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03. October 2018

## A Self-Guided Walking Tour of Gdansk, Poland



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Gdansk is becoming quickly the most visited city in Poland after Krakow. Due to its extraordinary beauty it has been voted several time as **destination of the year** and is thus an absolute must-do when traveling to Poland. The city is so full of history and sights that you can easily spend more than 2 days in Gdansk. On top there is a wide range of day trips from Gdansk that you can choose from.

This **self-guided walking tour of Gdansk** will take you to many of the highlights and attractions that you must see when visiting Gdansk. The tour of Gdansk can easily be done in one day and includes a lunch and dinner recommendation.



This walking tour is foreseen to be done at daylight, however I strongly recommend to re-do the first part of this Gdansk city tour in the evening, when it's dark. **At night Gdansk has a magic** of its own and it's paradise for photography lovers. Gdansk is the largest city of the Kashubian Switzerland, the ideal setting for slow and sustainable travel.

It's key to have your hotel as close to the city center as possible so that you don't need to take any public transportation.

**For foodies** I recommend the traditional food walking tour, the Luxury Vodka Tasting or with a Polish Food tour.

*Find a walking tour map at the end of the post!*





# *SEE GDANSK IN ONE DAY*

Self Guided Walking Tour

[WWW.PAULINAONThEROAD.COM](http://WWW.PAULINAONThEROAD.COM)

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## *general info*

**Geographic situation:** Polish city on the Baltic coast, capital of the Pomeranian Voivodeship and Kashubia, Poland's principal seaport and the centre of the country's fourth-largest metropolitan area. Complex history with periods of Prussian or German rule, of self-rule as a "free city".



**Language:** Polish. English is widely spoken.

**Currency:** zloty

**How to get there:**

- By airplane to Gdansk Lech Walesa Airport. Book here your airport transfer to hotel
- By train from Warsaw, Gdynia or Sopot. Check railway prices here
- By long-distance bus (*super cheap here*) from Warsaw and other Polish cities.
- Rent a car to drive from Warsaw or to explore Kashubian Switzerland. Check rental car prices here.

**Activities:** Formerly trade and shipbuilding, amber processing and export. Major tourist destination with many national tourists visiting the Baltic coast



## where to stay in Gdansk, Poland

### Budget

Liberum

Marina Club Hotel

### Mid-Range

Stay Inn Hotel \*\*\* (*recommended because of its excellent location*)

PURO Hotel \*\*\*\* (*great interior design*)

### Luxury

Radisson Blu Gdansk \*\*\*\*\*

Hotel Gdansk Boutique \*\*\*\*\*







## 1. Royal Route and Long Market



Early Morning on the Royal Route

Let's start our free walking tour at the Long Market (*Długi Targ*), the heart of Gdansk. It used to be the nerval center of the town and the place where the main city market was held.

The street that leads from one from **Golden Gate to Green Gate**, is also known as the Royal Route. Only the wealthiest merchants and patricians could afford to live here. Like in other towns with Flemish heritage, you needed to pay higher taxes the more windows you have. Thus the **more windows**, the richer the owner of the house.

The oldest house on the Royal Route dates back to the Middle Ages. Gdansk has been entirely destroyed during the **Second World War**, however the old town has been reconstructed during the communist regime and some parts of the outskirts are still under construction.

Nowadays the Royal Route is considered one of the **most beautiful pedestrian streets in Europe**.



**Private Airport Transfer:  
From Gdansk Airport to  
Hotel**

🕒 Duration: 30 minutes



12 Reviews



**Gdansk: City Sightseeing  
Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Ticket**

🕒 Duration: 24 - 48 hours



15 Reviews



**Gdansk: 4-Hour Pub Crawl**

🕒 Duration: 4 hours



9 Reviews

## 2. Neptune Fountain



Neptune Fountain the symbol of Gdansk

The Neptune Fountain is situated since 1633 on the Long Market in front of the Artus Court and has become the **symbol of Gdansk**. The statue was made by a Flemish artist and is one of the oldest monuments of Gdansk. It's a perfect meeting point as well.

The legend says that Neptune created Gdansk's **famous herbal liquor "Goldwasser"**. Apparently he got angry because the extremely rich citizens of Gdansk (10% of the population were billionaires in Gdansk



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best times!!) kept throwing golden coins in the fountain. With his trident he moved the water so much that all the gold fell into pieces and created the golden flakes that are typical for Goldwasser.

Just in front of the Neptune fountain you'll spot the **Fahrenheit monument** that was built to honor Daniel Fahrenheit that was born in Gdansk in 1686.

### 3. Main Town Hall



Gdansk at night is pure bliss

The Main Town Hall, next to Neptune fountain, dominates the skyline of Gdansk. It is one of the **major attractions** and has been rebuilt in Renaissance style after a fire. It's interior is inspired by Dutch mannerism and certifies the important role of Gdansk in Europe and the worlds.

From the observatory you'll enjoy a gorgeous view and hear the music from the bells ringing every hour.

From here it's only a stone's throw to the **Golden House**, one of the most beautiful buildings in Gdansk built in 1609. The **richly decorated facade** and the sculptural decorations create one of the most stunning house fronts in Gdansk.



#### 4. Green Gate



Fun Fact: the Green Gate is not even green!

Head towards the *Green Gate* (which is not green but rather orange) to continue your free walking tour.

The Green Gate has been inspired by **Antwerp City Hall** and marks the eastern end of the Long Market and Royal Route. It is a yet another evidence for the **Flemish and Dutch heritage** and legacy of the Polish town.



Cross the bridge across the River *Motława* and turn left immediately towards the end of the bridge on *Chmielna* road to approach the **Crane** from the opposite river bank.



### Gdansk: Traditional Food Walking Tour

🕒 Duration: 2 - 4 hours



10 Reviews



### Gdansk: Beer Tasting Pub Crawl with Private Guide

🕒 Duration: 2 - 4 hours



1 Reviews



### Gdansk: Private Vodka Tasting Tour

🕒 Duration: 2 - 4 hours



2 Reviews

## 5. The Crane



Favorite Postcard Motive

The Crane on the Motława river bank became one of Gdansk's symbols and is represented on **almost any postcard**. It is easy to spot as it sticks out among all other houses.

The crane is the **largest wooden crane in Europe** and handled cargo coming from the sea. You can still visit the driving mechanism which needed several man to make it work. Nowadays the crane hosts the National Maritime Museum.

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The crane is a **popular photomotive** and you'll get your best shot from the other side of the river.

## 6. Gdansk Marina and Lunch Stop



Happy Girl in the marina of Gdansk

Continue the side paths along the river (streets names: *Pożarnicza* and *Motławska*) and walk along the marina of Gdansk until you reach the next bridge (*Stągiewna* street).

After my boat hitchhiking adventure, I am obsessed with spotting boats and there were quite a few gorgeous boat models in the harbor. They made me daydream about a **sailing trip on the Baltic Sea**.

You'll walk along buildings that are being renovated or even rebuilt in the traditional style.

At *Stągiewna* street you'll stand in front of the **Milk Can Gate**, part of the fortifications and an important entrance gate.

It's time to indulge in some typical **Pomeranian food** but with a modern twist. I recommend the restaurant *Dancing Anchor* at PURO Hotel. It's not only a very stylish place to stay at, but also the restaurant is absolutely top-notch when it comes to food and intriguing interior design. They serve Polish-Asian fusion cuisine.





## 7. St. Mary Street (Mariacka)



Beautiful Mariacka Street

From [PURO Hotel](#) cross the bridge towards the Green Gate again. However you bend left to continue your the self-guided walking tour of Gdansk and continue along the river on *Długie Pobrzeże* street.

After the Gdansk Archaeological Museum turn left and you'll stand at the beginning of **Gdansk's quaintest street: Mariacka**. You'll enter street by passing below the medieval St. Mary's gate and it ends at the St. Mary's church.

Every single house of St. Mary's street is absolutely gorgeous: entrances are terraced but narrow and the richly decorated house fronts testify the **wealth** of their former owners. No wonder that the street has inspired several painters and was a **movie setting for several films**.

Formerly *Mariacka* street was mostly inhabited by **merchants and goldsmiths**, nowadays it's packed with amber shops. The Amber museum and amber souvenir shopping are some of the top things to do in Gdansk.





## 8. St. Mary Basilica



The largest brick church in the world

Cross St.Mary street until you reach St.Mary church, the **largest brick church in the world**. The church was used by Catholics and protestants. It's interior is bright white nowadays and forms a welcoming light contrast to the massive, heavy impression that you get from the outside.



The main tower is 77 metres high and after climbing the 400 steps you'll enjoy one of the **best panorama views** on Gdansk.

Next to St.Mary Basilica is **the Royal Chapel**, a baroque beauty which is often overseen next to the towering basilica. However it is an absolutely beautiful building to be visited.



## 9. Academy of Fine Arts and Golden Gate



My favorite corner of Gdansk city center

Walk from the St. Mary Basilica through *Piwna* street which is packed with **numerous terraces** in summer. The street ends at the impressive house front of the Academy of Fine Arts. To me, this place was one of

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the most beautiful corners in Gdansk.

Turn left and you'll find yourself at the **Golden Gate** (*Złota Brama*) from which you'll enjoy a gorgeous view on the Town Hall and the Royal Route. The gate was built in the Renaissance style in 1612 and the statues represent an **allegory of citizen's virtues**: Prudence, Justice, Piety and Harmony.

Continue the walking tour by passing through the Golden Gate which will lead you to the tower of the **former prison** of Gdansk.



## 10. St. Catherine's Church





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From the massive former prison tower, turn right to *Targ Węglowy* street. It will lead you in about 10 minutes to St. Catherine's church which is the **oldest parish church of the Old Town**. It was built in 1227 but it was completely destroyed during the Second World War.

Fully rebuilt in the after-war years, the church nowadays hosts paintings by by Anton Möller and Izaak van den Blocke. The **76 metres high towers host a carillon** and a museum of tower clocks.

## 11. Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers



Monument to the fallen shipyard workers

From the emblematic St. Catherine's church it is only a stone's throw (or 12 minutes) to the **Monument of the Fallen Shipyard Workers**. The impressive monument stands in front of the *Solidarnosc European Center* and at the former entrance gate to the shipyards of Gdansk.

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More than 40.000 people used to work in the shipyards of Gdansk, which was one of the **most important European harbors at that time**. The imposing crosses with anchors have been built to commemorate the victims of the bloody workers' strikes in December 1970.

*Learn more about communism in Gdansk with the Gdansk Communist Tour.*

The monument was finished in 1980 and was one of the most important postulates from the workers who fought for their rights.

It's actually the **first monument to the victims of communist oppression** to be erected in a communist country.

*Book here your Gdansk Solidanosc Tour*



## 12. European Solidarity Centre



Inside the European Solidarity Center

Visiting the European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk is an absolute must do when traveling to Gdansk. It is not necessary to be a history buff in order to visit, in my opinion a visit to the museum about Solidarnosc movement and the bloody strikes in December 1970 are an investment in your **general knowledge** and an essential lesson about how **every single person can contribute to change**. All you need to do is take action!

The building itself is stunning and although it looks quite massive from the outside, it is very light and green inside. It's full of trees and plants. The European Solidarity Centre is much more than a museum to this tragic episode of history, it holds the **Solidarnosc offices where Lech Wałęsa** is still working today, a library, archives, a winter garden, a bar... The center is actually an **open meeting space** for young and old.

[Book here your Gdansk Solidarnosc Tour](#)

The **permanent exhibition** is organized in a very interactive and realistic way. There is original footage on the negotiations between the communist regime and the dockers. **Original communist-era apartment interiors** have been rebuilt and interrogation and prison cells as well. The museum thus provides a rare, realistic insight in the oppressive system of the communist regime. I definitely learned a lot during my visit.

I particularly liked the hall dedicated to the **individual backgrounds of the strikers** and the implication of Pope John Paul II in the transformative process.

It's an **absolutely unmissable experience** when visiting Gdansk, calculate at least 2 hours.

[Book here your Gdansk Solidarnosc Tour](#)



#### Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia 3 Cities Private Full-Day Tour

🕒 Duration: 8 hours



5 Reviews



#### Gdansk – Fighting for Freedom Tour

🕒 Duration: 4 hours



#### Gdansk: Luxury Old Town Walking Tour For Scandinavians

🕒 Duration: 3 - 4 hours



1 Reviews

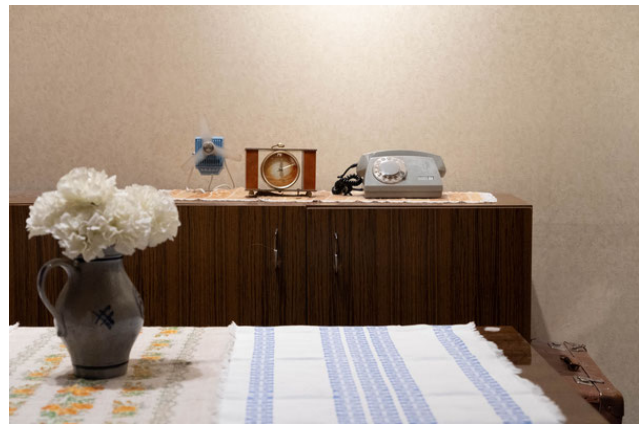


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13. A Local's Tip: Panorama view from Gradowa Hill



Panorama Views of Gdansk

In case you still have some energy left, I absolutely recommend to visit Gradowa Hill to enjoy one of the **best panorama views on Gdansk** and the immense area of the shipyards. According to our [guide Michal](#), you haven't seen Gdansk, if you haven't been to Gradowa Hill.

Gradowa Hill is located 20 minutes by walking from the European Solidarity Center.

The hill hosts the **a 19th century fort** and a large cross which illuminated at night. Some of the buildings on the hill are still used for military purposes and visiting the museums might be a good option in case you're interested in **military history**.

On the same area you'll find a interactive science center, the **Hawelianum Center**, named after the Polish astronomer.

