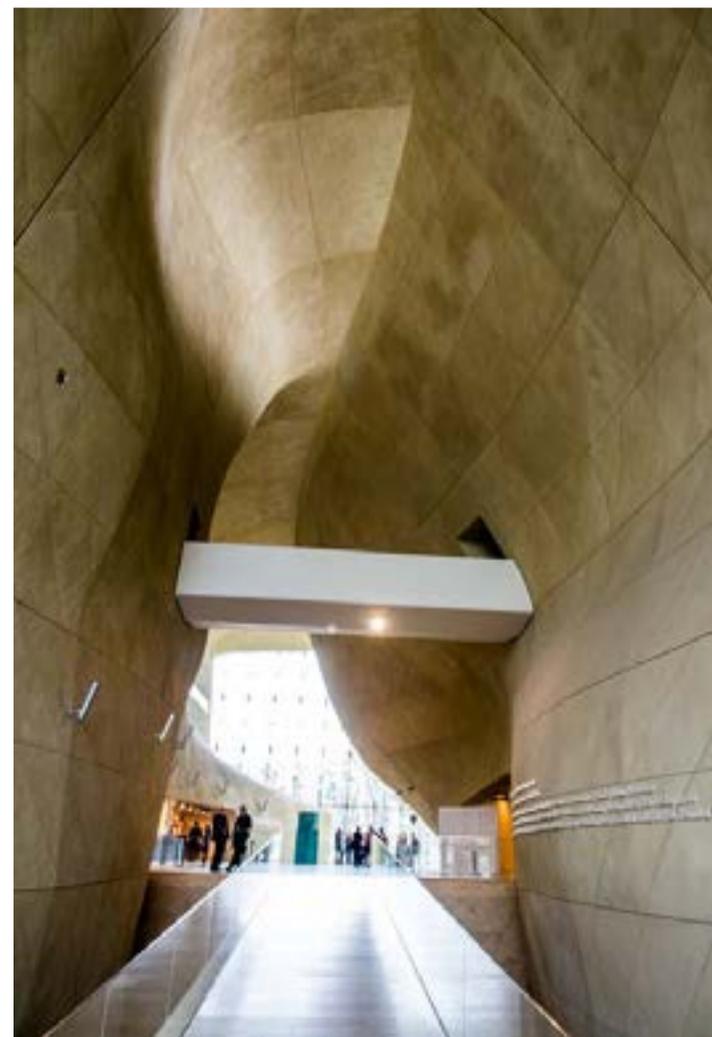
If you are not impressed by the exterior of this award winning building, wait to see the interior! When you enter the museum, you will find yourself in a dramatically wavy passage extending in front of you.

These concrete waves refers to the Exodus (parting of the red sea by God when Moses was guiding the escape of the Israelites from Egypt).

Thanks to the amazing architecture, you will already be deep into the exhibition before you even pay for your ticket!

The actual exhibition will carry you through 1000 years of Jewish history in Poland. From the first arrival of Jewish merchants, through the “Paradisus Iudaeorum” (Paradise of the Jews in Latin) of the 16th century in Poland, until the mass massacres by Nazi Germany in WWII.

The entrance is 30PLN (or about 6-7EUR), FREE on THURSDAYS. Find out more on the official [website](#).



Eat like a local

If you believe Polish food is just boiled potatoes and cabbage, think again.

Polish cuisine is hearty, tasty and rich in meat. It developed eclectically over hundreds of years, being influenced by Russian, Ukrainian, German, Jewish as well as Italian, French and Turkish cuisine.

Besides, eating in Poland is quite cheap. From Bar Mleczny to Michelin Restaurants, you will eat without breaking the bank. No wonder some of the international fast food giants are struggling in Poland.

In this article, I suggest you some of the best places to eat polish food. I don't, however, describe in detail the most traditional Polish dishes, like Bigos, Pierogi or Zurek. I will write more about Polish cuisine in the future (article coming soon).

Eat at a Bar Mleczny



Bar Mleczny literally means Milk Bar. The first Bar Mleczny, which was opened in Warsaw in 1896, had a menu mainly based on dairy items. Today, you can eat a wide range of traditional Polish food at the cost of a Starbucks coffee. That's right! For around 5 euros you can have a full meal composed of soup, first course and a drink (kompot).

Don't expect the best service, though. You'll have to line up to order and then line up again to collect your food.

Note: Sometimes the dish won't be ready and you'll have to wait at the table until an old lady will scream the name of your dish! A little price to pay for an authentic experience and some great homemade traditional food. I actually find the whole thing quite entertaining!

During communist times Milk Bar's popularity exploded and the number of restaurants in the whole Poland soared to 40.000. After the fall of the USSR, the Milk Bar was seen as a relic of the past and most people abandoned it in favor of "fancier" restaurants. Today, however, they are back in fashion and their number is rising again.

The daily menu – usually written with a white chalk on a blackboard – will be written in Polish, and therefore it will be incomprehensible to most of you.

So keep in mind these dishes when you go there:

Soups (zupy):

- Pomidorowa (z ryżem) – tomato soup, usually served with rice
- Żurek – thick sour rye soup with hard boiled eggs and polish sausage
- Ogórkowa – soup made of salted sour cucumbers

Main courses (dania główne):

- Pierogi – polish dumplings with either meat (pierogi z mięsem), or onions and cottage cheese (pierogi ruskie)
- Bigos – a stew of sauerkraut, polish sausage and other kinds of meat
- Kotlet schabowy – polish pork cutlet
- Gulasz – meat stew seasoned with paprika and other spices

Except for Pierogi, all other dishes will be served with either potatoes (ziemniaki), buckwheat (kasza) or rice (ryż) and are always accompanied by a side salad (surówka).

There are many Bar Mleczny in Warsaw. Make sure you visit one of these (link to google maps):

[Prasowy](#)

[Bambino](#)

[Sady](#)

NOTE: You can't say you visited Poland until you eat in a Milk Bar!

Eat Pączek in a “Piekarnia”

Polish bread is one of the best I have ever eaten and Polish piekarnia (bakery) is up to Italian “forno” or French “boulangerie” standards. You can find “piekarnias” at almost every corner of the street, there are literally hundreds of them.

If you happen to go to one, you should definitely try “pączek”, an amazing donut. It’s traditionally filled with wild rose jam but you can find it in many other varieties. The dough is deliciously sweet and it melts in your mouth. The most famous place to eat these is [Zagoździński](#), in Wola (open since 1925), but you can find good “pączki” in every bakery.



Pączek is the signature of Polish sweets, you really have to try it!

Try the most traditional of Polish fast food: Zapiekanka

Zapiekanka is the most Polish of the fast food. It’s an open-faced toasted sandwich made of half baguette or other long kind of bread. In the 70s, during the austerity of the communist regime, it was usually topped with just mushroom, cheese, and ketchup. Today, besides the traditional



kind, there are many more varieties. The best place to eat it in Warsaw is [Zapiexy Luxusowe](#), in Widok 19 street (“Centrum” metro station, really close to the Palace of Culture). They get fresh bread from the bakery every day and the portions are huge. My favorite is the “Firmowa Zapiekanka” which is toasted bread with Polish sheep cheese, crispy bacon, and onion (11.5PLN or about 2.5 EUR).

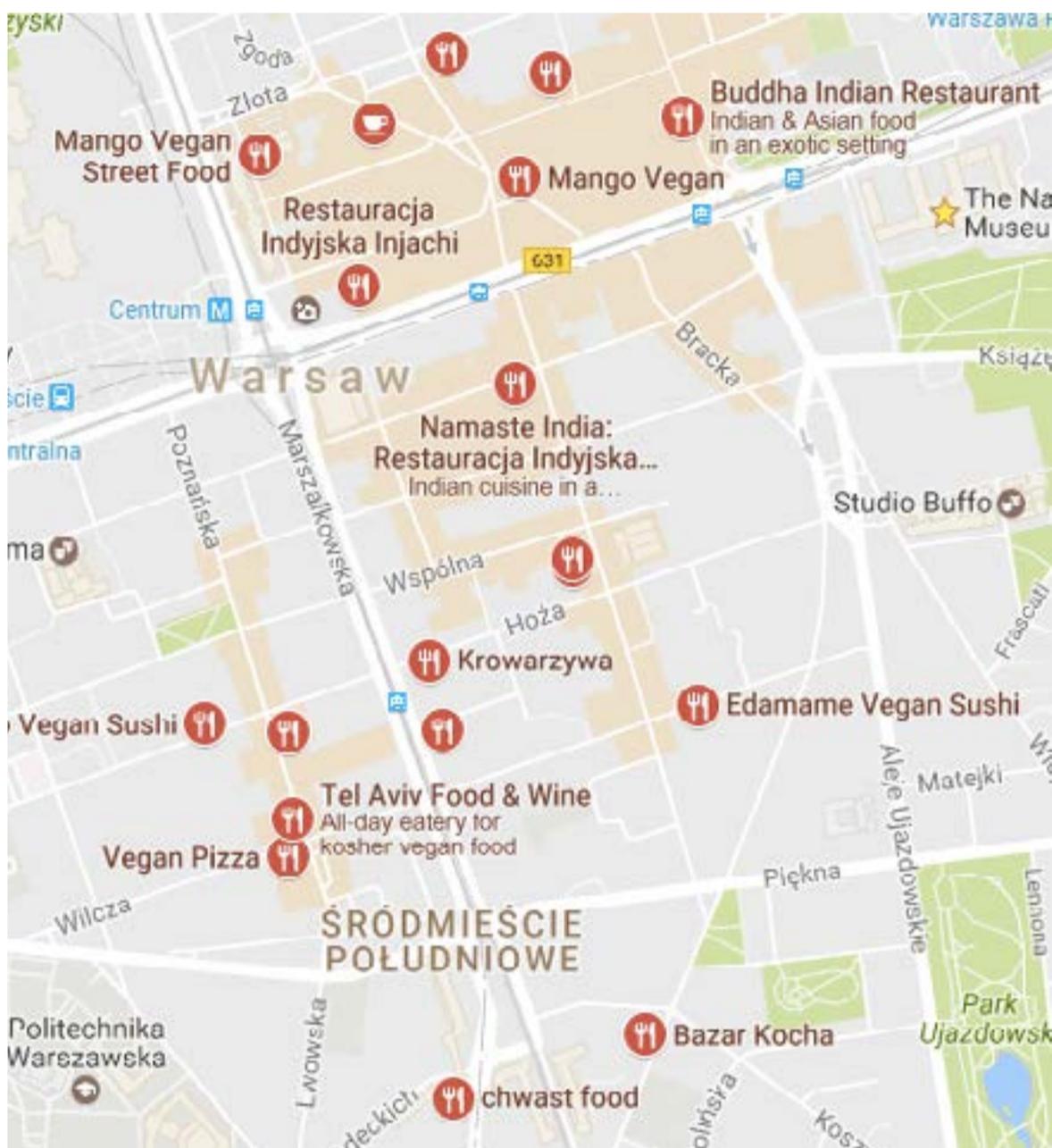
Not just meat: head to the “Vegan District”

A Vegan friend of mine once asked me: “Will I find vegan food in Warsaw? Or will I be forced to eat potatoes for a week?”

That’s a popular misconception because Polish cuisine is renowned for being rich in meat.

However, unlike 10 years ago, vegetarian and vegan restaurants are really easy to find in Warsaw. More and more Varsovians are jumping on the Vegetarian/Vegan trend and countless restaurants are popping up everywhere.

In some areas, it is even difficult to find a good old traditional cake made with milk, eggs and flour (which contains gluten. Thus also plenty of options for celiacs)!



Warsaw is a vegan heaven!

You will find basically every kind of cuisine you can think of, but converted into vegan only: vegan sushi, vegan Indian and vegan pizzas are just a few examples! In just one square kilometer there are over 20 vegan/vegetarian restaurants rated more than 4.5 (on google).



I call this area “the vegan district” (Even though this is not its official name).

Some of the Vegan restaurants worth noting are [Krowarzywa Vegan Burger](#) (address: Marszałkowska 27/35), [Tel-Aviv Food & Wine](#) (address: ul. Poznańska 11) and [Chwast Food](#) (address: Waryńskiego 9).

Taste the Polish countryside at Hala Mirowska

Originally built at the end of the 19th century, Hala Mirowska was the biggest market in the city until the WWII when it was destroyed. It was then rebuilt in the 50s and today it still serves its original function of an organic food market.

I must say that this is not a place for everybody. It is not a major tourist attraction nor a must see landmark, it's just a food market.

However, if you like markets as much as I do, you should definitely drop by.

Here in Hala Mirowska you will experience the authentic vibe of a 1990 Warsaw food market, you will deal with non-English speaking farmers and... you will find the freshest fruit, veggies, and eggs, the most amazing bread, the best meat, and the sweetest honey. You will also taste Polish delicacies like kabanos (smoked dry sausages), oscypek (smoked cheese from the mountains) or śledź (traditional herring marinated in hundreds of different ways).

If you have a sweet tooth you can indulge in some creamy Wuzetka (Warsaw cake), give way to a tasty Szarlotka (Polish apple pie) or sink your teeth into a fluffy Pączek (my favorite pastry in the world).

NOTE: Be aware that even though the market officially closes at 7 p.m., you should definitely come here in the morning: most of the merchants are actual farmers and in order to get here they have to get up crazy early in the morning. If you come in the afternoon many of them will have left and the market will be a bit empty and kinda "dead".



There is an indoor and outdoor market. The sweets are inside but most of the food is outside.

Indulge in International Cuisine: Hala Koszyki



Hala Koszyki is a hip food court, very similar to the “Foodhallen” in Amsterdam or the “Mathallen” in Oslo.

I wouldn’t suggest you go if you are visiting Warsaw for just a few days. There are other great places to eat amazing hearty Polish food all over the city.

However, if you are tired of Polish cuisine, or you are just looking for something different, at Hala Koszyki you will find a variety of dining options under one roof.

Italian, Polish or Thai, vegan or meaty, Hala Koszyki has it all.

You will also find quite a wide variety of Polish and international beers. My [full article](#) here.

Treat Yourself: Book a Michelin Restaurant

In Warsaw, there are two restaurants awarded with a Michelin star. [Amaro](#) is “a new restaurant concept serving dishes using only the superb Polish seasonal products creating real culinary masterpieces every day” while [Senses](#) defines itself as “honest and emotional about the food... innovative and modern yet surprisingly familiar”.

The two Michelin Restaurants are both committed to organic Polish products and to providing experiences rather than just food. For a dinner at Amaro, you will pay around 80 euros (plus pairing), whereas at Sense you’ll pay between 170 and 250 euros (pairing included). A bit pricey for Polish standards but cheaper than other Michelin Restaurants in other European countries.

If you want to make sure you get a table at one of these restaurants you should book 3 to 6 months in advance.

Out for a drink

25 reasons to say “na zdrowie”: Pawilony

“Pawilony” is a little area in Nowy Świat street with 25 tiny pubs! It’s a perfect place to start the evening, to meet a friend or to do the hell of a pub crawl. Every tiny pub is a little bit different from the next one. There is plenty of choice for all tastes.

“Pawilony” is a place where locals, expats, and a few lucky tourists come together. Yes, the tourists that come here are few, because the “Pawilony” hides... in plain sight! It is right in the center, in the pretty Nowy Świat street. To find it, however, you have to go through the gates 22, 24 or 26. There is no apparent reason to do so unless you know what’s hiding behind!

Let our Head go for a Spin, the Shot Bars



There are a lot of shot bars in Warsaw, enough to satisfy any taste. Even if you don’t like vodka!

Are you out of Zloty (PLN) but you are still in the mood for a shot? Dig some of the euros from the bottom of your backpack and go to “Pijalnia wódki i piwa”, which accepts euros. They make 13 different kinds of tiny vodka cocktails, served in shot glasses. They cost 1 € and are amazing! I’m not suggesting this, but trying all of them won’t break the bank and will definitely get you tipsy (ok, a bit more than tipsy!). There is one that, crazy enough, tastes exactly like the “Coca Cola Chupa Chups”, don’t tell your kids (if you have any). They also make their own lemon vodka which is delicious.

If you love Tarantino movies, head to the “Pulp fiction bar” (pl. Konstytucji 1 Śródmieście, Warsaw). This nice little shot bar has a great vibe, good prices, and bloody good shots! You will also find other liquors besides the vodkas. But maybe you want to have a taste of Poland from Com-mies times, then better go to “meta-seta-galareta”. They serve great tartar to accompany your vodka shots. Or maybe you want to stay in the Old Town? Then “Bar Warszawa” is your place. And how can I forget “Ulubiona”. How does such a place still exist in the 21st century? Fascinating! It’s bare, tiny and cheap. You do one thing here: get a shot of vodka (or more) and leave. You will pay as little as 50 cents for the shot of the day, but don’t expect a fancy place!

The list could go on for a while, better to stop here. I will write an article about the best shot bars in Warsaw soon.

Warsaw's "Beer Heaven": the Piw Paw

The [Piw Paw](#), with its characteristic walls covered by thousands of beer cups, it's a true "beer heaven". Here you will find a rich collection of tap beers (57 exactly) and over 200 bottles.

In the country of vodka, nobody thought that opening a pub with such a vast selection of beer could be a good idea. Eventually, though, craft beer became super popular also here in Poland. The "Piw Paw" is constantly visited by a relaxed crowd of beer lovers, every day of the week.

Make sure you go but don't get intimidated by the number of beers! To choose a beer with such a large choice it's always a challenge for me. If you have no idea about what you want, you can always start narrowing it down by choosing the country of origin and the kind of beer first. Or just ask the staff, they'll be happy to help.

PawPaw Parkingowa was the first (Address: Zurawia 32/34 Warsaw) but there are two more locations in Warsaw. One is PiwPaw BeerHeaven which has 95 tap beers (Address: Foksal 16, Warsaw) and the other is PiwPaw Mazowiecka (address: Mazowiecka 9, Warsaw), which is right in the heart of party-Warsaw.

You Don't Have a Hotel yet?

Check out this article:

[The Best Hostels and Hotels in Warsaw](#)

In the article I suggest the best hostels, as well as the best mid-range and high-range options. I hope it will be useful to you!



To check out the hotels I picked (and many many more), I would suggest you try [Hotelscombined](#), which searches all the major travels sites for the best deals (do you know skyscanner? It's similar but for hotels). I personally use Hotelscombine every time I have to book a hotel. I saved loads thanks to it. [Try it out!](#)

Of course "good old" [booking.com](#) is the obvious choice if you are in a hurry and you don't care too much about saving.

Breathtaking views

One of my favorite ways to experience cities is from up high. Warsaw skyline is quite characteristic, with its contrasting Palace of Culture rising amidst sleek and modern skyscrapers. Pictures from these viewpoints can be the best souvenir you'll ever bring home. Make sure you visit at least one of these spots at sunset.

The Palace of Culture and Science



The Palace of Culture and Science was a “gift” from Stalin to the people of Poland. It took about 9000 workers and three years to build this majestic building. Varsovians have mixed feelings about this building – as it is sometimes considered a symbol of Soviet domination – but Warsaw Skyline wouldn't be the same without it.

Today, you can access the Palace's terrace on the 30th floor and enjoy a mesmerizing 360° view of Warsaw (20 PLN, 22 PLN at night during summer months).

Most tourists stop with the view, but in the Palace of Culture you can also enjoy a cinema, four theaters (Studio, Dramatyczny, Lalka and 6. piętro), two museums (Museum of Evolution and Museum of Technology), offices, bookshops, a large swimming pool and a coffee house.

More info about the [Palace of Culture and Science](#).

The Marriott Sky Panorama Bar

With its 170 meters, the Warsaw Marriott Hotel is one of the tallest buildings in Warsaw (and one of the best hotels).

This skyscraper certainly contributes to making Warsaw's skyline so unique. But, if you want to enjoy the best view in Warsaw you won't see the Marriott hotel because... well, because you will be IN the Marriott hotel. The view from here is my personal favorite because it includes the Palace of Culture. Since you are here you can also enjoy great cocktails as well as nice dinners. But be aware that the prices are high for Polish standards.

Tower of St. Anna Church



View of the Old Town from the St. Anna tower.

The tower of St. Anna, sometimes called “The Old Town Observation Terrace”, is the best spot to enjoy a nice view over the old town. To find it, go to the Castle Square and look for a tower with written “Taras widokowy” on top.

The entrance fee is just 5 PLN (1€), totally worthy. Check out the view in this [google photosphere](#).

Szcześliwicka Hill

Rising to 152 meters, the artificial Szcześliwicka Hill was created as a dump for rubble from the destruction of Warsaw during WWII. Today the rubble is covered by soil and grass and it's one of the best parks in the city. The main attraction of the hill is its slope, where you can practice skiing and snowboarding all year around (also in the absence of snow) and... enjoy one of the best views of Warsaw.

Find out more about the [Szcześliwicka Hill](#) and its price.

Warsaw Uprising Mound



Similarly to Szcześliwicka, this is another artificial hill made of the debris of destroyed Warsaw. It's a great view of the city (even though a little bit far away) but also an important site that commemorates the Warsaw uprising. After climbing 400 steps you'll get to a monument of the “Kotwica” (anchor in English), the symbol of the fight against Nazi Germany.

Every 1st of August, the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, a fire is lit and it burns for 63 days, which is the length of the Uprising.

You can find this hill in the Mokotów District (Bartycka Street).

Shopping secrets

The days of communist Warsaw, in which bright neon signs advertised empty shops, are long gone.

Shopping in Warsaw is exciting and varied, both authentic and cosmopolitan. Whether you prefer strolling inside luxurious shopping malls, or exploring flea markets in search of the rarest vintage find, Warsaw has it all. Local designers' stores, often packed with the cutest Warsaw inspired designs, are the best places if you are looking for souvenirs. Flea markets are as scrappy as they can be, but they hide rare and unexpected Slavic treasures.

If you are looking for some quirky gifts, whether for yourself or for a friend, you should avoid getting the classical souvenirs (for example magnets or vodka shot glasses, there are plenty of these in the Old Town). You can buy those souvenirs in other European cities. In Warsaw, you can do better than that! Varsovians love their city so much that a thriving community of designers is constantly crafting new amazing objects related to Warsaw.

I've listed some of the best places to shop below. Some of them might be a bit hard to find, but you will be pleasantly rewarded.

Designer Stores



So, if you want something truly unique, something that won't be abandoned in some hidden corner of your house but rather displayed proudly in your living room, go to one of these Warsaw-inspired designer stores:

- Reset (address: Puławska 48) – mainly interior and nice home objects.
- Pan tu nie stał (address: Koszykowa 34/50) – mainly unique Polish inspired clothing and accessories.

Drastically different from the previous two, but nonetheless equally special:

- Cepelia, (Marszałkowska 99/101, or Chmielna 8) – traditional handmade Polish folklore objects.

Flea Markets

If you consider yourself a treasure hunter, or if you like to collect little vintage objects from every city you visit, you shouldn't miss these flea markets in Warsaw:

- BAZAR NA KOLE, unique old pottery, and furniture. It's guaranteed to find some little gem here.
- OLIMPIA, besides food and regional products you can also find vintage furniture, antiques, books, and clothing, among other stuff. Let the treasure hunt begin!

Bookshops

Another great idea for a souvenir: books about Warsaw. I've got loads!

Local books about Warsaw are perfect if you want to remember all the amazing experiences from your trip.

Head to one of these quaint little bookshops and discover what local artists, writers, and photographers have to say about their beloved Warsaw. All of the bookshops below have a good collection of books in English as well.

These are some of the prettiest and unusual bookshops in Warsaw:

- As You Like It. Designers books and photography books, among others. (Address: Emilii Plater 4)
- Super Saloon, similar to As you like but more modern looking. (Address: Chmielna 10)
- Art bookstore at the Centre for Contemporary Art "Ujazdowski Castle". This bookshop is packed with books in English and Polish and also some cute souvenirs (like the crunchable map of Warsaw). (Address: Jazdów 2)
- Antykwariat Grochowski, very nice second-hand bookstore, where time seems to have stopped a while ago. Besides loads of second-hand Polish books, they also have a nice collection of English books, travel books and vinyls. (address: Ludwika Kickiego 12)

Off the Beaten Path

Explore the Praga District

Sure, most of the museums, attractions and the Old Town are on the left side of the Vistula river. Yet, you should not neglect the right side. The river bank on this side is rough, wild and authentic. Adjectives that could as well describe the up-and-coming Praga District.

Praga was for decades an off-limit area, for both Varsovians and tourists. The crime rate, unemployment and living conditions of this neighborhood were the worst in the city.



Today, the Praga district is undergoing a revival. It is safe, cool and dynamic.

There is plenty to discover. Here you will find amazing street art from both International and Polish artists, 40 years old "mural-ads" from communist times, wrecks of buildings riddled by bullets in WWII, underground bars, alternative museums (Neon Museum and Czar PRL – Life under Communism Museum) and great tours (adventure Warsaw).

If you seek off the beaten track sights and activities Praga will be your favorite district in Warsaw.

Visit the Neon Museum



A unique little gem in Warsaw's Praga district, the Neon Museum is a private initiative of photographer Ilona Karwińska. This museum is the biggest collection of neons in Europe and the only one in Poland.

When entering the Neon Museum, you will be presented with an illuminating timeline of Warsaw's post-war past. What role could a neon play in communist Warsaw? How did it influence the way Varsovians perceived their city? And how could such an eccentric and colourful medium be used in dull communist Poland? You will find the answers to all of these questions at the museum.

The visit will be brief – it won't take more than 30 minutes – but stimulating. If you want to learn more about Polish post-war history, or if you love typography, neons or design, visiting this museum is an absolute must.

You will find the Neon Museum in the fascinating Praga district, on the right bank of the Vistula. While you are here, you should also go to the "Life Under Communism Museum", which is literally 200 meters away.

Take a Tour with AdventureWarsaw



The guys at Adventure Warsaw are organizing super cool Warsaw tours that go off the beaten track, tell stories of life under communism, and show you the most dynamic clubs and bars in the city. You will be driven around in a super awesome vintage Nysa 522, which will definitely add to the experience.

But it's not all about Warsaw with AdventureWarsaw. They also organize adrenaline based activities such as paintball in an old factory, kart racing, ATV (quad) trips into the woods and other activities.

If you have limited time, you should definitely consider joining one or more of their tours! They also have their own B&B, which has a great rating on booking.com.

Admire Industrial Architecture at the Gas Work Museum



Off the beaten path, a few minutes away from the pretty Old Town, lies the Gas Work Museum.

In the late 19th century, the first time in the history of the city, this was an avant-garde complex providing gas and lighting to Warsaw's streets. Today, it's a very interesting (and FREE) Gas Work Museum, with a great collection of original machinery, street lamps and gas cookers from over a century ago, all in mint condition.

When you step inside the museum, you will notice the pungent smell of grease – probably used to keep the metal from oxidizing. You might be the only person in the whole building, which totally makes it for a great experience.

The museum is not the only thing to see here.

The whole complex is fascinating and worth visiting. The 19th-century industrial architecture, the red bricks, and the original gas street lamps, effectively manage to bring you back to a time when lighting in the street was a sign of technological progress.

You should also go have a look at the cool old “colosseums” (the one in the picture above), or to be more accurate, the old gas storage tanks. These colossal cylindrical buildings – contrary to the rest of the facility – aren't restored and have an incredibly romantic look, with their broken windows and deteriorated bricks. They are not part of the museum and it's not allowed to go inside but you can [snap nice pictures from here](#) (link to google map street view).

Some people manage to get inside but it's private property so you could get in trouble. I really hope the owners will make good use of those amazing buildings, and that, one day, they will become monuments.

If you want to see original gas street lamps in Warsaw, go to Agrykola street, next to Łazienki Park (the best time to admire them is at dusk).

A few hundred meters from the gas work museum lies another great spot in Warsaw: the Tibetan Gallery in Wola, keep reading!

Discover the Tibetan Gallery in Wola



The Tibetan Gallery is an “open-air street art gallery” showing Tibetan culture, Tibetan history and the atrocities happening today in Tibet. This gallery is the first of its kind in the world.

The idea of creating the Gallery came after the Council of Warsaw awarded Dalai Lama with honorary citizenship.

You can [find the gallery in Wola district](#) (link to google map). If you want to know more go to their website: [Tibetan Gallery](#).

See the Narrowest House in the World: the Keret House



The Keret House is the narrowest house in the world, with 152 cm at its widest point and 92 at its narrowest point. This world record house was initially conceived as an example of “impossible architecture”, which could fit in the “non-productive” cracks of Warsaw’s chaotic urban landscape.

The house might not be the best place for a claustrophobic person, but it’s actually a perfect place to live in and it’s regularly rented to young creative individuals (mostly writers).

For this reason, the house is usually open to the public only once or twice a year, welcoming just about 100 people who booked their visit well in advance: The house will be open to the public in the spring of 2017. Check the official [Keret House Website](#) to find out the exact dates.

The Keret House can be difficult to find, as it’s way narrower than you might think!

When you do find it, don't just snap a picture and leave, like most people do. What you see from the street is just the back of the house.

If you want to see the front of the house, you should enter the bakery (in Polish: piekarnia) which lies right next to the house.

Here you will meet Jacob, the young owner of the bakery. Just ask about the Keret house and he will be happy to guide you to the back of his bakery, into the inner yard of the building, where you will be able to see the front of the Keret House.

The bakery, beside serving excellent breakfast and coffee, is also a good place to go if you want to learn some extra facts and figures about the Keret House, as it will host (from April/May 2017 onwards) a little exposition about the house.

It is actually possible to access the front of the house from the street but you will have to go a long way around, it's easier through the bakery!

Go back in time at the Fotoplastikon



Stepping into the Fotoplastikon in Warsaw is a truly "time-warping" experience. As you walk into the tiny room that accommodates the machine – before you even put your eyes on the viewfinder – you are quickly transported back in time. Old songs play quietly in the background, the gentle smell of old wood permeates your nostrils and the sight of this old machine, once the latest miracle of the entertaining business, takes you away from modern society.

The Fotoplastikon is a stereoscopic machine with a collection of more than seven thousands 3D pictures. These pictures were captured by hundreds of photographers and journalists, who were sent around the world to depict all those faraway places that the common people could not afford to see.

If I told you that you could travel back in time for the price of a bus ride (1\$), would you do it?

It's also worth saying that this is the oldest working machine in its original location. There are other machines similar to this one in the world, but they are usually in museums!

If you want to know which exhibition is on at the moment, visit their [website](#). My [full article here](#).

Seasonal Musts

Warsaw Film Festival and FREE access to Museums in Autumn

If you are a movie lover or a culture enthusiast, autumn might be the best time for you to come!

In October you can go to the Warsaw Film Festival, a major film festival. The organizers strive to “show a film before it wins an Oscar” and they are proud of “not chasing filmmakers who are already famous”. In 2009, The [Warsaw Film Festival](#) joined the elite group of events recognized by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations – next to Cannes, Venice, and Berlin.

Beside the WFF, autumn is a good time to visit Warsaw because the royal residences are free!

In November all the former royal residences have free admission and special programs in place. This means that major landmarks like the Royal Castle, the Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów, and all the buildings in the Royal Łazienki Museum are free to visit!

Winter: The fairytale Christmas Light Festival



Warsaw’s temperatures in December and January are rigid, but the spirits are warm. In the coldest months of the year Warsaw Old Town dresses up with its prettiest clothes and transforms itself into a glowing wonderland full of light creations, ice skating rinks and Christmas markets.

This amazing light festival displays 1300 artistic installations and covers over 20 km. It is the biggest light festival in Poland and one of the biggest in Europe. Every year the light sculptures are bigger and more creative than the previous year. Think that in 2016 the amount of lights doubled compared to 2015 (all the lights are LED, which makes this huge festival eco friendly). I doesn’t look like this trend is going to slow down.

In 2013, French newspaper “Le Figaro” considered Warsaw to be “among the ten most beautifully decorated cities in the world”. If they had come in 2016, Warsaw would have definitely made the top of their list! So come in winter if you want to see Warsaw at its prettiest!

Free Chopin Concert at Łazienki Park in Spring



Łazienki Park is a great place to visit all year around. But it's probably at its best in spring.

In spring, Łazienki park is an explosion of life and colors. Vibrant multicolored flowers, the infinite shades of green treetops, the tweet of birds, the company of red furred squirrels and the reflection of the buildings in the lake are the perfect muse for any artist.

Bring your own food and a blanket. Sit on the grass and enjoy a Chopin concert on Sundays (between 12.00 and 16.00). Get there early to secure a good spot! The Chopin concerts start on the 15th of May and last until the 25th of September.

The access to the park and to the concert is free.

Everybody wants to be a Varsovian in Summer



As soon as the temperature rises, the Vistula shores get out of their winter lethargy and explode with life.

Parties, bars, walking routes, bike paths, sandy beaches, wildlife and water sports. The Vistula river has so much to offer!

All you need to know is that there are two sides of the river, one wild and untamed on the right side (Praga side) where you can find the sandy beaches, and the tamed and cemented on the left side (Centrum side), which is also super cool with great parties and floating bars.

If you are looking for a good place for a walk or a bike ride (more about biking in Warsaw below), look no farther than the bike path along the Vistula, which you can access from the “Most Poniatowskiego” (Poniatowskiego Bridge), at the “Rondo Waszyngtona” (Waszyngtona Roundabout).

If you want to BBQ or just chill around a bonfire, get your spot in the wide sandy beaches next to Poniatowski bridge on Praga side. A crazy night out is not hard to find either. I suggest you go to Pomost 511 or Cud nad Wisłą (two cool bars just next to each other on the left side of the river). There are new amazing spots popping up every year, I can't wait to see what the Vistula riverside will offer this summer.

If you are interested in wildlife, you'll be surprised to know that the Vistula shore hosts more than 40 different species of animals. Some year ago a [moose was spotted swimming in the river](#) (youtube video)!

Also along the Vistula, you should definitely check out the [Multimedia Fountain Park](#). This is a great show which uses water, light, and sound to provide an incredible experience which attracts thousands of people.

You can see the performance on Fridays & Saturdays at 9:30 p.m. from May to August and at 9 p.m. in September.

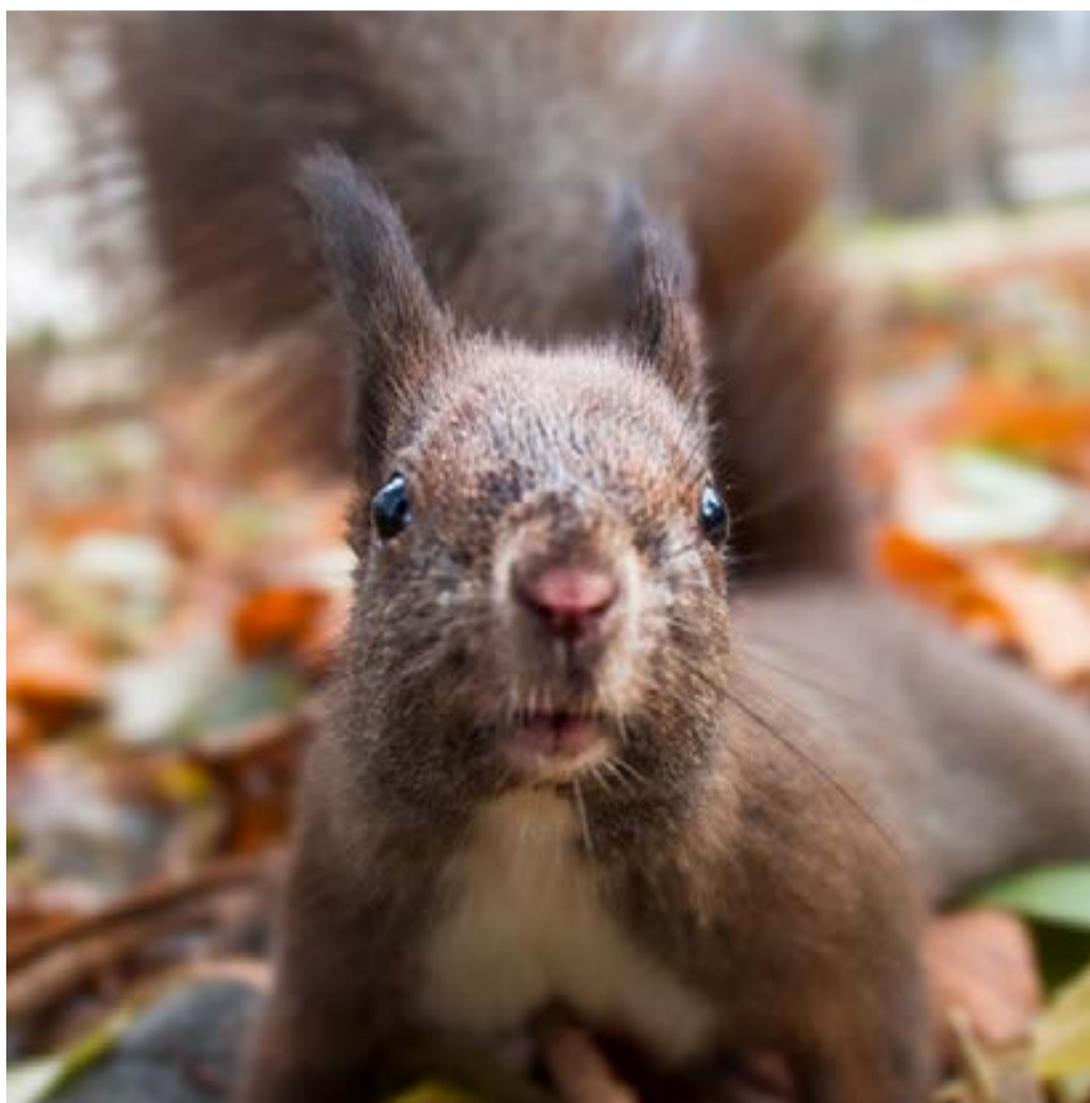
Outdoor activities

Łazienki – Royal Residence Park

[Łazienki Park](#), the largest public park in Warsaw, is an important venue for music and culture and a must-see for architecture and nature lovers.

Once inside Łazienki Park, you will easily forget you are in the center of one of Europe's biggest cities. This massive park, covering about 76 hectares (which is about 120 football fields), is also home to a variety of buildings worth visiting (Palace on the Isle and Myślewicki Palace are particularly interesting museums). Plan three to four hours to visit. In summer and spring, I would recommend a longer stay, with a lunch break for the Chopin concert (Arrive well in time to reserve a good spot or rent a free cushion).

The access to the park is free all year around but each building has its own price. Entrance to ALL buildings is FREE on Thursday (But better to go in the morning if you can, as afternoons get busy).



If you want to read more about this park, I describe it in detail here in the [full article](#).



Go Kayaking on the Vistula river

Jump in a kayak and tame one of Europe's coolest rivers! You can get a kayak in one of three available destinations and then bring it back in any of the three.



The locations on google maps:

- [Pomost 511](#) (left bank of the Vistula)
- [Plaża Poniatówka](#) (right bank of the Vistula)
- [Next to AQUATICA](#) (right bank of the Vistula)

The cost is 20 PLN for the first hour and 10 additional PLN every 30 minutes.

If you want, you could combine the kayaking experience with the Veturilo bikes. This is called the "Kayak and Bike loop":

- Get the kayak on one bank of the river.
- Leave it on the other bank.
- Then get a Veturilo bike (free for the first 20 minutes) and cross the river on most Świętokrzyski bridge (nice and safe bike path on both sides of the bridge).

Find out more about it [here](#) (website is in Polish). If you feel more adventurous go [here](#) and book an extended Kayak trip (even a few days trips).



The best way to visit the city: Rent a “Veturilo” Public Bike



It's very cheap (it's actually FREE for the first 20 minutes but you have to pay for registration: 10PLN one-time fee), easy, and you can find them everywhere!

Veturilo means “vehicle” in Esperanto*. The name was chosen among thousands of other suggestions from internet users.

Here is the [official map](#). This map is great because you can see the availability of the bikes before you get there. I also created [my own map with google's “my maps”](#), so that you can use it in Google maps and get directions to the nearest station (you can't do that with the official maps).

A great bike path is the “Sunny Route”. It runs along the right bank of the Vistula River. It's quite unique because you will be immersed in wild nature even if in the middle of the city. Over 8 km forest and beaches to enjoy on your Veturilo bike! You can access the bike path from the “Most Poniatowskiego” (Poniatowskiego Bridge), at the Rondo Waszyngtona (Waszyngtona Roundabout).

Another route, perhaps a bit more demanding, is the “Vistula route” This route runs for 34 km from Młociny to Powsin. It runs across the Młociński Forest, along the Vistula and Ujazdowskie Avenue, passing through the Łazienki Park and Wilanów.

On the last Friday of every month, Warsaw Critical Mass meets up for a 30 km ride in the capital's streets. The start point is the Royal Castle Square.

Uprising Mass. A yearly bicycle ride organized in tribute to the soldiers of the Warsaw Uprising. This route runs along locations associated with the Uprising. The ride takes place in August.

If you want to join an organized bike tours, consider [station Warsaw](#).

If you want to be more independent instead, I'm sure that you will make great use of this [Warsaw bike map](#).

You can take your bike on buses for free, but keep in mind that each bus has room for only one bicycle.

*Esperanto is a language invented by Polish-Jewish ophthalmologist L. L. Zamenhof

A Final Note...

We truly hope you enjoyed this guide!

It is a pleasure for us to show you the best side of our city!

The truth is though, that with this guide we only scratched the surface of what Warsaw has to offer! We will continue to provide you with the best content possible, so make sure you visit us (or join if you haven't) on OddUrbanThings.com!

What to do next?

First of all, a big thank you for downloading this guide!

This guide (and OddUrbanThings.com) is the product of our love for Warsaw and travel. Nobody pays us for doing what we do.

We sincerely love to help people like you, who show an interest in our city.

If you truly liked this guide, there are a few things that we would REALLY appreciate you doing:

1. Tell your friends! Share this guide with any of your friends that are planning to visit Warsaw. [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [e-mail](#). Send pigeons if you like! :)
2. If you got this guide from a friend, GREAT! But make sure you [join us for more](#) Warsaw related content!
3. [Like us on Facebook](#)! It is SO important to us. HELP us spread the word!
4. If you don't have a place to stay in Warsaw yet, check my article about [the best hostels and hotels in Warsaw!](#)

Enjoy your trip to Warsaw!

Warmly,

Federico & Anna

PS: in this guide there are two affiliate links, one to [Hotelscombine](#) and one to [Booking.com](#). These links help us cover the cost of running the site. We would never recommend products which we don't use and love ourselves.

