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the scrumptious goodies, I'd have to say that cake is my biggest downfall. Honestly, I'm surprised I haven't gained weight with all the cake I've eaten since moving to Germany. The cake that I salivate over most is German marble cake or "Marmorkuchen" as the Germans call it. I love it so much that I requested it as my birthday cake. This vanilla and chocolate flavored cake is swirled to form a marble-like form and is topped off with a sinful chocolate ganache. I've tried several marble cakes before, but this recipe my German mother-in-law had given me in particular takes the cake. Perhaps it's the "Eierlikör," which is similar to eggnog? Only one way to find out!

ETSCHBERGER MARMORKUCHEN

Ingredients

375 grams powdered sugar

375 grams canola or other neutral oil

375 grams Eierlikör (can be found in many German supermarkets) 6 eggs

470 grams flour

A bit of cocoa powder

1 packet of baking powder (I bought this at Aldi)

2 packets of vanilla sugar (can be found at any German supermarket)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 toothpick or knife

Instructions

- 1. Preheat oven to 150°C. Grease a Bundt form pan.
- 2. In a large bowl, mix the sugar and eggs together.
- **3.** Using the same bowl, mix in the Eierlikör, salt and vanilla sugar until creamy.
- **4.** Add the flour and baking powder and stir until there are no more clumps. The consistency will be runny.
- 5. Pour half of the mixture into a separate bowl and add the cocoa powder according to taste and mix until smooth.
- 6. Pour the vanilla mixture into the greased Bundt form. Using a spoon and scooping the batter one spoonful at a time, add the chocolate mixture on top. Swirl the two mixtures together with a toothpick or knife until a marble pattern is formed. Bake for 75 minutes. When the cake is cooled, top it off with a chocolate ganache. Enjoy!



FunFacl: Marmorkuchen is popular during Easter time.

BAKER'S TIP:

Made a whole batch and don't want to eat it all in one go? Seal the rest of the cake in Saran Wrap and aluminum foil and store it in the freezer. The cake should be good for up to three months.

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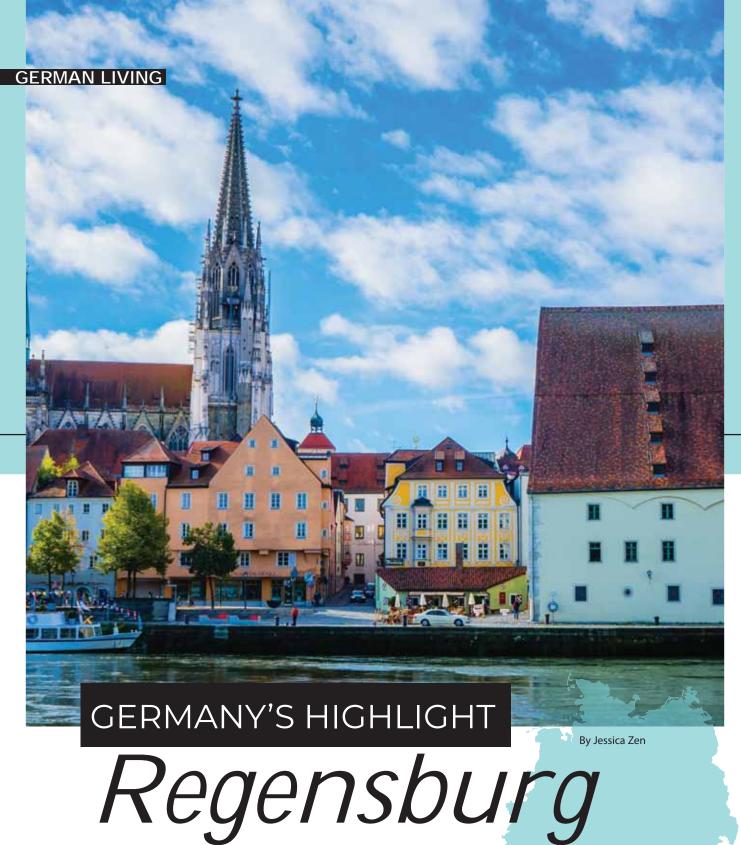
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he charming medieval city of Regensburg is the ideal location for anyone looking to have the quintessential Bavarian experience. It is located at the confluence of the Danube, Naab and Regen rivers. The medieval city center, which remained intact after World War II, boasts a UNESCO World Heritage Site title. Regensburg is home to the largest medieval old town north of the Alps and is the perfect place to wander the cobblestone streets and admire the ancient churches and imposing aristocratic houses.



There is so much to see in Regensburg without ever leaving the old town. St. Peter's Cathedral is sure to immediately catch your eye. It is an exemplary Gothic building and a landmark for the city. Its twin spires tower at 345 feet. Inside, look up at the massive hanging organ and stunning stained-glass windows. Next, wander towards St. Emmeram's Basilica for a look around at over 1,000 years of architectural styles. The 11th-century Romanesque basilica is part of the larger Thurn and Taxis Palace. Many of the rooms are lavishly furnished and amazing to see as part of a guided tour. Highlights include the ballroom, silver room and conservatory.

If you get hungry while exploring, be sure to stop at Regensburger Weissbrauhaus for some traditional Bavarian cuisine. Think Nürnberger sausages with mustard and rye bread or delicious "weisswurst," which is white sausage. You can also get pumpkin soup, a Bavarian staple. Don't forget to order a beer or two while here. After all, you are in Germany!

Once you've satisfied your hunger, continue exploring the old town. The bright yellow Old Town Hall, which dates back to the 14th century, has rooms that were once occupied by the Holy Roman Imperial Diet. The Adler-Apo-

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theke, dating back to 1610, is one of the oldest pharmacies in the city. Visit the University of Regensburg campus to stop and smell the roses and admire their modern botanical garden. For a look at an interesting work of art, head to Goliathstraße. Here you'll find a medieval house with a massive mural of David and Goliath painted on it. The mural dates back to 1573 and there is now a restaurant named David that overlooks the city's rooftops.

No trip to Regensburg is complete without stopping to admire the Old Stone Bridge, which stretches for just over 1,000 feet. This 12th-century bridge crosses the Danube River and links the Old Town with Stadtamhof and was once the city's only bridge. Today it functions as only a pedestrian bridge. When you cross the bridge, take a look at the vibrantly colored buildings down the street, but veer left to grab lunch at Brauereigaststätte Spitalgarten. Here you'll find an ideal spot to sit outside next to the river, have a beer and enjoy the cityscape.

Regensburg makes the perfect day trip or even two-day adventure. This city is dripping with culture, history and fascinating sights. Whether the ancient religious buildings or tasty food draw you in, you are sure to be absolutely charmed with Regensburg by the time you leave.











Explore Old Town and Wawel Castle

The Old Town main square is arguably the most picturesque part of Kraków. Clean, white streets surrounded by stunning architecture and an assortment of horse-drawn carriages going by it's like something out of a fairytale!

The main square was originally used for commerce, and one can still shop for a variety of goods from vendors in the Cloth Hall in the center of the square. The square is lined with restaurants and cafes offering outdoor seating, and while you might pay a little more here than in other areas of Kraków, the prices are low compared to other European cities.

Wawel Castle is just minutes away from the main square and sits atop Wawel Hill overlooking the Vistula River. An assortment of Romanesque, Renaissance and Gothic architecture make up the castle grounds, which may be visited free of charge. The insides of the buildings — the State Rooms, the Crown Treasury, the cathedral and more — may be toured, but it is highly recommended to reserve tickets in advance if you wish to do so.

Eat pierogi, cheese and Obwarzanek

Sampling "pierogi" in Poland is a must! These delicious little dumplings come stuffed with potatoes, cheese, meat, sauerkraut or other vegetables. You can find them almost anywhere, but perhaps the best place is at one of Kraków's milk bars. The milk bars began as government-subsidized cafes where workers could get a low-cost bite to eat. The meals were simple and cheap, using mostly dairy-based ingredients or potatoes and eggs. Today, you can still dine at milk bars in Poland offering a spin on these simple menu items at very low prices.

Try "Gołka" cheese from a market or from street vendors — some serve it grilled with cranberry sauce on top! This rubbery, smoked, salted cheese is a treat. Also, try "Oscypek" cheese if you get the chance. It is similar but produced with sheep's milk instead of cow's milk and is only available April through October.

"Obwarzanek", also known as "the Kraków pretzel," is a ring-shaped bread that is somewhat of a mix between a pretzel and a bagel, topped with salt, sesame seeds or poppy seeds. You'll find them everywhere — in every cafe and on every street corner, which is good because they are delightful.









LEFT: Auschwitz Rail Entrance was used from 1942 until late 1944, delivering Jews from all over German-occupied Europe by crowded freight trains RIGHT: A watch tower, on the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.





Visit Auschwitz

On a somber note, Kraków is an hour's drive from Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest German Nazi concentration camp. Everyone should experience this place at least once in their lifetime and know that it will be an emotional, yet educational journey.

Renting a car is an option, but traveling to the memorial via public bus from Kraków is a simple and cheap alternative. Touring Auschwitz without a guide is free but requires a reservation as a limited number of people are permitted inside at one time. You may also reserve a guided tour for a fee, which can be done on the Auschwitz website: http:// auschwitz.org/en/. Pay close attention to the details — visitors without a guide are only allowed during certain hours, so plan your visit accordingly. Be sure to visit Birkenau as well, the extermination camp down the road from Auschwitz. A free shuttle bus runs in between the two sites several times each hour, and no ticket or guide is required to enter Birkenau.

Everyone should experience this place at least once in their lifetime and know that it will be an emotional, yet educational journey.

Tour Wieliczka Salt Mine

Right on the outskirts of Kraków is one of the world's oldest operating salt mines — Wieliczka Salt Mine. Excavation began in the 13th century and the mine was used for commercial salt mining until the 1990s. It is now an official Polish historical monument offering tours to visitors. Inside the 327-meter deep mine, visitors have a chance to see exhibits on the history of the mine, an underground lake, statues carved from rock salt and an extravagant subterranean chapel. The 2.2-mile guided tour took approximately two hours to complete, with an optional museum portion at the end. It's quite incredible to get a glimpse of this underground world.

Between the charming sites, delicious cheap eats, history and abundance of experiences to be had, Poland's greatest treasure always leaves visitors wanting to come back for more!

Up Close and Personal

---- with------

Old Town Gdańsk

by Stacy Roman

s one of the oldest cities in Poland, the stunning coastal city of Gdańsk is full of stories and history. Ruled by Prussians, Germans and Poles, the combined cultural influence can be felt everywhere. From the moment you arrive, you'll notice a stark resemblance to the Dutch capital, Amsterdam. Tall, gabled facades tower over the cobblestone streets below. The city center, or Main Town, is home to the imposing St. Mary's Basilica, Neptune's Fountain, the storied Long Market and shops featuring exquisite amber jewelry from local artists. Because of the old town feel, it's easy to confuse Main Town with the actual Old Town, which is a quaint and quiet area just north of the more touristy part of the city.



What to Do

A mere 15-minute walk from bustling Main Town Gdańsk, Old Town offers a small glimpse into the everyday life of its locals. It's easy to navigate the maze of tree-lined streets. Be sure to check out the Old Town City Hall. Originally built in the late 1500s, the ornate red brick structure now houses a local culture museum. If you head further north, you'll discover the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970. The three looming steel crosses were erected to memorialize the 42 protesters who were killed in an uprising against extortionate prices of goods set by the communist regime. Not far from the monument is the **European Solidarity Center. This** museum documents the Gdańsk and Polish life experience behind the Iron Curtain after World War II and is well worth a visit.



RIGHT: Cobblestone street near the Long Market, city center.



Good Eats

There is no shortage of fantastic food spots in Old Town Gdańsk. Ranging from inexpensive breakfasts and down-to-earth milk bars (similar to a low-key cafe) for a traditional Polish meal, there is plenty to choose from. For a quick and delicious breakfast, stop by Loveat Heweliusza. This no-frills spot offers tasty muffins, pastries, breads and steaming cups of coffee for a great price. Fancy a bite after checking out the museums and monuments? Head to Bar Iwona przy Drodze do Wolności. Popular with nearby shipbuilders and dock workers, this milk bar is a hidden gem. Enjoy a hearty meal of meaty goulash or borscht. You may have to get creative when ordering, as everything is in Polish.

After a fun afternoon of sightseeing, head to Pierogarnia Mandu Śródmieście. Located where Old Town meets Main Town, this renowned restaurant is a great place to taste one of Poland's national dishes—the pierogi. From savory game-filled dumplings to sweet desserts to finish off the night, you can sample a variety of the famous potato pockets of goodness. Or hit up Swojski Smak which offers a delicious take on classic Polish fare in a cozy atmosphere.

Take a moment and discover the hidden beauty and culture of Old Town Gdańsk. You'll be amazed at the history and culture just waiting to be found. ■



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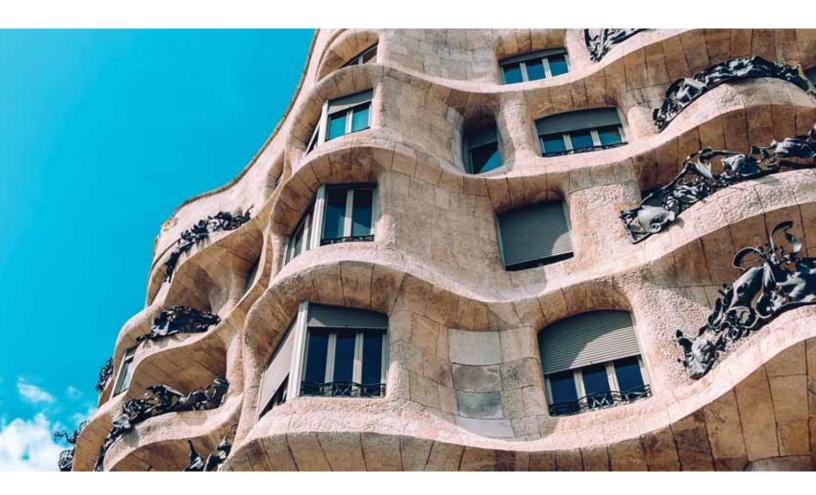


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By Anna Leigh Bagiackas



For many people, the city of Barcelona is a top priority when it comes to making a travel bucket list.

Here is the good news. Whether you have a full week or only 48 hours, you can experience both the must-sees of this Catalan city, and slow down to understand what makes Barcelona so special.

As Spain's second-largest city, behind the capital city of Madrid, Barcelona has its own distinct feel, most notably with its Modernist architecture thanks to designer Antoni Gaudí. Its location along the coast also contributes to its character with beautiful beaches that will entice even the most planful of tourists.

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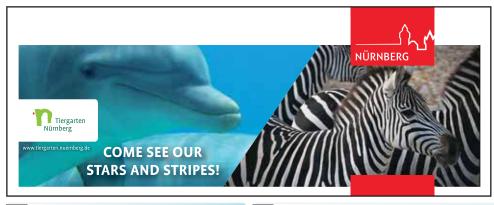
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What to See

With 48 hours in Barcelona, you can visit the must-sees and a few of the places you can't fit in a quick trip (but you should). On the top of the list should be Sagrada Familia, one of Europe's most magnificent cathedrals that has been under construction for over 100 years and isn't expected to be completed until 2026! This is one of many structures designed by Gaudí worth visiting, in addition to Park Güell, Casa Milá and Casa Batlló, all representative of his Catalan Modernist style—side by side with the medieval history that still surrounds the city.

Celebrate another Spanish artist with a visit to the Picasso Museum, which houses over 4,500 works by the artist. Spending time wandering Barcelona's streets should also be a top priority and to start, head to Las Ramblas, a pedestrian walkway with shops that will lead you through one of the city's main squares, the Placa de Catalunya. You can also reach the Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter), a favorite neighborhood for travelers for its narrow medieval streets and trendy shops. For more strolling and shopping there is also the Mercat la Boqueria, Barcelona's famous market.

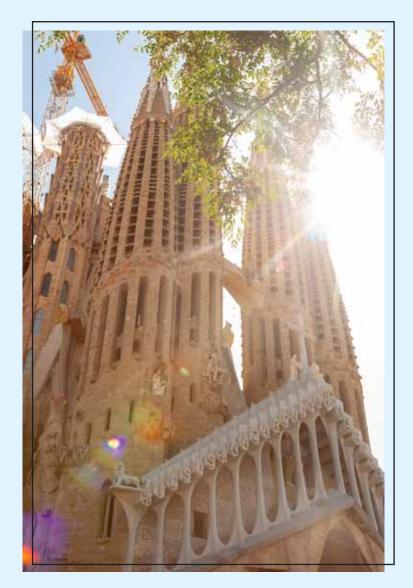
A trip to this city should also include beach time. Whether you're walking along the harbor or relaxing at Barceloneta Beach, make sure to squeeze in a seaside visit. If it is fútbol that brought you to Barcelona, a visit to Camp Nou may be in order to watch FC Barcelona.

What to Eat and Drink

To facilitate your wandering, you're going to need to keep yourself fueled and what better way than with an exploration for your tastebuds? Catalan cuisine has similarities to other Spanish regions, but it also offers its own distinct menu. Here's what you should try:

Tapas are the name of the game, with the "bomba" being the legendary bite in Barcelona. This is a fried ball of potatoes and pork, served with two tasty sauces. Its name, "the bomb," comes from the hand grenades used in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. Other bites include "Pa amb tomàquet," or a piece of crusty bread slathered with tomatoes, olive oil and garlic. Being so close to the sea, you will find great seafood around the city too.

Lastly, to accompany your tapas or maybe celebratory paella, drink pairings can include sangria, Cava, the Spanish sparkling wine, or some vermouth. ■







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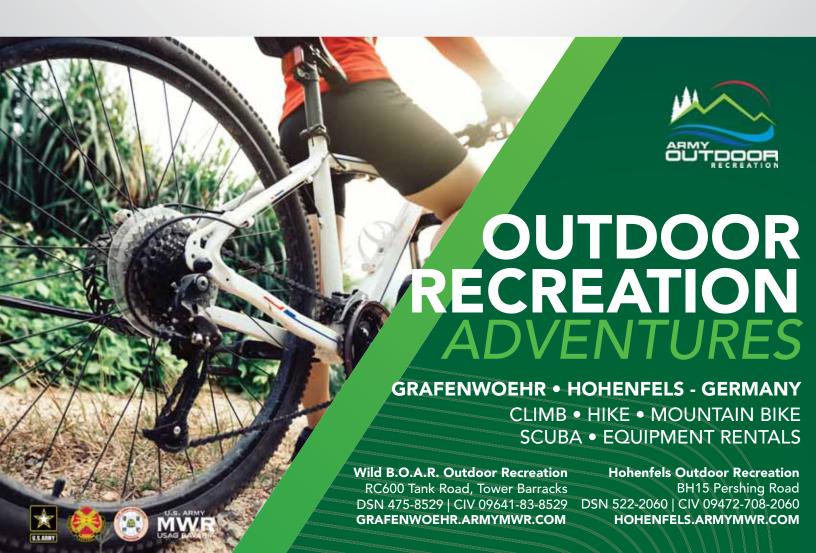


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