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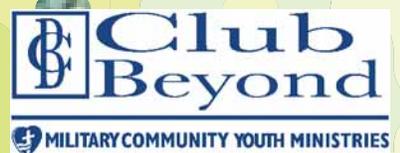
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**WRITER-EDITOR**

MARY DEL ROSARIO, ANNA BAGIACKAS

**GRAPHIC ARTISTS**

CARRIE FARRELL, DANIELA GAMMON

**ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

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**COVER DESIGN BY**

CARRIE FARRELL

**ADVERTISING OFFICE**

Unit 29480, APO, AE 09211  
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# MARVELOUS MARBLE CAKE

If there's one guilty pleasure of mine, it would be that I have a major sweet tooth.

By Mary Del Rosario

Cookies, candies, ice cream—there's not one tempting sweet delight I'd turn down. But, out of all 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!



*FunFact:  
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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GERMANY'S HIGHLIGHT

# *Idar-Oberstein*

By Karen Bradbury

Idar-Oberstein is a pleasant if rather sleepy town nestled in a wooded western corner of the Rhineland-Palatinate within the Hunsrück range of low-lying mountains. A first-time visitor could hardly pass through without noticing its most famous landmark—the Felsenkirche—a church built directly into the crag of a cliff towering high above the part of town known as Oberstein.



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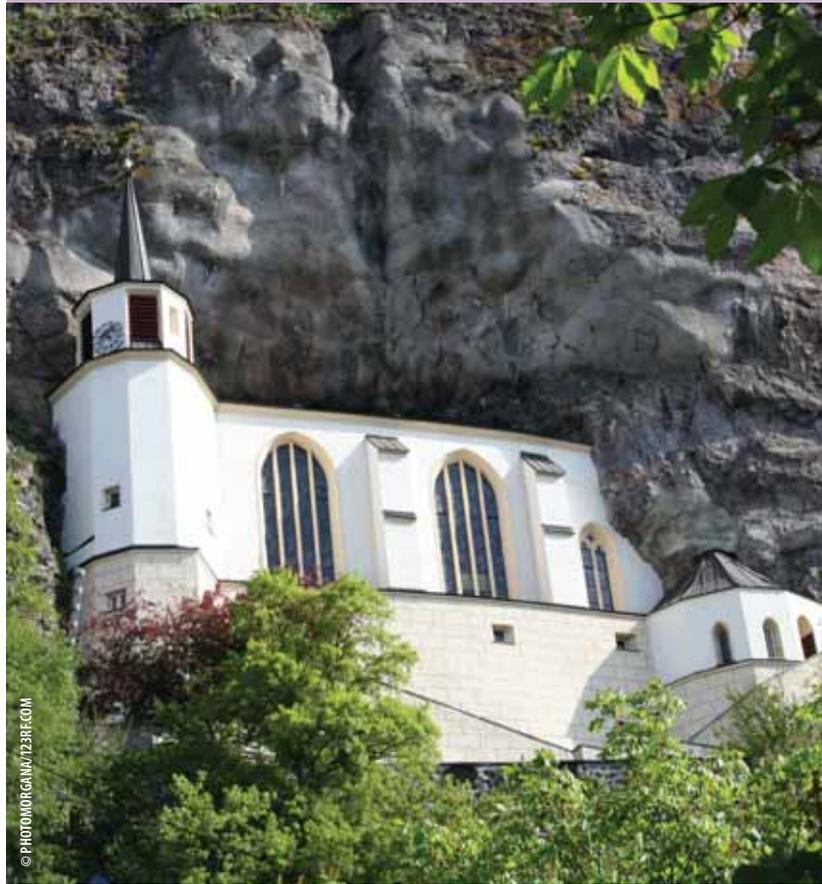
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VISITORS MUST DON HARDHATS BEFORE WALKING THROUGH AN ILLUMINATED TUNNEL FILLED WITH ROCK CRYSTALS, AMETHYSTS AND OTHER SPARKLING STONES.



But it's what lies beneath that gives Idar-Oberstein its unique niche amongst German tourist destinations. Way back when, in the geological period known as the Permian, lava flowed from the inner earth and rose to the surface. Within this lava, bubbles that were filled with the gases were destined to become amethyst, jasper, quartz and other semi-precious stones. The history of the mining of such stones locally dates back to the 14th century, and the first mill to grind and polish them was established here around 1520.

As resources dried up, the industry waned, prompting miners and those who worked the stones to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Many emigrated to South America. New life was breathed into local industry at the start of the 19th century, when agate rock formations mined in Brazil were shipped back to Idar-Oberstein to be worked into costume jewelry and other decorative items. Even today, Idar-Oberstein remains a leading manufacturer of gemstone products, and its designers work for some of the world's most renowned jewelers.

Today's tour of Idar-Oberstein concentrates solely on the sights connected to its mining heritage—of course there's much more to see in this gem of a town!

### *Deutsches Mineralienmuseum*

The German Mineral Museum displays precious stones mined locally and worldwide. Of note is its collection of locally crafted art-deco style jewelry, a cabinet with fluorescent lighting which sets off the minerals to spectacular effect, healing stones such as those used by local mystic St. Hildegard of Bingen and 400-million-year-old fossils of sea life recovered in Hunsrück slate. The museum's latest exhibit is a collection of some 50 sculptures made of rare minerals and metals.

### *Steinkaulenberg*

At Europe's only gemstone mine open to the public, visitors must don hardhats before walking through an illuminated tunnel filled with rock crystals, amethysts and other sparkling stones. The tours are led in German, but headsets offer English explanations. They also hold a gemstone camp with minerals stocked from elsewhere, at which treasure-hunters can search for semi-precious gems of their own. Register for the prospecting experience in advance.

### *Weiherschleife*

This grinding mill is representative of the 183 facilities that once stood alongside the Nahe River and other local waterways. It remained in operation until 1945; nowadays, expert guides demonstrate processing methods of bygone days on massive sandstone grinding wheels.

### *Jewelry Shops*

Competent salespeople and forthcoming craftsmen welcome would-be buyers into more than 20 specialty stores scattered throughout town, where it's not just jewelry that begs to be taken home. On the weekend before Easter each year, workshops open their doors, providing behind-the-scenes looks to admirers of sparkling things. For a list of shops, see [echtedel.com](http://echtedel.com) ■

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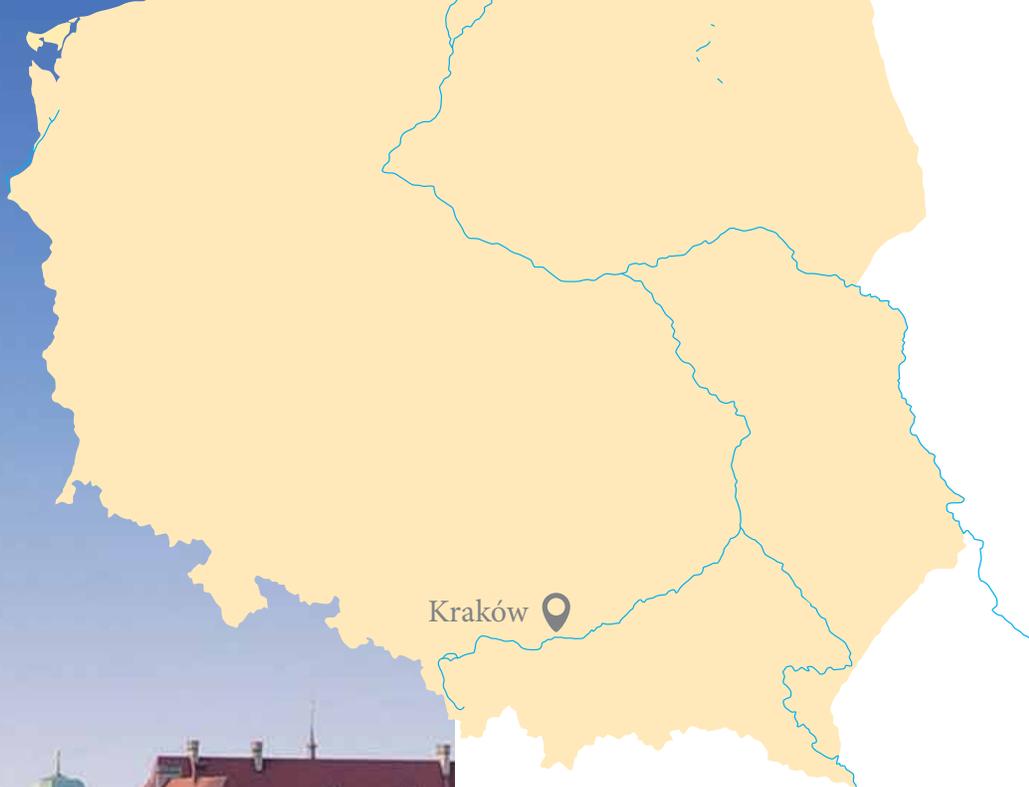
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# Visit KRAKÓW: Poland's Greatest Treasure

By Erinn Burgess

If you are searching for a destination rich with history, beautiful architecture, delicious food and vibrant culture, look no further! Kraków is one of Poland's oldest cities and offers a variety of notable things to do and see for travelers of all types.





## 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.

TOP:  
Old Town  
main square  
BOTTOM:  
Wawel Castle



## 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.

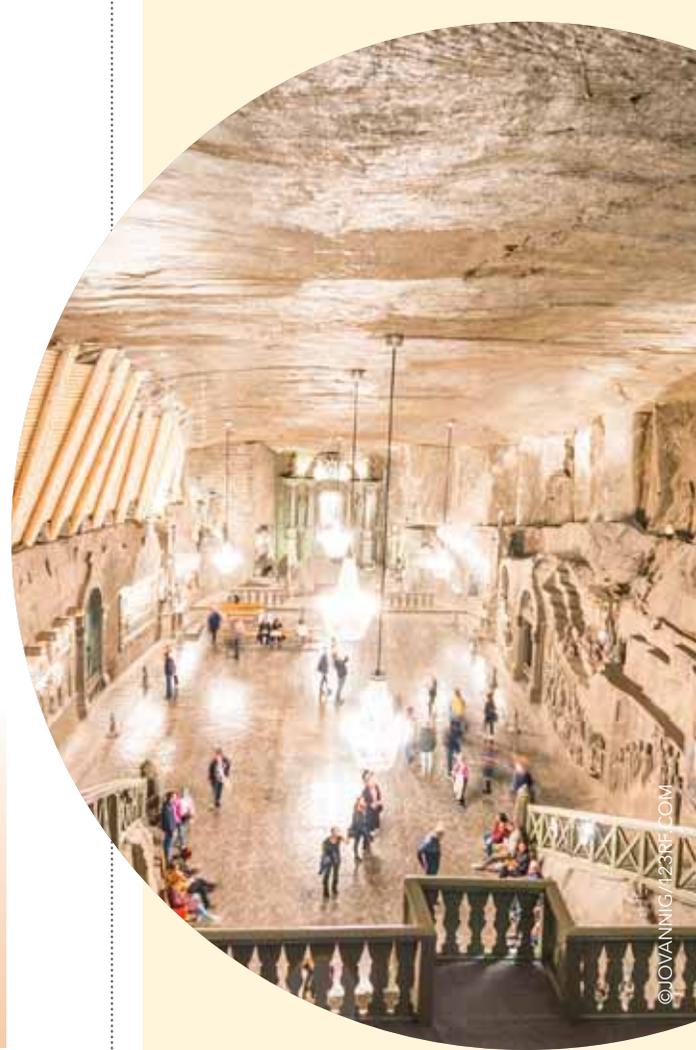
Try “Gołka” cheese from a market or from street vendors — some serve it grilled with cranberry sauce on top! This rubbery, smoked, salted cheese is a treat. Also, try “Oscypek” cheese if you get the chance. It is similar but produced with sheep’s milk instead of cow’s milk and is only available April 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, deliv-  
ering Jews  
from all over  
German-occu-  
pied Europe  
by crowded  
freight trains  
RIGHT:  
A watch tow-  
er, on the site  
of the Aus-  
chwitz-Birke-  
nau 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

As 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.

LEFT: Aerial view of Old Town Gdańsk

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 Swój 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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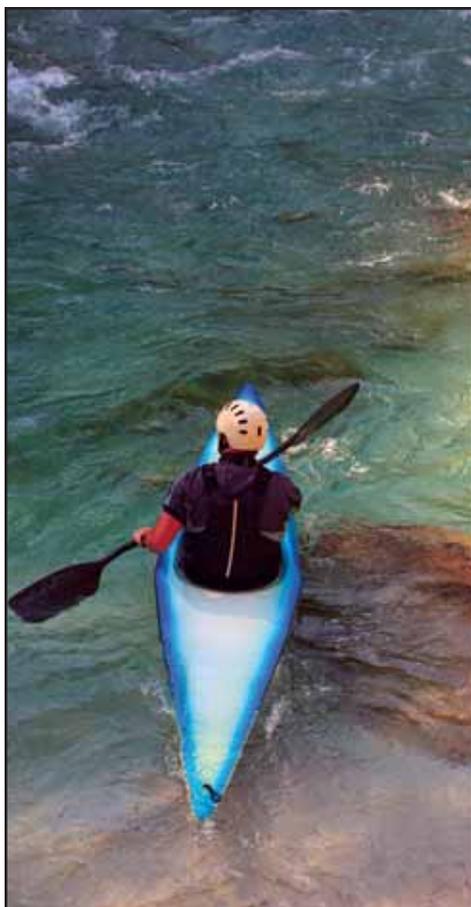
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# 48 HOURS IN BARCELONA

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 playful of tourists.

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## What to See

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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 Família, 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 Milà 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

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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. ■



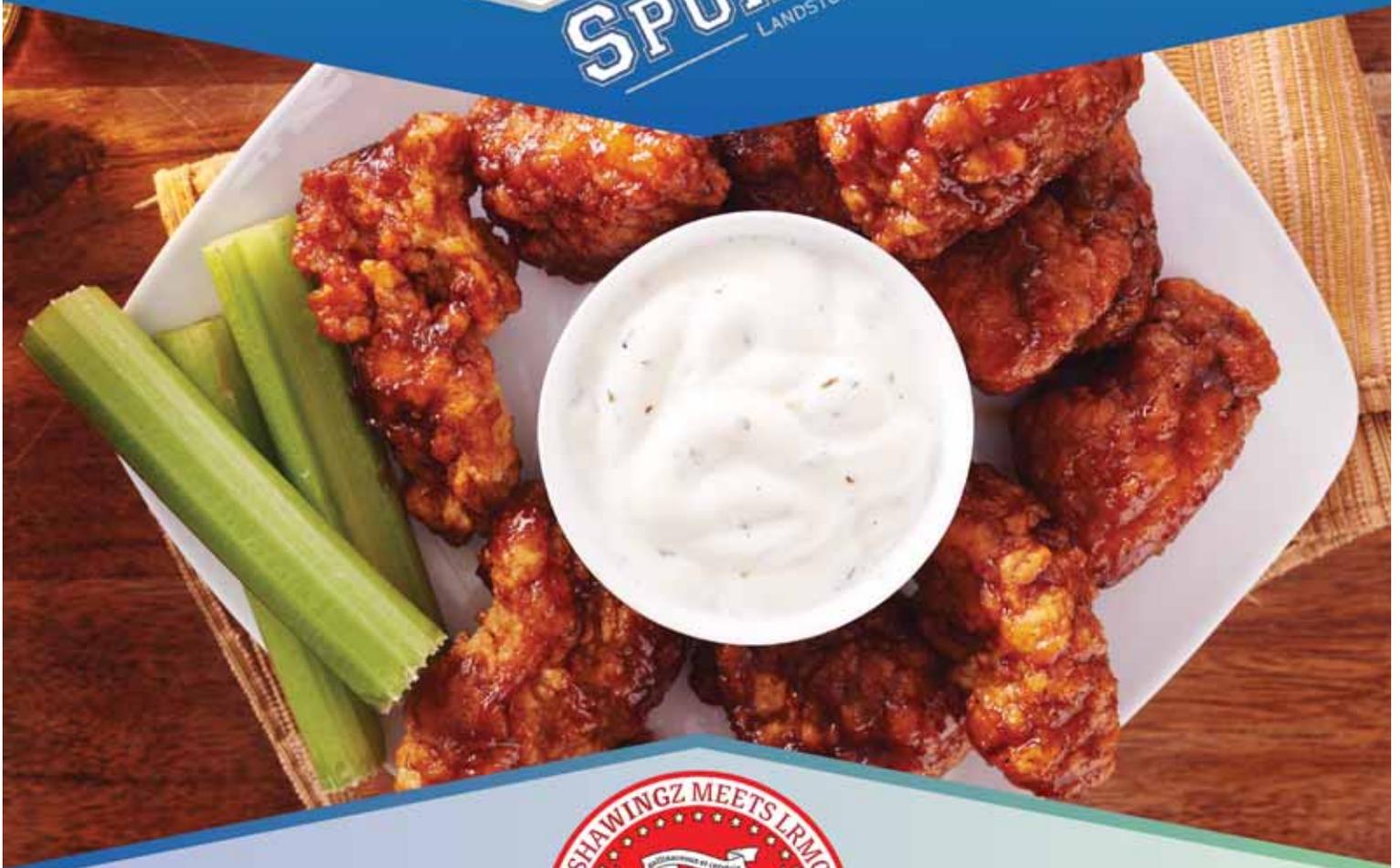


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