

# Treasures of **GYULA REGION**

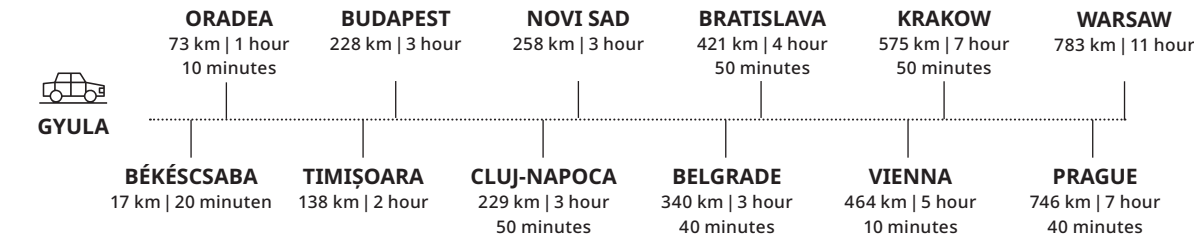
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**SZÉCHENYI** 

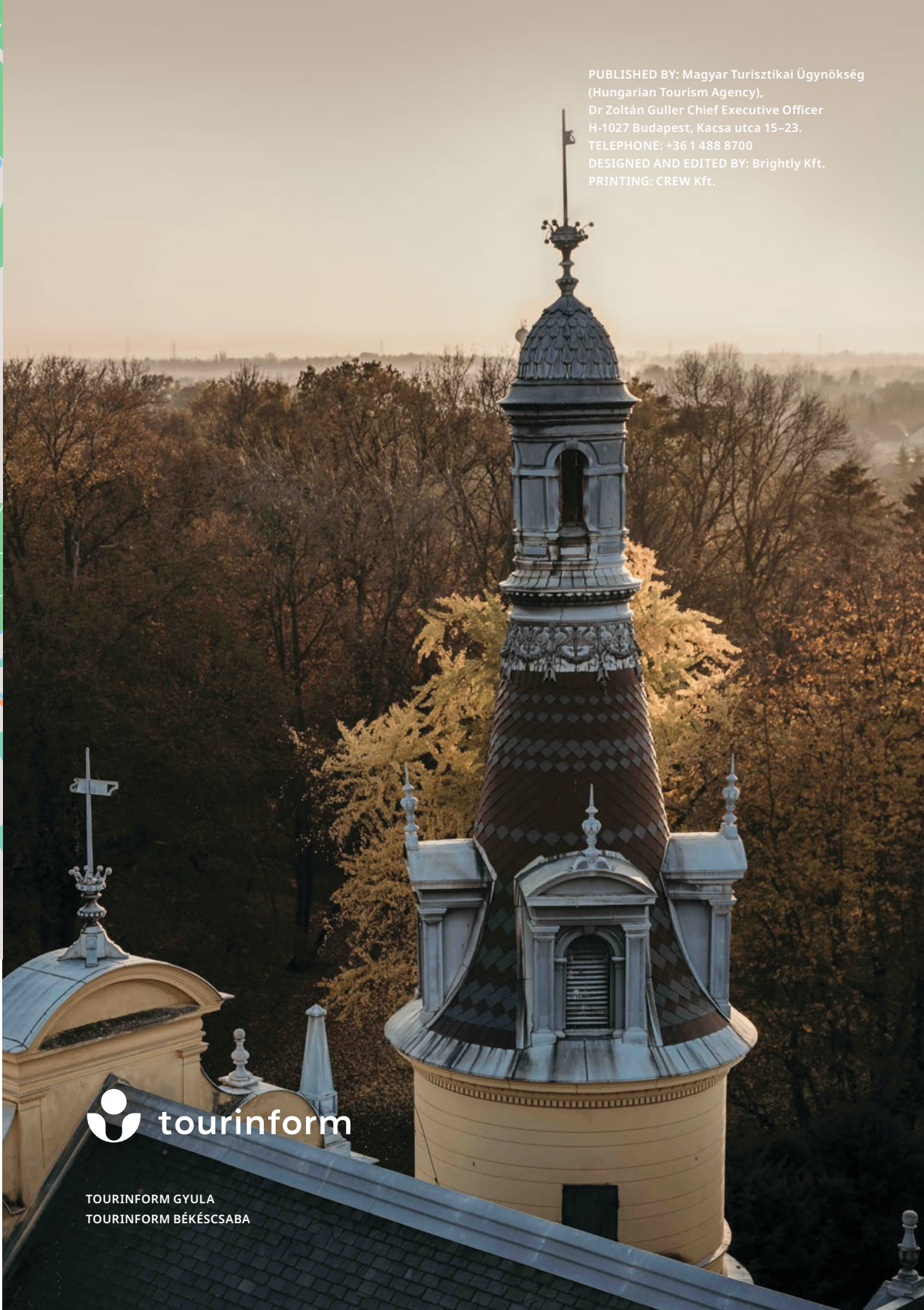




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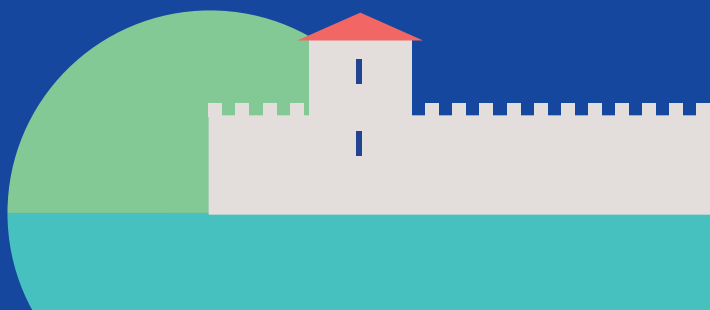
TOURINFORM GYULA  
TOURINFORM BÉKÉSCSABA

# TREASURES OF GYULA REGION

Bathing culture was flourishing in Gyula as far back as the Turkish period and most visitors still come to this historical spa city for its medicinal waters and therapies. That said, the town is also bursting with cultural attractions: it's well worth visiting the city centre to stop at the museums, farmhouses and churches, to mingle with the locals at one of the festivals and to sample the regional delicacies. Békéscsaba is only 17 km away, and boasts the unique heritage of Mihály Munkácsy as well as many other sights and attractions. While walking along the quaint streets of the neighbouring villages, you can enjoy a simply inimitable rural atmosphere.

Gyula and Békéscsaba are situated in the Körös Rivers Valley, in the southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain. This valley has a special charm thanks to its romantic riverbanks and forests and a pleasant, sunny climate almost all year round.

This brochure will help you discover the region of the White and Black Körös Rivers, presenting the most exciting features, a range of relaxing and active attractions, as well as the differences between Gyula and Békéscsaba sausages and a list of festivals and culinary experiences that you simply should not miss.





# FIVE UNMISSABLE EXPERIENCES

## BATHE BENEATH THE TREES

Relish the beneficial effects of medicinal water in breathtaking surroundings at one of the country's best-loved spas, the Gyula Castle Spa, situated in a 200-year-old park, where visitors can bathe in the shade of plane, oak and rowan trees.



## IMMERSE YOURSELF IN HISTORY

The over 600-year-old Gyula Castle provides insights into the opulent lives of Hungarian lords and Turkish beys, whilst the recently restored Almásy Palace offers a glimpse of the secret world of noble families and their servants.



## NAVIGATE MAJESTIC WATERS

If you're looking for an active holiday or day trip, there are countless water routes along densely wooded riverbanks in the romantic backwaters of the Körös Rivers. While kayaking, you may even discover turtles sunbathing on the stones.



## ENJOY THE LOCAL FLAVOURS

When visiting the region, be sure to sample the sausages from Gyula and Békéscsaba, which certainly live up to their excellent reputation. The Békéscsaba sausage even has a festival dedicated to it: one of Hungary's biggest gastronomy events with sausage filling and tasting and a sausage-making competition. Choose a dessert from the delicious range on display at the Hundred-Year-Old Confectioner's Shop in Gyula.



## EXPERIENCE 19TH CENTURY ROMANTICISM THROUGH MIHÁLY MUNKÁCSY'S PAINTINGS

Carpenter's apprentice-turned painter Mihály Munkácsy achieved world-wide acclaim with his genre and large scale religious paintings. You can discover the artist's romantic realist masterpieces in Békéscsaba.



600-year-old

Gyula Castle



460 km

of cycle paths



1879

saw the opening of the first theatre on the Great Hungarian Plain, the Vigadó in Békéscsaba



579

exhibits at the Munkácsy Museum



2000 hours

of sunshine a year



in 1840

The Hundred-Year-Old Confectioner's Shop in Gyula opened



3000 km

of sausage casings are filled here every year



The Gyula Castle Spa first opened

in 1956



# FOUR PALACES, FOUR STYLES, FOUR HISTORIES

The towns and cities of the southern Great Hungarian Plain boast a cultural heritage to rival regional treasures anywhere in Europe. You can discover aristocratic palaces from bygone days, buildings and objects reflecting the life of the rural bourgeoisie, museums and exhibits.

## ALMÁSY PALACE

### FROM SALONS TO SERVANTS

The Baroque Palace in Gyula was built by the Harruckern family and for centuries was the home of the counts of Wenckheim and Almásy. Nationalised after World War II, the building was completely emptied in the 1990s; however, by 2016, the palace had been restored to its former glory, featuring special activities and a huge expanse of long established parkland for visitors to explore.

The visitor centre's interactive exhibits provide insight into the lavish lifestyles of aristocrats, the strict daily routine of the masters and the secret world of the servants waiting on their whims – discover what it was like to be a chambermaid, how they polished the silver or how the beds were warmed. Thanks to holoprojector technology, the former palace residents come to life. The Hussar Tower hosts fine art exhibitions, while the tower lookout on the other side offers stunning views of Gyula Castle and the palace park.



## VÁSÁRHELYI-BRÉDA PALACE

### THE SPIRIT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

The Lőkősháza Palace's architect was inspired by Villa la Rotonda in Vicenza, Italy: this Classicist-style structure with four tympanums evokes the masterpiece of Palladio, the most renowned architect of the Italian Renaissance. Situated close to the Romanian border, there is a great deal to see inside both the palace and the expansive park, including a Foucault pendulum in the cupola and a night projection artwork that can be seen after dark; also fascinating are the exhibition on the palace's history and the contemporary art exhibitions.

## WENCKHEIM PALACE

### EXTRAVAGANT ECLECTICISM

This Neo-Renaissance/Eclectic-style castle was built based on plans by Miklós Ybl, who rose to meet the challenges posed by Krisztina Wenckheim's extravagant demands: upon her request nothing is uniform within the palace, yet harmony is retained among the stylistic features. The palace is surrounded by French and English gardens and is the best-known landmark in the Körös-Maros National Park. Before visiting the palace, it's worth checking the opening hours on its website.

## GYULAVÁR PALACE

### A REGIONAL TREASURE TROVE

Built in the first half of the 19th century, the wrought-iron window grilles of this noble mansion were made by the estate's blacksmiths.

The Gyula Palace is now home to a visitor centre, presenting a wealth of information on the folk, cultural and natural heritage of the southern Great Hungarian Plain.



# Cultural diversity



Gyula Castle

## GYULA CASTLE

This over 600-year-old Gothic fortification is the only flatland brick castle in Central and Eastern Europe which is still intact; it is situated in a beautifully laid out park, near a boating lake.

The 24 exhibition halls of the castle museum bring the everyday life of the last seven centuries to life. You can visit the castle courtyard to watch falconers flying their birds, see blacksmiths at work, dress in costumes from the age and even try writing with a goose quill.

## LADICS HOUSE

The ways of the rural bourgeoisie are brought to life in the home of the Ladics family of notaries in Gyula, built in the early 19th century. For five generations, the Ladics family preserved furniture, attire and a sprawling family library which was typical for the times. Superbly preserved, the house provides a unique record of the times and everyday lives of the rural bourgeoisie.



## GYULA CASTLE THEATRE

Since 1964, the Gyula Castle Theatre has opened its doors to the public every summer, hosting prestigious performances and festivals. Initially, only Hungarian historical dramas were performed, but the repertoire has steadily expanded over the years. The event has since become an all-arts festival, featuring dance and musical performances, film screenings and fine art exhibitions.

## CONNECTING MUSIC, PEOPLE AND THE WORLD

There is a world clock in the city centre of Gyula, highlighting the unity of our world and the importance of the connection between people and music. Apart from showing the precise time, the clock displays various time zones and is a modernist creation: a shining ornament in the pedestrianised street with its greenish-bluish glow.

## LUTHERAN CHURCH

The city centre of Békéscsaba is home to Central Europe's largest Lutheran church, which was built in 1824 in the Empire style typical at the time of the transition from the late Rococo to the Classicist style. The church is home to one of the largest church organs to be found in any Hungarian Lutheran church; it was built by organ-masters János Soukenik and János Rukavina of Szeged.

## THE FIRST THEATRE

The Vigadó, the first theatre on the Great Hungarian Plain, was built in Békéscsaba in 1879. This theatre performed a central role in the city's cultural scene: performances, concerts, balls and parties were hosted in this gorgeous building, where audiences marvelled at the gilded Venetian mirrors and marquetry flooring. Since 1956, it has been known as the Jókai Mór Theatre.



Lutheran Church, Békéscsaba



# A special connection: Mihály Munkácsy and Békéscsaba



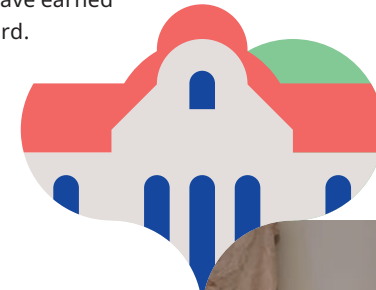
The streets of Békéscsaba are transfused with the spirit of Mihály Munkácsy. Statues, commemorative plaques, inscriptions and a painted tulip chest all pay respect to this giant among artists. Munkácsy arrived in the city as an eight-year-old orphan; this experience inspired a number of his works, including the Yawning Apprentice.

## MUNKÁCSY MIHÁLY MUSEUM

The museum is home to the largest Munkácsy collection in the world, including its most valuable painting, The Weeping Women at the Foot of the Cross.

However, the collection doesn't consist only of paintings, but also graphic art and a steadily expanding range of exhibits, currently 579; these include some of the artist's personal effects, photographs of his life, works and models as well as various documents.

Apart from presenting information on the celebrated painter, the museum is also the custodian of 253,000 archaeological finds, 12,000 folk exhibits, 12,000 works of fine art and 65,000 historical articles and documents, as well as 33,000 natural science exhibits. The refurbished exhibition halls, technical solutions and interactive, multi-lingual guided tours have earned the Visitor-Friendly Museum award.



## MUNKÁCSY MEMORIAL HOUSE

The memorial house was opened on the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mihály Munkácsy, in a Classicist-style manor house, where he stayed as a guest in his childhood with his relatives, the Reök family.

The manor's four main halls feature 21 original Munkácsy paintings, presenting the master's various periods: his early work, realistic folk tableaux, portraits and the sketches made for his religious paintings.

The cellars underneath the manor host atmospheric wine-tasting events, whilst the rear building provides the venue for educational activities focused on the art of Mihály Munkácsy and upper-middle class lifestyles of the 19th century.

## COULD MUNKÁCSY'S PAINTINGS BE LOST FOREVER?

Munkácsy's paintings used a bitumen-based primer. The substance known as 'bitüm' lent a pleasant, warm tone to his paintings, which is why he insisted on using it, even after noticing that his paintings grew darker at a faster rate. In order to impede this process, the works must be kept at controlled temperature and humidity.





# Culinary adventures

## WHERE EVEN THE FENCES ARE MADE OF SAUSAGE

Gyula and Békéscsaba sausages are world-famous, Hungarian products with protected geographical indication status, meaning there are strict requirements for these specially labelled products. Both cities have separate museums dedicated to the award-winning products named after them.

The CsabaPark in Békéscsaba allows visitors to take part in the sausage-making process, become acquainted with the steps of the meat-processing procedure or even attend a pig slaughter. At the same time, children can visit the Giant's Kitchen (Óriások konyhája), allowing them to learn more about the sausage-making process in a fun way.

## IS IT FROM GYULA OR BÉKÉSCSABA?

Although both sausages feature paprika, the Békéscsaba sausage is more heavily spiced and is made with cumin, as opposed to the Gyula sausage which contains pepper. The Gyula sausage comes in pairs, whilst the Békéscsaba is a single, slightly thicker sausage.

## PLUM PÁLINKA FROM THE KÖRÖS RIVERS VALLEY

Békés County plum pálinka is also a protected product: it may only be made from red plums harvested in the Körös Rivers Valley. The Békés County Plum Pálinka Route passes through Békés, Békéscsaba and Gyula and presents the traditions of pálinka distillation, along with various methods and tricks associated with it, and the culture surrounding pálinka.

## THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT TO BÉKÉS COUNTY PÁLINKA: BÉKÉS COUNTY FOIE GRAS!

By the 18th century, Orosháza had already become one of the most important poultry farming regions in Hungary. Some of the country's best foie gras originates from this region; the foie gras is best served roasted in its own fat. The dish is deliciously complemented by the fruity-tasting, sloe pálinka with almond overtones and a marzipan-chocolate aroma made from sloes growing wild in the region.



## OLD-FASHIONED DESSERTS IN IMPERIAL SURROUNDINGS

The Hundred-Year-Old Confectioner's Shop has been open since 1840 in the most prestigious building in Gyula, featuring a Belle Époque atmosphere, lavishly decorated walls and Biedermeier furniture. A museum has been established on the site of the former kitchens. The cooler counters feature classic pastries, home-made ice cream and handmade bonbons – and don't forget to taste the hundred year-old cake!

## ENJOY THE LOCAL PRODUCE!

Gyula features an extensive network of small producers, offering handmade goat cheeses, shapely and flavoursome tomatoes, ground paprika products and even quail eggs. The best local producers sell their healthy, sustainably produced goods every Sunday at the Gyula Market and Market Hall.





# Festivals for all seasons



## BÉKÉSCSABA SAUSAGE FESTIVAL

These four-day festivities are traditionally held on the final week of October. One of Hungary's most prominent gourmet festivals offers visitors a taste of rural life. Naturally, the focus is on Békéscsaba sausage and the flavours of home cooking, accompanied by singing and dancing, as well as a range of artistic and children's activities for visitors to choose from.



## GYULA PÁLINKA FESTIVAL

For three days in spring, Gyula becomes the Capital of Pálinka. The focus is on the producers, who present the fruit of their labours every year. The festival allows visitors to sample gourmet treats, take part in a pálinka distilling competition and listen to pop concerts.

## GYULA HONEY AND GINGERBREAD FESTIVAL

In Gyula, the festival season doesn't come to an end in the winter as the city hosts a wonderful family event towards the end of the year. Visitors can choose from unique types of honey and extravagantly decorated gingerbread at the festivities in December, as well as attending a beekeeping exhibition and fair. Children can prepare for Christmas with Advent arts and crafts activities.

## SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The Shakespeare Festival takes place every year in July, at the Gyula Castle Theatre. A number of prestigious domestic and foreign theatre companies stage the works of the famous bard, presented in various performance styles. Apart from theatrical productions, visitors can attend concerts, workshops and exhibitions and enjoy street theatre performances.



## GYULA CASTLE JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Renaissance-style courtyard of the Gyula Castle, with its superb acoustics, has been hosting the Gyula Castle Jazz Festival since 1991, where the cream of the Hungarian jazz scene gathers every summer. Over the last 20 years, a number of international performers have participated in the festival and global stars have performed for enthusiastic audiences.



# REFRESH YOUR HEALTH AT THE HISTORIC CASTLE SPA

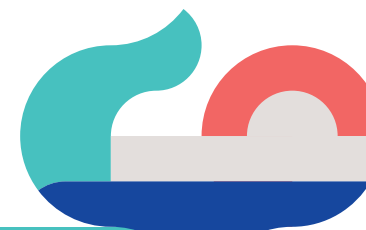
## SAUNA CEREMONIES

The key figure of the sauna ceremonies is the sauna master, who blends essential oils and various aromas in the water of the dousing bucket while entertaining sauna users with thrilling stories. Adventurous visitors can experience 'beer sauna' sessions to enhance their skin's beauty or enjoy the beneficial effects of citrus fruits or honey infused in the hot steam.

## REFRESHING BATHING

Thermal baths are one of the most effective ways to recharge mentally and physically – the best-known thermal spa in Békés County, the Gyula Castle Spa has all the necessary trappings for this. Not only are there pools, but massage benches, jacuzzis, a sauna park and a pool bar for guests to enjoy, all set within mature parkland.

Additionally, the spa's sauna park features three outdoor sauna houses, jacuzzis, dousing tubs, two indoor infra saunas and a steam bath; on Saturday evenings, visitors can take part in night-time wellness sessions in the special atmosphere of the cupola spa pool. Those who prefer more energetic leisure activities can visit the water slide park or go for a swim in the 50-metre sport and 25-metre swimming pools.



## SPA IN THE CITY

The Árpád Thermal Bath and Spa is at the heart of Békéscsaba. Besides the spa complex inside the historical building, visitors can choose from indoor and outdoor pools, slides, a sunbathing island, jacuzzis and a range of top quality treatments.

## TOP LEVEL THERAPIES

The medicinal waters of the Gyula spa have a beneficial effect on locomotor disorders, neuropathic impairment, and inflammatory gynaecological diseases, as well as aiding rehabilitation after accidents. The thermal water pools are located in a former barn house building.

Recovery is assisted by hydrotherapy treatments including tub baths, traction baths, carbonic acid baths, tangenter treatments and underwater jet massage that can be supplemented by gymnastic therapy, as well as physiotherapy, mud packs and medical massages.



# Adventures in the Körös Rivers Valley

## FLOURISHING ECOTOURISM IN THE SZANAZUG PARADISE

In 2015, the Körös Rivers Valley was designated a natural park, a title granted to extensive areas with significant natural assets, while placing a great emphasis on sustainable development, providing back-to-nature experiences by creating facilities both for relaxation and active tourism.

Szanazug, located at the confluence of the Black and White Körös Rivers is a wonderful ecotourism destination. The site is popular for hiking and bathing, with long, open beaches, shady banks and groves, and clean waters in the rivers and shallows.

Apart from bathing, visitors can experience practically all forms of watersports, from pedal boats to water skiing, kayaking, canoes, rowing boats and boat trips, and can cross between river banks on the ferries. Weekend homes, boat-houses, inns and camping sites await guests along the romantic riverbanks.

The Körös Rivers and their backwaters are perfect for boat tours, yet hiking can also be a rewarding pastime in the vicinity of Szanazug. Discover the remains of an ancient hill-fort, Sámson Castle, dating back to the Árpád era, while the nearby Mályvád Oak Forest offers unique fauna and flora for visitors to explore.



## IN THE WATER, ON A BICYCLE, ON HORSEBACK

Discover the Körös Rivers Valley by kayak or canoe and drift along the majestic riverbanks to experience the wild countryside. Choose from a wide range of individual and group boat tours, allowing you to experience the flora and fauna of the region as well as the history of the local villages.

If you wish to discover the region by bike, there are a number of routes to choose from. From Gyula, you can cycle all the way to Békéscsaba, gliding along the embankments running alongside the rivers. If you're keen on history, you can find out more about the Wenckheim counts along the way.

Alternatively, you can discover the region on horseback as there are plenty of horseback riding tours to choose from in the Körös Rivers Valley – even beginners can try their hand at riding under the supervision of skilled instructors.

## SPORTY TOURS

40-km-long cycle tour  
in the Körös region

1.

2.

The three-hour Csaba Cycle  
Circuit which showcases Békés-  
csaba and its surroundings

A canoe trip to Békéscsaba  
from the centre of Gyula

3.





# DISCOVER SZEGED AND ITS SURROUNDINGS TOO!



## GO FOR A SPLASH!

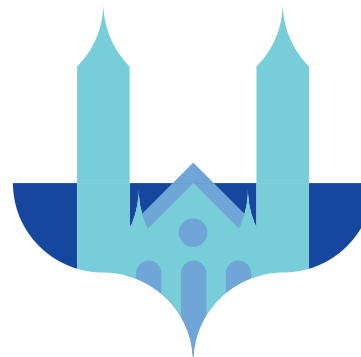
Makó's best-loved landmark is one of Hungary's most outstanding works of organic architecture. According to the building's designer, Imre Makovecz, the spa he created is a temple to water and purity. The medicinal waters of the Hagymatikum treat neuropathic pain and arthritis. Visit Mórahalom too, where a 3,000-square-metre leisure pool awaits those looking to make a splash, while the thermal pools are effective for treating knee and shoulder joint complaints.

## TAKE A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF SZEGED!

Those energetic enough to ascend the 287 steps of the cathedral are rewarded with stunning views of the bustling high street, a multitude of cafés and restaurants, the mosaic-like pattern of Art Nouveau buildings and the majestic sight of the meandering Tisza River.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HUNGARIANS' ANCESTORS!

The name of Ópusztaszer first appeared in the tales of the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin. It's no coincidence that nearly one thousand years later, a National History Park was established on this site with the aim of preserving ancient Hungarian customs and traditions. The presentation of numerous monuments, traditional structures and activities helps visitors become acquainted with the adventurous ancestors of the Hungarians.



## WATCH A PLAY BENEATH THE STARRY SKY!

Every year, the Szeged Open Air Festival offers contemporary and classical performances for visitors to enjoy against the breath-taking backdrop of the imposing cathedral. From musicals to comedies, choose the performance that best suits your tastes!

## SAMPLE THAT UNIQUE HUNGARIAN DELICACY, FISH SOUP!

If there is one dish that encapsulates Szeged and its environs, it is surely Tisza fish soup. Made with local ground paprika, four kinds of fish from the Tisza River, onions from Makó and locally produced peppers, this soup is sure to impress any day of the year.



# Discover Debrecen and its surroundings too

## ENJOY THE CITY VIEWS FROM THE PANORAMIC WALKWAY!

Debrecen's main sights include the largest Reformed church in Hungary. After wandering around the impressive interior, it's also worth taking a stroll along the panoramic walkway stretching between the towers of the Neoclassical building, where you can enjoy the city from a height of nearly 30 metres.

## REFRESH YOUR BODY AND SOUL!

The spa complex in Nagyerdő, Debrecen, which has been classified as a health resort, offers a thermal bath, a therapeutic facility, thermal water treatments and a leisure pool for those seeking recovery and rejuvenation. You can also choose from a range of 40 different treatments, at the spa complex in Hajdúszoboszló, where there is thermal water, an outdoor pool and leisure pool.

## HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDE ACROSS THE HORTOBÁGY

In the unique landscape of the Great Plain, you can admire the herds of grey cattle grazing on the Puszta from a horse-drawn carriage and marvel at the virtuoso stunts of the "csikós" horseback herders.

## LAKE TISZA BIKE CIRCUIT

Visitors can also explore Hungary's second largest lake, Lake Tisza, on a 65-kilometre-long bike circuit. If you would like to take your time to enjoy the beautiful scenery, you can even spend the night in a cabin floating on the water.

## BIRD-WATCHING IN THE WILD

If you take a tour through the Lake Tisza bird sanctuary, you can take a peek into the lives of protected heron and cormorant colonies. It is also a unique experience to follow the aquatic nature trail which winds through the reeds, walking along wooden footbridges to admire Lake Tisza's bird life from the bird-watching hut and lookout tower.

