



# GDAŃSK

## THE ROYAL ROUTE



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## The Royal Route

The **Royal Route** forming the longest urban axis of the Medieval Europe is the most interesting historic road in Gdańsk. It was the place to organise parades, momentous ceremonies, and triumphant entries of the Polish monarchs to the city. The route starts at the Upland Gate, then follows the walls of the Gateway Complex to dive through the Golden Gate and emerge in Long Street, the city's representative road. Towards its end Long Street merges naturally into one of the most beautiful market places of Europe - the Long Market. Beyond the Green Gate which closes the Long Market, the route leads on to the Żuławy Gate where, in New Gardens Street, royal pageants would disperse. Taking time to walk the Royal Route we admire many top-class listed buildings characteristic of the Hanseatic city. Why not take a stroll along the tract once chosen by the royals?

### Upland Gate

The Renaissance Upland Gate at Bogusławskiego Street at the outset of the Royal Route is the most impressive of all entrance gates to Gdańsk. Originally erected in the 16th century as an element of the city fortifications it emerged in its present shape in 1588 after the revamp works performed under the eye of Williem van den Blocke. Carved Polish, Gdańsk, and Royal Prussian emblems adorn the attic, and a Latin inscription over the main passage reads: 'Justice and piety are the two cornerstones of all kingdoms'.

### Gateway: Torture House, Prison Tower

Just beyond the Upland Gate, forming a side wall of the Coal Market stands the mixed Gothic and Renaissance Gateway to Long Street, composed of the Torture House and the Prison Tower. The compound was built in mid-14th century within the chain of the Medieval fortifications surrounding the Main City. Up to late 17th century the Torture House had actually been the gateway, that is it played a military function in preventing access to the city. Later, the Gateway complex was altered and given its present mixed Gothic-Renaissance appearance.





In the 17th-19th century the site was used as the city prison. The highlight of the air pervading the numerous cells inside is the sinister-looking chopping block. The wall facing the Golden Gate shows traces of a pillory. The Tower is finished with a Renaissance helm. The Gateway Complex now in conservation will soon be open welcoming visitors to a stunning collection of true art. The Amber Museum to be housed here will exhibit works made of amber called the "Baltic gold".

### Golden Gate

Opposite the Prison Tower rises the magnificent Renaissance Golden Gate. It was built on the site of the earlier Medieval Long Street Gate in 1612-1614 to the design of Abraham van den Blocke. The city's vivid emblem placed on both sides of the gate over the main passage greets the passer-byes. The attic is flanked with stone figures sculpted by Peter Ringering. Peace, Freedom, Wealth, and Fame face the Gateway. On the Long Street side come Concord, Justice, Piety, and Reason. The accompanying Latin maxim reads: 'Concord makes minor states grow, discord makes major ones collapse'.

### St George Brotherhood Court

The Golden Gate neighbours on the Gothic St George Brotherhood Court from 1494 built to the design by J. Glotau. The Court was originally the meeting place of the earliest elite rifle club of the Medieval Gdańsk - St George's. It also served ceremonial, feasting, and theatrical purposes. In 1566 the roof turret was topped with a figure of St George fighting the dragon.





## Long Street

Long Street - this stately street of the Main City mentioned as early as in 1331 ran across the residential area dwelt in by the most influential and richest families of the Gdańsk patriciate, to name e.g. bankers, mayors, councillors, ship owners, and merchants. Once considered the label and symbol of wealth of the old Gdańsk, the street and the lavishly decorated facades of the patriciate residences still continue to rouse admiration. Both the locals and visitors from all over the world favour it as the place for a leisurely stroll. Join us on our walk to stop at the most interesting houses.

## Uphagen House

12 Long Street

The residence of Jan Uphagen, a city councillor and assessor. The blended Rococo and Classicist style décor of the building was given to it by J. Dreyer in 1776-79. In execution of the owner's last will the house was maintained in its period shape over the centuries and until 1945. Today, the Uphagen House accommodates one of the most becoming museums of Gdańsk - the Museum of Townhouse Interiors (branch of the Gdańsk History Museum). The luxurious and lavish interior design gives an idea of what a typical burgher house looked like in the times. Walking around the meticulously restored home the visitor is taken on a trip back in time to the late 18th century.

## Ferber House

28 Long Street

This Renaissance building of 1560 was owned by the influential Gdańsk Ferber house (family crest: 'Three Boar Heads'). The family gave the city six mayors, many councillors and assessors, and two parish priests of St Mary's Church in Gdańsk. One of them, Maurice Ferber, was raised to the office of the Bishop of Warmia. The gable wall is adorned with the Polish, Gdańsk, and Royal Prussian emblems. Next door, numbered 29 stands the Czirenberg-Freder House built around 1620 in the Baroque style. Its facade features heads of Roman emperors and Latin inscriptions. The central line reads: 'Pro invidia' ('For envy').



### Lion Court

35 Long Street

The house is a Renaissance residence (1569) designed by H. Kramer. Its original entrance hall was once acclaimed one of the most splendid reception rooms in the city. Its beauty was captured on a 19th century print by J. C. Schulz. The Lion Court was the meeting place of the cultural and scientific elite of old Gdańsk. It hosted many eminent guests, to name e.g. a visit by the Polish King Ladislaus IV Vasa in 1636.

### Schumann House

45 Long Street

Built in the Renaissance style (1560), it is one of the finest townhouses in the city. It was originally owned by the Schumann family. Over generations five of its members became mayors of Gdańsk, four were royal burgraves, and eleven held councillor titles. The gable facing Long Street is crowned with a statue of Zeus. Below stand Diana and Apollo, and on the wall facing the Long Market a statue of Athena. The authentic entrance hall accommodates a tourist information stand and the tourist guide centre.

### Town Hall

The Town Hall of the Main City is the monumental edifice, once seat of the city authorities, at the convergence of Long Street and Long Market. The first structure on the site was built in the early Middle Ages. Initially Gothic, it was re-erected in the Renaissance style after the 1566 fire. The Town Hall served as a temporary place of abode of the Polish monarchs: Casimir the Jagiellon, Alexander I, and Sigismund I the Old. Today, it is transformed into the Gdańsk History Museum.





The building is certainly worth stepping inside and resting an eye on the copious interior decoration of the Great Council Hall, also called the Red or Summer Chamber, basking in gorgeous authentic fittings of the 17th/18th century, the Small (Winter) Council Hall, or the Great Chamber of the Local Court (Veta) also called the White Chamber. The tower overlooking the city supports a carillon composed of 37 bells playing tunes every hour during the Gdańsk Carillon Festival. The tower is crowned with a natural-size gilded statue of the Polish King Sigismund Augustus, erected there in 1561. In the tourist season the tower is open to visitors. The gallery at the top offers a sweeping panoramic view of Gdańsk. The Town Hall has many a times been selected the reception place of eminent personalities of politics and culture, royalties, and presidents.

### Long Market

The first written records mentioning the Long Market go back to the 14th century. For ages on end it was the busy heart of city life used as a trading market, corn exchange, tournament ground, the site where royalties were sworn allegiance to, and a place of public executions. Seen from different perspectives, the Long Market has always inspired graphic artists, painters, and photographers. Tourists have also taken a special fancy to this highly charming Gdańsk quarter with its characteristic and unique air.





### Neptune Fountain

The Neptune Fountain symbolic of the bond between Gdańsk and the sea was erected in front of the Artus Court in 1633 on commission from the then Mayor Bartholomew Schachmann. A year later the iron fencing featuring Gdańsk emblems and the Polish eagles was added. The entire composition was designed by Abraham van den Blocke. A local legend has it that Neptune contributed to the development of the recipe for the famous Gdańsk liquor, the Goldwasser. Apparently, indignant at seeing coins tossed into his fountain the god struck the water with his trident crushing the gold into tiny flakes which since then have glittered in the delicious herbal liquor. As time went by the Neptune Fountain grew to become symbolic of Gdańsk. Its replica, alongside that of the Artus Court and the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers, was put up in the Mini-Europe Park in Brussels. The fountain is the visitors' much favoured photo background.

### Artus Court

The Artus Court ranks among the most impressive buildings of the type in Northern Europe. It was intended to provide the rich patriciate with a meeting place that would resemble the legendary Round Table grouping King Arthur's Knights. The Court was an important point on the social and commercial map of the city, and the stately main premises of the merchant guilds (called the Benches). After the original structure had burnt down in the 1476 fire the Court was rebuilt in the Gothic style in 1476-1481. In 1616-1617 Abraham van den Blocke transformed its facade to follow the Dutch Mannerist style. In 1742 the Artus Court interior held the first corn exchange session. From then on it served the purpose until 1914.





The last war left it reduced to rubble. The entrance to the Court is guarded by sculpted lions supporting the Gdańsk emblems and a statuette of Mercury (Greek Hermes), patron of trade, merchants, and thieves. The facade features medallions with portraits of Polish monarchs, figures of ancient leaders, and statues of Justice and Might. A statuette of Fortune, goddess of good luck, crowns the front to guide the bold locals in their occasionally risky business affairs and distant sea voyages. Take note of the 'devil's tooth' right of the entrance. Inside the Court interior is studded with works of art contributed by its occupants, the guilds. The gem, however, is the largest in Europe, almost 11 metre high Renaissance stove. Its walls are covered with 520 richly decorated tiles. The Artus Court today houses the Gdańsk History Museum and is occasionally used for official receptions.

### New Bench House

43 Long Market

The New Bench House is also called the Gdańsk Entrance Hall. In 1712-1806 it was occupied by the magistrate court (lay judges). Between 1901 and 1945 its authentic hall served as an art gallery. The gabled wall finishes with a figure of Justice. At one p.m. every afternoon (and at three and five p.m. in the season) a sweet girl's face appears in one of the windows of the New Bench Hall. This is Hedwiga, a legendary 17th century maiden said to have been kept prisoner there by her uncle. In 1891 the girl, heroine of an old romance, became the protagonist of its novelised version entitled 'The Maiden in the Window' by Jadwiga Łuszczewska (Deotyma). Generation after generation indulged in the book and upon arriving in Gdańsk would look for the house and the pretty lass lurking in the window.







### Golden House

41 Long Market

The Golden House belongs to the cream of the Gdańsk townhouses (1609-17). It was built the Renaissance style to the design of Abraham van den Blocke for Mayor J. Speimann, a rich merchant and refined art sponsor. Its abundantly sculpted facade once sumptuously gilded (hence the name) features heads of rulers and leaders, battle scenes, and the family crests of the founders. A statue of Charity overlooks the doorway framed in the following Latin maxims: 'Love virtue and it will make you happy, choose oppression and it will make you fall', and 'Do justice, fear nobody'. The gable wall is finished with a statue of Fortune.

### Royal Residence

1-4 Long Market

The houses re-erected after the Second World War once served as the residence of Polish kings visiting Gdańsk. They gave roof to Sigismund III Vasa (on his 7 visits), Ladislaus IV Vasa, John Casimir, John III Sobieski (his son, Alexander was born while in Gdańsk), Augustus II, and Stanislaus Leszczyński. One of the house gables carries a statue of Neptune.

### Green Gate

The Renaissance Green Gate was built on the site of the oldest, 14th century Koga Gate by Regnier of Amsterdam and J. Kramer from Dresden in 1564-1568. Intended as the formal residence of the Polish monarchs, it was, however, only once used for that purpose. Its only royal occupant was Marie Louise Gonzaga on her way from France to marry King Ladislaus IV. The four passages are marked with the emblems of Gdańsk, Poland, Royal Prussia, and the eagle of the Prussian kings. Today, the Gate is managed by the National Museum and is frequently used as an exhibition hall. Lech Wałęsa, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, also has his office here.





1. Brama Wyżynna / Upland Gate
2. Przedbramie ulicy Długiej / Gateway:  
Katownia i Wieża Więzienna / Torture House and Prison Tower
3. Złota Brama / Golden Gate
4. Dwór Bractwa św. Jerzego / St George Brotherhood Court
5. Dom Uphagena / Uphagen House
6. Dom Ferberów / Ferber House
7. Lwi Zamek / Lion Court
8. Dom Schumannów / Schumann House
9. Ratusz Głównego Miasta / Town Hall of the Main City
10. Fontanna Neptuna / Neptune Fountain
11. Dwór Artusa / Artus Court
12. Nowy Dom Ławy czyli Sień Gdańska / New Bench House
13. Złota Kamienica / Golden House
14. Królewskie Kamieniczki / Royal Residence
15. Zielona Brama / Green Gate

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