

WHAT'S OUT THERE?

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME TO WIELKOPOLSKA

EVS & ESC
PART 1




Stowarzyszenie „Jeden Świat”
Service Civil International Poland



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Nature

Historical Sights

Local Folklore

Cultural Tips

INTRODUCTION

HELLO, DZIEŃ DOBRY!

If you received this little “book”, you’re probably just starting your Poznań adventure as an European volunteer (EVS or ESC). You will soon surely be busy with your tasks and new friends, and we hope you will love it :) What we try to suggest to you, is to take a careful look around you as well. Welcome to Poznań, a city with more than 1000 years of history, that will be your home for the next few months. It is well known in Poland for its historical value, beautiful green areas, fast growing cycle community and open minded spirit, linked to its multi-cultural and ethnic background.

This is not a typical city-guide, you can find a lot of them everywhere. It’s rather an invitation for you to discover your new home with some tips from an insider, who loves her city and wants to share this love and who decided to share her knowledge with us, foreign volunteers. Thank you, Marta!

When you google Poznań you will first see the colorful photos of Stary Rynek (Old Town Market), a touristic heart of the city. Well, we will skip it, as you will go there anyway, the first day after you unpack :) Stary Rynek is surely a beating heart of Poznań, but doesn’t a heart alone make a whole body?

We divided this “guidebook” into four parts: nature, historical sights, local folklore and cultural tips. Every place has a task assigned to it and “points to collect” – one completed task, one point. Let’s play! :)

Whoever collects all points can name himself/herself a real Poznaniak/Poznanianka – it took Marta 30 years, but maybe you’re much faster!



NATURE

1 - Rusałka Lake

Rusałka is an artificial lake located very close to the city center and we highly recommend that you get to know it better. Not only it looks like a natural lake - it is surrounded by a nice forest with plenty of walking trails, it also has interesting but sad beginnings. A lot of people don't really know that it was created during World War II and it has a bloody history. It was dug by prisoners from the local "working camps", from whom a lot had died during the work. Despite its history Rusałka is today one of the most popular green areas in the whole city and is visited by hundreds of people everyday. It also serves as the closest city beach, despite the water not being the cleanest you've seen.

But yes, everyone swam in Rusałka and the water is safe - it is being tested every year and gets only positive results so far.

So, you may wonder what your task is. Gather some friends, go to the Rusałka beach, eat an ice-cream and jump into the water. But...We recommend you wait until the summertime.



2 - Strzeszynek Lake

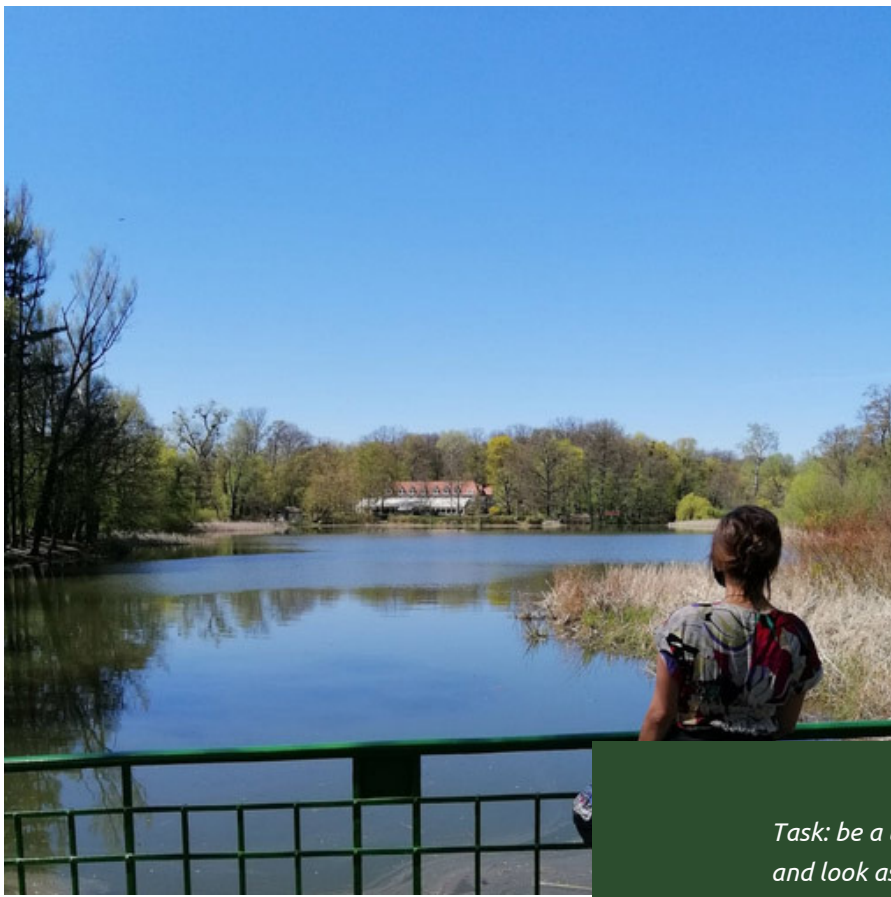
Located some 5 kilometers from Rusałka, it is known for having a better water quality. You may just go there by bike, it is connected with Rusałka with a direct trail through the woods (that you can of course walk as well). It's a nice small lake with the whole necessary infrastructure - an official beach, some restaurants, bars, ice cream stands, beach volleyball fields, playgrounds etc. Once you have enough of the civilization, you can take a walk around the lake - on the other side of the lake there are just trees and some peace.

Task: just go there! As a proof show us a photo with the statue of two yellow fighting...bunnies.

Tip: If you have a bike and feel confident enough, you can plan the classic 4 lakes trip. It covers Rusałka, Strzeszynek, Kiekrz and Lusowo. You can swim in each of them. The whole distance is around 50 km.

3 - Park Sołacki

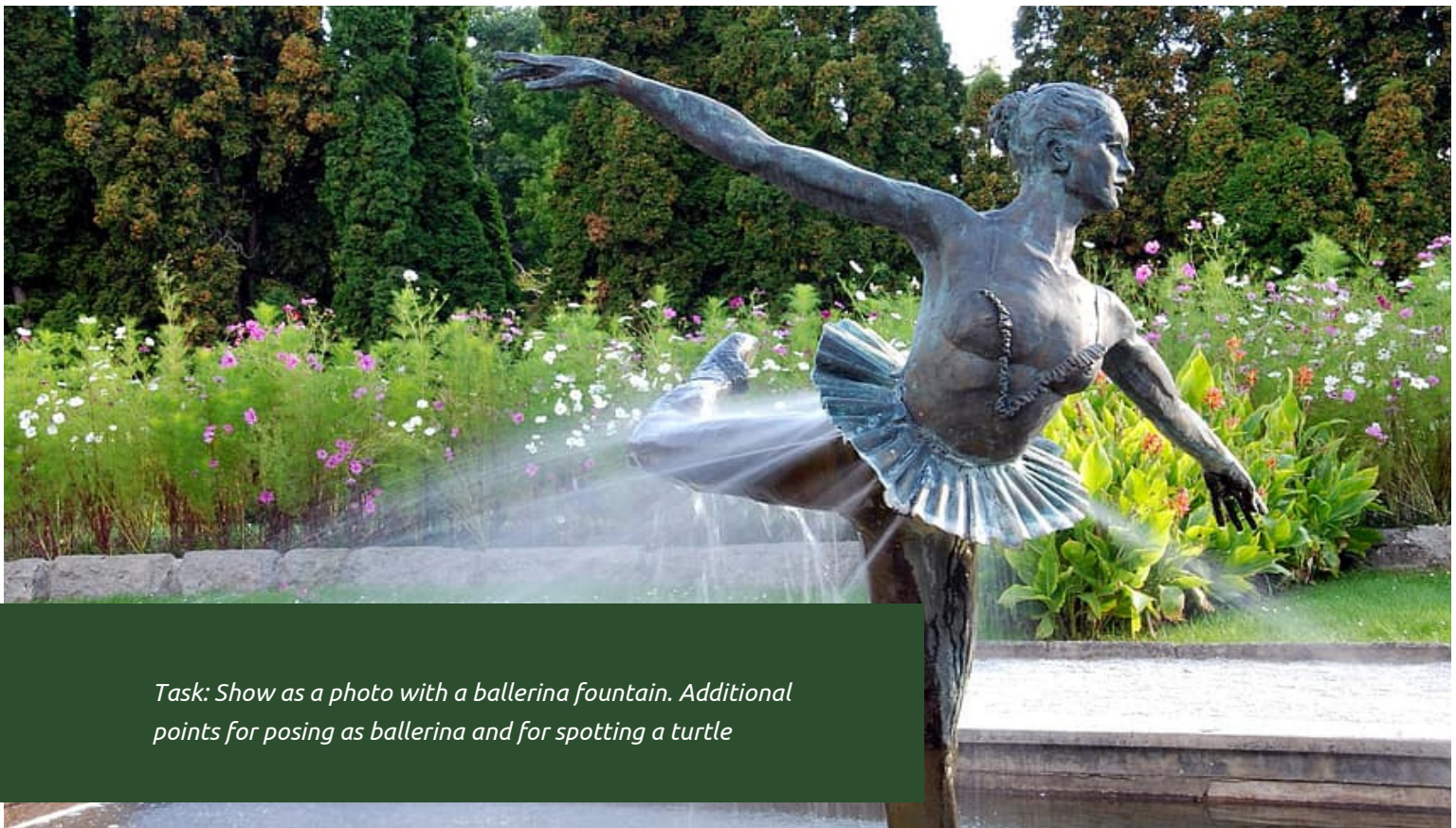
One of the oldest and prettiest parks in Poznań, designed by German architects. Best place to have some beautiful Instagram photos, as it is full of romantic little bridges and ponds. Everyone has a posed photo in Park Sołacki - in Spring and Summer it is filled with just married couples having their sessions, but all kinds of sessions happen there all year long.



Task: be a typical Park Sołacki model! Find a picturesque place and look as romantic as can be

4 - Botanical Garden

Best in late Spring, Summer and early Autumn. It's a large garden with thousands of plant species, organized into different zones, each of them uniquely designed. You will find there for example an artificial alpine path, ponds with turtles, nice cafeteria with regular exhibitions. It's a good choice if you need a spot to relax after work but no time for a trip outside the city. And it's for free. To get there take any tram/bus heading to Ogrody (which means Gardens in Polish - coincidence?)



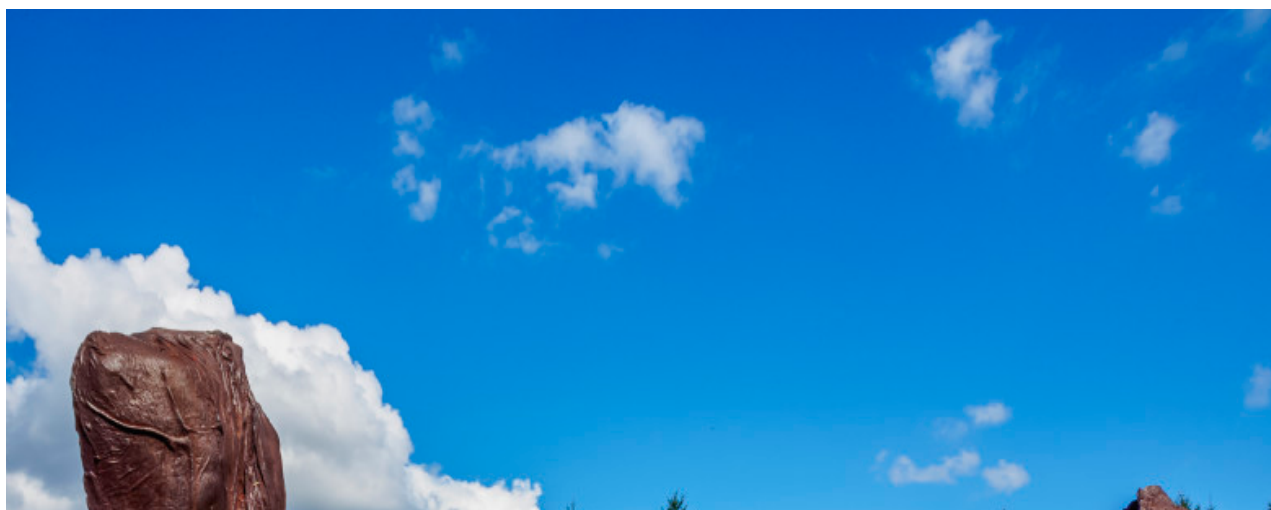
Task: Show as a photo with a ballerina fountain. Additional points for posing as ballerina and for spotting a turtle

5 - Cytadela Park

Did you know that our "Central Park" used to be the biggest artillery fortress in the whole Europe?

We bet you didn't. Nowadays you will find only a few remainings of its power back then - some bunkers (all that don't serve as a museum are closed), a lot of antitank moats, huge war cemetery on its slopes (with thousands of graves of the soldiers, who died trying to conquer and defend it in 1945). Today it's one of the most popular parks in Poznań, but looking just at its size it had to be an impressive fortress. Save a day and go for an adventure! Cytadela is a place for everyone and we mean it - you can find there completely forgotten, hidden wild spots where no one comes, 5 minutes away from crowded well organized places. Check which one you like more. There is a restaurant for those hungry, two museums, dozens of sculptures all around the place, an old devastated amfitheater, old cemeteries, some very famous works of art and a lot more.

Place like this needs more than just one task.



Task 1: Check out the most famous Cytadela sculptures - "Nierozpoznani" (The Unrecognized). Some people love it, some hate it, but it is surely important for the Cytadela landscape. Make a photo from "inside" the sculpture.

Task 2: Find the Amfitheater. Isn't it a strange place? A photo on the stage will be highly appreciated!

Task 3: Find a place called Rosarium. If you do it in April or May, you will get an extra point, as this is exactly the right time to go there. Enjoy

Task 4: Get lost. Seriously. My favourite spots in Cytadela are those far away from the crowd - paths behind the bunkers, especially the tank-moats. Getting lost with google maps is hard nowadays, but at least try to find some more adventurous paths.

Tip: Plan your Cytadela trip so that you leave it before it gets dark. It's a huge area, so you might not want to look for the way out so late, when it's not lit up well.



6 - Dębina

It is a surprisingly old forest with some oaks being even a few hundreds years old (Dębina in Polish means an oak forest). It used to be a hunting area for Polish kings and now...a little city forest with 4 lovely ponds ready for fishing. You will find there a lot of local guys trying to catch fish, and you just have to ask them "bierze?". If you're lucky, you might spot some wild animals, like deers, foxes or even wild boars (then relax and walk away, they are used to people and we never heard of any attacks). Talking about wild boars - you can find them in every Polish forest and they often come close to the city. If you ever meet one, just stay calm. If they are not bothered, they have no interest in people. You know, no shouting, running, selfies from 1 meter distance or petting the little piggies (although they are cute).



Task: Visit all four ponds and make a photo of a fisherman (paparazzi!)

7 - Szachty

Once rather a neglected piece of land with some dark business going on, not a place for a Sunday walk with your family, or an open air date with your girlfriend. Well, things have changed for Szachty and a future looks bright for this gorgeous park in the south outskirts of Poznań. It is now one of the favourite green zones, especially for those, who live in the area. It has all necessary infrastructure, a lot of bike lanes and benches, and - the biggest attraction - the view tower, from which you can enjoy the view over Poznań and local ponds (Szachty is actually a bunch of ponds, streams and little islands, great place for birds spotters, for you can find plenty of water birds there). You can get there either by bike or public transport - just prepare for a longer journey.

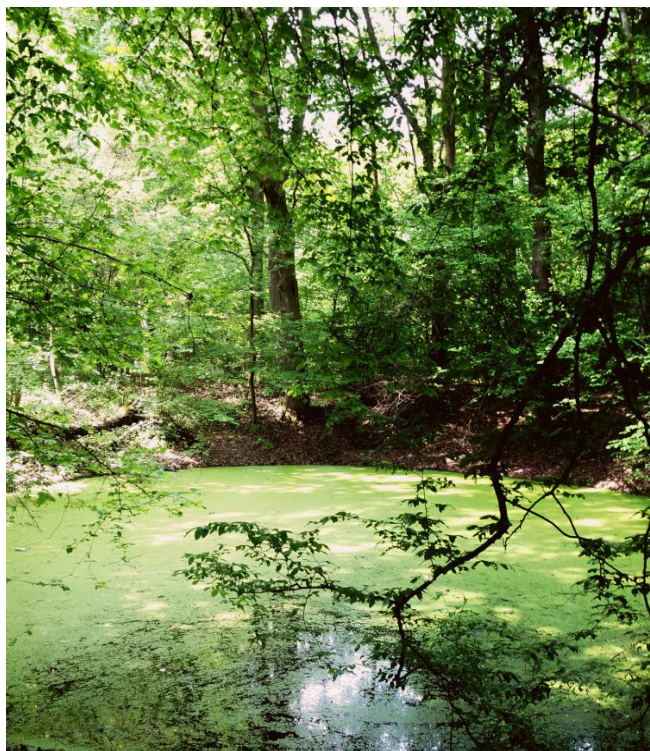
It is worth it!



Task: A photo from the top of the tower, of course!

8 - Morasko

And what if we tell you, that around 5 thousand years ago a meteorite hit Poznań and that you can see the crater with your bare eye? It's not a joke, it's just the Morasko Nature Reserve, close to the new Adam Mickiewicz University Campus (also called Morasko by everyone). You can get there easily by public transport and, if interested, visit the campus as well. Morasko is just a little forest, but those few craters make it exceptional for the global scale - not many craters can be seen without having a look from above. Ours are so little, that you don't need a plane to find them. They look like little, not particularly clean ponds and yes, they are far from being spectacular. But come one, how many times did you have a chance to touch a real, meteorite-made crater? Several pieces of the meteorite have been found there and the biggest one is at the same time the biggest ever found in Poland. Oh, we would forget - Morasko Mountain (yes, this is what we call it) is the highest point of Poznań - and the view is nice.



Task: find the craters, make a photo! If the weather is nice, reach the peak of Morasko and enjoy the view.

9 - Wielkopolski Park Narodowy

Bored with the city already? Just around 20 kilometers away, easily reachable with the regional train (15-20 minutes ride, costs around 10 złoty) or with a bike, there is an official national park, offering kilometers of routes through the woods. Wielkopolski National Park (let's call it WPN, like we do it) is basically speaking a huge forest - as you probably already noticed Wielkopolska doesn't have any mountains or other spectacular natural formations. We are a very flat land and our biggest natural treasures are forest and lakes - welcome to WPN, there are some lakes in the park, but it is not allowed to swim in some of them - check it before you dive in, as you don't want to pay a fine. Plenty of wild animals can be spotted there - if you're lucky you may see a deer, a beaver, a fox, a wild boar, even a wolf. There is an ultimately cool museum located in Puszczykowo - a home to our most famous local writer and traveller Arkady Fidler - totally a must see for every globetrotter! In the city of Mosina you can even take a ride with a rail trolley (reservation needed in advance) - it is called Mosińska Kolej Drezynowa and it's worth checking out. In Mosina there is also a view tower.



Task: The park is huge, so we don't want to assign any place-related tasks. Going there for a day trip and not getting lost forever is enough to get a point!

10 - Malta Lake

It is not a typical green area, as it rather serves as a big open air sport facility. Good place to go skating, cycling, it even offers a ski slope! Every few years rowing competitions are organized there, often on european or even world class level. Just a few steps from it there is a swimming pool/aqua park, Termy Maltańskie.



Task: fit volunteers are healthy volunteers. Grab your running shoes/bike/skates and make a lap around Malta. Walking counts too.

Tip for bikers - if you continue to ride along the right bank and then keep on going straight, you will find yourself on one of the coolest bike trails, connecting Malta with Swarzędz, a town next to Poznań. It's a lovely ride through woods, along a little river and lots of ponds. In Swarzędz there is a lake, your final destination.

Tip 2 - another popular recreation area is Park Jana Pawła II (John Paul's II Park).

11 - Wartostrada

Wartostrada is a bike route that goes along the Warta river. It has a few sections and some additional infrastructure, like open air gyms and even an open air climbing wall (Poznański Rejon Wspinaczkowy). It can be used also as a walking/skating/nordic walking route, as it has two lanes - one for bikes and one for pedestrians.



Task: Again, fit volunteers are healthy volunteers :)

HISTORICAL SIGHTS

This is a category impossible to close in such a tiny guide, as the history of Poznań takes us back more than one thousand years ago. We will try to point out some places that you might miss when exploring on your own. Let's start!

1 - Cathedral Island (Ostrów Tumski)

We agree, this is very mainstream. But it is impossible to start talking about Poznań and just skip the place where it all has started, somewhere in the Xth century. Visiting the cathedral is a must, as it is literally the oldest one in the country (or it has been, as the one you can see now was fully rebuilt after WW II). But Ostrów Tumski is not only the cathedral, it is also home to the whole bishopship and the place where the first city was grounded. Take a walk around the island, check out the museums (We recommend the Genius Loci exhibitions, that will take you back to the very origin of the island city - tickets are free on Saturday).



Task: Take a photo of the Golden Chapel, the most important in the Cathedral and find out who are the two guys buried there.

2 - The Emperor's District

You may ask yourself how is it possible, that a country, which never has been an empire, has an emperors district. Poland has not always been independent and Poznań belonged for over a century to the German Empire. The Emperor, Wilhelm II, decided to have one of his residences here and the result is stunning till today. A big part of what is a city center today used to be a residence designed specially for him - we invite you to discover it carefully. The heart of the district is the Castle (Zamek), which is the youngest of main europeans castles, as it was built in XIXth - long after people decided that castles are no longer needed. It is a huge building and it serves as a local cultural centre, offering a cinema (Kino Pałacowe), several concert halls, exhibition surfaces, book shop, cafe, theater and many more. It is a real miracle that it survived the war in a good condition and was not fully demolished afterwards. We have to warn you - when entering, don't expect nice, royal interiors. Everything valuable was either destroyed or stolen during and after the war. The castle is not a museum, rather an open cultural space and a beating heart of Poznań events. So, let's move to the task and further.



Everything that surrounds the Castle belonged to the district. The Opera (Teatr Wielki), Adam Mickiewicz University main building, Medical University, post office building, neogotic church on Fredy Street, parks and gardens. Those buildings served for different reasons back then, but even today they stayed very representative. In the summertime you will find hundreds of students sitting in the park in front of the opera haus, as it is the so-called academic quarter - many universities have their sites around.

Castle Task: Enter the main hall and check out the exhibition - there is always sth hanging on the walls and it's for free. Go upstairs, find the cinema and the cafe - we guarantee that you will feel like having a picture there :)



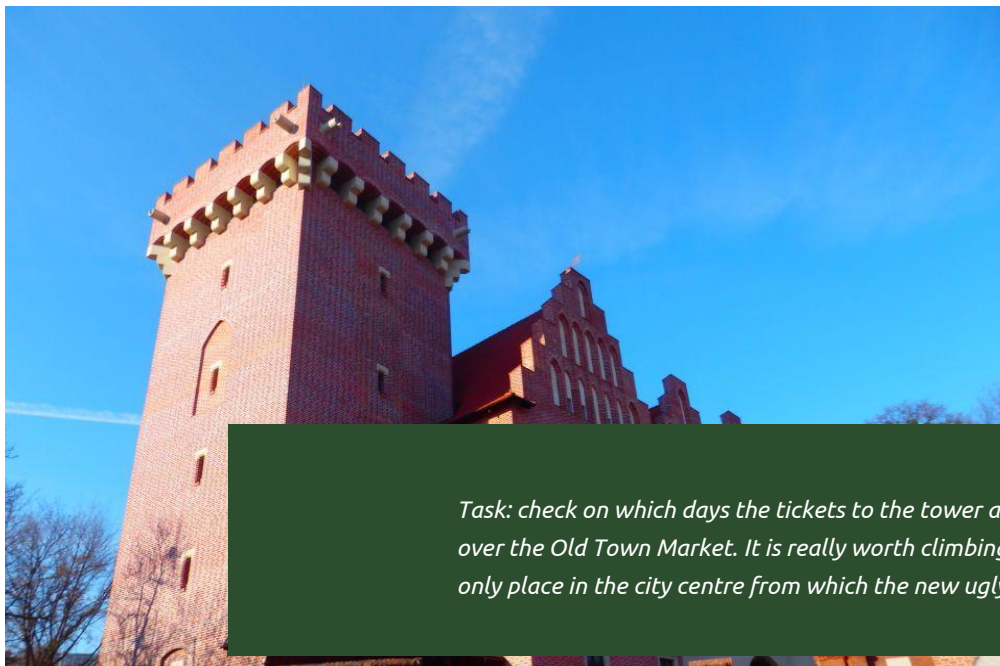
Adam Mickiewicz University task - are you a classical music fan? Poznań Filharmonia has a music hall inside the building and it is worth checking its programme. Sometimes they give great concerts for free, sometimes it is possible to get really cheap tickets. By the way, the hall is really pretty.



Opera Haus task - everyone in Poznań has a photo with the lion. Go for it! Don't forget to look at the top of the roof - what you find there is one of the city's symbols.

3 - Castle Hill (Wzgórze Przemysła)

A lot of castles here. This one is very particular, as it was built...around 10 years ago. Yes. The hill is truly a castle hill, as a former castle used to be there - it got more and more destroyed and until today only a little part of it survived, with no "castle" look at all - it is this little pink building with a nice Applied Arts Museum inside. Where the castle used to be there is a replica standing, which (not only in our opinion) has little artistic, historic and practical value. As new castle haters we still send you there to complete the task.



Task: check on which days the tickets to the tower are free and enjoy the loveliest view over the Old Town Market. It is really worth climbing the stairs! Whatsmore, it is also the only place in the city centre from which the new ugly castle can't be seen! :) What a joy!

4 - Fara Church

The only historic building in the old town that survived the war literally untouched and is now considered the most valuable.

Fara Church stands right next to the Old Town Market and is quite a spectacular example of baroque architecture. It is a part of a bigger closter complex that today hosts a whole city council. After visiting the church (a must) find the city council inner yard - remember this place, in the summertime there are a lot of events going on there. Once done with relaxing on one of the benches, find the inner yard of the ballet school, right opposite to you. If you're lucky and it's open, definitely go inside! On the other side of the church, with unfortunately no direct crossing, there is a lovely Fryderyk Chopin's Park.



Fara task - have you noticed the beautiful old organs high above the entrance? In Fara there are regular organs concerts, most of them with free admission. Check out their program and try it at least once!



Ballet School task - if you find the gate open, go in and make a photo with the ballerina statue.

5 - Forts, Bunkers and Anti-Raid Shelters

As we mentioned before, Poznań used to be a fortress, with a ring of surrounding forts. Some of them were built in the XIXth century, some are much younger, some come from post war times and served as potential anti raid shelters. Keep your eyes open, as you may stay close to one of them right now! They are literally everywhere and every few years new are being discovered, mostly during road constructions and renovations.

There is even a pub inside one of them.



Task - find a bunker/shelter located closest to your flat. It shouldn't be too hard. Marta's is in the nearest park

Tip - if you are interested in military topics, Poznan is a place for you. Visit Muzeum Broni Pancernej (Museum of armored weapons), the biggest such exposition in the country.



5 - Fort VII - Concentration Camp Poznań

As we mentioned before, Poznań used to be a fortress, with a ring of surrounding forts. Some of them were built in the XIXth century, some are much younger, some come from post war times and served as potential anti raid shelters. Keep your eyes open, as you may stay close to one of them right now! They are literally everywhere and every few years new are being discovered, mostly during road constructions and renovations. There is even a pub inside one of them.



Task - try to visit it while you're here. Weekend tourists normally skip it, but you're not one of them, aren't you?

LOCAL FOLKLORE

1 - Stary Marych Statue

Have you noticed an old guy pushing his bike on his way to work at Półwiejska Street? The urban legend says that once he gets there, the world will end. Luckily he hasn't moved since the statue was placed.

2 - Wolf Statue in Stare Zoo

Stare Zoo (Old Zoo) was once the main Poznań zoo. It was too old and too little to fulfil the modern standard and has been turned into the park. Most of the animals are gone, but there is a thing that stayed the same. The wolf statue used to be the favourite photo spot for children. Every Poznań-born child has a mandatory photo on the wolf back. Task - As a Poznań-based volunteer you definitely need this photo too!



Task - A photo on the back seat of his bike is a Poznan classic.



Task - As a Poznań-based volunteer you definitely need this photo too!

3 - Maltanka

Maltanka is the narrow-gauge railway that operates between Malta Lake and New Zoo. It has a long tradition and is since years one of the major attractions for families with children.



Task - As the tickets are not for free, we can't ask you to take a ride. But maybe you will want it anyway? Children love it, older children too

4 - Palmiarnia

Located in Park Wilsona, Palmiarnia is an over 100 years old glasshaus, inside which you will find a rich exhibition of tropical plants. It is a journey through ecosystems and latitudes, which costs around 10 złoty (cheaper than any tropical trip)



Task - Visit Park Wilsona, which is not only a park, but also a historical monument itself (this is why some rules are stricter than in normal parks, for example it is forbidden to ride a bike there). If you feel like going to Bali, we encourage you to visit Palmiarnia as well :)

5 - Nowe Zoo

Nowe Z (New Zoo) was opened to mark the 100th anniversary of the Old Zoo, when it became clear that the old one can't be developed any further. It occupies a huge area behind Malta Lake and is the second largest zoo in Poland. The typical "zoo day" includes a ride with Maltanka Railway. Nowe Zoo is a destination for a whole day, the distances are long and it is recommended to keep it in mind when choosing the shoes :)



Task - Not everyone likes zoos. No task assigned.

6 - Saint Martin's Day

On the 11th of November, the whole Poland celebrates Independence Day, but in Poznań a lot of people focus more on Saint Martin's Parade, taking place at Saint Martin's Street (Święty Marcin). We celebrate it with special croissants, baked specially for this occasion (Rogal Świętomarciński). Tones of them are being sold and eaten on this single day. Bakers who want to sell them need to have a special certificate.



Task - Save the date! It is mandatory to take part in the parade if you stay here in November. To fight the low autumn mood, grab a croissant, like a real Poznaniak would do, If you can't be here at Saint Martin's Day, you can find our croissants in some bakeries, all year long.



7 - Murals

More and more murals (wall paintings) appear in Poznań, changing empty, ugly walls into pieces of art. Most of them have no deeper meaning, but some are connected to concrete people, places and events. Keep your eyes open!

The most famous one is located in Śródka district.

Task - Find at least 3 murals and take a picture of them. What do you think they represent?



8 - Koziółki - Goats on the Town Hall's Clock Tower



TASK:

The main symbol of our city. Koziółki (goats) appear on the clock tower of the town hall every day exactly at 12:00 pm and give a little performance to dozens of viewers. On Saturday and Sunday they can gather even a few hundreds people who come just to watch them..



You have a couple of months to find a suitable day and go to Stary Rynek. Be there some minutes before 12:00 to find a perfect watching spot. Koziółki go out very punctually, so don't be late, if you don't want to miss them.

CULTURAL TIPS

POZNAŃ OFFERS A LOT OF CULTURAL EVENTS, EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN MEET PEOPLE WHO CLAIM IT DOESN'T. DON'T BELIEVE THEM.

If you feel like going to the movies, support local cinemas! The chain giants will survive anyway, but the studio cinemas need your support! We recommend you to check Kino Muza (the oldest one, over 110 years old), Kino Rialto, Kino Charlie@Monroe (cute as can be!), Kino Pałacowe (in Zamek) and Kino Apollo. It is good to be up to date with festivals and special events organized by them. In the Summer a lot of places organize open air cinemas - Poznań International Fares, Stary Browar, Avenida, Scena Maltańska and more. It looks differently every year, so check the details when holidays are coming. Open air cinemas are mostly free of charge. There are plenty of theaters in Poznań, but it might be hard to find a suitable play if you don't speak Polish. Most of the pieces played in Teatr Wielki are either operas or ballets, so you won't need any Polish there. Price might be a problem - opera tickets are quite expensive. If you feel that the language is not an issue here are some Poznań-based theaters: Teatr Nowy, Teatr Polski, Scena na Piętrze, Teatr Ósmego Dnia, Teatr Muzyczny, Polski Teatr Tańca and many, many more.





Don't forget about festivals - the most well known in Poznań are Malta Festival (theater, dance, music), Ethno Port festival (music), Na Szagę (travel festival), Short Waves festival (short movies), Animator (animated movies), OFF Cinema (documentaries) and many more. You can also find culinary events, motorization exhibitions (Retro Motor Show) and sport events (Poznań Marathon, Half Marathon, Wings for life etc).

Music is being played all over the city and there are more concerts a day than you can actually visit. Music Academy offers lots of free concerts in Aula Nova and we recommend it sincerely. For jazz/rock/blues events check the Blue Note Club, Klub U Bazyla and Dragon Club - those three places have regular gigs, but they are naturally not the only ones.

A place to check in Spring/Summer season is Kontenery Art, a project located close to Warta river. It is not only a popular meeting spot, offering a lot of cool organized space to hang out, but also a music stage and home to many cultural and sport events. In the past few years a lot of places opened along the river shore, so there is plenty to choose from. Free yoga classes, workout training, dance tutorials and language exchanges take place all year long in various locations.



You made it!

We hope those tasks will keep you busy for some time and that you will enjoy discovering your new home. There is much more to see and experience here and we hope that you will find a lot of spots not covered by this “guidebook” on your own. For any further questions related to the city, feel free to contact the main author :)

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