

B   M I N G
M  R K E T S

ONCE ON THE DECLINE, EASTERN EUROPE'S TRADITIONAL
MARKETPLACES ARE AT THE CENTRE OF CITY LIFE AGAIN.
JESSICA PRUPAS AND JONATHAN BOUSFIELD
DISCOVER WHY THEIR STOCK IS RISING

ILLUSTRATIONS LIVI GOSLING



BALTI JAAMA

[TALLINN, ESTONIA]

What's the story?

Once upon a time, the Baltic Station Market (*Balti Jaama*) was a rather dowdy fruit, veg and junk mart. Then, in 2017, it was transplanted to arty warehouse district Telliskivi Creative City and given a sexy makeover. Now this sleek, three-floor complex has morphed into a focal point of the regenerated Kalamaja district, where punters fill their boots before an afternoon of shopping or gallery hopping.

Who's it for?

Weekend wanderers on the hunt for farm-fresh produce and a vegan burger.

What's on offer?

The avant-garde overlaying the old Soviet guard under a zigzag-roofed warehouse designed by esteemed Estonian architecture firm Koko, which is also responsible for the city's futuristic Seaplane



“Punters fill their boots before doing some shopping or gallery hopping”



Harbour. Traditional produce vendors rub elbows with street-food stalls, lively cafés and artisanal gift shops.



NEED TO KNOW

A bit of the old flea market has been

preserved nearby: it teems with nostalgic communist relics and secondhand clothing.



EAT THIS!
Steamed Taiwanese buns at Baojaam

CENTRAL MARKET

[PULA, CROATIA]

What's the story?

Housed in a cast-iron, Art Nouveau pavilion that was something of a sensation when it first opened in 1903, Pula's Central Market is a shining example of how markets can keep trad even as they



PHOTOS @OKEYKAT:INSTAGRAM

evolve. It's all the bustle, bright colours and breezy aromas you expect from a Mediterranean marketplace, with an additional degree of hubbub and chatter from the packed cafés upstairs and in the plaza outside. As well as keeping the city supplied with fruit and veg, the market is overflowing with charming artisan produce: hams, sausages and olive oil all vie for attention.

Who's it for?

The gossip-hungry mid-morning coffee crowd, casting side-eye glances around the upstairs terrace as produce-hunting grannies pull shopping trolleys below.

What's on offer?

Twizzly homemade pastas, creamy cheeses and family-recipe home-cured *pršut* ham all lovingly made by locals are just some of the treats in store. It's also the liveliest social

“The market overflows with charming produce”

event in town and the sprawling top-floor café terrace is the best spring spot to camp down when the sun comes out.



NEED TO KNOW

Pula market is best enjoyed as a pre-lunch ritual, so try not to leave it too late: a lot of stalls start packing up an hour or so before closing time. Get your shopping done first, then settle down with that well-deserved aperitif. >



EAT THIS!
Grilled squid from the Furia seafood grill



EAT THIS!
Maracuya meringue pie from various stalls

BREAKFAST MARKET

[WARSAW, POLAND]



What's the story?

Nowhere is the idea of the market as social event quite so developed as in Warsaw, where the outdoor, all-day Breakfast Market, or *Targ Śniadaniowy*, offers a panoply of farm produce, craft brews, homemade cakes and a bubbling, crackling array of hot street food. Taking place at weekends from April to September, the market

offers a showcase for bakers and brewers, and also invites the city's food trucks and snack joints. The choice is huge, the temptations are enormous: perfect for cancelling your other plans and making a long, slow, day of it.

Who's it for?

Park life in all shapes and forms: picnicking friends, summer strollers, young families, urban cyclists and people who just came out to walk the dog.

What's on offer?

Activities are laid on for kids and, if the weather is fine, this is one of the best places in town to let them run around. This is Warsaw hedonism at its most daytime chilled, with families, friends and visitors kicking back. Note that it starts to pack up towards the end of the afternoon.

“Perfect for cancelling your other plans and making a long, slow, day of it”



NEED TO KNOW

Many of the weekends are themed around a particular country and its cuisine, with appropriate live music (Japan, Chile and Mexico being three regular examples). Check out the *Targ Śniadaniowy* Facebook page to see what's coming next. >

BEOGRADSKI MARKET

[BELGRADE, SERBIA]

What's the story?

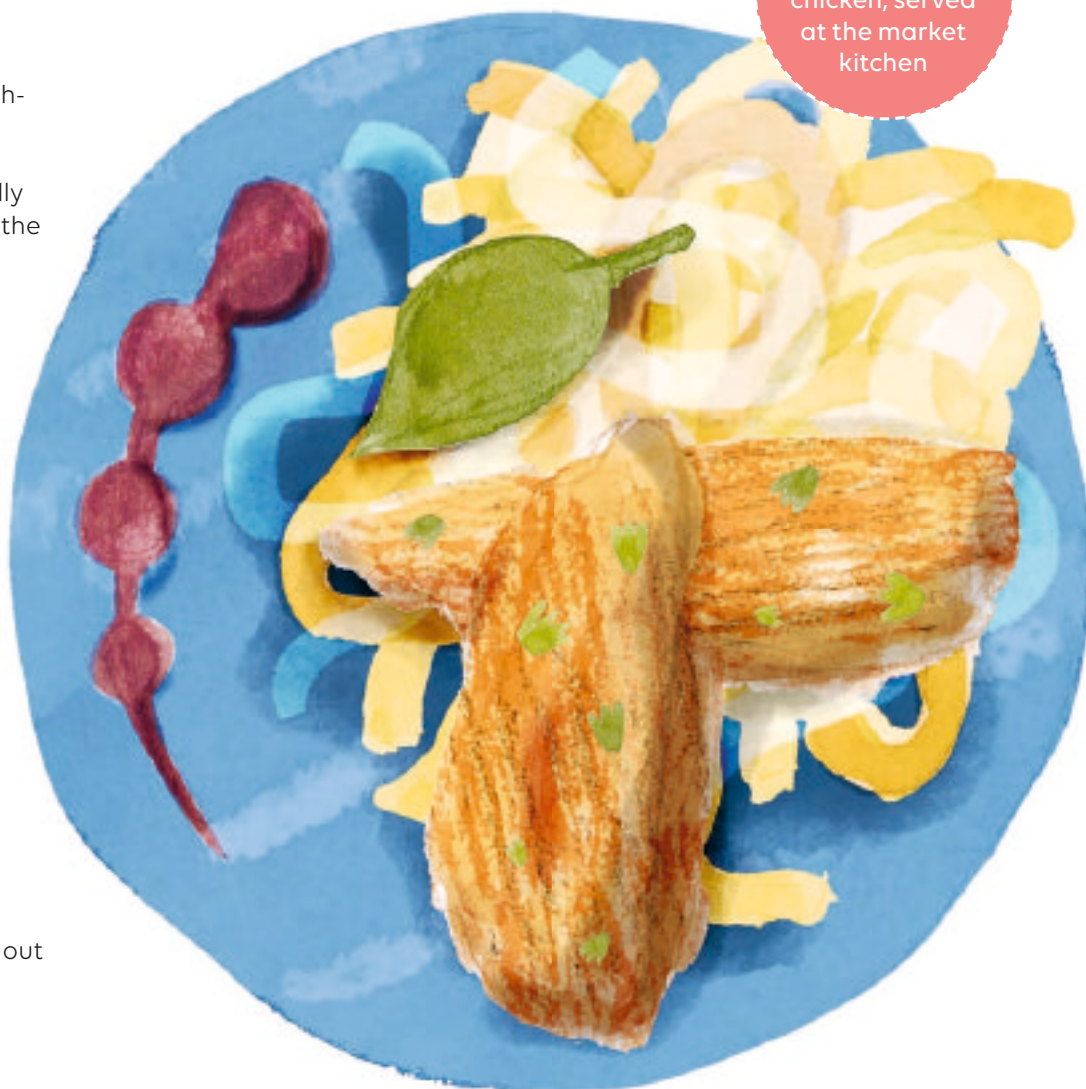
One of the best places in south-eastern Europe for a browse, a booze and a bite to eat, Beogradski Market successfully fuses street-food culture with the idea of a grand night out. It's slightly more chic than your average indoor food court, blending post-industrial grit with a design-conscious array of spindly stools and soft lights. Right in the middle of the hall, a vinyl record store occupies one of the fibreglass cubes that once served as newspaper kiosks throughout the former Yugoslavia. There are live bands and DJs at weekends; in summer, revellers pile into the outdoor courtyard for bubbling beats and meaty grills.

Who's it for?

Cocktail-sipping trendsetters out for a serious boogie.

What's on offer?

Counters tempt visitors with seafood, local grills and drinks, including the criminally smooth *rakija* brandies made by the



EAT THIS!
Marco Polo chicken, served at the market kitchen



“In summer, revellers pile into the outdoor courtyard for bubbling beats”

on-site distillery. The mellow after-work vibe pumps up as the evening progresses, when the market morphs into a giant bar, where it always seems to be Friday.

NEED TO KNOW
The all-you-can-eat breakfasts (till noon on workdays, 2pm on weekends) are well worth turning up early for. Inexpensive themed specials are available on Thursday evenings; Sundays are family days with activities laid on for kids.

ZHENSKI PAZAR MARKET

[SOFIA, BULGARIA]

What's the story?

Just a short amble from the Banya Bashi Mosque and Sofia Synagogue, Zhenski Pazar – or 'Women's Market', though all genders are welcome – has long been a waypoint between the city's densely packed cultures. Locals of all stripes flooded here

just after Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman rule and its popularity hasn't waned since. In 2014, a huge renovation scrubbed away the ravages of time, giving this half-a-kilometre strip a new sheen and cementing its status as the city's main artery.

Who's it for?

Camera-wielding tourists on the hunt for colourful souvenirs and businesslike locals filling their fridges for the week.

What's on offer?

Sofia's melting-pot ethos comes to life: Arab butchers sell halal



meat next to Chinese merchants presiding over mountains of bric-a-brac, while the open-fire scent of flatbread wafts from the Kurdish restaurants nearby.



NEED TO KNOW

Just beyond the market entrance, the first stall worth stopping at is the wine shop in the seller's block to the left, where one measly lev will bag you a glass of Bulgaria's best. *Nazdrave!*

>

“It's long been a waypoint between the city's densely packed cultures”

EAT THIS!
Baklava from the stalls in the main strip



CENTRAL MARKET

[TIRANA, ALBANIA]

What's the story?

Tirana's so-called 'new bazaar' is actually nearly a century old, erected in 1931 to absorb the overflow from next-door's Old Bazaar. After the old market was demolished in 1959, the new one rose from the ashes to become the Albanian capital's main commercial hub, a riot of colour and sound with a ragged Balkan spirit. It got a massive facelift in 2017 as part of a municipal tourism push, but its soaring steel arches and gleaming glass walls don't detract anything from its raw, chaotic appeal.

"A riot of colour and sound with a ragged spirit"

Who's it for?

Anyone who brings their A game – haggling is an art form here. Don't be afraid to go in low if you're up for facing off against some very steely stallholders.

What's on offer?

Old-world Albania with a forward-thinking outlook. The modern pavilion has come to represent Tirana's evolution into a global city, while the stalls keep things humble with their heaps of traditional wares and sacks of produce.



EAT THIS!
The juiciest figs you'll ever eat, from any fruit stall



NEED TO KNOW

Make the pilgrimage at the crack of dawn for the best pick of plump olives, salty cheeses, fresh figs and potent rakija – though we recommend waiting till lunchtime to sample this savage fruit-based spirit. 🍷

