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Maria Skłodowska-Curie's Warsaw

ROUTE PL 1

Presentation of the route

Places related to Maria Skłodowska-Curie's childhood and youth. The route takes you to the footsteps of the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize and, so far, the only one who has been awarded the Nobel Prize for two different scientific disciplines (chemistry and physics). Maria Skłodowska-Curie was born in Warsaw, where she spent her childhood and youth too. From a very young age, she was fond of walking by the Wisła river. Today, a statue of Skłodowska-Curie in Warsaw's New Town looks towards the Wisła river. It is the first waypoint of our route.

Maria Skłodowska belonged to a generation of emancipated Polish women who, thanks to the schools for girls and the so-called Flying University (Uniwersytet Latający) in Warsaw received an education which enabled them to undertake university studies that were inaccessible to women in the Russian Empire. The walk leads through the places where Maria Skłodowska lived, studied, grew up and celebrated her successes.

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Panorama



Monument to Maria Skłodowska-Curie

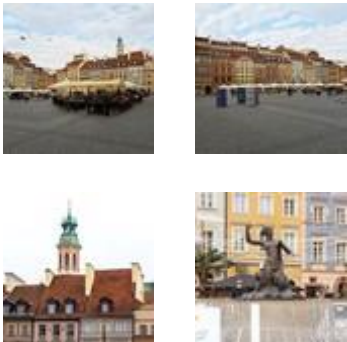
On the edge of the Vistula Escarpment, at the end of Kościelna Street, there is a sculpture of Maria Skłodowska-Curie - a two-time Nobel laureate and a Warsaw citizen. That's where the parents of the future Nobel winner holding little Maria in their arms were looking towards the Vistula River. It was in 1867, the same one in which Alfred Nobel received the British patent for dynamite. Maria Skłodowska-Curie is the only woman to receive the Nobel Prize twice in two different scientific domains. She was also one of the first women to receive a driving license. The monument is a gift from the Association of Members of the Legion of Honor and the French National Order of Merit to the residents of Warsaw. It is also a symbol of strong Polish-French friendship. The Vistula river bank was one of Maria's favourite walking routes. She often came here as a child and as a teenager, and kept coming back as an adult, during her consecutive visits to Warsaw. Highly sensitive to nature's beauty, she could not remain indifferent to the picturesque landscape of the Vistula river banks. In October 1921, she wrote in a letter to her daughter Ewa: „Yesterday I spent the morning on a lonely walk by the Vistula. (...) The river winds idly in its wide bed, intensely blue near the bank, and lighter further out where it reflects the sky, crisscrossed with lovely shoals of white sand, glittering in the sun and imposing the course on the capricious current. These shoals are surrounded by a halo of bright light, marking the boundaries of deeper water. I feel the urge to stroll down one of these magnificent, luminous beaches”.


Museum

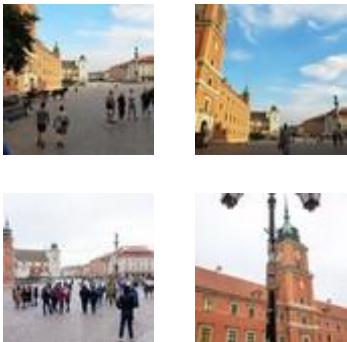


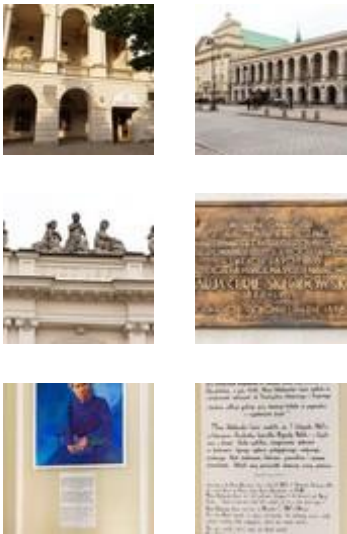
The Maria Skłodowska-Curie Museum


Crossing the door of the tenement house at 16 Freta Street in Warsaw's „New Town” district, we enter the house where Maria Skłodowska was born on November 7, 1867. This is the only biographical museum of the Polish Nobel laureate. At the Museum you can find, among others, a model of the laboratory – together with an laboratory's equipment and vessels – in which Curie's spouses made their discoveries and many of Maria's personal belongings: a glasses case, a leather purse offered by the Polish Woman Alliance of America whose members donated money for the equipment of the Radiology Laboratory in Warsaw, an elephant figurine given as a present by the President of the United States Herbert Hoover and a black georgette coat, left by the scientist during her stay in Warsaw in 1932. The whole is complemented by a rich collection of photographs and archives documenting Skłodowska's life and achievements. The baroque church of St. Jack (pl. Kościół św. Jacka) stands just 100 m further, at 10 Freta St. In this church, 10-year-old Maria received her first communion and this was a place of her regular presence. Going further along Nowomiejska street we reach the Old Town Square.

Waypoint	Old Town Square (pl. Rynek Starego Miasta)
	<p>Warsaw's showcase is undoubtedly the Old Town, beautifully rebuilt after numerous destruction from the Second World War. It was reconstructed according to old plans and it was erected from scratch from the rubble remaining after the war. Every day, tourists from all over the world are admiring colorful, beautiful tenements and various decorations decorating them, that were reconstructed over half a century ago. The Warsaw's Old Town is the only urban layout that has been completely rebuilt after the war damage and entered on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List.</p>

Monument	Sculptures by Igor Mitoraj
	<p>Going down the Świętojańska street from the Castle Square to the Market Place we pass on the right side the architecturally interesting buildings of St. John's Archcathedral and the Church of Our Lady of Grace - with beautiful so-called Angelic doors created by an excellent internationally known Polish sculptor - Igor Mitoraj. The brass door is three meters high and weighs over three tons.</p>

Information point	Castle Square (Plac Zamkowy)
	<p>Leaving the Old Town, stop for a while at the Castle Square and let's have a look not only at the Royal Castle rebuilt from war damage only in the 70s of the 20th century, but also at the column commemorating King Sigismund III Vasa towering above Castle Square, which is the oldest secular monument in Warsaw and the first column of a lay person erected in modern Europe. A little further, on the left, there is an observation deck at the bell tower of the Church of St Anna from which you can see panoramic views of Warsaw.</p>

Waypoint	Museum of Industry and Agriculture (currently Central Agricultural Library)
	<p>The Museum of Industry and Agriculture - an education and research facility - was founded in 1875 and housed physics and chemistry laboratories where the future double Nobel laureate, Maria Skłodowska, began her scientific career and conducted her first experiments in 1890–91. From 1887, the physics lab was run by a maternal cousin of Maria Skłodowska, Józef Jerzy Boguski, a former assistant of Dmitri Mendeleev, creator of the periodic table of elements. Yet she preferred to spend her time in the chemical lab, led by Prof. Napoleon Milicer. It was here that Maria mastered the fundamentals and learned the basics of qualitative and quantitative chemical analysis, along with analysis of minerals. Her time spent in this laboratory gave Maria Skłodowska solid knowledge of chemistry and combat skills, indispensable in her future research. Maria Skłodowska belonged to this generation of emancipated Polish women, who thanks to the schools for girls and the so-called Flying University (pl. Uniwersytet Latający) in Warsaw received an education entitling them to undertake university studies inaccessible to women in the Russian Empire. Being determined, but also paying a high price for their independence, they later pursued scientific careers at prestigious Western European universities - in Paris, Vienna, Geneva, Zurich and others, where they obtained degrees and international recognition. 7 years later, while living and working in France, Maria Skłodowska-Curie discovered two new radioactive elements: polonium and radium (pl. „polon” and „rad”). Polonium was named after Maria Curie’s homeland of Poland (from the Latin word Polonia). These elements are used in chemistry and medicine. Currently, the building houses the Central Agricultural Library and the Old Town University of the Third Age of Maria Skłodowska-Curie. On one of the walls of the building facing Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, there is a commemorative plaque for Maria Skłodowska-Curie, unveiled in 1935.</p>

Waypoint	Senatorska Street, Pałac Mniszchów
	<p>Along the way, there is the Jabłonowski Palace (pl. Pałac Jabłonowskich) which is located at 14/16 Senatorska Street, opposite the Grand Theatre - National Opera. In the period of 1819 - 1939, the building served as the City Hall. Here, on 7 June 1925, Maria Skłodowska-Curie received a Diploma of Honorary Citizen of the City. During the ceremony, city officials read out the statute of a foundation for the establishment of the Warsaw Radium Institute that Maria was strongly lobbying for. After the formal part, at 9 p.m., a ballet was held to honour the Scholar. At 38/40 Senatorska St. (where the embassy of Belgium is located today) inside the Mniszech Palace (pl. Pałac Mniszchów), on December 2, 1913, after Maria’s lecture in the Museum of Industry and Agriculture, a reception in her honour was</p>

held in one of palace's halls. Perhaps, participants of this unique event took the same way from 66 Krakowskie Przedmieście St. to Senatorska St.

Waypoint

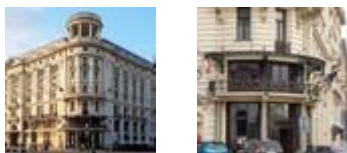
The Saxon Garden (Ogród Saski)



Going back through the Saxon Garden, passing by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier - a symbol of modern Warsaw, and going through the Piłsudski Square, we return to the Bristol Hotel, the oldest and most luxurious hotel in Warsaw. It was here in 1913, in the Raspberry Hall (pl. Sala Malinowa) of this particularly elegant hotel, where the Warsaw Scientific Society (pl. Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie) organized a banquet in honour of the two-time Nobel Prize laureate. Along the way, there is the Jabłonowski Palace (pl. Pałac Jabłonowskich) which is located at 14/16 Senatorska Street, opposite the Grand Theatre - National Opera. In the period of 1819 - 1939, the building served as the City Hall. Here, on 7 June 1925, Maria Skłodowska-Curie received a Diploma of Honorary Citizen of the City. During the ceremony, city officials read out the statute of a foundation for the establishment of the Warsaw Radium Institute that Maria was strongly lobbying for. After the formal part, at 9 p.m., a ballet was held to honour the Scholar.

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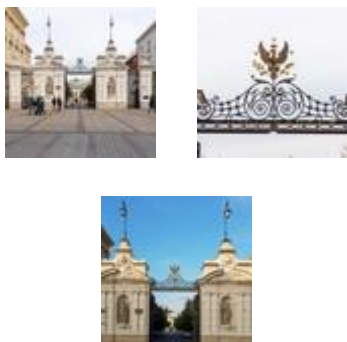
Bristol Hotel



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Waypoint


University of Warsaw



Strolling down Krakowskie Przedmieście St, one of the most prestigious and prettiest streets in the city, we reach the University of Warsaw. At 36 Krakowskie Przedmieście St., there was located a government gymnasium run by the tsarist authorities, which Maria Skłodowska attended. However, she mentioned several times in her diaries that she did not like this place very much, though she was awarded a gold medal when graduating from this school. Walking along this route towards the University, at 64 Krakowskie Przedmieście St., we pass by the Polonia House (pl. Dom Polonii), where former Citizens' Union (pl. Resursa Obywatelska) was located. This is where Skłodowska met with professors of the Polish Chemical and Physical Societies on June 5, 1925. Maria

	<p>Skłodowska-Curie visited the University of Warsaw twice. In June 1919, the University awarded Maria Skłodowska-Curie with the title of Honorary Professor of the Philosophy Department. In October 1921, Maria participated in the inauguration of the academic year. She visited the University of Warsaw once again in 1925 to give a lecture on studies of radioactivity. Crowds of Warsaw's residents attended the lecture.</p>
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Monument	Staszic Palace
	<p>The Staszic Palace, located at 72 Nowy Świat Street, housed in the interwar period the French Institute and the Warsaw Science Society, of which Maria Skłodowska-Curie was an honorary member since 25 November 1912. In 1921, the Scholar gave the Society 12,851 francs from the money collected by Polish immigrants in the US for the investments of the Radiology Laboratory. On 6 June 1925, in the French Institute (in the Palace), Skłodowska gave a lecture on the functioning of the Paris Radium Institute. Over 70 years later (in 1997) one of the halls of the Palace was named after Maria Skłodowska-Curie.</p>

Metro	Copernicus Science Center
	<p>At the end we can visit the Copernicus Science Center. The walk will take us about 20 minutes. Today, possibly this is the place where future Nobel laureates are taking their first steps and where each of us may feel like an explorer. The Copernicus Science Center is one of the largest science centers in Europe. The exhibition is divided into six interdisciplinary galleries with over 450 interactive exhibits. After this intensive trip, we can sit and relax on the Vistula boulevards. We can sit here to look again at the Vistula - the beloved Maria Skłodowska-Curie's River.</p>