

“Get in the Pole”



The Old Town Market Square, one of the most picturesque corners of Warsaw city.

Golfing in Warsaw – By Dermot Synnott

TRAVEL
FEATURE



The team at Destination Golf have been tracing all over the globe to find new golf destinations that can meet the demands of a travelling golfer. There is no doubt that the world has become a smaller place and to unearth new destinations and fresh experiences is becoming an ever challenging task.

Having recently visited Szczecin (Western Pomerania) and Gdansk (Eastern Pomerania), we jumped at an invitation from the Polish Tourist Board to visit Warsaw. In doing so, we can now attest to a golf destination that provides the perfect mix of quality golf, history and culture.

Our direct flight with Ryanair from Dublin to Modlin airport was a short 2.30hr journey, departing at 5.20pm and arriving at 9.30pm – perfect for those wanting to get a day's work in before hitting the fairways of Warsaw.

On arrival at Modlin airport, our host presented us with a fruit-based Polish vodka, setting the tone for a few days of drinking and golfing in wonderful surrounds. A 40-minute transfer brought us into the heart of Warsaw city, where we checked into Polonia Palace Hotel.

This unique hotel in central Warsaw is the only building to avoid being destroyed in communist-era; therefore its long history has survived war and political crises. Because of this, it stands as a symbol of the best of both Old and New Warsaw. An ultra-stylish hotel, it underwent two years of renovations and modernisation, before being reopened in 2005. Today, the four star hotel provides an enchanting mix of tradition and modernity, with a homely restaurant and a fashionable jazz bar.

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Beer cart girls hand out chilled Tyskie beers at First Warsaw Golf & Country Club.



Lakeside setting at First Warsaw Golf & Country Club.



A snap beside one of the billboard signs on the course.



Lucky to g

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There is no doubt that golf in Poland has come a long way since the turn of the century. Championship courses are being built close to main cities, tournaments are being hosted, and course are gaining rapid Global recognition. The first of our three games at local courses around Warsaw was at the First Warsaw Golf Club.

First Warsaw Golf Club is a private yet friendly golf club with a newly built clubhouse. Before teeing off, we basked in the Polish sunshine while enjoying a tasty lunch on the balcony that overlooked the 18th hole, accompanied by a chilled Tyskie Polish beer.

The course was well presented with wide fairways, manicured greens and cleverly integrated water features.

By the time we had reached the back 9, our group decided that golfing in such a setting deserved another round of Tyskie beers. The beer car girls duly obliged and we sailed around the last few holes without a care in the world.

After our game with got to meet with the clubs Director, who divulged his extensive plans to upgrade the teeboxes and construct a brand new green at the 18th, which will be almost like an island green sitting in the natural lake beside the clubhouse.

Later that evening we visited the Praga district, one of the coolest, most bohemian places to eat and drink in Poland. We were there to visit the very popular Warszawa Wschodnia restaurant at the SoHo factory. The open plan restaurant gives you a unique opportunity to watch some of Poland's finest chefs in action, creating typically Polish cuisine to whet your appetite. I chose the mouth-watering Deer medallions flambéed in French Armagnac brandy!!



get a full swing beside the large billboard.

Continued over...



A stunning sunset over the 18th at Sobienie Krolewskie



A birds eye view of Warsaw from above.



The par-3 feature hole 16th at Sobienie Krolewskie.



Our pilot

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The next morning we checked out of our hotel and transferred to Sobienie Kroleswkie Golf Club, one of the biggest golf resorts in Poland, located 30km South of Warsaw. On arrival at the large red brick clubhouse, you are instantly greeted by smiling staff at the reception desk in the main hallway, proving a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

We had time for a bite of lunch before our game so the restaurants generously size “club sandwich” was the perfect re-energiser before taking on the Championship course which had recently hosted a European Tour satellite event.

Sobienie Kroleswkie golf course was very different to the previous day's golf. More of an inland links styled course akin to windy course that you would find on a Scottish or Irish coastline, it was quite a challenge with the long rough and undulating greens. The back 9 was particularly memorable, with the clever use of lakes and hazards.

The club is particularly proud of its new golf academy. Opened in September 2009, this is the perfect place for beginners to learn the fundamentals, or advanced players to sharpen their skills under the watchful eye of professional training staff.

There also is an aviation academy attached to the resort and to our surprise, an evening sunset flight over Warsaw had been arranged for us. The birds' eye view of Warsaw took our breath away as we looped around the National Stadium and scrutinized the stunning countryside.

Our accommodation that night was at a nearby four star hotel, which is a sister hotel to the golf course. Sobienie Kroleswkie Hotel is an exquisite 19th century palace hotel where guests can relax and enjoy a luxurious meal in the restaurant, horse riding, tennis, swimming pool or the Wellness Spa.



with some of the Irish press group.

Continued over...



Golfing in the Polish countryside at Lisia Polana Golf Club.



The large clubhouse at Sobienie Krolewskie.



Dumplings and Ksiazecze local beer.



No better



All of the buildings in Old Town Warsaw are illuminated by night and there's an electric atmosphere that seeps out of the energetic night clubs. There is no shortage of pubs and clubs in Warsaw. And for the finale (or beginning) of the evening you can go for a shot of vodka and a small, traditional snack at a twenty-four hour shot bar.

We rose early the next morning to have a stroll around the Old Town, taking in the Royal Castle, Old Town Square, Royal Residences and Multimedia Fountain Park. A short taxi ride also brought us to the Palace of Culture & Science and the National Stadium – both of which require the “wish you were here” tourist snap.

Warsaw is an extraordinary place, rich in history. But what makes the capital's Old Town unique, however, is that almost 90 percent of it was rebuilt... after World War II. Using old pictures, the attention to detail and effort employed in its thorough reconstruction was respected by the UNESCO commission, who then categorised Old Town as a World Heritage Site.

Visiting one of the many shopping malls would be an obvious continuation to the day, but for us it was a game at Lisia Polana Golf Club. An enjoyable course that flows through the countryside, this was the most forgiving of the three courses – wide fairways, shorter holes and flatter greens. Our group all agreed that it was the perfect course to start or finish a golf trip to Warsaw, especially given its close proximity to Modlin Airport.

We had time for a bite of food before going back to Modlin airport for an 9.30pm flight, so it was time to try the famous Polish dumplings and a local beer, toasting to a thrilling few days in the Polish Capital.



thirst quencher than a chilled Tyskie beer.

Warsaw's Big 5



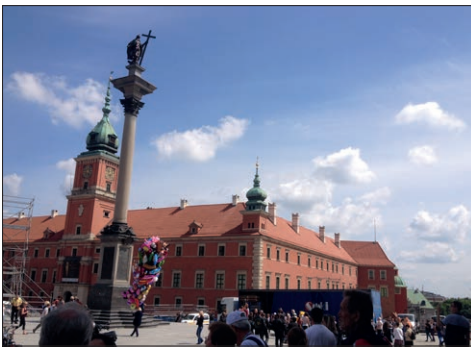
Warsaw Old Town

Included on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list, take a walk around this lively district to visit the main sites and soak up the bustling atmosphere.



Warsaw New Town

A wide array of high-end shops, cinemas, hotels and the Palace of Culture & Science - one of the tallest buildings in Poland.



Royal Castle

Built in the 13th century, this castle has served as the residence of monarchs as well as the Polish President in 1918.



National Stadium

Modern stadium that hosted the final of the EURO 2012 football championships, and is also used for concerts & exhibitions.



Mermaid Syrena

Located in the market square (Old Town), this bronze statue of the Mermaid of Warsaw serves as an emblem of the city.



Warsaw City: Guided Tours

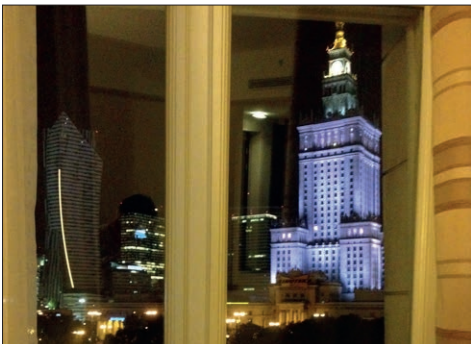
Tour the city in a communist-era police vehicle called a 'Zuk', providing a unique touring experience. Our English speaking guide was thorough and extremely knowledgeable about Warsaw. For 'Zuk' City Tours email: zygmunt@poczta.onet.pl



Warsaw City: Where To Eat

We dined at the very popular Warszawa Wschodnia restaurant at the SoHo factory, located in the Praga district. Watch some of Poland's top chefs work their magic from the open plan restaurant.

www.gessler.sohofactory.pl



Warsaw City: Where To Stay

We stayed at the Polonia Palace Hotel which is an easy walk from Warsaw's shopping districts and financial centre. It also enjoys an enviable location directly opposite the Palace of Culture & Science. www.poloniapalace.com

Fact Box

Golf:

First Warsaw Golf Club www.firstwarsawgolf.com

Sobienie Krolewskie Golf Club www.sobieniekrolewskie.pl

Lisia Polana Golf Club www.lisiapolana.pl

Travel: Ryanair flies direct from Dublin to Modlin Airport [2 ½ hours approx.]

Further Information: Polish National Tourist Office www.poland.travel/en-gb