

I love art and culture and, especially when I travel, it's something I always want to see and soak up. I found lots of it in Wroclaw, Poland and discovered it was even named the European Capital of Culture in 2016. It's easy to see why when you're walking around because there's beauty, art, and history all around you. Ground zero for any trip to Wroclaw is the Rynek or Market Square in the centre of town. The square dates back to the thirteenth century and is lined with colourful buildings. In the Rynek, and all around the city, you'll notice little dwarves no more than a foot high. There are more than four hundred of them around Wroclaw and they represent more than just charming public art. Dwarves were the symbol of the Orange Alternative, an anti-Soviet movement that began in Wroclaw to protest Poland's Communist regime. In protest, Communist propaganda was defaced with images of dwarves to show how absurd it all was and to encourage people not to be afraid. Now you'll see dwarves all over the city in various forms including sculptures and other street art like graffiti.

One of my favourite art works in Wroclaw is an installation called Transition found on two opposing street corners. It symbolizes the period of martial law in Poland from 1981 to 1983. You see seven human figures descending into the sidewalk and disappearing which represents how martial law drove people underground in fear. On the other side of the street, seven figures reemerge which symbolizes how people came out of hiding when that oppressive period ended in 1983. It really made an impression on me.

The crown jewel of Wroclaw's art scene is the Panorama Raclawicka, a 360 degree painting that depicts a battle for Polish independence in 1794. It's 15 metres high and 114 metres around which really brings the history to life in a way only art can.

If you're in the mood for love then head to Tumski Bridge also known as Lovers Bridge. It's a popular spot for couples who leave a lock to symbolize their love and throw the key in the river. The bridge leads to Cathedral Island which is the oldest part of Wroclaw and a very pretty area to walk around. Keep an eye out for the city's lamplighter - yes, an actual lamplighter! - who walks the cobblestone streets each day at dusk to light the gas lanterns. I've never seen that before and it made me feel like I was travelling back in time. Absolutely charming.

The Market Hall is nearby Cathedral Island and there you can get some food or souvenirs or shop with locals for fresh groceries. My favourite part there are the giant concrete arches that feel very imposing. Overall I loved visiting Wroclaw and feel like it might be the most artistic city in Poland.