

Dinner is served: traditional draniki and toasted tsybriki

What will be on offer at cafes and restaurants serving foreign tourists during the World Ice Hockey Championship, and at what price?

By Svetlana Stasko

'Bread and circuses!' is the famous demand of the Roman crowd, who sought food and entertainment from their rulers. Minsk will soon be filled with bustling fans, singing their hockey team songs. While our ice rinks will certainly be providing entertainment, what of food provision at our cafes and restaurants?

The Ministry of Trade has advised the capital's restaurateurs to serve at least eight national dishes during the tournament, and to chat to foreign visitors in English. Naturally, fans are likely to head to Karl Marx pedestrian street, so I headed there to 'test the waters'. The nearest coffee house, where the interior is inspired by the style of a quaint British cottage, is close to the metro, serving European cuisine and a prevalence of British dishes: porridge, omelette, toast, pancakes and traditional British pies. Breakfast can be had for just Br100,000 (about \$10) while lunch costs around double the amount.

Service and cuisine are sure to meet hockey fans' expectations, but it's not hard to imagine how busy Minsk will become. Finding a table may present a prob-

lem in the centre, although there are over 1,500 cafes, restaurants and snack-bars across the capital, able to feed over 70,000 people. In the evenings and at the weekends, the most popular destinations tend to become very busy, so how will they cope with an additional 15-20 thousand tourists seeking service?

I popped into a pizzeria on the main street, to discover whether they'll be serving draniki and the

Various capital restaurants ready to offer tourists dishes with national colour

expected eight national dishes on their menu. Deputy Director Vera Ledoschuk tells us, "There's plenty of time until May. By then, our menu will have gained new dishes, with emphasis on national recipes."

In the next café, I'm told that Belarusian traditional dishes prevail: borsch served in pots, sauerkraut soup, machanka, vereshchaka, six kinds of draniki, and Belarusian tsepeliny (dumplings). "We're used to

serving foreigners, as we're near hotels and the railway station. People often ask for authentic dishes and want to sample Belarusian beer," says Tatiana Kiseleva, the Deputy Director. "In May, we'll focus on tourists arriving for the championship, being ready for orders in advance." Breakfast costs about Br50,000 (about \$5). "We have 45 varieties of pizza and our Italian visitors have told us that ours is tastier than some served in their homeland."

It's to be expected that cafes and restaurants located near the ice rinks will be most busy.

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menus and seat themselves in the central hall, which boasts 400 seats. It is the first food court in Belarus.

Arena-City pizzeria can feed a great number of fans, assures manager Tatiana Getmankik. Its dining room seats over 200 and, of course, it offers a take-away service. Most pizzas cost Br 50,000 (about \$5). "We have 45 varieties of pizza and our Italian visitors have told us that ours is tastier than some served in their homeland."

Belarusian culinary professionals are keen to help Minsk restaurateurs, with some projects developed especially for the championship — such as a guide entitled *Sauces*. These are an easy way to make simple dishes more tasty, as is popular in Europe. Several of the recipes are from remote corners of Belarus.

With our cafes and restaurants adopting such a positive attitude towards livening up menus, native Belarusians are sure to be attracted to try out dishes too: pechisto meat, fermented oat soup, pancakes made from pumpkin, rare pyzy and many other delicacies will be on sale, honouring the culinary heritage of our forebears.



Ruzhany black stone meteorite joins famous Sapegi Castle exhibits

Unique artefact added to Sapegi Castle museum, in the Pruzhany District's Ruzhany

By Svetlana Vechorko

The stone meteorite is of the most common type: a chondrite. Weighing around 25kg, it's as large as two footballs and is now on show in the history hall at Ruzhany. "This meteorite differs from other stones, being black, with a solid mass and containing much ferrum, as well as other alloys. Moreover, it shows evidence of having burnt through the atmosphere," notes Museum Director Ruslan Kniga. The artefact was discovered accidentally, during the relaying of a wall at St. Peter and

Paul's Church. It was lying like any rock, alongside other stones, in the foundations.

A church superior asked Ruzhany's museum staff to take a look at the meteorite and they are now awaiting an official letter from the National Academy of Sciences. Mr. Kniga comments, "In 1894, Grodno Province residents, especially those from Slonim, Svisloch, Volkovysk and Ruzhany, saw an object streak through the sky. The phenomenon is mentioned in all chronicles of the time. It is described by astronomic sources as the Ruzhany meteorite



Unique Ruzhany meteorite on show

but we hadn't discovered its location until now."

Ruzhany Castle was built by the Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Lev Sapega, and is one of the largest Belarusian palaces from

the 17th-18th century. Restoration began in 2008, with five display halls now open to tourists, located in the Eastern and Western wings. Since early 2013, around 20,000 people have visited the complex.



Hospitality in all forms

By Sergey Svetlakov

Accredited guests of World Ice Hockey Championship, hosted by Minsk this May, to access public transport free of charge

Minsk's public transport is being extended, to include an additional 13 routes connecting such sites as the railway station and student village with Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena. About 200 additional buses will run during the World Championship. "Accredited guests of the World Ice Hockey Championship will be able to use public transport around Minsk free of charge," underlines Valery Shkuratov, the Head of the Capital Transport and Communications institution.

The work of fixed route minibuses, which have already changed image, will be also improved on the eve of the World Ice Hockey Championship, with comfortable models appearing on the capital's streets.

Meanwhile, Minsk National Airport is to gain a closed-type taxi stand, with drivers working on a competitive basis. Another project envisages complete reconstruction of the Privokzalnaya Square (Railway Station Square).

All information in just one call

Info dial number for guests of IIHF World Championship, hosted by Minsk this year

On arrival, tourists will be able to dial a short number to find out anything they might need to know. Moreover, during the World Ice Hockey Championship, volunteers will be invited to work at Minsk Information Centre, which will also sell souvenirs.

Minsk Information and Tourist Centre is to release a special tourist brochure especially for the event, giving information on public transport and matches, alongside a city map showing hotels and hostels, parking areas near the rinks and hospitality zones. Buses are to run regularly, connecting Minsk-Arena with Chizhovka-Arena and other sports facilities, as well as with centres of accommodation.

During the World Championship, Minsk Information and Tourist Centre will also be organising excursions, offering audio-guides in seven languages, including those for children (and a version especially for handicapped youngsters). Guests and residents of the capital will have the choice of over 40 tour routes around Minsk, run daily, while bus #1 will, of course, operate across the city, offering a great alternative.