

Dinner with Fryderyk



Warszawa

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Fryderyk (or Frédéric) Chopin's music touches hearts and the figure of the composer himself has fascinated people around the globe for many years, not only in terms of his creative and social activity. Although few sources dedicated to Chopin's daily life have been preserved, tidbits about his culinary tastes lie hidden between the lines of many different stories.

The composer spent his youth in Warsaw. At his family home, he ate foreign dishes that were fashionable at the time, but also Polish bourgeois cuisine. Chopin was a regular of Warsaw restaurants and cafes. Greatly fond of dairy, he drank milk and whey, which wasn't popular among upper-class adults in those days. He ate donuts, adored hot chocolate, and delighted over the taste of gingerbread biscuits in a letter to a friend.

Culinary culture developed very dynamically in 19-century Warsaw, with a growing number of restaurants serving foreign specialty dishes alongside Polish cuisine. Lucyna von Bachman was born when Fryderyk Chopin was sixteen. She was later known all over Poland by her second husband's surname — *Ćwierczakiewiczowa*. This feisty and energetic woman was the author of probably the most famous Polish cookbook, entitled *365 Five-Zloty Lunches (365 obiadów za pięć złotych)*. She busied herself not only with cuisine, but also educating women and supporting their emancipation. She was involved in charity work as well.

It's in her publication that we find a recipe for Warsaw-style tripe stew. Served in an aromatic broth, the dish was spiced with pepper, allspice, marjoram and mace. Its taste was further enriched by the addition of vegetables, beef and meatballs. Today, tripe stew and *pyzy*, dumplings of raw and cooked old potatoes stuffed with meat, are characteristic of Warsaw cuisine. They even used to be sold at markets as street food.

Modern Warsaw's food scene is even more interesting than it was back in Chopin's time. Here in the capital, we can eat both Polish and international dishes, drink good coffee and go out for a homemade lunch. Seekers of culinary experiences will find a fine dining scene that includes restaurants featured in the Michelin Guide.

Photos: Warsaw Tourism Office, Polona.pl



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