Writer of the Year YVONNE GORDON

From design shops to ‘breakfast’ at 3pm, Poland’s capital is abuzz with creativity, says Travel Writer of the Year YVONNE GORDON

I t’s big — these places are really trendy,” says Kuba Wedel, who works in Warsaw’s creative quarters. “It’s not what I expected on my first visit to the Polish capital, but this is only the start. Before arriving, I had a grey, austere image of Warsaw. As it turned out, I found a city full of colour and design trends, with an exciting, creative buzz. Even the best guidebooks I see, its design shop Pan Tu Rail (panaturystyczne.com), are alternatively guide to the city, with locals giving their own enthusiastic take.

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On a recent visit, I decided to stop at a café called Charlotte (marcinka.pl) and ask for a seat at the table next to the window. The décor is very trendy, with cushions on the floor and an interesting mix of chairs and tables. It’s a great place to take a break and enjoy a cup of coffee while watching the world go by. The café has a cool atmosphere, with music playing in the background.

The menu includes a variety of dishes such as salads, sandwiches, and desserts. For breakfast, I had a croissant with ham and cheese, which was delicious. The coffee was also excellent, with a smoothly roasted taste. Overall, I had a great experience at Charlotte, and would definitely recommend it to others visiting Warsaw.

What to Pack

The weather in Warsaw can be quite unpredictable, so it’s best to pack for all seasons. In the summer, expect temperatures to range from 20°C to 30°C, while in the winter, temperatures can drop to -5°C. For spring and autumn, expect temperatures to be in the range of 10°C to 20°C.

Be sure to pack for walking and appropriate clothing for sightseeing tours. Tours in Warsaw are well-defined, but prepare for long walks and appropriate clothing.

3 must-dos...

Palace of Culture and Science: Showcases the science of the 21st century in a modern building designed to symbolize the fin de siècle. The building is home to four theatres, two museums, a music hall, and a cinema.

Polin Museum: If you see just one museum, make this it. Set over seven floors of the history of the Jews going back 1,000 years, not just the Holocaust. Each gallery is different (one is even a street) and interactive exhibits will keep your interest. Fascinating. See polin.pl.

Old Town: Worth seeing for its medieval architecture, cobblestone streets, and historic buildings. Make sure to see the Old Town Market Place, which is home to many shops, restaurants, and cafes. You can also see the Royal Castle. Walk from the hotel to the Old Town, and enjoy the beautiful architecture.

Getting There

Air Lingus (airtingus.com) flies from Dublin to Warsaw Chopin Airport and Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies from London to Warsaw Modlin. For more on what to see and do in Warsaw, see Warsawtourist.com or for Poland info, visit poland.travel.

Travel

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Wonderful

WEEKEND MAGAZINE

Travel writer of the Year

YVONNE GORDON

Yvonne Gordon was named Irish Travel Journalist of the Year 2010 at the Travel Trade Travel Journalists Awards.