



Bydgoszcz has seen a 21st Century transformation

The historic Polish city of Bydgoszcz, located on either bank of the Brda River, is relatively unknown as a traveller destination.

With a heritage stretching back to the 13th Century, Bydgoszcz became a city dominated by the electrical machinery and chemical industries during Poland's 44-year post-war period as a Soviet bloc country.

This was followed by 15 years of post-communist economic decline with the city run-down, grey and known as *Brzydgoszcz* from *brzydki* the Polish for ugly.

When Poland joined the European Union, in 2004, Bydgoszcz was able to access initial EU funding to pump-prime what is a remarkable transformation.

The city authorities, private sector and community then took over the city's renaissance with layer on layer of enhancement projects, landscaping and events and celebrations.

As a result, Bydgoszcz today offers as rewarding a short European city break as one could hope to find, and one that will only get better.

<https://www.visitbydgoszcz.pl/en/>

Ashley Gibbins
Commissioning Editor
AllWays traveller



A personal view of Bydgoszcz



Bydgoszcz is a no risk city-break destination

Travel journalists do 'the heavy lifting' when it comes to deciding on an unknown destination for a vacation or short break.

By Ashley Gibbins

This to provide some guidance with seasoned eye, to enable others decide if they should visit - or not. Particularly when it comes to places that few others were likely to be aware of.

This was certainly the case with Bydgoszcz, a Polish city that I had never heard of, could not pinpoint it on a map of the county and, to be honest, was now sure how it is pronounced.

Having greatly enjoyed three trips to Polish cities in recent years, Ann and I were fairly confident we were going to enjoy our five-night break to Bydgoszcz.

We have found Polish people to be warm and welcoming and passionately proud of their being Polish.

There is also the country's fascinating history, excellent dining with fine wine a great beer.

The more we visit Poland, the more we appreciate all of these things.

And (spoiler alert) our trip to Bydgoszcz was just tremendous, and not because our expectations were lower.

About this city

Bydgoszcz, which sits on the Brda and Vistula rivers along with the Bydgoszcz Canal and an international waterway, is pronounced Bid-gosh-ch (with the 'ch' as in cheese).

It is found in north-central Poland, some 150 miles from the German border, which is pertinent, as our guide Mikołaj Buzala explained in simple terms.

"Over the centuries, the city has been Polish, then German, then Polish again, then German once more and now Polish, forever I hope."

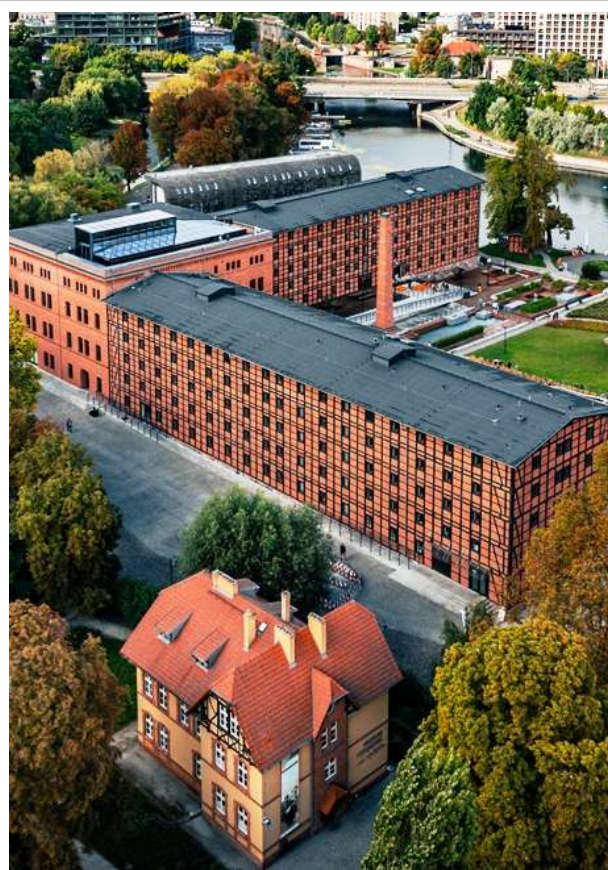
This is because its location on the two rivers made it a much-contested border territory.

The first mention of Bydgoszcz was back in 1238, but it was during the 15th and 16th Centuries that the city saw its heyday as one of Poland's wealthiest cities.

In 1772 Bydgoszcz came under Prussian and then German control and was renamed Bromberg, which it remained until 1920 when, following World War One, when the city was returned to Poland and reclaimed its original name.

In less than 20 years, Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany becoming Bromberg again from 1939 to 1945.

With the city liberated by the Red Army 1945 the city became Bydgoszcz one last time though, being part of Poland, it had to endure 44 years of suppression within the Soviet Bloc.



The ugly city!



After the fall of communism in the 1990s, Bydgoszcz spiralled into decline.

The city's once-booming manufacturing base crumbled leaving a decaying urban landscape of abandoned factories; its grand Art Nouveau architecture was sorely neglected and there was little or no city centre investment.

So why would want to visit this city?

The answer is a remarkable transition that started in 2004, when Poland joined the EU.

This saw the securing of substantial EU funding to pump-prime the city's renaissance and which since then continued at pace by the city authorities.

A stunning transition

The transition, in just 20 years, is as remarkable as it is stunning.

Bydgoszcz as a traveller destination has arrived and greatly rewards a visit, and the enhancement to the urban landscape continues unabated.

The rivers and canals

The rivers and canals, which were once filthy industrial waterways, are now clean and alluring and the old town is as vibrant and full of character as any of its European competitors.

Mill Island, adjoining the old town, which was once derelict and very much a no-go area, has been transformed into a hub for culture and recreation.

A bustling city centre

The bustling Bydgoszcz city centre and its surrounding districts are restored and landscaped parks and gardens are dotted throughout.



City of music

Bydgoszcz is also a UNESCO designated City of Music in recognition of its music heritage with many opportunities to enjoy live music.

Add to this the excellent 'wining and dining' on offer, and fine day trips out of the city, and Bydgoszcz ticks every box when it comes to a short city break.

There could be the temptation to write that Bydgoszcz is an up-and-coming destination, but this would not be correct.

Bydgoszcz has already arrived and is only going to get better.

More information

<https://www.visitbydgoszcz.pl/en/>

It's always 'people make places'

Whenever one travels, it is the people one meets along the way that cements memories.



Mateusz Leśny



Mikołaj Buzala

And in Bydgoszcz we found citizens who were friendly, welcoming and passionate about their city and interested in why we were visiting it.

We met so friendly people on this trip and are proud to mention them knowing they will be able to offer the same warm welcome to other visitors

Getting around and about

As a regional airport, getting through passport control is smooth and efficient.

As for getting into the city we made contact with Mateusz Leśny, who has his own luxury taxi and, as we learnt, also runs, swims and cycles in competitive triathlons.

Mateusz picked us up from the airport and dropped us back again and we also called upon his services for our daytrips out of the city.

In addition to being the driver, Mateusz was our 'mobile concierge' giving us a real insight into life in a city he is so proud of.

He met all our transport requirements perfectly and will do the same for you.

Mateusz Leśny at
mateuszlesny94@gmail.com

Taking the tour

Anyone who has read any of our city features will know we look to lock in a guided tour on our first full day.

It helps to get orientated and, by asking our guide a stream of questions, gives us a real feel of the place.

The Bydgoszcz Tourist Information office, in the heart of the old town, offers advice and maps for self-guided walking tours and can provide details of English-speaking tour guides.

As for us, we were fortunate find Mikołaj Buzala.

A one-time tech professional, his character and personal charisma persuaded Mikołaj to 'follow a dream' and forge a career promoting his city.

The IT industry's loss is the city and its visitors gain.

Mikołaj speaks perfect English and has an in-depth knowledge of Bydgoszcz, and an enthusiasm for imparting it, that is truly infectious.

He was also more than willing to answer all our questions, be they about the city itself or Poland's recent history, which is fascinating.

The Old Town

Bydgoszcz Old Town, nudging the Brda riverside, comprises the area around the historic Old Market Square lined with restaurants.

There are also 18th-century tenement houses, 19th-century timber-framed Granaries and the 15th century Gothic style Bydgoszcz Cathedral.

Mill Island

Mikołaj also took us onto the adjoining Mill Island (see below) which has been transformed, in recent years, into the city's leisure, recreation and cultural hub.

The city centre

Finally, we walked into Bydgoszcz's city centre taking in its parks and Art Deco district.

Because we had peppered Mikołaj with so many questions, we could not spend enough time in this part of Bydgoszcz.

We did though manage to get back there, before leaving Bydgoszcz, and Mikołaj also provided his own perspective on this part of his city (below).

As with other guides, in other cities, our time with Bydgoszcz was so well spent and set up the whole trip for us.

Mikołaj Buzala at
mikołaj.buzala@gmail.com

Mill Island a shining example of this city's renaissance

This no-go area has been transformed into a stunning urban park for leisure, recreation and culture.



The green spaces and picnic lawns and pubs and restaurants have been introduced.

Canal and waterfront walkways connect the island to the river locks and dams.

Mill Island also stages a season-by-season programme of family-orientated special events and celebrations.

While there are those who would have Mill Island known as the *Venice of Bydgoszcz*, this does it an injustice.

This is a peacefully delightful part of Bydgoszcz and deserves due recognition in its own right.

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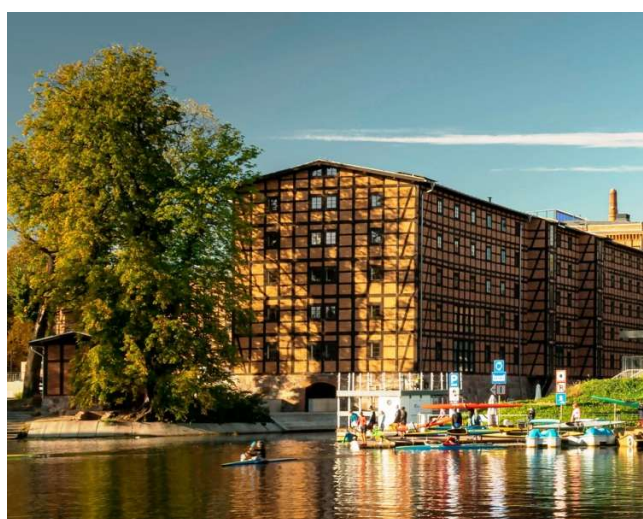
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The European Money Centre, on the island, sits on the site of the historic Royal Bydgoszcz Mint.

It is worth a visit to view the astonishing Bydgoszcz Treasure a collection of 486 gold coins dating from the 16th and 17th centuries alongside religious medallions and gold jewellery.



Following WWII, the factories fell under state control, and this led to decades of underinvestment and slow but inevitable decline.

By the 1980s the island's granaries and milling factories had been abandoned and the island deserted but for the few unscrupulous who inhabited it.

Happily, a complete clearing of the island's infrastructure was avoided.

In 2005, a grand scheme to redevelop the whole island for leisure, recreation and culture was agreed by the city authorities.

Work on the project started a year later and the result has been remarkable.

Pedestrian bridges now link the island to surrounding areas of Bydgoszcz and the historic buildings have been renovated, with the flagship Rother's Mills opened as a cultural and exhibition space,



Visit Bydgoszcz less than 20 years ago and you would have been warned off visiting the 17-acre Mill island (Wyspa Młyńska).

A medieval royal estate had evolved to become the city's industrial area with flourishing grain, milling and sawmills.



A remarkable example of early 20th-century urban planning

Despite its modest size, Bydgoszcz city centre showcases a remarkable blend of early 20th-century urban planning that has been strongly inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement.

By Mikołaj Buzala



Mikołaj Buzala

The area I'm particularly enthusiastic about is a relatively small rectangle of just 1.3 square kilometres on the northern bank of the Brda River.

What makes the area truly exceptional is that, unlike many city centres in Poland, it escaped major wartime destruction.

As a result, more than a century of urban development can still be experienced almost seamlessly, with each period complementing rather than replacing the previous one.

This makes it a very important addition to the Old Town and Mill Island areas.

To locate it on the map, the area is roughly bounded by Gdańska, Jagiellońska, Ogińskiego and Kamienna Streets.

While this forms the heart of the original urban layout, the two parks, are just the beginning.

The best way to appreciate the area is on foot and by starting with Casimir the Great Park and Freedom Square, with its Deluge Fountain

The entire district is organised around an interconnected system of parks, pocket gardens and tree-lined avenues.

There are the Jan Kochanowski Park; the interwar botanical garden and the grounds of the Institute of Agriculture, which has a set of experimental fields in the very heart of the city.

These with the historic allotment gardens and green spaces account for more than 20% of the district's total area.

This creates a series of intimate, leafy neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct character, including :

The Art Nouveau District

The Art Nouveau District is located just north of Jan Kochanowski Park between Mickiewicza and Chodkiewicz Streets.

It features dozens of beautifully preserved early 20th-century tenement houses built during the German period, complemented by impressive villas commissioned by local industrialists.



The Sielanka Estate

The Sielanka Estate is an interwar villa neighbourhood with more than sixty elegant Modernist houses clustered beneath the Neo-classical Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, one of Poland's most imposing churches, around Turwid Square and Ossolińskich Avenue.

The New Academy of Music Quarter

The Music Quarter is one of the city's newest residential developments.

Built around the Academy's striking new headquarters, completed only last year, it has transformed a former clay pit and the remnants of old industrial sites into a vibrant new neighbourhood surrounded by yet another park.

These districts provide an insight into three distinct chapters in Bydgoszcz's development.

From the rapid expansion under Prussian rule, through the ambitious interwar years, to the city's contemporary transformation.

Woven between these neighbourhoods are many of the city's key cultural and academic institutions, including the Academy of Music, the Pomeranian Philharmonic, the Polish Theatre and several university and science institutes buildings, all within easy walking distance.

More information :

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mikalaj.buzala@gmail.com



Its waterways add to the city's great appeal

Rivers running through cities offer such aesthetic appeal and, in this respect, Bydgoszcz has the Brda River, flowing between the Old Town to the city centre and around Mill Island.

The Bydgoszcz Canal offers another opportunity to feel the soothing influence of water.

Both of these were, at one time, used for industrial purposes and were filthy, smelly and highly polluted.

In recent decades, however, they have been cleaned up and developed for leisure and recreation.

The city authorities are also committed to water conservation and have constructed over 100 underground rainwater retention and reuse reservoirs as one of many water-focused initiatives.

For the visitor, the opportunities to appreciate and enjoy this city on or around water is a real bonus.

A river cruise

We started by taking a 60-minute leisurely Brda River cruise aboard the electric-powered *Słonecznik* (Sunflower).

It offered a pleasantly different perspective of the city.

<https://www.visitbydgoszcz.pl/en/discover/tourist-attractions/a/sightseeing-boat-trips>



The Lemara Barge



Anastazja Malicka

We then took a tour of the Lemara Barge (Barka Lemara) a historic cargo vessel now a floating-heritage museum.

She is permanently moored on the Brda River in front of the Bydgoszcz granaries and next to the Sulima-Kamiński Bridge.

With Anastazja Malicka as our guide, we enjoyed a fascinating insight

into what life was like on board the Lemara during its heyday.

It was the first time Anastazja had given her tour of the barge in English, and she was excellent.

She knows everything there is to know about the Lemara and was more than able to answer all our questions.

We learnt the Lemara was built in a Bydgoszcz shipyard in 1937 and was originally owned by skipper Adolf Schmidt who named it by combining his parents' names, Leon and Maria.

The Schmidt family lived and worked on the barge for decades and today she is a legacy to them and the other skippers who plied their trade here.

More information :

<https://mck-bydgoszcz.pl/barka-lemara/>
Anastazja Malicka at amalicka06@wp.pl

Bydgoszcz Canal and Museum



Weronika Kowalska

The Bydgoszcz Canal is also an alluring waterway and gave us a pleasant couple of hours strolling the towpaths.

Commissioned as an artificial waterway by Frederic the Great, in 1773–1774, the 25km canal is Poland's oldest operational inland waterway.

Its original industrial use has long been superseded by leisure and recreation, with

the stretch in Bydgoszcz itself part of a nature reserve and landscape park.

The small but fascinating Bydgoszcz Canal Museum showcases the canals construction and its industrial, cultural and recreational influence on the city with maps, scale models, old photographs and a rare 1920s oak rowing boat.

To get the most from a visit, arrange a guided tour with Weronika Kowalska who brings the history of the canal to life.

It really does turn what could be somewhat dry experience into an invigorating one.

For those who want to get on the canal, the Museum offers free hire of canoes.

More information :

Weronika Kowalska at muzeum@kanalbydgoski.pl
<https://kanalbydgoski.pl/about-the-museum/>



The Museum of Soap and Dirt History

With a couple of hours free, Ann and I also came upon the *Museum of Soap and the History of Dirt*.



Tymon Markowski

Located just off the Old Market Square, at 13-17 Długa Street, it is run by Daria Kierasiewicz and Adam Bujny as 'a living museum on the history of dirt and health from the ancient times to the present'.

Each visit starts with a short workshop giving visitors the chance to make their own soap, which is presented at the end.

From then on, the audio tour of this small museum takes one through rooms detailing the medieval bath along with a recreation of a 19th century bathroom and facilities for washing and bathing, mangles, washing machines and dryers and a collection of soaps from around the world.

There is the chance to touch and smell everything in the museum.



Tymon Markowski



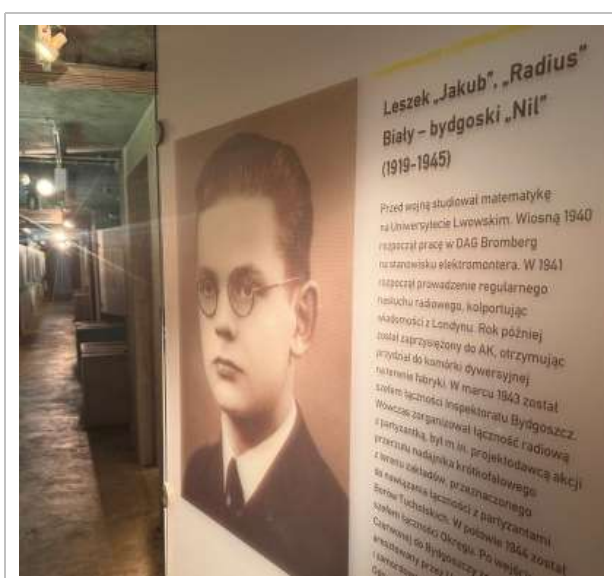
More information :
www.muzeummydla.pl





An experience that will never be forgotten

Exploseum is a 'real' history museum within the abandoned, camouflaged ruins of DAG Fabrik Bromberg, a Nazi Germany munitions factory.



Between 1939 and 1945 the factory, located in deep woodland, covered a vast area for the production of nitro-glycerine, nitrocellulose, TNT and smokeless powder.

These were all used as high explosive in shells for the German army on the Eastern Front and there was also an ammunition filling area and a rail terminal.

In addition to the factory complex itself, there was a 'township' of rudimentary huts for the forced and slave labour working here.

While many of the buildings have been demolished, or are being used for other purposes, we can walk the building at the core of the complex, which contained the production line for the nitro-glycerine.

This has remained virtually unchanged since the Second World War.



Chilling and sombre



Aleksandra Żelazna



When Ann and I decided on a visit we had no real idea of what we would find.

While it was chilling and very sombre, we were so grateful for the opportunity to appreciate what had happened on this very spot 80-plus years ago.

Visiting the untouched building and tunnels one feels the echoes from the past and this is an eerie and sometimes emotionally uncomfortable experience.

But one we would not have missed and one we will not forget.

This is a museum that requires a guided tour and in Aleksandra Żelazna we had the very best.

She is so knowledgeable about the factory and its operation and never failed to answer the flow of questions we had.

With Aleksandra taking us through the many displays of maps, photographs and objects we learnt that the Nazi's brought some 40,000 to 60,000 forced workers, prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates to the factory.

She explained that conditions for workers from countries who had signed the Geneva treaty, were relatively good.

They had brick built barracks that were heated and worked a daily eight-hour shift.



For others working in the factory, the conditions were severe, particularly for Soviets and the Jewish women who lived in squalid huts, on meagre rations and who were forced to do the most difficult or dangerous jobs with no protective clothing.

They would toil for long hours in appalling conditions with the risk of acid burns that never healed.

Everything, Aleksandra told us, depended on the 'Nazi race scale'.

Walking the complex of massive concrete factory building and its 2km of interconnecting underground passages we could take in displays detailing the production of nitro-glycerine line for military purposes; the everyday life of the factory workers, the underground activities of the Home Army and the Red Army invasion.

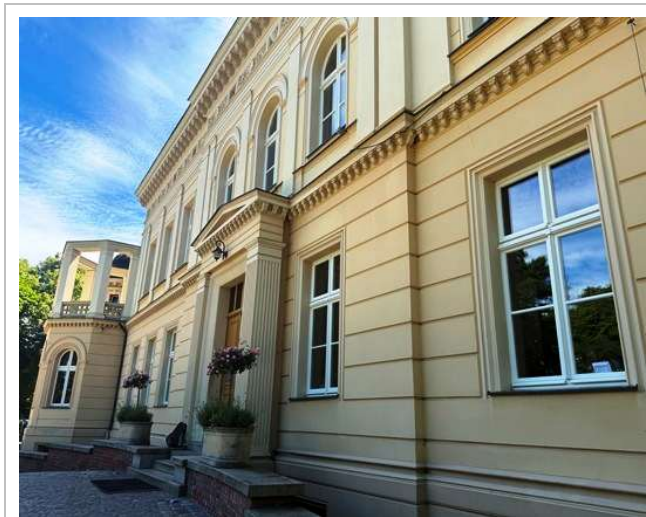
A part of the museum is dedicated to Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, as well as his company Dynamit-Aktien Gesellschaft (DAG), which owned the facility.

We cannot recommend a visit to Exploseum highly enough.



More information :

<https://muzeum.bydgoszcz.pl/exploseum/>
Aleksandra Żelazna at
exploseum@muzeum.bydgoszcz.pl



The Ostromecko Palace estate

A trip to the Ostromecko Palaces and park offers a real contrast to Explozeum.



Located a short drive from Bydgoszcz, for which we used Mateusz, it is an historic 18th-century estate embracing the Old Palace, the New Palace sitting in 40 hectares of landscaped gardens and parkland.

The New Palace (Pałac Nowy) is a grand 19th-century neoclassical and French Neobaroque style mansion which has a small hotel and offers an excellent restaurant (which Ann reviews below).

There is the chance to tour the palace, furnished with period furniture and go to the Owl Attic with its permanent exhibition of 8,000 owl figurines, paintings and artifacts

The smaller Old Palace (Mostowski Palace) is found a very short stroll away.

This is a baroque palace dating back to the mid-18th century and offering the chance to admire the Andrzej Szwalbe collection of historic pianos.

The park at the Ostromecko Palaces is itself a delight featuring a 19th-century English landscape garden design planned by Prussian royal gardener Peter Joseph Lenné.



Pawel Swieca

There is a formal Italian rosarium, near the Old Palace, with its roses blooming from spring to autumn, and a pond reached through a linden tree walkway.

In all, the park has some 4,500 trees and over 60 designated as natural monuments, and, for many visitors, a half-day picnicking in the park is all they wish for with.

Our guide for the visit to the Palaces was Pawel Swieca who, in addition to being truly knowledgeable about the estate, is a fine classical pianist.

Having Pawel give short recitals on the historic piano in the collection was a real pleasure.



More information :

<https://palaceostromecko.pl/>

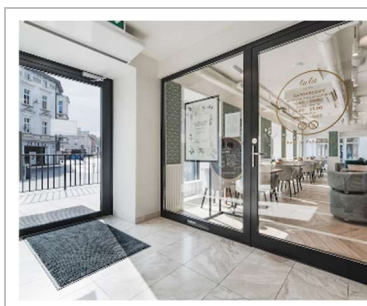
A place to stay in Bydgoszcz



Sowa Apartments make for a great city base

Situated in the heart of Bydgoszcz, Sowa Apartments make an ideal base for exploring the city.

By Ann Mealor



The old and new towns with their excellent restaurants, cafes and bars are just a leisurely stroll away as is the pretty Brda River and other cultural and historic sites.

It is quiet, modern, spacious and nicely furnished with large windows overlooking the city.

Our apartment had a comfortable bedroom, lounge area with a sofa, table and chairs and a small kitchenette with fridge, hob and a selection of cutlery and pans.

Just enough to make a quick snack or a light supper if you didn't fancy eating out.

Plenty of tea and coffee were provided along with an environmentally friendly glass bottle that could be re-filled with tap water and kept cold in the fridge.

The high-quality Prija toiletries were a pleasure to use, and the powerful rainfall walk-in shower really good.

Our hospitality tray was replenished daily and the rooms tidied and cleaned.



Lulu Bistro



Every morning we had breakfast in the bright and cheerful Lulu Bistro, which is on the ground floor of the Sowa complex.

The sunny conservatory overlooking the Old Town is the perfect place for an early meal.

It is worth spending at least an hour here as the food is delicious and the staff are so friendly and helpful, as well as being extremely efficient.

Ashley and I always chose the fluffy, well filled omelette as it was just so good.

This came with an enticing platter of fresh, crisp salad, bread, cottage cheese, egg mayonnaise and rolls of sliced Emmenthal cheese and a particularly tasty smoked ham.

There were other choices on the menu including pancakes, a full English, which I would have had if I wasn't eating lunch, eggs Benedict, avocado and halloumi cheese and scrambled eggs.

As well as my usual Earl Grey tea, I had very healthy smoothie of cucumber, apple and spinach served in a mini-milk bottle with a straw.

There was no better way to start the day before taking to the cobbled streets of Bydgoszcz.

Sowa Apartments can also be found in nearby Torun and are opening soon in Gdansk.

More information :

<https://www.sowa-apartamenty.pl/bydgoszcz>

<https://lulubistro.pl/>

Dining in Bydgoszcz



Palace Ostromecko



Meluzyna



Kuchnia

Dining in Bydgoszcz a real pleasure

On previous visits to Poland, I have always found the restaurants exceeding my expectations and eating out a pleasure.

By Ann Mealor

I'm pleased to say that Bydgoszcz was no exception.

Menus offered a choice of meat, fish, vegetarian and vegan dishes, portions were generous and the food always fresh, served piping hot, well-presented and good value for money.

The bistros, cafes and brasseries were all attractive and well furnished.

Some had open kitchens so the chefs could be seen at work, and many offered the option to dine al-fresco, which is always my preferred choice when the weather allows.

The Polish wine is also excellent. Here those that we were able to enjoy and would recommend.

Kuchnia by Marcin Szukaj



Kuchnia by Marcin Szukaj has a cosy, rustic bistro feel, with wooden tables lit by the soft glow of lamps, white-washed brick walls and music in the background.

There is an open kitchen where the culinary team can be seen chopping, frying, grilling and preparing a range of delicious dishes.

Award winning owner and chef, Marcin Szukaj works closely with local farmers to get good quality ingredients for his seasonal menus.

Marcin is inspired by classic Polish recipes but gives them an innovative twist to create something special.

Our tomato soup starter was full of vine ripened flavour and my Sturgeon fillet from Charzykowy Fish Farms in a caviar and chive sauce with a carrot and pea puree was a real treat.

Ashley's carefully presented salmon on a bed of seasonal vegetables with a piping hot side of potato dauphinoise was equally as good.

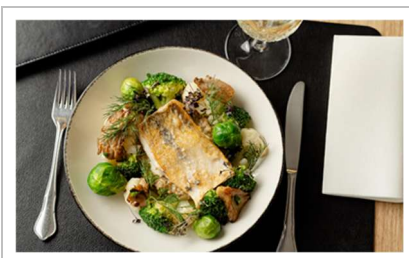
We did leave just enough room to share a dessert, and it was one of my favourites – a colourful, light cream puff with coconut mousse, white chocolate crumble and ice cream.

A sweet triumph!



More information :

<https://kuchniarestauracja.pl/>



Meluzyna

Designed by Hildebrandt of Berlin, Meluzyna is a chic, sophisticated restaurant situated in a beautiful Art Nouveau style villa in Bydgoszcz's new town.

More information :

<https://restauracjameluzyna.pl/>

With its welcoming arch of flowers, elegant black and white interior, subtle lighting, very comfortable, grey padded, plush dining chairs and excellent service, Meluzyna is the place to enjoy a long, lazy lunch or a special evening meal.

We went mid-afternoon, and as the sun was shining, we sat outside in the shade of a parasol on the pretty patio.

I enjoyed the most delicious, fresh, crisp salad in a zingy citrus dressing topped with small wedges of deep-fried camembert, caramelised pear and apple mousse.

The perfect dish for a hot day and a wonderful mix of textures and flavours. Ashley went for the delicate freshwater zander with a butter sauce, mashed potato and seasonal vegetables. It looked superb and tasted just as good.

We paired our food with a glass of cold, crisp Riesling.

Unfortunately, we couldn't manage a dessert, but maybe next time!

Katarynka Bistro



Situated close to the main square in the heart of Bydgoszcz, Katarynka is a lively and popular bistro serving traditional Polish and European cuisine.

The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.



With the weather glorious we dined outside, soaking-up the last of the sun, and people watch, particularly those enjoying over-filled ice cream cones.

Inside the Bistro has a rustic charm with red chequered tablecloths, lush green foliage and colourful murals on walls and ceiling.

As we had eaten breakfast and lunch, we decided to skip the starter and go straight to the main course.

I chose beef tenderloin steak with grilled vegetables, sweet potato fries and peppercorn sauce, while Ashley had salmon fillet, spinach dumplings and salad.

It is always a gamble choosing steak as I don't always get it cooked as I like it well done but still soft and tender.

However, when it is done right, I really enjoy it and I was so pleased I took the risk as my tenderloin was superb!

A triumph even! I enjoyed every succulent, perfect mouthful.

Ashley's generous portion of fish went down a treat too.

We left room for a light strawberry meringue and a slice of creamy banoffee pie, plus a very moorish vanilla coffee vodka cocktail – a great way to round off the evening.

More information :

<https://katarynkabydgoszcz.pl/>

Pierogarnia Stary Mlyn



When in Poland, everyone needs to try the delicious Polish dumplings – pierogi.

In Bydgoszcz we went to the dumpling hot-spot, Pierogarnia Stary Mlyn, on the bank of the Brda River.

This traditional restaurant oozes cosy farmhouse charm, and with the help of our waitress we chose a selection of vegetarian, oven baked pierogi with tasty fillings including smoked cheese and cranberry, cottage cheese, onion and creamed spinach and cheese and garlic.



They were absolutely delicious and portions were generous.

We also shared a sumptuous salad of burrata, cherry tomatoes, crushed pistachios, red onion, pumpkin seeds and crispy dumpling chips all tossed in a light raspberry dressing.

The restaurant has freshly squeezed juices, alcohol-free cocktails and refreshing homemade lemonade.

I only wished we had room for the desserts!

More information :

<https://www.pierogarnie.com>

Karczma Młyńska



Built on the walls of the old Bydgoszcz granary, Karczma Młyńska occupies a beautiful spot on the River Brda opposite Mill Island.

The farmhouse style restaurant with its wooden beams, brick walls and candlelit tables has a lovely veranda, the best place to dine to make the most of the wonderful riverside views.

Inside has a homely feel and is filled with interesting, rustic *objets d'art* from Germany, Austria and Italy.



Specialising in good quality, old style Polish cuisine, there are plenty of tempting dishes on the menu and all the food coming out of the kitchen looked great.

We both chose the fish – I had the fried cod with coleslaw and French fries and Ashley the grilled salmon with garlic butter and crispy potatoes.

For dessert, we shared a bowl of smooth vanilla ice cream with hot raspberries.

Karczma Młyńska also wins my award for 'Best Cocktail' a zesty, well-prepared margarita that packed a satisfying punch.

More information :

<https://karczmaamlynska.com.pl/>

Palace Ostromecko

If you are visiting Palace Ostromecko, you will be disappointed if you don't stay for lunch. It is a must.

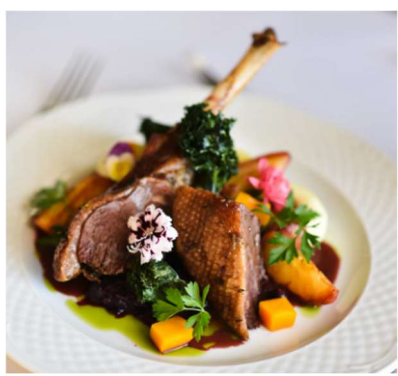
The dining room is stunning with its high ceiling, fresh flowers, chandeliers and sumptuous décor - very befitting of a grand stately home. It is a pleasure to just sit there and admire the opulent surroundings. However, the food and service here are second to none.

We had the most delicious grilled salmon salad lunch.

The fish was delicate and perfectly cooked, served on a bed of mixed salad leaves tossed in a light honey-mustard dressing, sweet cherry tomatoes, crunchy asparagus and ripe avocado.

The service was friendly, courteous and efficient and our young waiter had a real knowledge of the dishes and wines.

I would love to return, to explore more of the grounds – and the menu.



More information :

<https://karczdamamlynska.com.pl/>



The Park Hotel



This is where I had my second fabulous steak.

Situated on the Bydgoszcz Canal about a twenty-minute walk from the centre of town, the restaurant at *The Park Hotel* is an ideal port of call if you are visiting the Canal Museum or spending some time on, or walking along, the picturesque waterway.

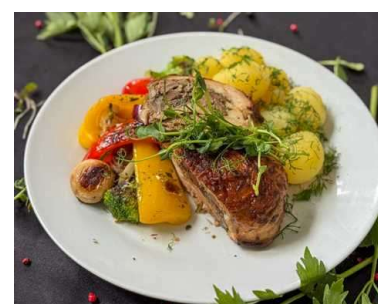
The restaurant, decorated in black and white, is chic and modern and the waiting staff helpful and welcoming. We stopped for an early dinner and went straight to the main course.

More information :

<https://www.parkhotel.bydgoszcz.pl/>



As I had enjoyed my steak so much at Katarynka Bistro I decided I would try the Park-style beef tenderloin steak served on a hot stone with a selection of butter, garlic and green pepper sauces. And a basket of French fries. Ashley went for the whole roasted sea bream in butter and herbs with mediterranean vegetables.



My steak was fantastic. Again, prepared well-done, but soft and juicy. I couldn't believe that I enjoyed it as much as my first one, but I did. Every luscious, tender mouthful. And as it came on a hot stone, I could slice it and cook it for as long as I wanted. Ashley's sea bream was sweet and flakey as it fell off the bone. We paired our meal with a bottle of one of our favourite Polish white wines, Solaris.

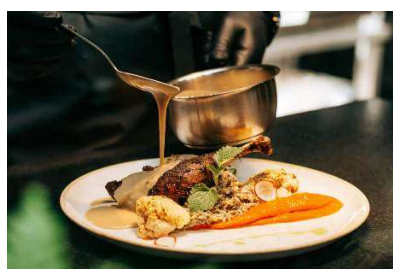


Oliwa I Czosnek

It was delightful sitting outside and relaxing in the pretty outside courtyard of Oliwa I Czosnek (Olive Oil and Garlic), a stylish Michelin guide restaurant.

On the outskirts of the Old Town, we stopped here for lunch.

I had warm goat's cheese mousse, wrapped in buttery, crisp filo pastry with a mixed salad of leaves, walnuts, orange, beetroot, kale chips and red wine-soaked pear in a balsamic and honey vinaigrette.



It was the perfect meal for a warm summer's day. Ashley had the filet of zander in a light champagne sauce with spinach and garlic dumplings and crunchy pickled fennel and celery.

Both dishes were creative and full of seasonal flavour.

We also enjoyed the garlic olive oil and fresh bread that was brought to the table whilst we studied the menu. Inside is large and airy with an industrial vibe and huge cuts of meat hang on display in the chiller.

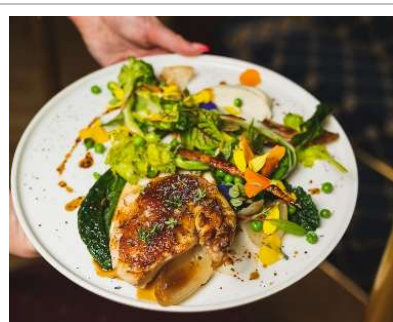
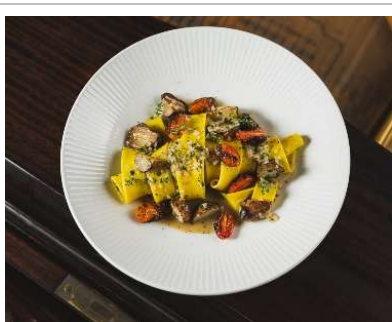
Outside or in, the food is top-notch and the cocktails flamboyant and colourful too.



More information :

<https://czosnekioliwa.pl/>

Gdanska14 in the Focus Hotel Premium pod Orlem



Gdanska 14 is part of the grand and historic Hotel Premium pod Orlem.

Situated in the centre of town, the hotel has been operating for over 120 years and proudly stands as an architectural, city landmark.

When dining at Gdanska 14, it is worth popping into the hotel lobby to see the magnificent, ornate sweeping staircase.

Gdanska 14 shares the hotel's vibrant history and stylish design. Large and spacious with high ceilings, a glamorous cocktail bar and a grand piano it has an art deco, lounge feel.

The food here is a seasonal mix of modern and traditional Polish dishes using ingredients of the highest quality.

As I had been enjoying my steaks so much, I decided beef tenderloin was going to be my last meal in the city. Yet again, it was superb.

The meat was well-done yet tender, stuffed with dried plums, wrapped with smoked bacon on a bed of fresh vegetables, roasted new potatoes and topped with a green pepper demi-glace. I couldn't have enjoyed it more and what a fitting end to all the culinary delights I had sampled in this part of Poland.

Ashley went for the strong flavoured herring fillet with roasted potatoes, tartar sauce and cold pressed linseed oil. He gave it top marks.

Our attentive waitress carefully prepared us a surprisingly good margarita with which we toasted the end of our very enjoyable culinary journey through Bydgoszcz. Cheers!

More information :

<https://gdanska14.pl/en>



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