

POLISH COUSINE

Polish food is famous for being simple, hearty and not especially colourful. You simply haven't had a thorough sampling of it until you've tried all the traditional dishes below, all of which you should be able to find in almost any Polish restaurant or milk bar in town. *Smacznego!*

Barszcz



A nourishing beetroot **soup**, barszcz may be served with potatoes and veggies tossed in, with a croquette ('barszcz z krokietem') or miniature pierogi floating in it ('barszcz z uszkami'), or simply as broth in a mug expressly for drinking ('barszcz solo'). A recommended alternative to other beverages with any winter meal, we'd be surprised if you can find a bad cup of barszcz anywhere in Poland, so make sure you return home with barszcz stains on at least one of your shirts.

Bigos



Traditionally a winter dish, Bigos is a hearty stew made in large batches. Though there is no standard recipe, ingredients usually include lots of fresh and pickled cabbage, leftover meat parts and sausage, onion, mushrooms, garlic and whatever else is on hand. In fact, metaphorically Bigos translates to 'big mess,' 'confusion' or 'trouble' in Polish. Seasoned with peppercorns, bay leaves, caraway and the kitchen sink, the stew is left to gestate, sometimes underground, for a few days for full flavour infusion. A Polish restaurant or prospective wife can be fairly measured on the strength of their Bigos.

Gołąbki

Translating to 'little pigeons,' this favourite dish consists of boiled cabbage leaves stuffed with beef, onion and rice before being baked and served in a tomato or mushroom sauce. Polish legend claims King Kazimierz fed his army gołąbki before a battle outside Malbork against the Teutonic Order, and their unlikely subsequent victory has been attributed to the hearty meal ever since.



Golonka



Naleśniki

The Polish equivalent of French crepes, these are thin pancakes wrapped around pretty much any filling you can dream of, savoury or sweet. Generally the easy way out in any dodgy Polish dining establishment.

Smalec

Vegetarians who broke their vows for a bite of sausage or a taste of żurek generally draw the line here. An animal fat spread full of fried lard chunks (the more the better, we say) and served with hunks of homemade bread, Smalec is a savoury snack that goes great with a mug of beer. Any traditional Polish restaurant worth its salt should give you lashings of this prior to your meal.

You can order it with bread and beer in Spiż - the restaurant on marquet square.

Żurek



It doesn't get any more Polish than żurek – a unique sour rye soup with sausage, potatoes and occasionally egg chucked in, and often served in a bread bowl.

Probably the most popular lunch/supper in Poland is the almighty 'schabowy' with mashed potatoes and pickled cabbage, and you can walk into almost restaurant in the country and be assured of its presence on the menu (if the kitchen hasn't run out of it already). Essentially a breaded and fried pork chop (cutlet), 'kotlet schabowy' is quite similar to Viennese schnitzel, and a solid bet for a cheap, filling, risk-free meal. If you're awoken on a Saturday or Sunday morning by the sound of profuse banging - that's the collective sound of every housewife in Poland tenderising the meat for this meal with a spiky mallet. So best mind your manners.

Kotlet Schabowy



Doughy dumplings traditionally filled with potato (Ruskie), sweet cheese, meat, mushrooms and cabbage, strawberries or plums, though if you nose around you will find plenty of maverick fillings like broccoli, chocolate or liver as the possibilities are truly limitless and they are served almost everywhere in the city.

Pierogi



These greasy, fried potato pancakes ('**placki ziemniaczane**') are very similar to Jewish latkes (if that means anything to you) and best enjoyed with goulash on top (placki po Węgiersku). Highly caloric, they're also a tried and true hangover cure.

Placki

The ultimate Polish drunk food, and also known as 'Polish pizza.' Take a stale baguette, pour melted cheese on it and then cover it with mushrooms and ketchup from a squeeze bottle. Best eaten when absolutely plastered. Where to buy it: various fast food cabins dotted around the city centre.



Zapiekanka



SHOPPING

WHAT YOU SHOULD VISIT IN WROCLAW

1. Ostrów Tumski

Ostrów Tumski is an island and the oldest part of Wrocław. Surrounded by the River Oder, this former garden, which gave rise to the city of Wrocław, is now featuring a number of impressive monuments. The most prominent monuments include the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist (restored after World War II), the Holy Cross and Saint Bartholomew's Collegiate, which is a unique two-storey brick basilica. Located on the island is also the Archdiocese Museum, which for more than one hundred years has been collecting sacred art, including the celebrated Book of Henryków. Dated to the 13th–14th centuries, the book is known to feature the first sentence to have ever been recorded in Polish (the document was listed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register). This is the only place in Wrocław where you can see a lamplighter turning on the gas lamps at dusk.



2. Rynek

Hustling and bustling both day and night, Rynek, or the Market Square, is the very heart of Wrocław. The centre of the square features the Cloth Hall and the Town Hall, the latter being a unique specimen of Gothic and Renaissance architecture. The Town Hall, which once housed the city authorities, has been converted into the Museum of the Bourgeois Art. In front of its eastern façade stands the faithful copy of the mediaeval Pillory, and in front of the western façade the Aleksander Fredro Monument. The Market Square is surrounded by beautiful town houses. The area is not far from another tourist attractions of Wrocław, the quarter of Nadodrze. This former craftsmen area is now becoming increasingly beautiful and entices the visitors with its unique atmosphere.



3. Four Denominations District

Four Denominations District is part of the Old Town enclosed by ul. Kazimierza Wielkiego, ul. św. Antoniego, ul. Pawła Włodkowica and ul. św. Mikołaja. In close proximity, the district features four different temples representing four different denominations: an Orthodox church, a Roman Catholic church, a Lutheran church and a synagogue. Two tourist trails run

across the district: the culture trail and the historic trail. The area also boasts a number of good hotels, many bars, galleries and music clubs.



4. The Royal Palace

The Royal Palace, together with its Baroque-style garden, now houses the Historical Museum of Wrocław. The Museum showcases the history of the city with exhibitions such as "Wrocław's Millennium". Royal apartments are also open to the public.



5. Wrocław University

The main Wrocław University building is part of a larger Baroque-style building complex composed of a former Jesuit college and Jesuit church. The building houses the Wrocław University Museum and the gem of Lower Silesia's Baroque, the Leopoldinum Hall, together

with the Oratorium Marianum music hall, which has served as a celebrated concert space for more than two hundred years now. The astronomical observatory in the Mathematical Tower features historic astronomers' equipment, including a 14th-century astrolabe, a 16th-century heavenly globe and a compass date to 1665.

6. Panorama of the Battle of Raclawice

Painted by Jan Styka and Wojciech Kossak, the Raclawice Panorama is a unique representation of the Battle of Raclawice (4th April 1794), created to commemorate the centenary of the Kościuszko Uprising. The work, which boasts an impressive size of 15 x 114 m, is open to the public in a specially designed rotund building. The combination of painterly techniques (perspective) and technology (lighting, artificial terrain, darkened and winding entry) provides for a unique and illusionistic spectacle.



7. The Hydropolis

The Hydropolis, or Wrocław's centre for environmental education, is one of the largest centres of this kind in Europe. It is also the only centre in Poland that showcases almost all types of aquatic environment. The visitors can choose from over 70 different interactive features and multimedia installations.



8. The Centennial Hall

The Centennial Hall is one of the most prominent landmarks in the history of 20th-century architecture. Designed by the eminent architect Max Berg, it was created in 1913 to celebrate the international exhibition commemorating the Battle of the Nations. The dome of this early Modernist reinforced concrete structure is 1.5 times larger in diameter than the dome of Rome's Pantheon while weighing only 42% of its bulk. In 2006, the site was enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage Register. You can find out more about its construction at the Cognitive Centre, a permanent multimedia exhibition. The Centennial Hall complex also features the Four Domes' Pavilion, designed by the eminent architect Hans Poelzig and developed from 1912–1913. The building, which formerly housed the Wrocław Feature Film Studio, has now been restored to serve exhibition purposes. The renovated building features one of Poland's most intriguing and developed collections of Polish contemporary art (the property of the National Museum in Wrocław). The Centennial Hall is surrounded by the Pergola, which boasts one of the largest multimedia fountains in Europe.

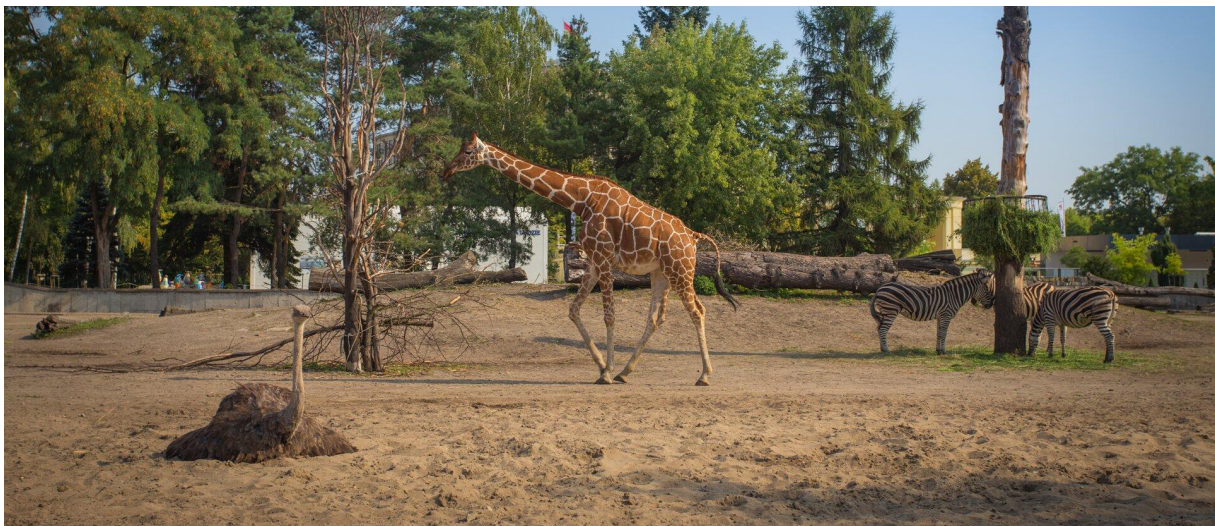


9. Szczytnicki Park

Szczytnicki Park is the largest park in the city. Established in 1875 as a private garden, it was later transformed into a city park. Set up in 1913, the Japanese Garden remains its key attraction. With its original composition, the garden shows a different face each season, the only permanent feature being Japanese architecture. Szczytnicki Park, with its arboretum, beautiful rhododendron orchards, rose gardens and the Japanese Garden, is heritage listed.

10. The Wrocław Zoo

The Wrocław Zoo is the oldest and largest Polish zoo (considering the number of species). The Zoo features both historic facilities, including the bear tower, elephant house and monkey house, and modern pavilions such as the Afrykarium, which is a unique complex showcasing a variety of Africa's aquatic habitats.



Everything is closely scrutinised by Wrocław dwarves!

