

A Lunch in Gdańsk



Napoje

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| --- Mięko gorące | 2,90 |
| --- Kakao | 3,90 |
| --- Kafi | 3,90 |
| --- Kmpel | 3,90 |
| --- Kawa inka z mlekiem | 3,90 |
| --- Herbata ekspresowa z cytryną | 3,90 |
| --- Napoje w puszkach | 6,90 |
| --- Soki i napoje w butelkach | 6,00 |
| --- Woda gazowana / niegazowana | 3,80 |

Dania śniadaniowe

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| --- Bułka | 0,80 |
| --- Chleb żytni | 0,90 |
| --- Masło | 1,50 |
| --- Dżem | 1,50 |
| --- Miod naturalny | 2,80 |
| --- Jabłko prażone | 2,90 |
| --- Ser żółty | 3,90 |
| --- Szynek | 3,90 |
| --- Jajko gotowane | 2,20 |
| --- Ser twarogowy | 4,80 |
| --- Twarożek ze śmietaną i cukrem | 3,90 |
| --- Twarożek ze śmietaną i cebulką | 4,80 |
| --- Twarożek ze śmietaną i szczyporkiem | 3,90 |
| --- Jajecznicę na masle z 2 jaj | 6,00 |
| --- Jajecznicę na słoninie z 2 jaj | 6,00 |
| --- Jajecznicę ze szczyporkiem z 2 jaj | 6,00 |
| --- Parówki z musztardą/ketchupem | 4,80 |
| --- Kiełbasa na gorąco z musztardą/ketchupem | 5,90 |

Zupy

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| --- Mieczna z makaronem i cukrem | 4,90 |
| --- Mieczna z ryżem i cukrem | 4,90 |
| --- Pomidorowa z makaronem | 6,90 |
| --- Pomidorowa z ryżem | 6,90 |
| --- Flaki wołowe | 11,90 |
| --- Barszcz czerwony czysty | 4,90 |
| --- Barszcz czerwony z jajkiem | 7,50 |
| --- Barszcz czerwony z fasolą | 7,50 |
| --- Barszcz ukraiński | 7,50 |
| --- Rosół z makaronem | 6,90 |
| --- Gryzowa z makaronem | 7,90 |
| --- Szczawiowa z jajkiem | 6,90 |
| --- Jarsynowa | 7,90 |
| --- Ogórkowa | 7,90 |
| --- Fasolowa | 7,90 |
| --- Kapuśniak | 7,90 |
| --- Krupnik z pieczarkami | 7,90 |
| --- Żurek z ziemniakami | 7,90 |
| --- Żurek z jajkiem | 7,90 |
| --- Owocowa z makaronem | 8,90 |
| --- Chłodnik z jajkiem | 8,90 |
| --- Botwinka z jajkiem | 7,90 |

Zestawy

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| --- Kofel mielony, ziemniaki, surówka | 23,90 |
| --- Kofel schabowy, ziemniaki, surówka | 21,90 |
| --- Kofel drobiowy, ziemniaki, surówka | 21,90 |
| --- Filet z mintaja, ziemniaki, surówka | 21,90 |
| --- Kasza gryczana, gulasz, surówka | 24,90 |
| --- Makaron z 2 jajkami szarymi | 9,90 |
| --- Placki ziemniaczane z pieczarkami i surówką | 7,90 |
| --- Placki ziemniaczane z gulaszem i surówką | 7,90 |

Dania barowe

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| --- Kofel wegetariański | 4,90 |
| --- Krokiety z kapustą i grzybami | 9,90 |
| --- Paszteciki barowe | 2,50 |
| --- Paszteciki galicyjskie | 2,50 |
| --- Naleśniki z serem, śmietaną i cukrem | 18,90 |
| --- Pierogi leniwe z masłem i cukrem | 8,90 |
| --- Pierogi z mięsem i słoniną | 13,90 |
| --- Pierogi ruskie z cebulką | 12,00 |
| --- Makaron ze śmietaną i cukrem | 6,90 |
| --- Makaron z twarogiem, masłem i cukrem | 6,90 |
| --- Makaron z jabłkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 9,90 |
| --- Makaron ze śliwkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 9,90 |
| --- Makaron z truskawkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 16,90 |
| --- Makaron z dżemem, śmietaną i cukrem | 8,90 |
| --- Makaron z jagodami, śmietaną i cukrem | 8,90 |
| --- Makaron z malinami, śmietaną i cukrem | 8,90 |
| --- Ryż z masłem i cukrem | 3,90 |
| --- Ryż z jabłkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |
| --- Ryż ze śliwkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |
| --- Ryż z truskawkami, śmietaną i cukrem | 8,90 |
| --- Ryż z dżemem, śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |
| --- Ryż z jagodami, śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |
| --- Ryż z malinami, śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |

Dania mięsne

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| --- Kofel mielony wieprzowy | 11,90 |
| --- Kofel schabowy panierowany | 11,90 |
| --- Filet drobiowy panierowany | 11,90 |
| --- Utko kurczaka pieczone | 9,90 |
| --- Dzerek wołowy w sosie chrzanowym | 18,90 |
| --- Filet z mintaja panierowany | 11,90 |
| --- Wytróbka wieprzowa saute z cebulką | 8,90 |
| --- Gulasz wołowy | 11,90 |
| --- Szluka mięsa w sosie | 13,90 |

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| --- Bigos | 7,90 |
| --- Fasolka po bretońsku | 7,90 |
| --- Gołąbek w sosie pomidorowym | 7,90 |
| --- Śledź w oleju z cebulką | 6,90 |

Dodatki do dań

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| --- Frytki | 7,90 |
| --- Ziemniaki z tłuszczem | 4,90 |
| --- Pyzy ziemniaczane z tłuszczem | 4,90 |
| --- Kluski śląskie | 4,90 |
| --- Kasza gryczana z masłem | 4,90 |
| --- Kasza gryczana z tłuszczem | 4,90 |
| --- Ryż do drugich dań | 3,90 |
| --- Makaron z tłuszczem | 4,90 |
| --- Placki ziemniaczane | 4,90 |
| --- Kopytka | 6,90 |
| --- Sos pieczeniowy | 2,50 |
| --- Sos pomidorowy | 2,50 |
| --- Sos chrzanowy | 2,50 |

Surówki

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| --- Surówka z kapusty białej | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z kapusty kiszonej | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z kapusty pakifskiej | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z kapusty czarnej | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z ogórków kiszonych i papryki | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z selera i marchewki | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z marchwi ze śmietaną | 4,90 |
| --- Surówka z porów ze śmietaną | 4,90 |
| --- Salata ze śmietaną | 6,90 |
| --- Pomidor z cebulką | 6,90 |
| --- Mizoria ze śmietaną | 6,90 |

Warzywa gotowane

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| --- Buraczki zasmażane | 4,90 |
| --- Marchewka zasmażana z groszkiem | 4,90 |
| --- Szpinak zasmażany | 4,90 |
| --- Fasolka z masłem | 4,90 |
| --- Fasolka szparagowa z masłem | 4,90 |
| --- Kalafior z masłem | 4,90 |
| --- Pieczarki duszone | 5,90 |
| --- Kapusta wczesna zasmażana | 7,90 |

Desery

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| --- Galaretko owocowa ze śmietaną i cukrem | 3,90 |
| --- Budyn śmietankowy z sosem | 3,90 |
| --- Truskawki ze śmietaną i cukrem | 7,90 |

Wszystkie ceny w zł
Kuchnia: 10:00-22:00
Bar: 10:00-22:00
Wszystkie ceny w zł

Text: Franzi Gaibler (University of Helsinki)

For me, the answer is June, 2025, when I was visiting Gdańsk and stepped foot into an establishment, called *bar mleczny* (eng. *milk bar*). After finishing a plate of *Gołąbki* that had this unmistakable taste of something home-cooked, the kind of taste that reminds you of a meal you had at your grandparents house when you were younger, I looked around seeing tourists and locals chatting while having their lunch.

I began to wonder what the story behind this place was. How did these seemingly unspectacular eateries, born in the 19th century and shaped by communism, survive, and even experience a revival in contemporary Poland?

The history of milk bars, as it turns out, is a history of transition. A transition from communist infrastructure to market economy, from necessity to nostalgia, and from being closely intertwined with Polish social life to becoming a subject of urban gentrification.

The roots of milk bars go back to the late 19th century, where in 1896 – a Warsaw dairy farmer named **Stanisław Dłużewski** – opened the first one with the idea of offering cheap and nourishing, mostly dairy-based meals to workers. Starting from there, milk bars gradually became part of Poland's culinary landscape in the early twentieth century, truly beginning to flourish under socialist rule after the Second World War.

In the Polish People's Republic, commonly known as PRL, they formed a nationwide cluster of state-subsidized cafeterias, offering traditional Polish meals, such as *Pierogi*, *Kotlet schabowy* or *Barszcz* at reasonable prices, with functional interiors where a wide range of customers could be efficiently served.

At their peak, between the 1960s and 1980s, there were up to 40.000 *milk bars* across Poland, many of them concentrated in large cities, with their simplicity, cheap pricing and central location, becoming places where different parts of society crossed paths. Workers, students, and professors stood in the same line, ordered food from the same menu and sometimes ended up sharing a table, thereby becoming, even if only briefly united, by the search for a cheap lunch.

With the end of socialist rule in 1989, Poland began to embrace market economy and globalisation, and the country's food culture changed along with it. New restaurants appeared, offering cuisines that had previously been rare or less accessible. Western fast-food chains, pizzerias and modern style cafes quickly became symbols of a newly global and consumer-driven Poland. Against this backdrop, milk bars began to look like relics of another era, like reminders of a system people fought to leave behind.




For decades, they had relied on public subsidies that allowed them to keep prices extremely low, and when those subsidies were reduced or removed, many could no longer sustain themselves. Throughout the 1990s, large numbers of milk bars closed, which was especially visible in city centers, where rising rents and new types of restaurants reshaped the urban food landscape and for some time it seemed possible that milk bars might disappear altogether.

However, about 100 of them managed to survive. Some continued to receive limited government support for vegetarian dishes, which helped keep prices low. As a result, they remained important to many people, especially students, pensioners, and workers who valued their affordability. Over time, milk bars also began to take on an additional meaning beyond their practical role. At least to an outsider it seems that they came to be seen as part of the country's everyday cultural landscape with menus largely unchanged and an atmosphere that stayed familiar: trays sliding along the counter, handwritten menus, and functional interior that had changed little over the decades. Besides the local clientele in a milk bar, with pensioners still coming for inexpensive lunches and students dropping in between classes, the lines are also filled with tourists, who are, partly driven by a sense of anemoia for the

socialist era, curious about a place which offers traditional food at an affordable price, which seems virtually unchanged since the 1960s.

At the same time, the neighbourhood surrounding many milk bars has changed considerably. In several cities, redevelopment and rising rents have transformed central areas, bringing new businesses and new residents, and with these shifting urban landscapes, milk bars often stand out as places that have either maintained a certain continuity, while the city around them transformed. Or on the other side, the milk bars transformed alongside their surroundings, becoming more gentrified with craft beers and matcha on the menu and coffee rave events, targeting a different clientele and serving a different purpose than in the past.

So what does this history of milk bars tell us about transition? I'd say it offers a window into Poland's broader changes over the past century. Born in the late 19th century and shaped by the socialist period as well as later economic transformations, they have remained part of everyday urban life. Back in the milk bar in Gdańsk none of this history was immediately visible to me, it simply felt like a place where people came to eat lunch. 

References

Milk Bars: The Polish Face of Gentrification.

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The Cultural Significance of Milk Bars in Poland.

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In Poland, Milk Bars Are Still Serving Comfort and Community.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/21/dining/milk-bar-mleczny-poland.html>

