

MAGIC

The Gathering

GRAND PRIX WARSAW

TRAVEL GUIDE

pocket edition

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WELCOME TO POLAND

Poland (or *Polska* — ['pɔlska]) is a Slavic country in Central Europe with a population of around 38,5 million.

General information:

Time zone: Central European Summer Time (CEST) – UTC+2 (the same as most of Western Europe)

Emergency number: 112

Time and date format: 24-hour clock (00:00–23:59), dd/mm/yy (or dd/mm/yyyy).

Measurement system: metric

CURRENCY

The currency in Poland is the **złoty** (pronounced **zwoh-tee**), abbreviated **zł**. Its ISO code is PLN. Złoty is divided into 100 units called the **grosz** (abbreviated **gr** and pronounced **grosh**).

- **Available coin values:** 1gr, 2gr, 5gr, 10gr, 20gr, 50gr, 1zł, 2zł, 5zł.
- **Available banknote values:** 10zł, 20zł, 50zł, 100zł, 200zł.

IMPORTANT! Although Poland is a member of the European Union, it does not belong to the so-called “Eurozone” – meaning it hasn’t adopted the Euro as its currency and **you can’t expect to pay using Euros** (although there will be some establishments that will accept it as payment).

Be aware that in 2014 the design of Polish banknotes was slightly refreshed, and therefore it’s perfectly natural that you will encounter two notes of the same value, but with a slightly different look and feel.



ACQUIRING ZŁOTYS

If you want to obtain a specific amount of złotys at a specific exchange rate, you can use an exchange office (*kantor* in Polish). You can find kantors in the city centres, shopping centers, at airports and big railway stations.

I'd recommend avoiding the kantors at railway stations and airports, because they usually have the steepest prices. If you don't really care about paying 5-10% more for your currency and/or need your złotys here and now, then it's ok to use them.

You can also get your złotys from ATMs (*bankomat* in Polish). You just use your card and withdraw złotys instead of your normal currency. Be wary though, that your bank may charge you fees for a variety of things while using this method (using foreign ATMs, exchanging currency, etc.). Your bank will also exchange the currency according to its own exchange rate, so make sure it's not horrible in some way.

The safest way to avoid these fees is to use ATMs belonging to your bank (if it's a global or pan-European bank). A lot of banks also have licensing agreements with **Euronet** ATMs and it's possible you can withdraw złotys from them without any additional fees (there's a lot of Euronet ATMs in Poland). In any case, it's best to check with your bank for best practices when withdrawing foreign currencies when abroad.

Also, remember you can just use your debit or credit card to pay for stuff without using zlotys at all. Most establishments in Poland – from grocery stores to restaurants – allow card payments. Just make sure your bank won't charge you any unnecessary fees when using this method.

Also, it's possible that your bank has security measures to prevent card theft and you need to inform them that you're planning on using your card abroad, before you leave. Again, check with your bank. ■

INTRODUCING WARSAW

BASIC INFO

Warsaw is the capital of Poland and is located in the central part of the country, straddling the Vistula river.

With a population of over 1,7 million, it's the largest city in Poland and the 9th largest in the EU. Counting the larger metropolitan area, the population increases to 2,7 million.



Warsaw's official flag and coat of arms (the Armed Mermaid).

The city's name is an amalgam of the names *Wars* (**vars**) and *Sawa* (**sava**) which come from several myths detailing the founding of the city.

In one of them, Wars and his wife Sawa were poor fishermen living in a hut beside the Vistula. One evening they happened upon prince *Siemiomysł*, who got lost in the woods while on a hunt. They didn't recognise him for royalty, but still offered him supper and a place to spend the night.

Grateful for their help, the prince granted them the ownership of the hut's surrounding lands and that's where the city of Warsaw stands today.

There is another myth, in which Sawa was actually a mermaid living in the Vistula. She fell for and married a young fisherman named Wars. When she spoke her marriage vows, her fish tail turned into human legs.

The image of the mermaid Sawa went on to become the city's coat of arms. There are also two monuments to her in the city itself. One is in the Old Town's market square. The other one is at the banks of the Vistula, right next to the Copernicus Science Centre. ■

TRAVELING TO WARSAW

BY PLANE

Poland is one of the state parties of the Chicago Convention of International Civil Aviation, so there should be no surprises for you in security rules at the airport. Just act as in your mother country.

Warsaw air traffic is served by two airports.

CHOPIN AIRPORT

Warsaw Frederic Chopin Airport (WAW) (PL: *Lotnisko Chopina*), also known as *Okęcie*, located in Warsaw, about 10km from city centre.

[Website](#)

GETTING TO THE CITY CENTRE

By train

After leaving the terminal, go right. You have to get to the **Warszawa Lotnisko Chopina** train station.

Afterwards, take the SKM line number **S2** or **S3** – both can take you to the city centre, be it **Warszawa Śródmieście** (Warsaw Middle-town) or **Warszawa Centralna**. It takes about 20 minutes to get there. Both run through **Warszawa Zachodnia** train station as well. SKM lines are a part of public transportation system in Warsaw, so the tickets issued by the Public Transport Authority (ZTM) will be valid in those. Single-fare ticket costs 4.40PLN (a bit over 1€), discount 2.20PLN.

You can also take any Koleje Mazowieckie (KM, Mazovian Railways) train (white-green-yellow ones) – they also run to the city centre. Just remember that single-fare ZTM tickets are not valid in those and you'll have to buy KM ticket from the train's staff.

By bus

After leaving the terminal, you should find yourself almost at the **Lotnisko-Sektory CDE** bus stop.

There are four buses that operate ca. from 04:30 in the morning, till 23:00 in the evening: **148**, **175**, **188** and **331**. There is also a night bus – **N32** – that covers the other hours. Buses no. **175** and **N32** will

take you directly to the city centre (**Centrum** or **Dworzec Centralny**), others pass by different metro stations. Single-fare ticket costs 4.40PLN (a bit over 1€).

By taxi

Typical fare to the city centre is around 35-45PLN (ca. 10€), and around 40-60PLN (ca. 10-15€) on Sundays and public holidays. The maximum rate per 1km is 3.00PLN on weekdays 6AM – 10PM (Tariff I, usually it's 2.40PLN), and 4.50PLN on weekdays 10PM – 6AM and Sundays and public holidays (Tariff II, usually it's 3.60PLN), plus initial fee of maximum 8.00PLN.

Official taxis, recommended by airport authorities, include:

- [Ele Sky Taxi](#), tel. +48 22 811 11 11
- [Sawa Taxi](#), tel. +48 22 644 44 44
- [Super Taxi](#), tel. +48 22 19622 or +48 22 19661

All their operators should be able to speak English. Some of the drivers may know it as well.

All of the cabs accept cash payments and most of them will also accept card payments (but make sure before you get in). Standard taxi in Warsaw can take up to 4 passengers.

MODLIN AIRPORT

Modlin Airport (WMI) (PL: *Lotnisko Modlin*), located in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, ca. 40km from Warsaw city centre.

[Website](#)

GETTING TO THE CITY CENTRE

By train

The ticket costs 15zł (ca. 4€) and covers the fare for shuttle bus from airport to Modlin train station and Koleje Mazowieckie train to Warsaw.

By bus

There's a direct bus to the city centre by ModlinBus, also stopping at **Dworzec Autobusowy Metro Młociny**. The regular price to the city centre (near Palace of Culture and Science – **Plac Defilad**) is 33zł, which equals ca. 8€. You can book the tickets online at their [website](#).

By taxi

There are fixed fares for travel Modlin Airport to Warsaw and they depend on the city district you want to get to. For example, regular fare to the

city centre is 159zł (ca. 38€) during the day (6:00-0:00) and 199zł (ca. 48€) at night (0:00-6:00) and on several public holidays.

Uber also has a fixed rate for Modlin and it's 70zł (uberPOP) and 110zł (uberSELECT) as of writing this guide (August 2016). ■

BY TRAIN

There are three main stations for long-distance trains in Warsaw:

- **Warszawa Centralna** a.k.a. Dworzec Centralny (Central Railway Station)
- **Warszawa Zachodnia** a.k.a. Dworzec Zachodni (West Railway Station)
- **Warszawa Wschodnia** a.k.a. Dworzec Wschodni (East Railway Station).

All three of these stations are connected via a huge network of tunnels and a bridge spanning the Vistula. Practically every long-distance train that stops in Warsaw will stop at each of these three stations.

Inner city and local trains will also stop at these stations (as well as many others, scattered around the city), but will use different platforms than the long distance ones.

GETTING TO THE CITY CENTRE

The easiest way to get to the centre is just to arrive at **Warszawa Centralna**, which is in the very centre of Warsaw.

The venue (Expo XXI) is very close to **Warszawa Zachodnia**, though — in walking distance of below 20 minutes. ■

BY BUS

International buses like Eurolines, Ecolines and Simple Express have their main stop at **Dworzec PKS Warszawa Zachodnia** (Warsaw West Bus Station), situated at the address Aleje Jerozolimskie 144.

The cheap bus lines, PolskiBus.com, stop at **Dworzec Autobusowy Metro Młociny** (Kasprowicza street 145) or at **Dworzec Autobusowy Metro Wilanowska** (Puławska street 145), both being situated by metro stations.

GETTING TO THE CITY CENTRE

Depending at which bus station you arrive at, you'll have different ways to reach the centre. If you arrive at **Warszawa Zachodnia**, then you

can get to the city by bus or by train. The two other stations are directly next to the Metro and that's the best way to get to the centre. All of the locations also have taxi parking nearby, so you can grab a cab without even calling for one. Just make sure they're one of the official ones (more on that in chapter 6). ■

BY CAR

Poland is not exactly famous for its speedways (neither the size of existing network nor the quality nor the pricing), but if you really must arrive by car, it is possible.

What you need to know in advance is that you don't need to bother about a pre-paid sticker like in many countries, but instead you pay for specific segments in designated payment points – sometimes only at the exit (you might get a ticket at the entry), sometimes at both entry and exit, sometimes only at the entry. Fees are inconsistent, because different segments are operated by different companies (or by the State). Yes, it's messy.

When you arrive in Warsaw, be aware that there's a fee for parking in the city centre and nearby (Mondays to Fridays between 8:00 and 18:00).

Parking metres are usually within sight and many of them accept card and digital payments (but it's always better to have spare change). Some of them might require you to input your car's registration number (the one that's on your registration plates).

Parking costs are as follows:

- First hour: 3,00zł
- Second hour: 3,60zł
- Third hour: 4,20zł
- Fourth and every successive hour after the fourth: 3zł

The GP venue is outside the paid parking zone.

You can check the extent of the zone on [this map](#), if you're going to be parking on work days.

VENUE INFO

The venue for the GP is called **Warsaw Expo XXI Center**. It is located at Prądzyńskiego Street 12/14.

[Website](#)



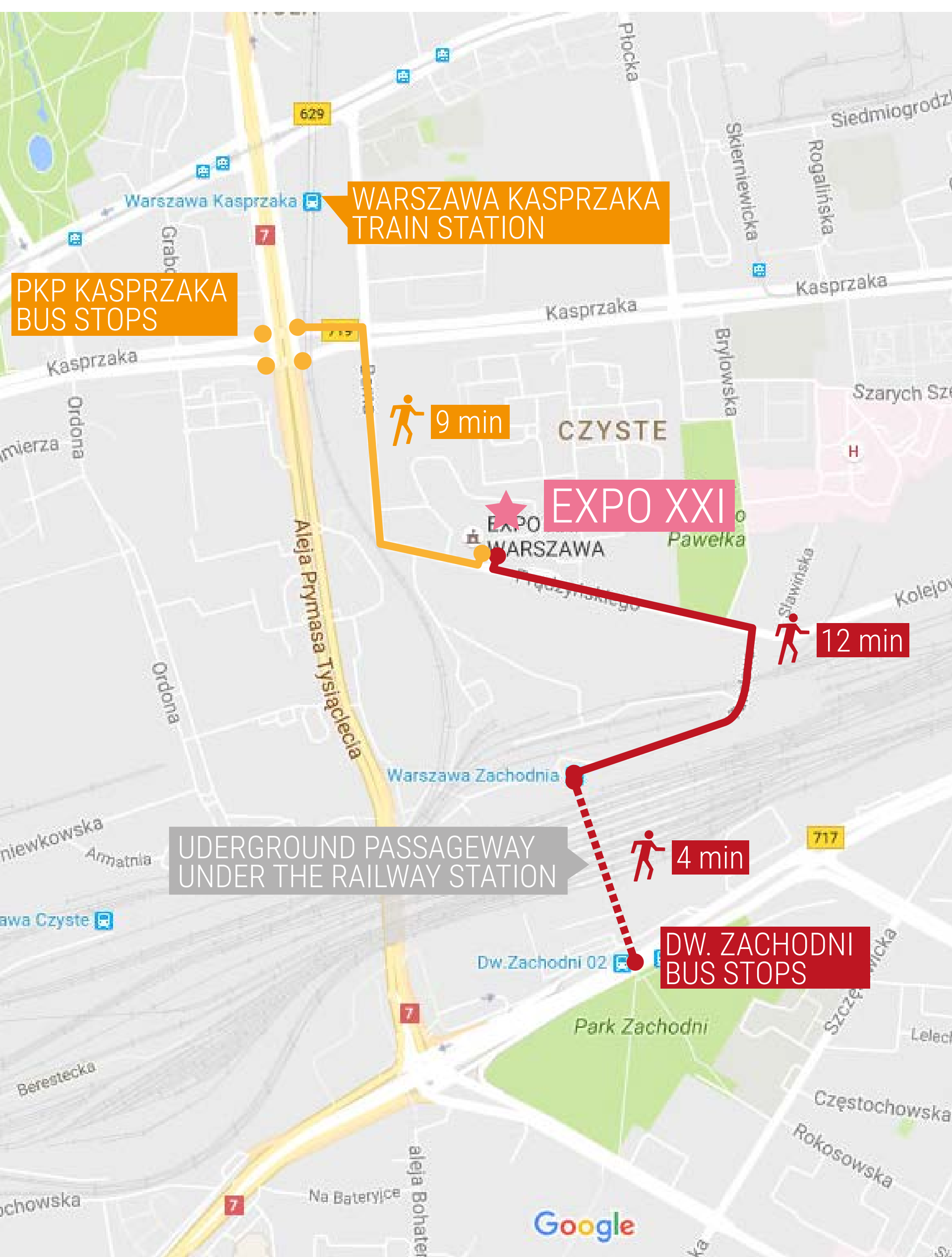
The two previous Warsaw GPs were held at the same venue, so if you've been here before, you should be familiar with the place.

The building is located in an industrial part of town, right next to one of the biggest railway stations in Warsaw (**Warszawa Zachodnia**). The surrounding area is pretty barren. There aren't many shops or restaurants nearby, so plan accordingly. There is a decent cafeteria at the venue, though.

Getting to the venue is also a bit problematic, since there aren't any nearby bus stops and depending on where you arrive, you might need to walk for a good 10-20 minutes before you reach the complex. It's ok if you use a taxi, though. There is no problem

getting there by car. There also aren't any Veturilo (city bike) stations nearby.

The two stops closest to the venue, that you can get to by public transportation, are **PKP Kasprzaka** and **Dworzec Zachodni**. Here's how you can get to the venue when you arrive at these stops.



GETTING TO THE VENUE STRAIGHT FROM THE AIRPORTS:

The cheapest way to get there from Chopin Airport is to take the train to **Warszawa Zachodnia** station (approx. 15 minute ride). If you validate your ticket when the train leaves the station, a 20-minute ticket would be more than enough for the trip.

When you arrive at Warszawa Zachodnia, you'll be about 1km away from the Expo Center. Then you can take a taxi (that should cost ca. 12PLN — under 3€) or just walk for the remaining way (which should take less than 15 minutes).

Of course you can also take a taxi directly from the airport. The fare should be comparable to getting to the city centre. It should take about 20 minutes to get to the venue this way.

Coming from Modlin Airport — the most convenient way to get here is by taxi directly (it takes more or less 40 minutes and it's the same fixed price as getting to city centre), but it's also the most expensive way. Getting there by ModlinBus+taxi from city centre is significantly cheaper, but takes approx. 1 hour (depending on traffic). ■

GETTING AROUND THE CITY

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

HOW THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WORKS

Warsaw has a sprawling transportation system consisting of buses, trams, trains and the Metro. It's managed by the Public Transport Authority or **ZTM**. Anyone can use the system as long as they buy (and validate!) a ZTM ticket.

Tickets are not checked by the drivers and **it's**

your own responsibility to validate your ticket upon entering a vehicle (or a Metro station).

Because of this, there is no obligation to enter vehicles by the door closest to the driver. You may use any door, but please always let the passengers out before you enter.

To validate a ticket you must insert it into a **validator** (with the ticket's magnetic strip facing down). The validator will gobble up the ticket whole and make some noise. If the validation is successful, your ticket will pop-out with a batch of information printed next to the magnetic strip. Among them, will be the information on how long your ticket is valid.

If something goes wrong, the ticket will pop-out without any printed information and a red light will flash, indicating a problem with the ticket or validator.

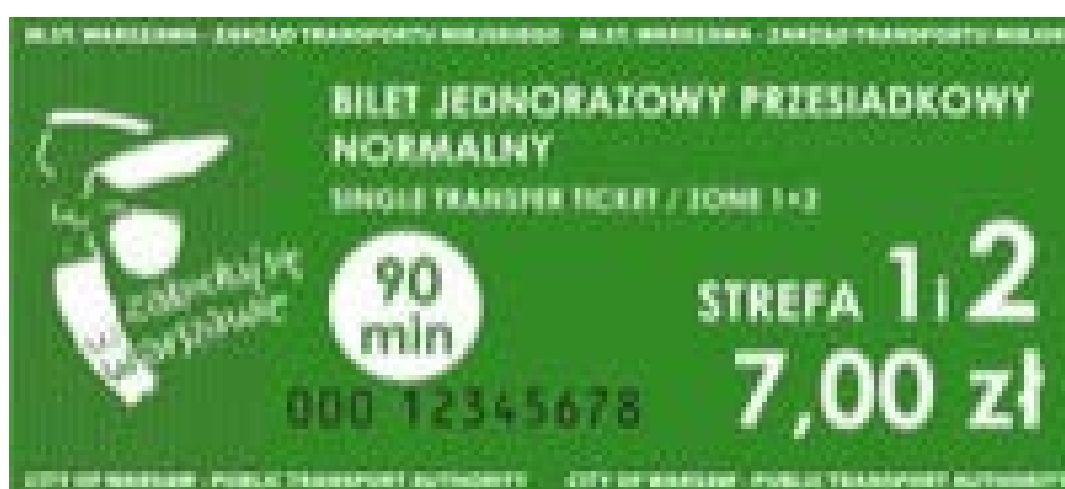
This system is kept in check by plain-clothes inspectors who might randomly pop into a vehicle, block the validators and perform a ticket inspection among the passengers. Every inspector will have a special ID and a device used for checking tickets. If you get caught riding a vehicle (or being in the "ticket zone" of a Metro station) without a valid ticket, you will get fined.

Warsaw has two ticket zones. Zone 1 is the inner city and Zone 2 is the suburbs. If you have to travel beyond the inner city, you will have to get yourself a (slightly) more expensive Zone 1+2 ticket.

Fortunately, the venue, the railway stations and Chopin Airport are all well within the inner city, so **it's doubtful that you'll ever need a Zone 1+2 ticket.**

TYPES OF TICKETS

I won't be going into detail about Zone 1+2 tickets, since you're not likely to need them. They work the same way as regular (Zone 1) tickets, but are a bit more pricey. If you ever get a hold of a Zone 1+2 ticket, you can use it the same way you would use a Zone 1 ticket, since they are valid in both zones.



“Strefa” means zone.

Apart from the zoning, there are two types of tickets. Normal tickets and half-rate (Ulgowe) tickets. You can use the half-rate tickets if you're entitled to a discount. The most likely reason would be being a student with an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or a Euro26 Student card (or you have a student ID issued by a Polish university). You also need to be 26 years old or younger to be eligible for the student discount.

If you're not entitled to a discount, you need to use normal tickets, like the vast majority of people.



Normal tickets have a dark background under the siren logo. Discounted tickets have a light one.

The difference between these tickets is the price. Half-rate tickets cost half as much as the normal ones (duh). If you use a half-rate ticket, you will be required to show your student ID (or any other document proving you're eligible for a discount) if you get inspected by a ticket inspector.

Once you validate your ticket, you're free to switch to different lines and vehicles. The only limitation on your journey is how much time you have to complete it (or validate another ticket to keep going).

On the next page, you'll find a list of the most commonly used tickets with a short explanation when to get them.



20 MINUTE TICKET

The cheapest ticket there is (not counting the discounted ones). Use it if you're making a short trip and just need to go a handful of stops.



75 MINUTE TICKET

The bread and butter ticket.

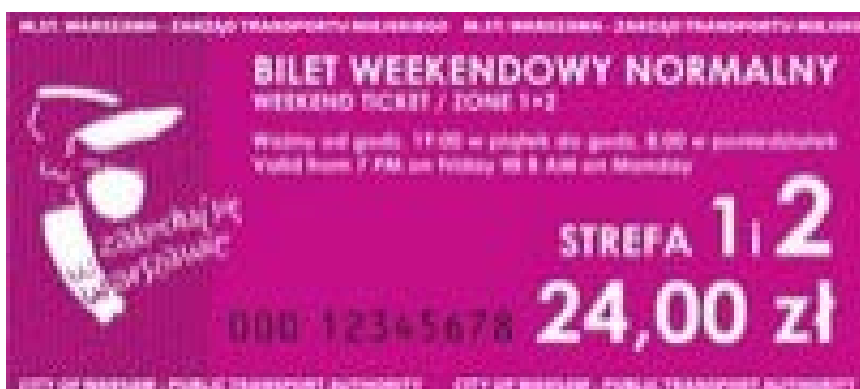
Good if you're making a round trip or are travelling to the opposite side of town.



1 DAY TICKET

This ticket is valid for 24 hours from the moment you validate it.

Nice value if you're making a couple of trips during one day. Great for a day of sightseeing.



WEEKEND TICKET

This ticket is valid from 19:00 on Friday till 8:00 on Monday. It's very convenient, since you only need to validate it once (on your first trip) and then just carry it with you when you travel.

It costs just a little more than five 75-minute tickets, so if you know you'll be doing six or more trips during the weekend, then it's better to just get this one.

The only downside is that this ticket might be harder to come by. Not a lot of vending machines carry it, so you might have to try and look for it in kiosks.

All these tickets have a magnetic strip on the back, that's used during validation.

Keep in mind, that if you get your tickets from a ticket vending machine, they might look a bit different than the ones presented above. They might have all the info printed by the machine and will probably look more like the one on the picture below.



If you buy your ticket at a series of specific ticket vending machines found on-board buses, you might instead get a QR-code ticket, that looks like this:



These tickets are very specific. They have different dimensions and don't have a magnetic strip, so **they can't be used in validators**. Because of this, they come pre-validated. **The moment you buy them, they're automatically valid.**

Keep in mind, that because they lack the magnetic strip, they won't grant you access to Metro stations, since you won't be able to get through the Metro gates with them. **This doesn't mean that you can't ride the Metro with these tickets.** You just need to find a way to get to the platform without using Metro gates. The safest bet is using elevators, since they usually have unobstructed access to the station's platform.

ACQUIRING TICKETS

ZTM tickets can be bought from kiosks and most places that carry press, but the easiest way to get them, is to use ticket vending machines. You can find these vending machines at the airport, train and Metro stations, at many bus stops and other points of interest. They're marked with red ZTM logo and a big Biletý (tickets) sign.

Most of the new buses and trams and all of the SKM trains will also have ticket vending machines on board, so you can buy a ticket the moment you enter a vehicle.

Freestanding ticket vending machines accept payment in coins and by card. The machines

inside vehicles vary on this. Some of them accept only coins (these are usually found on trams), some of them accept only card payments (those are usually on buses) and some of them accept both.

If you don't have a ticket and you enter a vehicle that doesn't have a working ticket vending machine, you may ask the driver if they have a ticket for sale. If they do, you must pay in cash and don't expect them to have any change to give you any odd money.

Also, try not to bother the driver if they're in the middle of performing some maneuver on the road. Best time to ask is when you're stopped at a street light.

There is also an official smartphone app that allows purchase of mobile tickets, but I can't recommend it, due to it having no English language version. If you think you can use it in Polish, you're free to try. Go to mobilet.pl and go from there.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

METRO

Metro is the name of the underground train

system running beneath Warsaw. There are two Metro lines running perpendicularly to each other. **M1** runs from north to south, and **M2** from east to west. You can switch lines at **Świętokrzyska** station (they're on two different levels, M2 being deeper underground).

Metro has different rules when it comes to using tickets. In any other case, you need to have a valid ticket when you're riding a vehicle. In the case of the Metro, there's a "ticket zone" at every Metro station. If you're in the ticket zone, then you need to have a valid ticket — even if you're currently just standing around playing Pokémon.

The ticket zone at Metro stations is protected by a line of gates. If you want to go through them, you need to validate your ticket at the gate.

If you already have a valid ticket, you put it into the gate just as if you were validating it for the first time. The gate will recognize your ticket is valid and let you through.

You don't need to do this when leaving the ticket zone, since the gates leading to the outside of the ticket zone open without using tickets.

If you have a valid ticket without a magnetic strip, you are permitted to be in the ticket zone, but you need to somehow get through the gates. Try looking for an open gate (they're sometimes left open to accommodate large traffic) or an elevator that goes to the platform. Elevators don't have gates mounted before them, so they can take

you straight to the platform (and the ticket zone) without any hassle.

TRAMS

Warsaw has a large network of tramways. They're a popular mode of transportation, because they're usually separate from street traffic and thus can avoid traffic jams. Riding a tram can be a bit bumpy, but it's a sure way to get to your destination on time.

BUSES

Buses are the bread and butter of Warsaw's public transport. They go almost everywhere and there's a lot of them. They used to be stuck in traffic a lot, but since the implementation of bus lanes the situation improved significantly.

There are three types of bus lines. The black ones are the regular ones. The red ones are "express" lines. They tend to skip a handful of the less popular bus stops to get through the city a bit faster. The N lines are the night lines. They operate from around 23:00 till 6:00 and are usually filled with partygoers and nightlife enthusiasts.

TRAINS

Using trains in Warsaw can be an excellent way to travel around but can be a little complicated. There are a lot of companies that offer transportation by train in Warsaw. Here's a list:

- **SKM** (Quick Urban Rail) — the official rail transportation service by the ZTM. There are four lines and they use regular ZTM tickets to ride. They have ticket vending machines on board along with validators.
- **KM** (Mazovian Rail) — a local railway company that offers rides to neighbouring cities. They have their own ticket vending machines at railway stations but as long as you ride their trains within the city's limits, you can use ZTM tickets. **They do not honour short-trip tickets** (i.e.: 20-minute and 75-minute ones). If you want to ride their trains you need to have at least a 1-day ticket (or a weekend ticket). They most likely will not have validators on board, so it's best to board them with a valid ticket.
- **WKD** (Warsaw Commuter Railway) — it's a small company that operates one line between Warszawa Centralna and a small city west of Warsaw called Grodzisk Mazowiecki. They have their own tickets, but if you're riding their trains within city limits, you may use long-time (1-day and weekend) ZTM tickets (make sure to validate before you board). Their line connects Warszawa Zachodnia (near the venue) and the central station.

- **PKP** (Polish National Railway) — these guys operate all the long distance rail traffic. You theoretically could use their trains to move between the big stations in Warsaw, but you would need to buy their tickets, since you can't ride them using ZTM ones.

I actually really like using the train network to ride around Warsaw. The trains are immune to traffic jams, very comfortable, quiet and usually on time. You just need to know which trains to use and where to validate your tickets and you're good to go.

There's a lot of train stations scattered around the city, along with two stations that are very close to the GP venue: **Warszawa Kasprzaka** and **Warszawa Zachodnia**. If you can find a train that connects your hotel to one of these stations, I highly recommend using that connection.

JAKDOJADE.PL

As you can see, using Warsaw's public transportation may be a bit overwhelming at first (especially if you're trying to use the train system). Luckily, there's a website (and smartphone app) that makes it easy as pie.

Visit warszawa.jakdojade.pl (it means "how to get there"), turn on English in the top right corner and try it out. It's really easy to use and very robust.

You can type in addresses, stop names, coordinates or general names of points of interest (i.e.: “Chopin Airport”) and set a particular time of departure (default) or arrival.

If you have a shift at 10:00 on Saturday, just input the location of your hotel as A, Expo XXI as B, set the date to Saturday and the time of arrival to — say — 9:45 and hit Search. The app will find the best connections for you. When you choose one of them, it will show you the time you need to leave and the time you’ll arrive, all the lines you’ll be taking and a map of your journey. It will even calculate how much time you’ll spend walking and what type of ticket you should get.

The app is very well maintained and usually takes into consideration any system wide changes (like a bus stop being closed due to renovation, etc.). As long as you input the data correctly, it will get you where you want to go and make sure you get there on time.

The smartphone version of the app is available for Android, iPhone and Windows Phone and it’s free on all platforms. Keep in mind that it uses data when connecting to the servers, though. If you want to use it in Poland, get yourself a data plan that won’t ruin you financially, or try to find some free Wi-Fi spot before launching it.

You may try and use Google navigation instead of Jakdojade, but it struggles with suggesting optimal routes and omits trains in general. It’s

constantly being improved, but its yet to catch up to Jakdojade.

DOS AND DON'TS OF WARSAW PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transportation in Warsaw doesn't have any special rules of conduct and doesn't differ much from other European cities. You might not be from Europe, though, or you're not used to city living, so just in case, here are some really basic dos and don'ts when using public transportation.

Do:

- Validate your tickets as soon as you enter a vehicle (unless you're already riding with a valid ticket)
- Always let the people out of the vehicle before you step inside.
- If you're sitting down and someone elderly, pregnant or crippled enters the vehicle, offer your seat to them (unless there are other unoccupied seats nearby).
- Make room for wheelchairs, baby carriages and strollers if they enter the vehicle.
- When riding escalators at the Metro stations, stick to the right side of the escalator. The left side is meant for people who are running up or

down the stairs, because they're in a hurry.

Don't:

- Smoke or drink alcohol at stops and in vehicles (that's actually prohibited by law, so you might get fined).
- Ride without a valid ticket (you might get fined).
- Act too loud. Don't listen to music without headphones.
- Obstruct the entrances to the vehicles.

In other words, try to be civil and polite and you'll be ok. ■

TAXIS

TRADITIONAL CORPORATIONS

Taking a taxi ride in Poland is generally cheap – especially compared to western Europe. Most legit taxi drivers will never try to scam you in any way (by charging extra or taking a longer route to increase the cost of the ride). The only problem you might run into are fake taxi companies. So, before you get into a taxi make sure it has the following characteristics:

- A highlighted TAXI lamp on the roof (not *TAKI* or *TA><I* – yeah, some people go to these lengths to scam tourists)
- A yellow and red stripe (the city's colours) with a fleet number, along with Warsaw's coat of arms (mermaid) on the side of the front doors.
- A white sticker with fares on the rear door window.
- Licence plate sticker with the vehicle's registration number on the windshield.

A good habit to have is asking the driver for an approximate price while telling them where you want to go. So, instead of going “*can you take me to Expo XXI?*” try asking “*how much would a ride to Expo XXI cost?*” This should keep the drivers

honest about which route they're taking.

Using traditional taxi corporations is not the cheapest way to get around town, but it has its benefits. Certified drivers know how to drive around Warsaw and will know most — if not all — landmarks you could possibly want to visit. They are also permitted to use some bus lanes to avoid traffic and can access some parts of the city where regular cars aren't allowed.

The only problem is that most of the taxi drivers in Warsaw are middle-aged and older men who never learned English in school, so you might have some trouble communicating.

If you ever need to call a taxi, try the companies from the next page. They're well established and should have operators that can speak English.

All the companies from the following page should accept card payments, but ask your driver for confirmation before you start your trip. Alternatively, have some cash on you, just in case, or to tip the driver (it's not required, but appreciated).

Corporation	Phone number	Initial payment + 1st kilometer	Price/km (regular tariff)	Price/km (night/ holiday tariff)
Sawa Taxi	+48 22 644 44 44	8,00	2,40	3,60
Super Taxi	+48 196 22	8,00	2,00	3,00
Ecocar	+48 123 456 789	8,00	2,40	3,60
Glob Cab Taxi	+48 1 9668	8,00	1,80	2,70

All prices in PLN as of August 2016. For a rough estimate in €, divide by four.

Usually (but not always) a higher price/km corresponds with the quality of the corporation’s vehicles, so the more you pay, the nicer car you’ll get.

UBER

Uber is a popular car-sharing app. It has a decent amount of active drivers in Warsaw and can be a nice alternative to classic taxi services.

Visit uber.com for all the details of where to get it and how it works.

The advantages of Uber over taxis:

- Uber is cheaper by a fair margin.
- You don't have to call a taxi company and talk to anybody to get somebody to pick you up.
- Uber drivers are usually younger and thus more tech-savvy and able to communicate in English.
- You can input where you want to go in the app and avoid trying to explain your destination to the driver.
- Payment is extremely easy. The Uber app just uses your credit/debit card to automatically pay the driver upon arrival. You don't exchange money or hand your card to anybody. It's all done digitally over the internet.
- Uber uses a 5-star rating system for drivers, which weeds out people who are unfriendly or can't drive well.

Disadvantages of Uber:

- The Uber app uses data. Make sure you have some data plan working for your phone, if you want to avoid terrible roaming data costs.

- Your Uber driver can actually be clueless about the layout of the city. They will use the built in GPS to navigate, which will be fine most of the time, though.
- The 5-star rating system is usually fine, but sometimes you'll get a fresh new driver that hasn't yet been evaluated by the system and those can be a mixed bag.
- Uber cars are just regular cars. They can't use bus lanes or enter select parts of the city.
- Sometimes it may be hard to actually get a pick up (when there's a lot of active passengers and few drivers).

Uber has flat rate rides to Modlin Airport, which are 70zł (for the cheaper uberPOP) and 110zł (for uberSELECT with selected vehicles) as of August 2016. ■

BIKING

My favourite way of getting around Warsaw is biking. Biking is super cheap, healthy and surprisingly fast, considering you can completely avoid traffic. As long as the weather permits it, I would recommend trying it out.

Naturally, I don't expect you to bring a bike with you on your trip here. Instead, I encourage you to use the city's public biking system, called **Veturilo** (which is part of a wider net called Nextbike).

Veturilo is a very robust and convenient way of biking in Warsaw. I personally use it very often, as do over 350.000 Varsovians. It may be a bit complicated at the beginning, but once you get the hang of it, it's a joy to use.

USING VETURILO

Veturilo uses a system of stations scattered throughout the city. Each station has ample bike stands where bikes can be parked. You can rent a bike from a stand by inputting your Nextbike/Veturilo account data in the terminal next to the station or by using the Nextbike smartphone app. If everything checks out, the bike stand releases the selected bike and you're free to take it and ride it wherever you want to. After you're done riding, find the nearest station and park your bike in a

bike stand. It will magnetically lock in and that's it. The rental is over and you're free to go.

If you already have a Nextbike account, it should work fine with Veturilo. If you want to try the system out during your stay, you can go to [their site](#) and create an account.

Keep in mind, that having an account is not enough. The account works in a pre-paid fashion, so you need to transfer at least 10zł onto it before the system allows you to rent bikes.

Using the bikes costs money and your account will be disabled if at any point it goes below 10zł, so a better idea is to transfer around 20zł onto it (about 5€). That should be more than enough to get you through your first rides.

This is how the prices of Veturilo rentals shape up:

Rental time	Price
First 20 minutes	Free
21-60 minutes	1,00
2nd hour	3,00
3rd hour	5,00
Every additional hour	7,00

All prices in PLN as of August 2016.

As you can see, renting a bike to go a short distance is actually free of charge. That's what makes biking a great way of sightseeing in

Warsaw. You can just go from landmark to landmark (there are usually bike stations nearby) without walking a lot and it costs absolutely nothing. If you keep your trips below an hour long, you will also pay close to nothing, since 1zł is about 0,23€.

BIKE PATHS IN WARSAW

Although Warsaw authorities introduced a great bike hire system, the city lacks a net of bike paths that would connect the whole city. The situation is gradually improving, though. The most up-to-date data on bike routes can be found on [OpenStreetMap](#).

When cycling through Warsaw, remember two things:

- when there's a bike path available, you're supposed to use it.
- when there's no bike path, you're supposed to cycle on the street (but this can be risky in the busy city centre, as many of the car drivers don't watch out for cyclists).

You're theoretically forbidden to cycle on the sidewalks unless there's some weather threat that could make it dangerous to cycle alongside the cars, but a lot of Varsovians prefer to cycle on sidewalks anyway. Unless you're riding like a maniac and endangering the pedestrians, you probably won't even be noticed by any authorities.

TOURIST INFO

PLACES WORTH VISITING

Warsaw is a big city, with countless museums, galleries, historical sites, an opera house and filharmonic. There are many cultural and sporting events going on all the time. You could spend weeks exploring all of the city's offerings, but I've selected a few of them for a quick start (or if you don't have weeks to do sightseeing).

STARE MIASTO + ZAMEK KRÓLEWSKI

(OLD TOWN + ROYAL CASTLE)

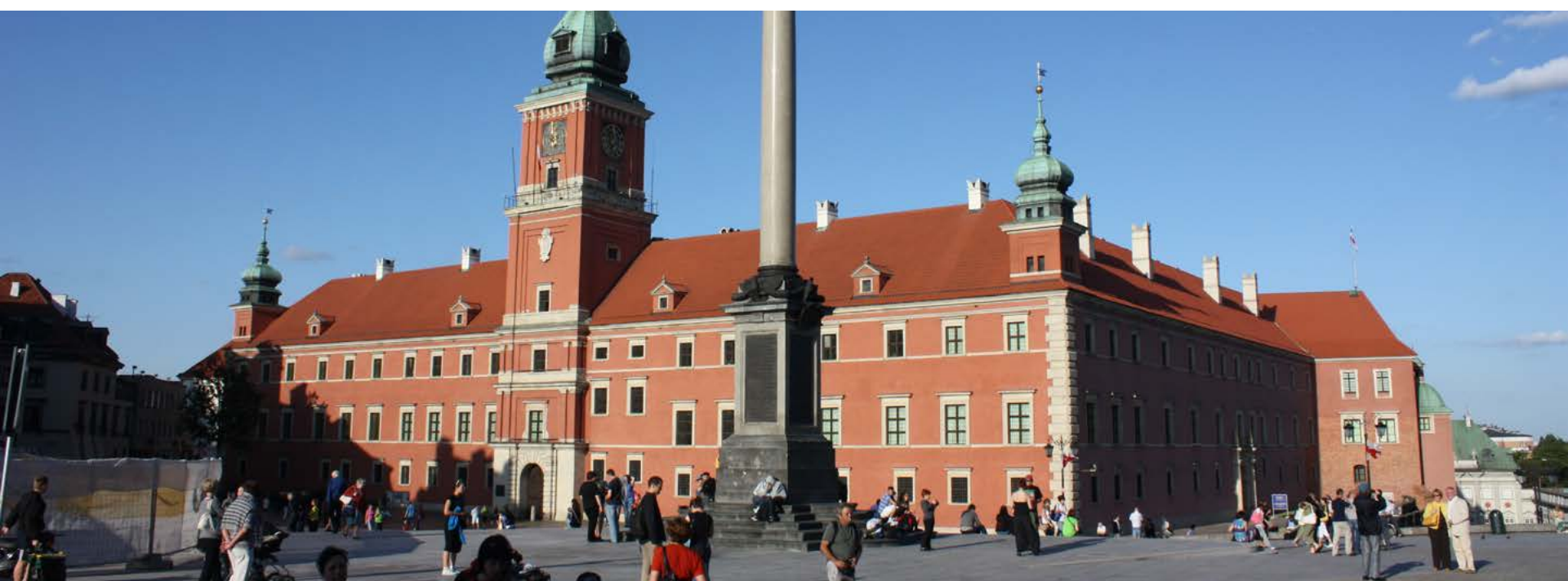
Address: Stare Miasto, Plac Zamkowy 4

Warsaw's Old Town may not be as expansive or grand as some of the other European old towns, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for with

uniqueness. This Old Town was completely destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising, razed to the ground and then continually rebuilt for almost 40 years.

It's filled with little shops, cafes and restaurants and it's a great destination if you like to wander around on foot. A basic recommended route would begin at **Sigismund's Column** and continue through **Świętojańska Street**, **Freta Street**, turning right to **Wójtowska Street**, going down to the park, taking a right and ending at the beautiful fountain park.

The Royal Castle is located at the **Castle Square**, next to Sigismund's Column and it doesn't actually look like a medieval castle. Warsaw became the capital at the end of the 16th century and that's when the castle was built. At that point, classic walled-off medieval castles were made obsolete by gunpowder. The Royal Castle was built in the style of Mannerism, which existed briefly between Classicism and Baroque, and one of its tenets was looking modest on the outside, while retaining a lavish inside. If you have the time and would like to see how palace life in the 17th century looked like, then go ahead and take a tour.



MUZEUM POWSTANIA WARSZAWSKIEGO

WARSAW UPRISING MUSEUM

Address: ul. Grzybowska 79

Website: 1944.pl

If you don't really have time to do a lot of sightseeing and all you have is a couple of hours, this is the thing you should go see. Thousands of exhibit items, digital images, films, video and interactive installations document — in startling detail — all the tragedy and heroism of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

The museum is lauded as one of the best attractions in Warsaw and does a great job of showing all the historical information with a human perspective.



POLIN

Address: ul. Mordechaja Anielewicza 6

Website: polin.pl

Poland has an incredibly long and complicated relationship with Jewish people and their culture. This museum is dedicated to documenting it with the latest multimedia and interactive tools. It's an incredible journey through history, through the eyes of Polish Jews, along with all the tragedies of the last century.

Seriously, the parts of the museum that concern the Holocaust are absolutely stunning, terrifying and make you reevaluate the meaning of humanity. It's an unsettling experience but it's worth the effort.

The museum's building is also a sight to behold. Encased in a minimalistic chassis, the museum features a huge rift going through the building, that symbolises the parting of the Red Sea.



MUZEUM NARODOWE

NATIONAL MUSEUM

Address: Al. Jerozolimskie 3

Website: mnw.art.pl

So maybe you're not that into history and all you want to look at is some fine art? Look no further than the National Museum. It has the biggest, most complete collection of art created by Polish artists and for Polish art patrons throughout history, along with a huge collection of European and World art.

The museum features several permanent galleries, divided chronologically and thematically: Old Polish and European Portraiture, Medieval Art, European Old Masters, 19th Century Art, 20th and 21st Century Art. There are also frequent temporary exhibitions featuring guest exhibits from other Polish and European galleries.



ŁAZIENKI

ROYAL BATHS PARK

Address: Al. Ujazdowskie 2 (main entrance)

Website: lazienki-krolewskie.pl

Forget Central Park. If you're looking for the most stunning park in the centre of a city, few come close to Łazienki, or the Royal Baths Park. It's the biggest park in Warsaw, a museum and historical complex peppered with classicist and baroque architecture.

It's the place to go if you just want to relax and wind down. Despite being in the city centre, once you go inside, it gets really quiet and serene. You can visit the Palace on the Isle and the Chopin Monument, sit around the greek theatre or feed some wandering peacocks, who live there.



CENTRUM NAUKI “KOPERNIK”

COPERNICUS SCIENCE CENTER

Address: Wybrzeże Kościuszkowskie 20

Website: kopernik.org.pl

If you're a science enthusiast or just want to spend a whole day having fun and discovering new stuff, there is no better place than the Copernicus Science Center located at the banks of the Vistula.



The place is a blast. It's the most interactive museum in Warsaw. It encourages you to touch and play with every exhibit and learn new things as you go along. There's a wide variety of exhibitions grouped into specific themes: human body, environment, space, etc. There's a special kids friendly exhibition/play area and an adults-only exhibition too.

If you can't get enough of your science, you can go to the on-site planetarium and watch incredible 2D and 3D films projected onto a spherical screen. Some of the viewings in the planetarium are paid and some are free. There are even special events like live jazz concerts accompanied by night sky projections. Consult the planetarium's event calendar if you want to take part in one.

If you should go there, make sure you reserve a whole day for it, or you'll leave without trying everything out, which is a bummer. There's a restaurant on site, so you don't starve during your visit and a science gift shop if you want some mementos of your visit.

CHOPIN MUSEUM

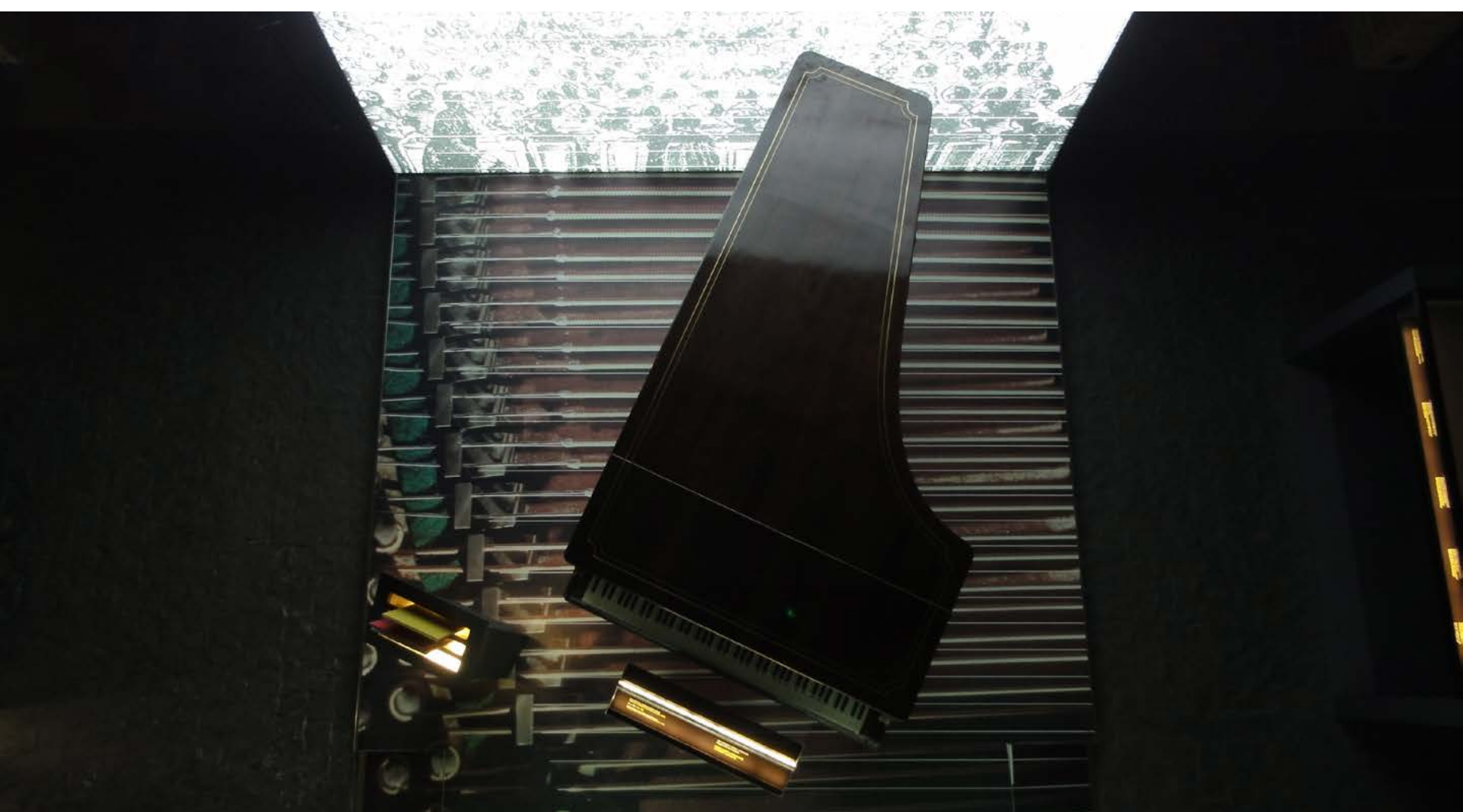
Address: Pałac Gnińskich, Okólnik 1

Website: chopin.museum

Do you like Chopin or just classical music in general? Well, Warsaw is Chopin's city. The prodigious composer was born in his family estate in Żelazowa Wola, half an hour drive from Warsaw. He spent his entire childhood and adolescence here, while receiving his formal musical education.

There are dozens of Chopin-related historical sites in Warsaw, but the go-to place for everything Chopin is the Chopin Museum in the Gniński Palace. It prides itself in delivering a custom tailored tour that takes into account the interests and level of prior knowledge of individual visitors.

Apart from the multimedia features, the museum displays hundreds of authentic Chopin mementos, including instruments he used to play and compose with. ■



FREE WI-FI

If you ever need to get connected to the internet while out in the city and you don't have a data plan, you can try and find one of the plentiful free Wi-Fi spots in Warsaw.

Free Wi-Fi isn't the best way to access the internet, of course. It's usually pretty slow and suffers from frequent disconnects. It can also require email registration and almost always will want you to accept some form of terms and conditions. In some cases, the access may have a time limit. Because of this, free Wi-Fi shouldn't be used as a means of continuous internet access and you shouldn't be doing any critical web-based work while using it.

If you ever need a reliable internet access point, seek out internet cafes. You can get hours of stable, fast internet at a desktop computer for a few zlotys there.

OK, now that we got that disclaimer out of the way, here are some great spots to get free Wi-Fi in Warsaw:

- Big railway stations
- Chopin Airport (may have a 30 minute time limit)
- Modlin Airport
- Almost all big-chain restaurants and cafes (McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, etc.)

- Shopping centers (they usually have designated resting areas with solid free Wi-Fi and power outlets for charging electronic devices)
- The Royal Route (Krakowskie Przedmieście), Castle Square and the Old Town Square are covered in municipal hot spots (they require email registration and the sessions last 30 minutes, but you can relog after the time expires)
- Most parks have hotspots (the range is limited, so you can't stray too far from the signs designating the hotspot)
- Select post offices
- Select city buses
- Select bus stops (10 minute sessions)

Most of these places won't be fast enough to let you watch youtube, but if you want to send out some pictures, check your email, go to facebook or use jakdojade.pl, they should be fine. ■

LUGGAGE STORAGE

If you ever find yourself in a situation where you have a couple of hours to go sightseeing, but you already checked out of your hotel, you'll probably

want to store your luggage somewhere before setting out to the city.

Your hotel or hostel may offer storage options, so it's always a good idea to ask there first. If not, there are storage lockers at Chopin Airport and at the Central Station.

- [Airport lockers](#)
- [Warszawa Centralna lockers](#)

Storing your luggage in a locker costs about 10 to 15 złotych (~3€) per day. It's worth noting, that you shouldn't store any valuables in the lockers, since it's impossible to get any type of refund in case your luggage is stolen from the locker. ■

CONTACT INFO + CREDITS

CONTACT INFO

If you have any further questions about your visit to Warsaw, feel free to contact me via email: konrad.omni@gmail.com. I'll try and help you in any way I'm able.

If you have any judge-related concerns, you should contact our Regional Coordinator — **Sebastian Pękala**. His email is: sebastian.pekala@gmail.com.



Hey there! That's me.
Feel free to send me any
feedback on this guide.

CREDITS

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■ **Kaja Pękala** (L3)

This version of the guide is just the tip of the iceberg. The full version has way more information (including historical info and a lot about dining in Poland) and a lot more pictures.

Get the full version [here](#). ■