

## TRIP TO POLAND / WARSZAWA FROM THE 18<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> OF MARCH 2009

### A little about Poland



Poland's coat of arms



Poland's flag



Poland's position in Europe

Poland, officially the Republic of Poland, lies in the middle of Europe. With an area of 312 679 km<sup>2</sup>, Poland is the world's 69<sup>th</sup> biggest country. Poland's population is above 38.1 million people; mostly living in big cities like Łódź, the country's historical capital or in the present capital Warszawa.

### A little about Warszawa



Warszawa's coat of arms



Warszawa's flag



Warszawa's position in Poland

**Warszawa** is the capital in Poland and is the biggest city. Warszawa lies at the river Wisła, about 350 km south of the Baltic Sea and just as far from the Carpathian Mountains. Together with the surrounding areas it has 2 900 000 inhabitants.

Most of the city was bombed to pieces during the war, but almost everything is erected just as it was. It has become so nice that Warszawa's old-town is now on UNESCO'S list of the world's cultural heritage.

The city is known internationally for giving its name to the Warszawa pact, the Warszawa convention and the Warszawa treaty.

## A little about the airport



The departure hall

Frédéric Chopin Airport Warszawa-Okęcie lies in the neighborhood of Okęcie.

It was earlier called Okęcie International Airport.

The airport is called after the world famous Polish composer Frédéric Chopin, and is the country's biggest airport.



Statue of Chopin in front of the arrivals hall

The trip was with Norwegian from Oslo Airport to Warszawa Airport on Wednesday evening at 20.10 o'clock. We were scheduled at 22.10 o'clock, but we arrived half an hour before.

On the airport we waited and waited for the suitcases. When the luggage belt stopped, Anne Berit's suitcase had not yet arrived. We went to the office for lost luggage to ask for the suitcase. But the suitcase was waiting for us there. We were glad, but we got no explanation why the suitcase had ended here.

It was not so late that the reception for the flats was closed, but we had called in advance and had arranged that a taxi should wait for us at the airport. That was correct. He got us to the city and left us outside the reception. This was an un-experienced driver who had not understood that he was supposed to have called the reception when we arrived, so we had to ask people in the restaurants around. At the end he who waited for us came and followed us over to the flat. The flat was very nice and had everything.

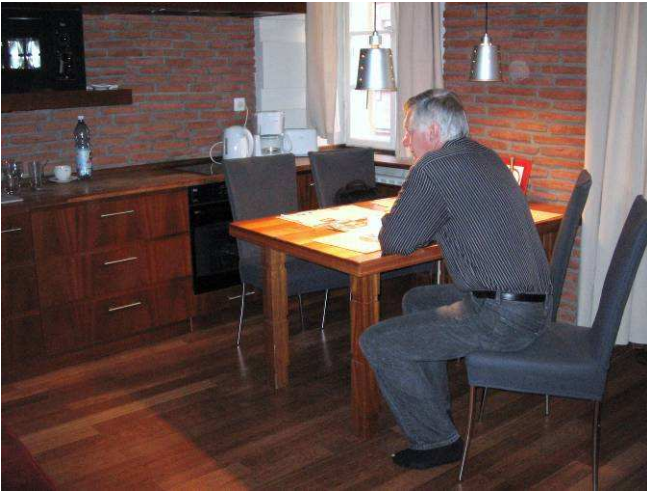


The kitchen area



The bedroom

This time we had brought with us bread, sandwich spread and coffee, so the day started with breakfast in the apartment. Then we started the sightseeing.



Kjell is sitting with cup of coffee



Here is the view to the neighbor house. There were a lot of nice facades.



When came down to the street we immediately saw the palace



The palace seen from another angle



The palace is from the 1300's and had its greatest times in the 1600's, when it was home for the kings of Poland and was counted as one of the finest palaces in Europe.

In 1945 it was blown up with dynamite and destroyed by Hitler's orders.

The palace was laboriously rebuilt in the period 1971-84, and has now the baroque look that it had before the war.



On the palace square is standing a figure on the top of a 22 meter high granite column.

The statue from 1644 of king Zygmunt III Vasa was, as everything else in Warszawa, destroyed in 1945 and repaired some years later. The original column is standing behind the palace.

King Zygmunt was by the way Swedish and his name was Sigmund.

This is the oldest monument in the city.



This is the gothic church of St. Anna from 1454. The church was burnt down during the Swedish invasion, but rebuilt in 1664.



This is the Madonna of Passau. It was made by the royal sculptor Józef Belotti and placed there in 1683 as a marking of king John III Sobieski's victory over the Turks at Wien. This statue is the oldest after the statue of king Zygmunt.



This is the monument of the Polish 1800's poet Adam Mickiewicz. He is probably more important in Polish literature history than Ibsen is in Norwegian, and all Poles from the age of kindergarten can tell everything about him. The original monument was destroyed by the Nazis in 1944, and today's version was unveiled in 1950.



Radziwill palace is from 1644, and from 1994 it has had a function as residence for the president of Poland. In this building the Warszawa pact was signed in 1955. The statue in front of the palace represents prince Jozef Poniatowski on horseback. He was one of Napoleon's marshals. This statue was also destroyed during the war and is re-erected as a gift from Copenhagen's inhabitants.



This is cardinal Wyszyński. Right behind the statue lies the old St. Josef's convent.



This is the entrance to the university of Warszawa, founded in 1816. It is the largest university in Poland.

It reaches over a series of palaces, which have been absorbed by the university.



Across the street just opposite the university lies the Czapski palace, where the faculty of graphic art is. Chopin's family lived in a wing of this building.



This is the Church of the Holy Cross (Kosciol sw. Krzyza). Here is kept Chopin's heart in an urn, in accordance with his own wish. The church has his history right back to the 1400's. During the Swedish invasion in the 1650's the church was destroyed. It was re-erected, but destroyed again by the Nazis in 1945. Now it is re-erected once again.



Right beside the church on Krakowskie Przedmiescie is Nicolaus Copernicus sitting. This almost 3 meter high statue of the famous astronomer, who ascertained that the earth is rotating about the sun, and not the other way round, was unveiled in 1830. The Nazis tried to destroy this statue also, but it was found on a scrap heap in the west of Poland after the war, and was placed on its rightful place after some repairs.

The building at the rear is the Staszic palace where the library and the Polish Academy of Science are.



At this restaurant we had some soup before going on



Here we went past a statue of De Gaulle



This is Three Cross Square (Plac Trzech Krzyży) with the Alexander church from 1820.



A modern kiosk on the street

Besides the Alexander church is statue of the martyr John from Nepomuk, who is an important saint in eastern Europe. A statue of John From Nepomuk is also on the Charles Bridge in Prague; the bridge where he was killed in 1393.

At the end of the day we came to the Lazienki complex, a large palace park of around 80 hektar that started as a hunting ground for the kings in the 1600's. Here are lots of monuments, palaces and temples.



This is the buildings in the botanical garden from 1818. There are over 4 Hectars (10 acres) and it has over 7000 different plants. To the left there is also an astronomical observatory.



Luis the XVIII lived here in The White House in 1801-4 when he was in exile from France.

This is The Palace On the Island. It was built in the years 1772-1793 by the court architect Domenico Merlini.



There was also a small lake here





On the other side of the lake was the Myślewicki palace that was built for the king's nephew, prince Józef Poniatowski.



Centaur



Amphitheatre from 1793 that is inspired from ruins in Lebanon



Restaurant



It was a nice park



The Belvedere palace from 1660 was residence for Lech Walesa. It is now a museum for the national hero and Pater Jozef Pilsudski.





The next morning we took another picture of the facade on the house across the street.



Here we are inside the church that we photographed the night before

It is the almost 700 year old Johannes cathedral, which is the oldest church in Warszawa. In the crypt lies Mazovia's dukes, Warszawa's archbishops and cardinals and Polish Nobel price winners.



Fine glass paintings



This is cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. He symbolized the clerical opposition against the communism in the Soviet era.



Here we are at the old-town square. It took many years to get this area restored after the destruction during the 2. World war and it is almost not to believe that most of the buildings here are less than 50

years old, for everything look as it did in the 1700's. Since the 1300's the old-town square has been used for everything from which-burning and knight's tournaments to festivals and fairs.

Today the Old-town is on UNESCO's world heritage list.



We just had to have a picture of this dragon signboard outside one of the restaurants at the Old-town square.



At the square is a statue of Warszawa's symbol and protector; a mermaid with sword and shield.



The end of the city wall



We are walking on top of the wall



At the wall is a memorial for all the children that lost their lives during the uproar in 1944.



Here we have come to Barbican.

Barbican is a majestic city gate and fortress in red stone that was built by the Venetian architect Giovanni Battista in 1548. The fortifications stretched from the Vistula River and around the Old town, and made up the border to the New town, where the working class lived unprotected. Barbican was partly demolished in the 1800's, but was reconstructed in 1953-54. Today it is a natural passage for pedestrians and a place where local artists display their work and where the young people meet.



Nice details in the wall



Kjell is walking along the wall



Now we were hungry and needed some food, soup and beer. We chose this Mexican restaurant.



We are talking with the waiter



A lot of objects were hanging all over



Lamp made of bottles



Mask



Then we went over to this monument



The monument is a memory of the Warszawa uprising, which raged in two months in 1944. Around 200000 poles were killed in this last desperate counterattack at the heavy armed Nazis, while the Russian army was sitting a couple of kilometers away on the other side of the Vistula river, waiting.



Here is the science woman Marie Curie's home, now a biographical museum. Marie Curie was Polish, grew up in Warszawa and her name was Maria Skłodowska. She discovered radium and polonium, which she called after her native country.



This is The New Town Square. The barouche St. Kazimierz church was changed to a hospital during the war and over thousand people died here when the church was bombed in 1944.



A bear with coat-of-arms



A nice fountain on the square

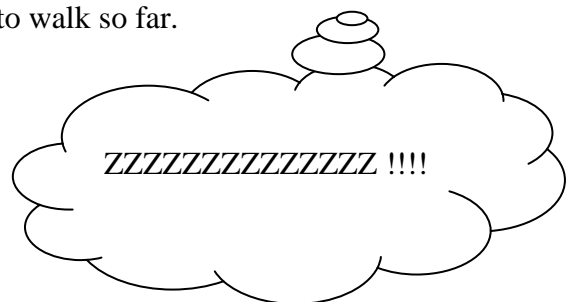


Now we needed more soup and beer. In this restaurant they had made pictures, which seemed as if we were looking out of a window.



Here is another picture.

After this we needed a nap again. It is tiresome to walk so far.





When we woke up it was time for having dinner. We were walking around, looking for a restaurant when we were shanghaied by this character. He asked if we wanted to come to his restaurant.



The restaurant was down in a cellar and we had hardly found it if we had gone there by ourselves. It was very nice with a lot of hunting trophies on the walls.



Kjell is waiting for the menu



Here are more trophies



We ordered deer.



It was very good





At the end we had to have pictures of us and the staff

When it was time to pay, we found out that we just had the necessary amount in cash to cover the bill. There was only one zloty left. They got this as a “tip” ☺. We were ashamed.