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Minsk Restaurants

(Appendix 4*)

Minsk is not world famous as a fine dining location. However, the selection of restaurants is actually quite good - we enjoy the restaurants much more than we enjoy the hotels. The greatest selection is located around Nezavisimosty (former F. Skariny), the central street of Minsk and most of the restaurants listed below are located in this area. Most of these restaurants will have menus in English upon request.



Fast Food Cafe Maxi Bis

Maxi Bis: Conveniently located in the center of Minsk on the corner of Nemiga and Prospekt Pobedy, you can easily recognize it by the carved monument on the building (see photo). Maxi Bis can be chaotic but the food is cheap and good. A meal including meat, potatoes and vegetables plus a 0.5 L glass of beer can be had for around \$5. They also offer some very nice cakes for a dessert. But the main advantage for foreigners is that the food is served buffet style, so you can just point to what

you want. This is the place for those on a budget or those who want a quick, quality bite to eat.

Akropl (Acropolis): This is one of our favorite restaurants in Minsk. While the food is supposed to be Mediterranean, it is probably not. But, it is consistently delicious and the service is top quality. The restaurant offers live music in the evening. Located at 17 Svobodi Sq, Minsk directly across from Maxi Bis.

Il Patio: Tasty Pizza and beer in Minsk? Yes! Patio Pizza makes great pizza in a casual dining atmosphere. Don't miss their unfiltered beer Baltica 8! Be prepared to wait for a table on the weekends. Located on Nezavisimosti Ave (Former Skoriny



Il Patio, also known as Patio Pizza



TGI Fridays

Ave).

TGI Fridays: New to downtown Minsk is TGI Fridays. This is probably the first franchise restaurant in Minsk other than McDonalds that will be recognized by many foreigners, so it might be of interest if you want to go somewhere familiar. However, on a recent visit, we found the food to be priced on an international standard, meaning about twice as much as you would pay for equivalent meal elsewhere in Minsk. The food was the usual Fridays fair of Burgers, Ribs and Fajitas. But paying \$10 for a burger and fries in Minsk just does not make sense to us. Hopefully this will change when the newness of the place wears off.

Planet of Sushi: Top notch Japanese cuisine in Minsk. This restaurant offers excellent service and a wide menu that includes sushi, tempura and teriyaki. This place is a bit expensive for Minsk, but worth it. Located on Nezavisimosti Ave (Former Skoriny Ave).

Bergamo Italian Restaurant: A bit out of the way, the only restaurant listed here that is not located in the center. The excellent Italian food is worth the taxi ride. While the food is well prepared, one of our visits was in winter and while we ate well, we nearly froze. Ask to be seated near a heater!

Rakovski Brovar: A microbrewery in Minsk offering home-made beer and traditional Belarussian cuisine in a hunting lodge type chalet. This restaurant is so huge that it even has a no-smoking section. Centrally located behind the Nemiga shopping center on a street so small you probably won't find it if you don't ask someone. Vitebskaya 10.

U Fransiska: Centrally located cellar cafe/restaurant. International and Belarussian traditional cuisine. Nice ambience, mostly good service. Located on Nezavisimosti Ave (Former Skoriny Ave).

Beze: For coffee and a nice choice of cakes in a central, pretty atmosphere this is the place to come. In most Minsk restaurants, you will find the service to be pleasant, in Beze you will find waitresses with an (arrogant) attitude. Beware Located on Nezavisimosti Ave (Former Skoriny Ave).



Restaurant Pechki Lavochki

Pechki – Lavochki: Nezavisimosti Ave (former Skoriny) 22., tel +375 17227-78-79, 227-61-02. Open 08:00 - 24:00. This centrally located restaurant offers delicious traditional Belarussian cuisine as well as cuisine from other Slavonic countries! Here you can try draniky (potato pancakes), schy (cabbage soup), machanka (meat stewed in broth), kalduny (traditional potato pancakes with meat stuffing), pancakes with caviar and many other traditional dishes. Prices are average ranging from 4 to \$15 per dish. The interior design resembles a traditional old Belarussian village house and even includes live chickens that live in a small house under the ceiling. Service is usually very nice.

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Traditional Belarussian Cuisine

(Appendix 5*)

In its development Belarussian cuisine has been influenced by the Russian, Lithuanian as well as Jewish, Tartars and some other traditions. We are not going to dedicate much time to history and will talk right away about the food.

Belarusians have preserved many traditional recipes.

General features:

- Geographical location and weather conditions in Belarus resulted in a wide use of such products as forest mushrooms and berries, herbs, apples, pears, river fish and crab, milk products.
- Belarusian cuisine is known for a big choice of potato dishes.
- Various flour pancake dishes are popular in Belarusian cuisine.
- Mushrooms are widely used in cooking but rarely as a separate dish and are mostly used to add taste to the main dish. Usually they are stewed or boiled.
- Fish is also rarely fried and mostly baked, stewed or very often dried.
- Belarusian cuisine is known for rich soups, often dressed with sour cream, as well as cold soups refreshing for the hot summer periods.
- Marinated vegetables are widely used in Belarusian cuisine: marinated tomatoes, cucumbers, mushrooms etc. It is still traditional for Belarusian families to make marinated mushrooms and vegetables based on home recipes.
- Meat: Belarusians eat lightly salted lard from pork to accompany boiled potatoes traditionally in winter. Pork is widely used in homemade sausages. Low fat pork and beef are mostly baked not fried. In traditional cuisine goose was widely used however nowadays it is mostly replaced by chicken.
- Grated and pureed forms of products (meats, fish, potatoes, vegetables) are used in many dishes separately or in combination with each other. Forest berries, pears, apples are usually not mixed with each other: various jellies, kvass, purees, baked puddings are made from one type of berries or fruits but not a mix.
- Cooking methods characteristic for the old traditional Belarusian cuisine are stewing and boiling. In the old Belarusian cuisine ingredients were subjected to a long heat cooking and would become very soft and often shapeless. This softness can still be observed nowadays in traditional cooking.
- Finally present day cooking in Belarus is characterized by great creativity of combining the old traditional dishes with features of other world cuisines and mixing varieties of ingredients for example in creative rich salads.

(Appendix 6)*

Belarusian Potato Dishes

Potatoes play a very important role in the national cuisine and are called «the second bread» in Belarus. This can be explained by history – potatoes were brought to Belarus about 75-90 years earlier than into Russia. Besides climate conditions in Belarus are very good for growing the types of potatoes that contain high level of starch, are tender and really delicious. Dishes from potatoes are used as the main dish or garnish.

- A) Belarusian Draniki;
- B) Kartofflyaniki;
- C) Belarusian Draniki with Pork;
- D) Babka;
- E) Kolduni

- 10-12 potatoes;
- 2-3 eggs;
- 3-4 tbl spoon of flour;
- 1 onion;
- 2-3 tablespoon sour cream;
- oil;
- salt to your taste.

Grate potatoes and onion together, drain out excess potato juice. Whip eggs and mix everything with flour and sour cream. Put some oil on a pan and let it get hot. Put a small portion of the draniki puree on the pan and let it get golden fried from one side. Turn it over and fry it from the other side. Serve with sourcream or machanka.

№2

- 250 gr of grated potatoes;
- 3 table spoons of flour;
- 1-2 eggs;
- 100 gr ground pork;
- 2 onions;
- oil.

Grate potatoes together with onions (so that potato mass does not get dark). Drain out excess juice. Whip eggs and add together with the flower to the potato mass. Warm some oil on the pan fryer and put a small portion of potato puree with a spoon. As soon as it starts to become a bit firm put in the center some ground meat and cover with another portion of potatoes. Fry it till it gets the fried golden colour and carefully turn it over to fry from the other side. You can also put ready pancakes into a clay pot, put sour cream on top and put into the warm oven for 10-20 minutes. This way they get shapelessness characteristic for traditional Belarusian cuisine.

№3

- 800 g potatoes;
- 1 egg for potato puree and 1 egg for the filling;
- 100 g flour;
- 50 g butter;
- 400 g ground beef;
- 100 g onion;
- 200 g Sour cream;
- pepper;
- salt.

Grate raw potatoes (to prevent from darkening you can add kefir), drain excess juice, add flour, 1 egg and mix.

Ground the meet together with onion and add egg, salt and pepper.

Make little pancakes from potato mass and put inside each ground meet. Put into the oven with butter and brush with sour cream. Bake till golden brown crust.

№4

Similar to Kolduni . The difference is that you do not form pancakes but make one big layered-pie-type pancake.

Ingredients are the same. Prepare potato dough as described above. Put 1 layer potato dough into a greased round form (skillet), cover it with a layer of minced meat and then add another potato layer, brush with sour cream. Bake in the oven till golden brown.

Another variant of this dish is to mix grated potatoes and minced meat without layering. However in this variant pork for the filling (or sometimes bacon) is cut into small pieces and before mixing with potatoes fried with onion till onion becomes translucent. Then mix potatoes and pork, put into oiled skillet, brush with sour cream and bake in the oven.

№5

- 8-10 potatoes;
- 2 tablespoons of flour;
- 1 egg;
- 1 tablespoon butter;
- 1 onion;
- 100 g sour cream;
- salt, pepper to taste;
- frying oil or fat.

Boil potatoes in skin, peel, grate, add flour, butter, egg, salt and pepper. Mix well and form balls each about 20 g. Bake in oven till they turn golden brown. Chop the onion and fry it. Put sour cream and onion over kartoflyaniki and simmer for 5 minutes. Can be served with fried mushrooms or finely chopped onion.

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(Appendix 7*)

Belarusian Deserts

Most of Belarusian traditional deserts are made from forest berries or garden fruits such as apples and plums etc. Using the berries Belarusians make kisel (thick sweet drink), kulaga, puddings. However nowadays when you visit Belarus you can enjoy a big variety of delicious very creative cakes, pies, cookies, pastries, puddings and other deserts.

Baked Apples filled with honey

- apples
 - honey
 - powdered sugar
 - you can also add nuts, forest berries and cinnamon
- A) You can also add your favorite type of nuts or berries.
B) Wash the apples and carefully cut out the cores.
C) Bake the apples in the oven.
D) Before serving sprinkle them with some powdered sugar.
E) Fill in the apple with honey.

Sirniki with raisins:

- 400 g quark (11% fat)

- 100 g raisins
- 50 g sugar
- 50 g flour
- 1 egg

A) Drain, pat dry.

B) Prepare sirniki dough: mix the quark, raisins, 50 g sugar, 1 egg and 50 g flour.

C) Put on a plate and place into the freezer for a couple hours.

D) Wash the raisins and soak them in water for 5 minutes.

E) Form into small balls with 2-3 cm diameter, dip in flour.

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