

Michelin culinary guide



The Michelin Guide has been published since 1900. The first gastronomic recommendations appeared in it in 1926, so in a moment we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of this idea. Warsaw as the capital of Poland appeared on the pages of the red guide in 1997, and 11 years later Krakow joined it. In 2023, Poznań will join the prestigious group of cities featured in the guide! Below we explain what the various symbols used in the red guide mean and what weight to assign to each symbol.

What is the Michelin Guide

The guide was created on the initiative of Michelin (a tire manufacturer) for drivers traveling on the roads of France. In the country where the automotive industry took its first steps, knowing where to repair and refuel the vehicle was worth its weight in gold. The first editions of the guide were included free of charge with purchased tyres. Others were available for a symbolic price. Information for drivers has been supplemented over time with tips on where to stay for the night and where to eat a tasty meal. The gastronomic section of the guide was established in 1926 and has been very popular since the first edition.



Source: <https://www.arts-et-gastronomie.com>

Stars, cutlery and bib gourmand symbols

The rating system was originally based on one star, awarded to recommended premises. Over time, the rating system developed the scale to three stars. In the post-war period, due to restrictions on access to food, a maximum of two stars was awarded for a time, but after some time the three-star system was reverted. In the 1950s, the rating system based on stars was supplemented with a new type of recommendation. It was "carefully prepared food for a small price". It was only in the 1990s that the award was called "Bib Gourmand" and gained its graphic distinguishing feature - the head of Bib (or Michelin man).

The guide was based mainly on graphic symbols and did not contain verbal descriptions. The symbols indicated, for example, an extensive wine list, a large selection of beers or an interesting view from the windows of the restaurant room. For several years, the mention of a given place has been enriched with literally two or three sentences of a short description. Since its inception, the authors have been accompanied by a practical approach to the subject. This can be clearly seen in the verbal description of the symbol of stars awarded to premises:

*** - "High quality cuisine, worth a stop".**

**** - "Doskonała kuchnia, warta tego by nadłożyć drogi".**

***** - "Excellent cuisine, worth the extra cost".**

As you can see, all the above descriptions are inextricably linked to the journey, for which the meal is only a more or less important accompanying element. Today, the gastronomic offer is an independent attraction for residents and tourists. This does not change the fact that these descriptions give food for thought and evoke a smile of sympathy. It's nice to know the context in which they were created.

Bib Gourmand means attractive price and good quality

The term *Gourmand* means gourmet in French. Bib is short for Bibendum, the name of Michelin's mascot. It is a characteristic figure made of white tires. Bibendum celebrates its 120th birthday this year. Bib Gourmand as a distinction awarded to the restaurant means good food at an attractive price. I do not expect a sophisticated form of dishes or special service. Dishes awarded with Bib Gourmand often resemble simple home cooking, and this in terms of taste, quality of ingredients and preparation technique is at a very high level in France.



Nutrition is taken very seriously in France. Issues related to culinary are the subject of scientific research, studies on collective nutrition, an important element of children's education and a protected national asset. Tradition and cooking skills are passed down from generation to generation

Cutlery symbol

As if that wasn't enough, restaurants are also awarded cutlery symbols. The latter, depending on the number of symbols (1 to 5) define the comfort and convenience of the place. When the cutlery is red, it means that the restaurant is not only comfortable but also “pleasant” in terms of decor and atmosphere. It is worth noting that the cutlery has nothing to do with the quality of the food. They refer only to certain elements of the design and organization of work. Here again, it is worth remembering about the basic assumption of the guide, it was supposed to facilitate the journey and make it more comfortable. Cutlery suggests where it is "nice and comfortable", but the number of awarded symbols does not reflect the values related to food. Three sets of cutlery instead of one will mean at most a nicer decor, more efficient service and more comfortable chairs. It is not inconceivable that you would prefer the food served in a restaurant that was considered less comfortable.

Nameplates and stickers

Restaurants distinguished by the Michelin guide have the right to place a metal plate with the appropriate symbol on the outside wall of the premises. Increasingly, these are also stickers appearing on the entrance door to the restaurant. For many years, only restaurants honored with stars or Bib Gourmand recommendations could do this. Today, restaurants that have been awarded cutlery are also allowed to do so.



Bon appetit!