Magiczny Kraków

Krakow’s bakeries - smell of fresh baked bread

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For centuries, Krakow was a city inhabited by many ethnic groups, which significantly influenced the character of the dishes served here. However, regardless of historical reality, bread is one of the most important foods here.

The guests are greeted with bread and salt, as well as a young couple arriving at the wedding. The bread is not thrown away, and some people still make the sign of cross before cutting it into pieces.

Bread is a basic ingredient of traditional Polish breakfast and supper. Despite centuries-old tradition of baking bread and a huge respect towards it, in the recent years bread has become an anonymous product coming from big factories. Apart from small, traditional bakeries, more and more new, alternative ones which are set by people without specialist formation are trying to face this problem.

Binkowscy

The bakery belonging to the family Binkowski is one of the oldest in Kraków. It has been operating continuously for more than 70 years. It is a family business set by Feliks Adamski in 1946. For many years, members of his family helped him to run the business, and his kids: Monika, Ewa and Aleksander, were raised surrounded by baking furnaces. Nowadays the bakery is managed by Monika Binkowska and her sons. The ambiance of this place is created by the people. Old clients who still remember their parents or grandparents buying bread always in the same place, this bakery at Długa 7. This invariable address lives in memory of many inhabitants of the city.

The heart of the bakery, the guarantee of its quality and tradition, are its employees: bakers, helpers, confectioners and clerks. The employees of the bakery have been working here since decades, one of them has just celebrated his 40th work anniversary, which is the best proof for the family-like, friendly atmosphere of the place. The Binkowski’s bakery means not only delicious bread, but also great sweets prepared according to the traditional recipe.

The Binkowski’s bakery is almost an open-air museum, where you can admire traditional, historical recipes being used. It is one of these unique places where it is the man, not the machine, standing behind the process of the production of bread. And it is a man of a big heart and a great respect towards the tradition.

Piekarnia Mojego Taty

Piekarnia Mojego Taty bakery is located on the ground floor of one of the tenements in the Kazimierz district. Since 2006, it is run by Wojciech Smętek who wanted to revive the family tradition of baking bread. The Meiselsa street smells of baked bread again.

The bakery was set by a Jew named Bajgiel. During the Second World War its products would end up

in the best German shops. After the war the bakery continued operating. Wojciech Smętek decided to come back to craft traditions of that place.

The heart of the bakery is its still operating antique furnace called ‘Englishman’ from 1914. When it is hot, the pressure goes up to 100 atmospheres, and the temperature exceeds 300 degrees Celcius. Bakers make a couple of tons of bread every day. They do most of the job manually. This is one of the few places remaining in Kraków with so little automation.

The time needed to prepare bread depends on its type and size. The biggest loaves that weight 3 kg need even up to three hours. The process depends also on the season. ‘During the winter, more sourdough or yeasts is needed. During the summer, when the temperatures are high, everything ferments so fast that the bakers need to hurry’, explains Mr. Wojciech. Bread has to be produced in a traditional way, using the sourdough prepared by the bakery. The basic ingredients are easy: flour, water, salt. The recipe starts with: ‘take 40 litres of water’. The rest lies in the bakers’ hands. The proportions are shaped by the type of flour used and the weather: temperature and humidity. No additions making the job easier are used. The rules are the same as in the past.

Zaczyn

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‘It was holidays, and we ran out of bread. After looking through a shelf with bread in a shop nearby our home, I decided to buy some flour and a pack of yeasts.’ Zosia Barto explains how her adventure with baking bread started. She baked her first bread rolls seven years ago. Today she manages her own bakery *Zaczyn*. Loaves of bread disappear within two or three hours from the opening. *Zaczyn* produces four types of bread: wheat, rye, wheat-rye and spelt bread with different types of addings like grains, fruit, nuts and herbs. In the bakery, one can as well sit down and eat a vegan breakfast or try a coffee from a nearby coffee roaster.

The biggest challenge Zosia had to face was finding the right type of flour – good qulity without artificial addings. Today, *Zaczyn* cooperates with a couple of mills in Poland. It buys not only flour, but also grains from which Zosia Barto prepares wholemeal flour. Small mills cooperate directly with farmers. Thanks to them, she can find people who still cultivate old Polish crops. It is often cultivated for feeding animals, so it is often more resilient than new varieties. Thanks to the interest of small bakeries these types of crop are reappearing on Polish tables.