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The Warsaw Old Town is a special place! Although nearly 90 per cent of it was destroyed during the World War II, it was restored so faithfully that UNESCO listed it (in 1980) as one of the World Heritage Sites. It is the only reconstructed site listed by UNESCO.

What contributes to the atmosphere of the Warsaw Old Town is its cosy cafes and restaurants, and artists who exhibit their pictures and sculptures in the open air. In the summer, the Old and the New Town become venues for musical performances, including popular jazz concerts, and theatrical plays.

## Not only on foot

### Horse omnibuses, carriages, the old town train

In the summer it is nice to have a ride around the Old Town in one of the carriages waiting at the Castle Square, alternatively you can take a horse tram called 'omnibus', which has its stop at the Castle Square. Such an omnibus tour takes less than an hour (for more details see: [www.ztm.waw.pl](http://www.ztm.waw.pl)). A great attraction for children is the Old Town train which also departs from the Castle Square. During a 30-minute ride the guide tells you about



interesting buildings and monuments (the service costs a bit more in case of guidance in foreign languages).



## THE OLD TOWN (STARE MIASTO)

The Old Town was founded in the 13th c. as a prince's headquarters and a fortified settlement. At present it is not only the historic centre and the oldest part of the city but also one of the cultural venues of the Polish capital.

- 1 The Royal Castle (Zamek Królewski)  
pl. Zamkowy 4, tel. +48 22 355 51 70  
[www.zamek-krolewski.pl](http://www.zamek-krolewski.pl)



Every July, the yard of the Royal Castle becomes the venue for the 'Musical Gardens' festival featuring filmed concerts, operas and ballets. Meticulously restored Kubicki Arcades adjacent to the Royal Gardens, invite you on August weekends for a series of musical and artistic events called the 'Royal Art Arcades'.

- 2 The King Zygmunt III Waza Column  
(kolumna króla Zygmunta III Wazy)  
It is the oldest and the tallest secular monument in Warsaw, erected in 1644 on the initiative of king Władysław IV in honour of his father – Zygmunt III Waza who moved the Polish capital from Cracow to Warsaw.

- 3 The Cathedral Basilica of the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist  
(Bazylika Archikatedralna  
pw. Męczeństwa św. Jana Chrzyciela)  
ul. Świątoborska 8, [www.katedra.mkw.pl](http://www.katedra.mkw.pl)



The Royal Castle was the headquarters of the kings and the authorities of 'Rzeczpospolita' – the Republic of Poland (since the 16th c.). It is also the place where the Constitution of May 3rd (1791) – the first one in Europe and the second one in the world – was adopted.

During World War II the Castle was almost completely destroyed – it was later restored on the basis of the parts that survived. Today it is a museum. The highlights of the Castle's collection are the original paintings of Rembrandt and the works of Bernardo Bellotto called Canaletto, whose vedute of the 18th c. Warsaw were invaluable during the post-war reconstruction of the city.



Stanisław August Poniatowski, the President of Poland Gabriel Narutowicz and a writer and Noble Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz. In the summer, in the cathedral you can listen to organ concerts starting at noon.

- 4 The Jesuit Church of the Gracious Mother of God  
(Sanktuarium Matki Bożej taskawej)  
ul. Świątoborska 10  
[www.laskawa.pl](http://www.laskawa.pl)

The church has in its altar a miraculous image of the Gracious Mother of God, the patron of Warsaw. What attracts the attention right at the entrance are the front doors – called the angels' doors – made by Igor Mitoraj, who carved similar doors for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome.



In front of the church there is a stone bear. There is a legend that says the bear is a shy prince that has been magically turned into a stone, and can only be disenchanted by a woman who truly loves him.

- 5 The St. Martin's Church  
(Kościół św. Marcina)  
ul. Piwna 9/11  
In the 14th c. church ecumenical services and meetings of the Warsaw intelligentsia are held. Nearby, there are the Augustians' monastery buildings where in the 16th c. local councils of the Mazovia Province were held.

- 6 Kanonia  
Kanonia is a small, triangle square right behind the cathedral whose name comes from the old tenement houses, which in the 17th c. were inhabited by canons (priests). There used to be a parish cemetery here, the remains of which is a baroque 18th c. statue



of the Mother of God. In the centre of the square there is a large gunmetal bell from the 17th c., which has never hung in a church. It is said that going around it three times brings luck. Kanonia is also the place to see the oldest in Warsaw plaque with the name of a street and the narrowest house in the Polish capital – it is only one window wide if you look at it from the square, but it is much wider if you look at it from the Vistula River. This was a clever idea of the house owner, who in this way avoided paying a high land tax, as the land tax depended on the width of the facade.

- 7 The Gnojna Mountain (Gnojna Góra)



From the Middle Ages until the second half of the 18th c. the Gnojna Mountain was a landfill. Today it is a viewpoint from where you can admire a stunningly beautiful panorama of the Vistula River and the right-bank part of the city.

- 8 The Museum of Pharmacy  
(Muzeum Farmacji)  
ul. Piwna 31/33, tel. +48 22 831 71 79  
[www.muzeumfarmacji.mhw.pl](http://www.muzeumfarmacji.mhw.pl)  
The Museum's collection includes original equipment of a pharmaceutical laboratory from the 30s of the 20th c., 19th c. jars, vases, tiles for rolling pills, pharmaceutical tins and cobalt cognac storing bottles.

- 9 The UNESCO Plaque (tabliczka UNESCO)  
The UNESCO plaque is embedded in the pavement of Zapieček Street (ulica Zapieček) to commemorate the listing of the Warsaw Old Town as the UNESCO Heritage Site in 1980.



- 10 The Old Town Market Square  
(Rynek Starego Miasta)

Founded at the turn of the 13th and 14th c., it is one of the most picturesque places in the city. It used to be the main square of Warsaw and the venue for formal events, fairs, as well as executions. It has remained unchanged in form since the foundation of the city. In the centre of the square there is the statue of the Warsaw Mermaid that has for ages been the coat of arms of the city.

- 11 The Warsaw Mermaid Statue  
(Pomnik Syrenki warszawskiej)

A mermaid is the symbol of Warsaw; it has been the city's coat of arms. The most famous statue of the Warsaw Mermaid is located in the centre of the Old Town Square and surrounded by a fountain by which you can cool off on a hot day.

## Legend about a Warsaw Mermaid

According to legend, a mermaid swimming in from the sea stopped on the riverbank near the Old Town to rest. She found the place so admirable that she decided to stay. Local fishermen living nearby noticed that something was creating waves, tangling nets, and releasing their fish. Although their original intention was to trap the offender, they fell in love with the mermaid upon hearing her sing. Later, a rich merchant trapped the siren and imprisoned her in a wooden hut. A young fisherman heard the mermaid's cry and with the help of his mates, released her, whereupon she declared her readiness to offer fishermen her help whenever it would be needed. Ever since, the mermaid, armed with sword and shield, has been ready to help protect the city and its residents.

- 12 Warsaw Tourist Information Centre  
Rynek Starego Miasta 19/21/21a

## Legend about a Basilisk

A legend says that in the basements of the buildings located along one side of Dekert, at the corner of Krzywe Kolo, there lives a Basilisk. It guarded the treasures once stored there, and every man who tried to reach them was killed by the gaze of the Basilisk, which turns men to stone. He was defeated in the end by a wandering tailor who showed the monster a mirror. The Basilisk was petrified by its own appearance, and hid away; from then on, he was no longer a threat to residents. Today on the façade of the other building there is a picture of the Basilisk, which is the symbol of the renowned Warsaw restaurant of the same name.



www.warsawtour.pl  
www.um.warszawa.pl  
www.e-warsaw.pl



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Tourist  
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Warsaw Tourist Information Offices go to  
www.warsawtour.pl

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- 12 The Historical Museum of Warsaw**  
(Muzeum Historyczne m.st. Warszawy)  
*Rynek Starego Miasta 28/42*  
tel. +48 22 635 16 25  
[www.mhw.pl](http://www.mhw.pl)

The Museum is housed in several old tenement houses rebuilt after the war and it consists of three courtyards. The exposition presents the history of the Polish capital from the dawn to the contemporary times. At present, the Museum is closed for renovation but its cinema is open and you can watch there a documentary on Warsaw in 1939-1945 there (the film is in English; other language versions – available on request – include: Polish, Spanish, French and German).

- 13 The Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature**  
(Muzeum Literatary im. Adama Mickiewicza)  
*Rynek Starego Miasta 20*  
tel. +48 22 831 40 61  
[www.muzeumliteratary.com.pl](http://www.muzeumliteratary.com.pl)

The museum is named after one of the greatest Polish poets of the Romantic Period. In the museum you can find a collection of objects related to the life and work of Adam Mickiewicz (the so-called 'mickiewicziana') as well as the manuscripts and memorabilia of other Polish writers and works of art and iconography depicting the literary eras – from the oldest to the most modern.

- 14 The Stone Steps** (Kamienne Schodki)  
The Stone Steps are very picturesque 15th c. steps. Napoleon Bonaparte walked on them during one of his stays in Warsaw.



- 15 The Barbican and the curtain walls**  
(Barbakan i mury obronne)



The remains of Warsaw's curtain walls erected in the 16th c. by Jean Baptiste from Venice.

- 16 The Jan Kiliński Monument**  
(Pomnik Jana Kilińskiego)



– a shoemaker and the hero who was the leader of the people of Warsaw during the Kościuszko Uprising (18th c.).

- 17 The Little Insurgent Statue**  
(Pomnik Małego Powstańca)



– a statue of a little boy wearing a helmet too large for him; the statue commemorates the heroic children fighting against the Nazi occupiers during the Warsaw Uprising.



## THE NEW TOWN (NOWE MIASTO)

This part of Warsaw was founded at the end of the 14th c. and until the 18th c. was a separate town, with its own administration, town hall and church. Most of the baroque and Classicistic tenement houses surrounding the New Town Square were reconstructed after the war. At present, in the charming streets there are many restaurants and cafes.

- 18 The Holy Spirit's Church of the Pauline Fathers** (Kościół Św. Ducha)  
*ul. Długa 3*



The church was built at the beginning of 18th c. For nearly 300 years, every August, a pilgrimage starts from outside the church to the Marian shrine in Częstochowa. In addition to that, right next to the church there is the smallest house in Warsaw, which houses a newsagent.

- 19 The St. Jack's Church of the Dominican Fathers** (Kościół Św. Jacka)  
*ul. Freta 10, [www.freta.dominikanie.pl](http://www.freta.dominikanie.pl)*  
Built together with the monastery in the 17th c., during the Warsaw Uprising the



church housed an insurgents' hospital. It was bombed burying approximately 1,000 people under the rubble.

- 20 The Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum**  
(Muzeum Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie)  
*ul. Freta 16, tel. +48 22 831 80 92*  
[www.muzeum-msc.pl](http://www.muzeum-msc.pl)

Located in the 18th c. bourgeois building where the scientist was born. It is the only biographical museum of Maria Skłodowska-Curie in the world. The most touching elements of the exhibition are authentic personal possessions such as clothes, looking at which we can see how tiny she was, a spectacle case, an inkstand, the elephant figurine the scientist got from President of the United States Herbert Hoover, the leather



bag in which the Polish Women's Alliance of America gave Skłodowska the money for the foundation of the Polish Radium Institute.

- 21 New Town Square**  
(Rynek Nowego Miasta)

Created in the 15th c., it was first a rectangle nearly twice as big as the Old Town Square. In the centre there was the Town Hall, demolished in 1818. At the New Town Square there is a 19th c. well made from cast iron and adorned with the coat of arms of the New Town Square – a virgin with a unicorn.

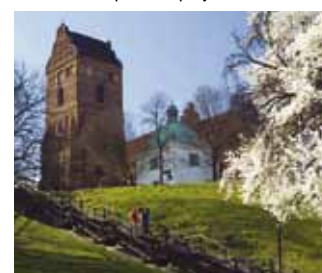
- 22 The St. Casimir's Church of the Benedictine Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament** (Kościół Św. Kazimierza)  
*Rynek Nowego Miasta 2*

Originally, the church used to be a magnate's residence but it was purchased by Queen Maria Kazimiera Sobieska, known also by the diminutive Marysieńka (Marie Casimire Louise de La Grange d'Arquien, consort to King John III Sobieski) and turned into a church. During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 the church housed an insurgents' hospital and a shelter for civilians. As a result of bombardments hundreds of people died under the church's rubble.



- 23 The Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
(Kościół Nawiedzenia Najświętszej Marii Panny)  
*ul. Przyrynek 2*

One of the oldest Warsaw churches, built at the beginning of the 15th c. It is said to have been built on the site of a pagan temple. It used to be a place of prayer for fishermen.



Next to the church there is a viewpoint from which you can admire the panorama of the Vistula River and the right-bank Warsaw. The nearby stairs will lead you to the Multimedia Fountain Park (Multimedialny Park Fontann).

Nearby: **24 – 25**

- 24 The Multimedia Fountain Park at the Castle Grounds**  
(Multimedialny Park Fontann)  
*skwer I Dywizji Panczernej*

Located in a charming place, in the vicinity of the Old Town and the Vistula River, the park is the place where during multimedia shows 367 fountain nozzles eject at the same time as much as nearly 30 thousand litres of water per minute. The streams of water are lit with the colourful lights of almost 300 flooded lamps. Every now and then, stunning laser animations are displayed on the mist made from the sprayed water. The multimedia shows called 'Water – Light – Sound' are held from May to September on Fridays and Saturdays. On the other days of the week you can see presentations without lasers and sound.



- 25 The Vistula Boulevard**  
(Bulwar Wiślany)  
[www.ztm.waw.pl](http://www.ztm.waw.pl)  
[www.wislawarszawska.pl](http://www.wislawarszawska.pl)

A place for walks, a bike path, a beach and a haven for a ferry, a water tram, an ornithological vessel and a ship going to the town of Serock.



- 26 The St. Francis Seraphic Church of the Franciscan Fathers**  
(Kościół św. Franciszka Serafińskiego)  
*ul. Zakroczyńska 1*

It was built at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Next to the church there is a monastery. In 1944 the church was bombed but fortunately it did not burn and many elements of its baroque interior survived.



- 27 The Sapieha Palace** (Pałac Sapiehów)  
*ul. Zakroczyńska 6*

Built in the 18th c., reconstructed to serve as Sapieha barracks at the beginning of the 19th c. During the interwar period the Palace was turned into an army hospital. At present the Palace houses a school and education centre for hearing-impaired children.

Nearby: **28 – 30**

- 28 Warsaw Uprising Monument**  
(Pomnik Powstania Warszawskiego)  
*pl. Krasińskich*

The monument commemorates the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 and those who gave their lives for their motherland, fighting against the Nazi occupiers in an unequal struggle that lasted 63 days.

The Monument consists of two parts. The first one depicts insurgents running from under a pylon (one of the pillars supporting a bridge), the other – insurgents getting out of sewers. At the Krasiński Square, during



the uprising there was one of the manholes into the sewers through which people evacuated to other parts of the city.

- 29 The Krasiński Palace** (Pałac Krasińskich)  
*pl. Krasińskich 3/5*

One of the most beautiful Polish palaces. Built in the 17th c., it used to be the seat of the Supreme Court and now it is one of



the seats of the National Library, whose collection includes the manuscripts from the Załuski Library and the Polish Library in Rapperswil, as well as some other old prints that miraculously survived the horrors of war. At the back of the Palace there is the Krasiński Garden – a stunningly beautiful, baroque municipal park and a popular place for walks.

- 30 The Supreme Court** (Sąd Najwyższy)  
*pl. Krasińskich 2/4/6*  
[www.sn.pl](http://www.sn.pl)

This edifice was built at the end of the 20th c. Its numerous adornments include caryatids symbolising the three virtues of faith, hope and love, and columns with maxims of Roman law inscribed on them in Latin and in Polish. The edifice itself has a symbolic shape of a gate to commemorate the fact that during the World War II there was here one of the gates leading to the Jewish ghetto.



[www.warsawtour.pl](http://www.warsawtour.pl)

Warsaw  
The Old Town  
The New Town

