



A Polish City Feels Its Future Has Arrived

On one side of Tumski Bridge in Wroclaw, in southwest Poland, the Gothic Cathedral of St. John the Baptist hovers agelessly over Ostrow Tumski, the city's oldest quarter. Nearby, a boot-sized brass dwarf sits fishing over the river's edge, one of more than 150 such statues placed throughout the city since 2001 in honor of the Orange Alternative, a Dada-influenced resistance movement that is widely considered to have had a hand in bringing down Poland's Communist regime in the 1980s.

On the other side of the Odra River, the restored old central square is a mishmash of architectural styles that speaks of the varied cultural influences on a place that was at different times claimed by Bohemia, Prussia, Austria, Germany and, of course, Poland.

In that historic center, still surrounded by Communist-era apartment buildings, the grinning dwarf statues have come to be a kind of absurdist glue holding the disparate city together: a place where unusual shops and low-lighted bars line streets that change from the modern to the medieval, and the imprint of several cultures is never hidden far beneath the surface.

This city of contradictions, formerly the German city of Breslau, has yet to make a name for itself on the European travel circuit. But that may be changing. The years since the country joined the European Union have largely been ones of progress and optimism. Riding that upswing, Wroclaw has become one of Eastern Europe's emerging hot spots, primed for cafe culture and a vibrant night-life scene.

"We're getting some fresh air, a breeze of contemporary ideas," said Kamil Przybos, an actor who grew up in Wroclaw. Finding cheap, authentic Polish food in central Wroclaw is not as easy as one might like. But if you don't mind listening to cheesy Polish pop radio and ordering your food in a fake thatched hut, Chatka at Jatkach in Old Town serves up well-prepared regional dishes, like ribs with fresh cut potatoes and sour cabbage, at very reasonable prices.

Swing around the corner to the tiny cobbled Stare Jatki, site of a 13th-century slaughterhouse, and browse old butcher stalls that have been converted into galleries and high-end souvenir shops. Don't miss the local dwarf — a butcher, of course — or the group of miniature animal statues at the end of the street that graze next to a plaque inscribed, "In honor of the slaughtered animals — from the consumers."

In recent years, Wroclaw's formerly neglected Old Jewish Quarter, with Wlodkowica Street as its anchor, has become one of the city's hippest neighborhoods. It's also home to the city's only remaining synagogue. The 19th-century White Stork was once the center of one of the largest Jewish communities in Germany.

The surrounding neighborhood has also been given new life. Spots like the student-friendly watering hole Mleczarnia, and Sarah, a candlelit restaurant that serves up takes on traditional Jewish dishes, have turned Wlodkowica Street into one of Wroclaw's most fashionable avenues.

"It's a very young town, and you can see this vitality here," said Mateusz Kornacki, a 25-year-old graduate of Wroclaw University, whose year-old company, *What's Up Wroclaw*, offers English-language tours of some of the city's off-the-beaten-path spots.

"This is the real Wroclaw," said Mr. Kornacki, who moved to the city from eastern Poland with his family when he was 12. "If you look behind the dirt and the collapsing facades, you'll find beauty."

- This is edited from a *New York Times* article written by Charly Wilder.

Find the word(s), phrasal verb or idioms from the text that best fits the definition provided.

1. to cause to fall
2. a combination of
3. containing or made up of different and often conflicting elements
4. full of life
5. altered or changed to
6. coolest
7. a place where people gather socially
8. away from busy or much-traveled areas



"I'm sorry, but I can't find Row-claw in my computer. Are you sure it's in Poland?"

19 Idiotic (But Real) Travel Complaints

These are actual complaints received from dissatisfied customers by Thomas Cook Vacations (based on a Thomas Cook/ABTA survey):

1. "I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local convenience store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."

2. "It's lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Vallarta to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time -- this should be banned."

3. "On my holiday to Goa in India , I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food."

4. "We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price."

5. "The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room."

6. "We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white but it was more yellow."

7. "They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax."

8. "No one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared."

9. "Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers."

10. "We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."

11. "The roads were uneven and bumpy, so we could not read the local guide book during the bus ride to the resort. Because of this, we were unaware of many things that would have made our holiday more fun."

12. "It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair."

13. "I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friends' three-bedroom and ours was significantly smaller."

14. "The brochure stated: 'No hairdressers at the resort'. We're trainee hairdressers and we think they knew and made us wait longer for service."

15. "There were too many Spanish people there. The receptionist spoke Spanish, the food was Spanish. No one told us that there would be so many foreigners."

16. "We had to line up outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning."

17. "It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel."

18. "I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes."

19. "My fiance and I requested twin-beds when we booked, but instead we were placed in a room with a king bed. We now hold you responsible and want to be re-reimbursed for the fact that I became pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked."

