

MINSK

This time we were going to [Minsk](#), which is the capital of [Belarus](#) (Belarus).

First a bit about Belarus:

Belarus is largely flat without natural boundaries. Half of the land area is cultivated land. It has nearly 10 million inhabitants.



Belarus location in Europe



Flag



Coat of arms

A little about the history of Belarus:

[Eastern Slavic](#) groups came to the area which constitutes today's Belarus during the migration period, in the 600's AD. These groups displaced or assimilated the [Finno-Ugric](#) peoples, the [Balts](#) and the [nomads](#) who lived there before.

In the 9th century, the area of the Eastern slaves began to be visited by Swedish Vikings on their way to Constantinople. These Vikings built a number of trading posts in the area, and gradually also took over the political control of the great rivers.

In the 860s, the [Kiev Empire](#), the first state formation in the East Slavic area, arose. When this state was at its peak, it was ruled by [Prince Yaroslav the Wise](#), who died in 1054. After the Prince's death, the kingdom was divided into many principalities, each centered around one city and all still part of the kingdom. About 20 miles northeast of today's Minsk, this emerged [the principality of Polotsk](#), which is at the heart of today's Belarus.

After an initial period as an independent feudal association, the Belarussian territories eventually fell to [the Grand Duchy of Lithuania](#) and [the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#), before Belarus became part of the Russian Empire in connection with Poland's divisions. During the Soviet Union, Belarus existed as the Belarussian Socialist Soviet Republic, before the country gained its independence in 1991.



Minsk's location in Belarus



Flag



Coat of arms

A little about the history of Minsk:

Minsk is mentioned for the first time in [the Primary chronicle](#), and shall have been founded in 1067. The city was at this time under the Principality of Polotsk. The city was later subject to Poland-Lithuania. In 1655 Minsk was conquered by the Russians, but was taken back by Poland-Lithuania. The city was once again annexed by Russia to Poland's second division.

Following [the October Revolution](#) in 1917, Minsk became the capital of the Belarussian Socialist Soviet Republic.

During World War II, the city was captured by German forces. Most of Minsk was destroyed in fierce battles, and after the war, the city became a hero city for the role of the Resistance. After the war, the city was rebuilt in socialist classicism. In the post-war period, the city has been growing rapidly and has nearly 2 million inhabitants today.

The river [Svislach](#) flows through the city.

We traveled from [Oslo Airport](#) on Friday 28 May, at 09.15 with [Air Baltic](#). We thought it was a bit early to travel from Kongsvinger that day, so we traveled to Gardermoen the day before and stayed at the [Park Inn by Radisson Oslo Airport Hotel West](#). It is located right next to [Gardermoen Parkering](#), so we booked parking for the car there. The cost of the car park included the shuttle bus to and from the airport.



We ate dinner at the hotel. Here we have ordered food and I'm waiting for the food to be served.



Here I'm eating the appetizer: grated sea craw fish.



Afterwards I had halibut as main course.



Anne Berit had a chicken dish.



These are the waiters. It turned out that she was married to the chef, because when we asked if we could get a picture the cook who made such good food, then she told that they were married. I think they are from Latvia.



Here's a picture of the chef.



A picture of me and the waiter.



The next morning we took the shuttle bus to the airport. Here I sit and wait for the bus.



Here we have arrived at Riga.



I check if the planes are on route.



We thought we might go with this plane to Minsk.



It turned out to be this plane. Anne Berit is a little nervous when we are going to fly with fewer than three seats on each side of the aisle.



Then we were in the air.



Anne Berit had to have some wine. It helped for the nervousness. I also had wine, although I wasn't nervous.



It was fine flying conditions, so it was basically nothing to be nervous about.



An image along the way. Here it seems that they are going to start a new building field.



Then we are in Minsk.



[Minsk National Airport](#) is the main airport in Belarus. It is located 42 km east of Minsk and it was opened in 1982.



This guy is ready to handle suitcases.



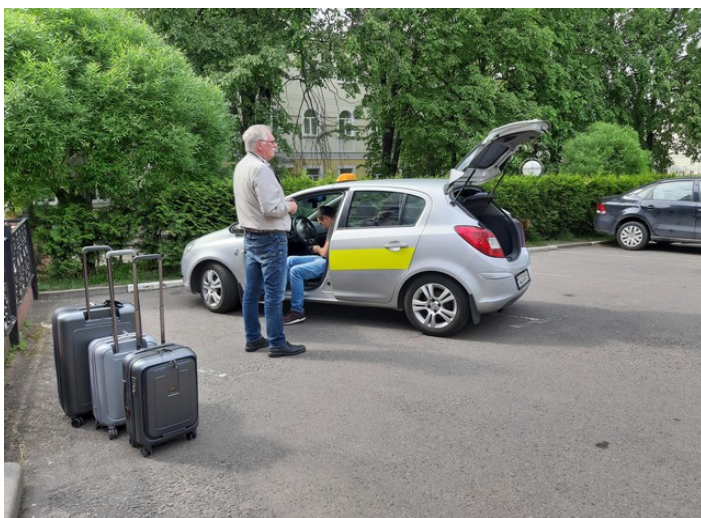
Then we are out of the plane.



This is the taxi driver from the airport to the hotel. The taxis were on the line and we took the first one that was free, but we did not agree on the price. That was a mistake.



Here we go past [Mound of Glory](#). It is a memorial set up in 1969 to commemorate the soldiers who were fighting for Belarus against Germany in World War II.



Here we have come to our hotel in Minsk and are paying the driver. We learned later that this was the quadruple of the normal price. It was annoying, but our thought was that he probably needed the money more than us.



We had booked a suite on [U Fontana Hotel](#). Then we got a large room with plenty of space, and the price of this was about half the price of the equivalent in Norway.



The room looked about like this.



There was a restaurant inside the hotel. In addition, it was possible to eat in different locations in the hotel garden. We see the main room in the background.



The lion checks those who pass by.



Here is a small house for a group in the garden.



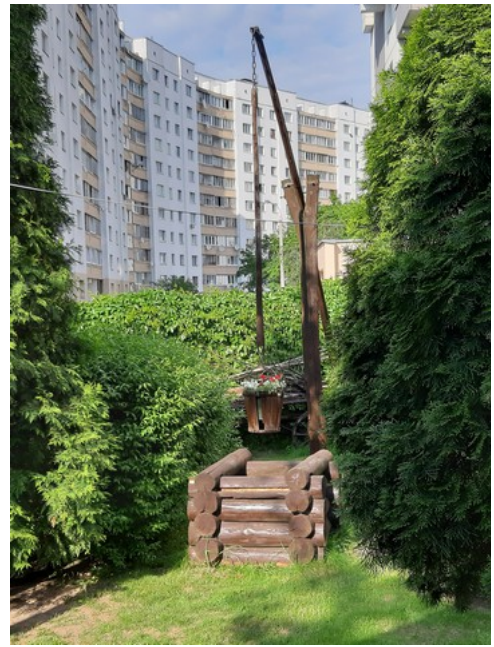
A few small houses more.



This is inside the main house.



At the back of the main house there was a service station where they had stock of various beverages and cutlery.



In the back, there was also a construction illustrating an old well.



Various ornaments inside the main house. Here is a mandolin.



A melodeon.



Anne Berit had trout for dinner.



I had kebabs with pork and boiled potatoes.



This was the wine we had for our food.



Later in the evening we wanted some snacks. They didn't have potato chips or the like, but they had dark bread that was brushed with olive oil, fried crispy and rubbed with garlic, a kind of bruschetta.



The day after we asked in the hotel reception if they could get a taxi with a driver who could speak English. They could, and first on our sightseeing list was the Great Patriotic War Museum.

[Wikipedia](#) [Belarus.by](#) [Kathmanduandbeyond](#) [Youtube](#)
[Dark-Tourism](#)



This is [Minsk Hero City Obelisk](#). It is 45 m high.



There are more statues in the area.





An image of the obelisk and the museum, seen from a slightly different angle.



Triumphal arc.



This one was also in the area.



A plane from the days of war.



The next stop was [Independence Palace](#). The building has many hundreds of rooms and is designed for large conferences and meetings.



Then we moved to Minsk Arena. The facility consists of three halls. Events have included the ice hockey World Championships in 2014, the Junior Eurovision Song Contest in 2010 and the European Championship on ice skating in 2016.

[Wikipedia](#) [Belarus.by](#)



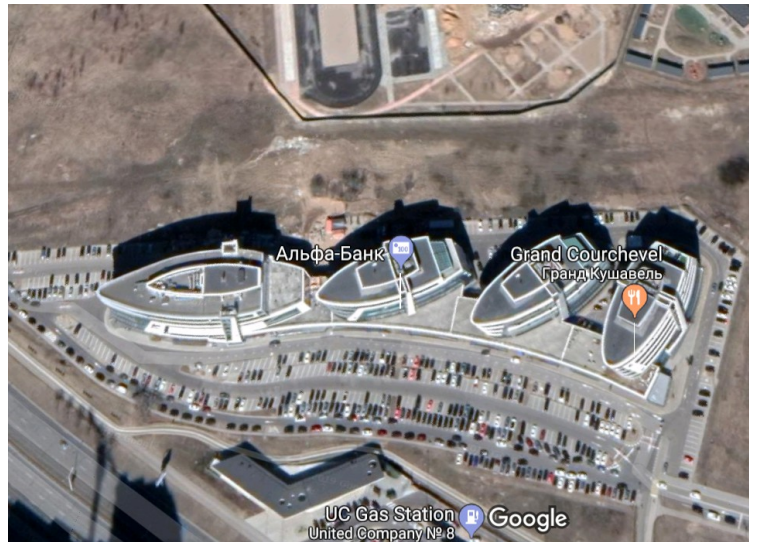
Along the main arena, the Minsk-Arena complex includes four venues which are the arena itself (hosting 15,000 spectators), a cycling track (hosting 2,000 spectators), a skating stadium (3,000 spectators) and a multilevel parking structure.



On the other side of the main road is a large bank building.



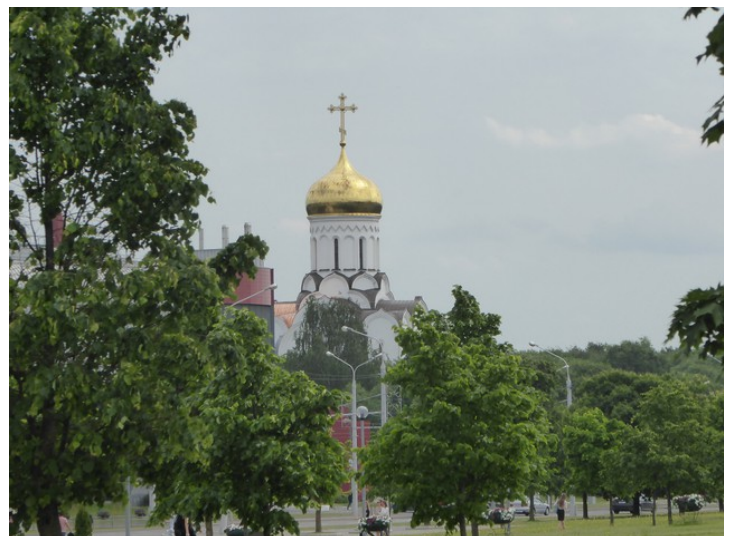
Here are also four business buildings that are shaped like ships.



The business buildings as shown on from Google Maps.



There were some trolley buses in Minsk.



From Minsk Arena we get a glimpse of this church, Hram Pokrova Presvjatoi Bogorodicy (Svjato-Pokrovskii Pravoslavnyi Prihod).



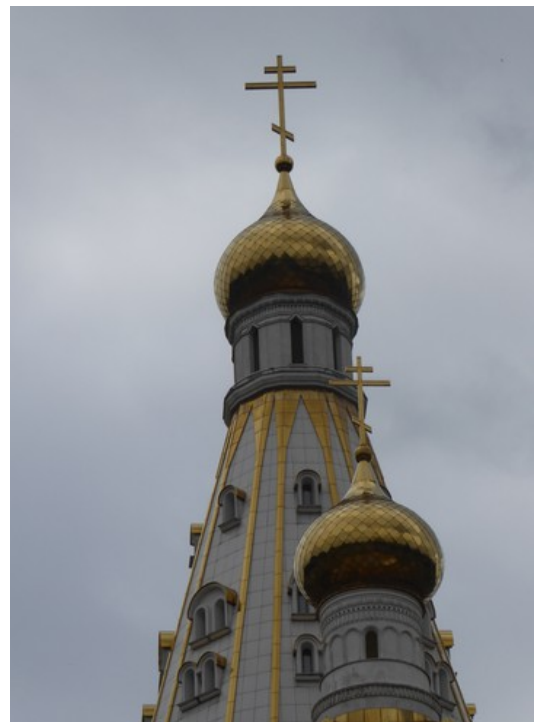
Then we moved on to [All Saint's Church](#). It's a pretty new church. It was opened in 2010.



A picture from the front.



Decorations



Cupolas



Right next to stands [Trinity Church](#). The construction started in 2001, so it is also quite new.



The National Library is the next stop.
[Wikipedia](#) [Belarus.by](#)



A statue of [Francysk Skaryna](#) stands outside the library. He was one of the first printers in Eastern Europe and laid the foundation for the development of the Belarusian language.



The square outside is often used for concerts.



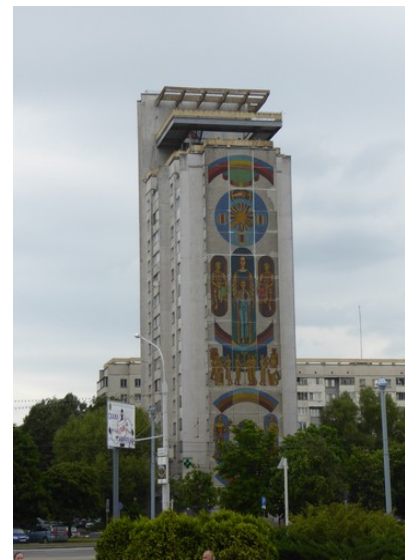
Right by the library there are some large apartment blocks.



Commercial building.



Business buildings and apartments



There are many blocks and on each of the blocks there are such decorations.



Victory monument at [Victory Square](#). The monument was erected in 1954 in honor of the efforts of the soldiers during World War II.



[Belarusian State Circus](#). This building was the first stationary winter circus throughout the Soviet Union. It was completed in 1958.



Outside the building there are a number of statues.





The National Opera and Ballet Theater for Belarus.
[Wikipedia](#) [Belarus.by](#)



Here we are at the [Island of Tears](#).
It is an artificial island made in the river Svislach



There is a bridge going out to the island. Where there is a small chapel in memory of those who fell in the war in Afghanistan.



Grieving women.



Crying angel.



Promenade along the river.



Funny advertising sign.



The [Palace of the Republic](#) was finished in 2001. It is used for state functions, conferences, concerts etc. It's on the [October Square](#).



[Trade Union Palace of Culture](#). Belarus trade union. It is also located at the October Square.



Minsk City Hall.



These horses are in front of the town hall.



The City Hall seen from the other side.



Sales booths



Here is written MINSK



There are many churches around the town hall. This is the Monastery of the [Holy Spirit of the Basilians in Minsk](#) that was run by the monastic order of [St. Basilios](#).



On the other side of the square is a cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary, [Cathedral of the Holy Name of Mary](#).



[Saint Peter and Paul's Church](#).



This big relief stands above the entrance to [KFC](#).



[Holy Spirit Cathedral](#).



[St. Joseph Church](#) is an archive today.



A statue of an old [city scales](#).



The chairman of the city council in Minsk with the city key.



Stately transportation.



Mobil sales booth.



This is the [general post office building](#) in Minsk.



This is on the [Independence Square](#).
Under these glass domes there is a big shopping center.



This is the [Fountain of Independence](#).



Detail on the fountain



[The red church](#) lies at the square.

After we had made this round, we were tired. We got the taxi driver to take us back to the hotel, but first we were down in the big mall and took out the money to pay for the trip. We paid only US \$ 60 for a 4 hour trip. It was worth it.

When we were back at the hotel, I took a picture of this fountain at the entrance.



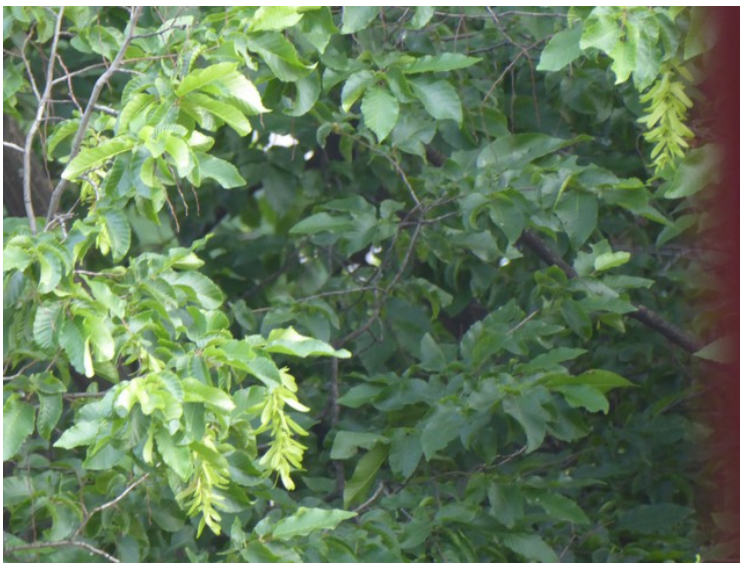
There was an aquarium in the reception.



Up in the room we took a couple of pictures of the view.



There were different type of trees outside.
This is a [horse-chestnut](#).



An [elm](#).



A little later went to eat in the restaurant out in the garden. A picture of one of the windows with curtains.



We didn't take pictures of the food this evening, only the wine bottle.



Finally a picture of the friendly service in the restaurant.