



Eger region

English

# A TASTE OF ADVENTURE

 HUNGARY



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# A taste of adventure

Once you've conquered the verdant Mátra's peaks dotted with castle ruins, you'll want to return to the almost 2-kilometre-long Kékestető slope by winter in your ski boots. Go for horse-drawn sleigh rides through the snow-capped forest, while in the autumn you can drive around holding the handlebars of a monster scooter. If you were sipping Egri Csillag wine on the terrace of a wine bar on a summer evening, in winter you'd be tasting Egri Bikavér in a heated cellar carved into the hillside. In Mátrafüred you can explore the forest standing on a Segway, meanwhile in the adventure park in Sástó even the kids can ride an electric jet ski, and from the cable car you can enjoy the wonderful panorama of the lake and Gyöngyös. Beauty of Lillafüred and the Szalajka Valley, the history of Eger Castle, or the bustle of downtown Miskolc are also worth an afternoon. Hollókő's Palóc Easter customs are famous far and wide – but so are Mezőkövesd's colourful, flowery Matyó embroideries. In Eger, you can enjoy the pleasant thermal waters under the golden dome of a 400-year-old Turkish bath, or try cave bathing in Miskolctapolca.



# 5+1 unmissable experiences

## CONQUER THE MAJESTIC PEAKS ON THE BLUE TRAIL

Take a deep breath at the top of the Hungary, on Kékestető, and then continue your journey through the wild landscapes of the Mátra and Bükk, where you can enjoy panoramic views of the valleys from lookouts and romantic castle ruins.



## TEST YOUR COURAGE 30 METRES ABOVE A QUARRY!

Between Mátraháza and Mátrafüred, in the area of the Sástó quarry, a gigantic adventure park awaits adrenaline junkies – including a 183-metre-long suspension bridge and an alpine slide spanning the hollow at a height of 30 metres.



## IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE BEAUTY OF NATURE AT EGERSZALÓK!

After a pleasant soak in the 24-pool spa, admire the snow-white salt hill, one of its kind in Europe, created by the 65-68 °C thermal water that rises to the surface.



## DISCOVER THE EGRI BIKAVÉR AND EGRI CSILLAG IN STYLE!

If you want to discover the emblematic wines of the area, you can indulge in their flavours in a modern setting in one of Eger's wine bars, or sip them in the excellent wineries near the vineyards, such as Noszvaj or Egerszalók.



## FOLLOW THE TRACES OF TURKISH CULTURE IN EGER!

Take a look around the historic streets from the circular terrace of the minaret, immerse yourself in the history of the castle with the varied exhibitions and guided dungeon tour, and finally indulge in a hamam massage with traditional perfumes in the 400-year-old Turkish baths.



## COLOUR YOUR JOURNEY BY DISCOVERING WORLD-FAMOUS FOLK TRADITIONS!

Learn about the World Heritage culture at the Matyó Museum in Mezőkövesd, slip into colourfully embroidered, flower-patterned folk costumes for a photo, then head to Hollókő, the Palóc village with its carved porch-front farmhouses, charming customs and distinctive food.



# Adventures all year round

## WINTER

For winter sports enthusiasts, the Mátraszentistván Ski Park is a must, where you can try your skills at 10 ski slopes. If you're feeling more adventurous, you can head to the Kékestető slope, where you can start at 1014 metres and enjoy almost two kilometres of gliding. If you head toward Eger, you will find wellness experiences and heated wine cellars where you can taste the finest Egri Bikavér wines.

## SPRING

If you want to experience the real, traditional Easter feeling, visit Hollókő this holiday season! In the streets, girls in fancy folk costumes run from the boys with the buckets who, in keeping with the tradition, want to sprinkle them with water, and folk music is everywhere. In Mezőkövesd you can admire the Matyó folk costumes at the Matyó Easter events. Don't miss the delicious home-made strudel and schnapps that the locals serve at this time of year!



Mályinka, Begyeleg lookout

## SUMMER

In the midst of the heat, take a walk in a cool, shady forest, conquer the hiking trails of the Mátra and the Bükk, enjoy the beauty of Lilla-füred, Szilvássvárad and the Szalajka Valley! The programmes of the Knights' Tournament Square, next to the renewed Diósgyőr Castle, will take you back to the Middle Ages. Then, you can end the day with a taste of Egri Csillag on the terrace of a wine bar in Eger.

## AUTUMN

Visit the adventure park in Sástó, take the cable car and enjoy the breathtaking panorama. If you are heading for the Mátra, don't leave your bike at home either, as you will find the most beautiful downhill trail in the country there. Don't miss the opportunity to take part in a grape harvest that will remain an unforgettable experience for you.

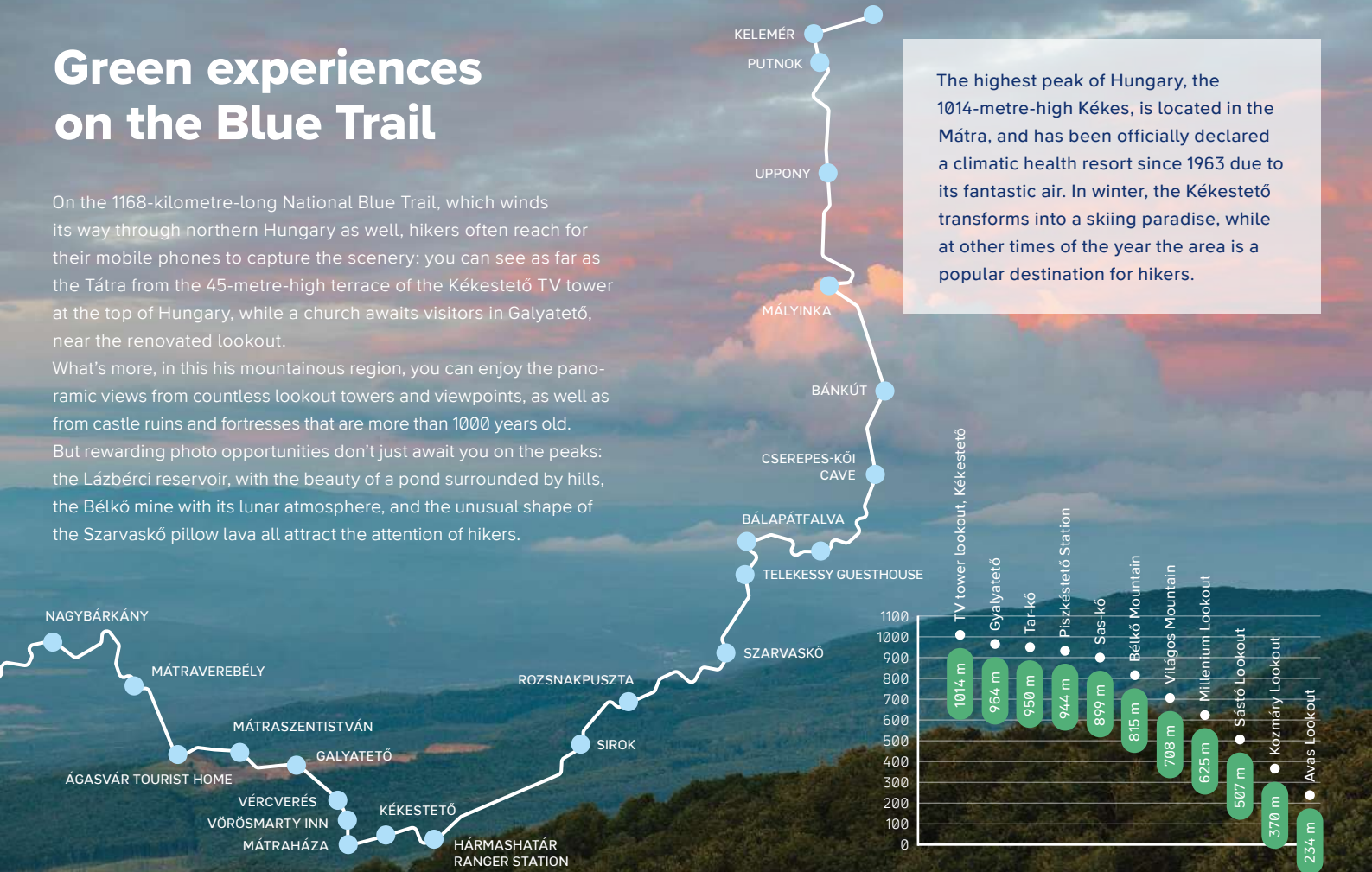
# Green experiences on the Blue Trail

On the 1168-kilometre-long National Blue Trail, which winds its way through northern Hungary as well, hikers often reach for their mobile phones to capture the scenery: you can see as far as the Tátra from the 45-metre-high terrace of the Kékestető TV tower at the top of Hungary, while a church awaits visitors in Galyatető, near the renovated lookout.

What's more, in this his mountainous region, you can enjoy the panoramic views from countless lookout towers and viewpoints, as well as from castle ruins and fortresses that are more than 1000 years old.

But rewarding photo opportunities don't just await you on the peaks: the Lázberci reservoir, with the beauty of a pond surrounded by hills, the Bélkő mine with its lunar atmosphere, and the unusual shape of the Szarvaskő pillow lava all attract the attention of hikers.

The highest peak of Hungary, the 1014-metre-high Kékes, is located in the Mátra, and has been officially declared a climatic health resort since 1963 due to its fantastic air. In winter, the Kékestető transforms into a skiing paradise, while at other times of the year the area is a popular destination for hikers.



# Unforgettable unique experience

## BIVOUACING AT THE HIGHEST LOOKOUT

One of the most exciting peaks, as enjoyable at night as during the day, is the Galya Lookout. The highest lookout point in Hungary is also the country's most adventurous bivouac shelter. A 17-metre-high stone lookout has stood on this site since 1939. This internal enclosed stepped tower was rethought and developed into the current open structure. On the one hand, it was extended, making it 30 metres high, and on the other hand, the stairs were moved outside, so that the freed-up interior space now provides space for three chambers, each measuring 9 square metres. The unique atmosphere of the reinforced concrete cells is created by colourful windows and round metal doors, adding a constructivist, even pop-art atmosphere to the interiors. Designed with simplicity and respect for nature in mind, the shelter has no soft beds or heated bathrooms, but there is electricity, lighting and Wi-Fi, which is a luxury for a bivouac shelter. A minimalist cabin like this can accommodate up to five people at a time. For those who prefer less puritanical conditions and opt for a more comfortable overnight stay, there is also a tourist hostel at the foot of the lookout.





# Extreme adventures in the Bükk and the Mátra

Making full use of the steep hillsides, the rugged forest paths, the winding caves, and the wide open spaces, the services offer unforgettable fun for all generations, from the more relaxing experiences to the most extreme, in all seasons.

## **SPEEDING THROUGH THE WOODS**

Hold on tight to the handlebars and start the descent from Mátrafüred over a 700 m height difference, on the 7-kilometre-long forest track, with 2 or 3 giant wheels!

For mountain biking enthusiasts, the 1.5-2 hours spent on the most beautiful downhill trail in the country will probably be the highlight of trip to the Mátra. Also, if you're a four-wheeler fan, you can try out what an electric quad or SUV can do off-road.



## **145 000 SQUARE METRES OF**

### **A TREASURE TROVE OF EXPERIENCES**

No member of the family will leave the adventure park at the Sástó quarry without exciting memories.

They can shoot a bow or a paintball gun, make friends with peaceful pets or real battle tanks, hop on a quad bike, electric jet ski or a railbus, and test their fear of heights by walking 30 metres above the mine on a suspension bridge or sliding down the zip wire.

## **SLIDING ALL YEAR ROUND**

Mátraszentistván's 10 ski slope complex lures beginners with gentle slopes and advanced skiers with exciting curves, while non-skiers are entertained by snow slides.

What's more, you can even slide here in the summer on the 60-metre-long summer tubing track! The real "peak" is, of course, the southern ski slope of Kékestető: the whole family can start the 1.8 km descent to enjoy a warm cup of tea or mulled wine 230 metres below.

## **SPECTACULAR OBSTACLE COURSES UNDERGROUND**

Most of the caves in the Bükk and Mátra can be explored on easy walks or guided tours, but those who want a serious challenge will not be disappointed: Létrás Water Cave, the Bolhás Water Sink Cave and the Venus Cave, you can climb ladders in often vertical shafts and negotiate long crawlways with a helmet and head torch.

# An unmissable experience

## MOUNTAIN EXCURSIONS IN THE MÁTRA WITH SEGWAY

If you're looking for a real futuristic adventure in nature, hop on a terrain Segway in the Mátra, which will not only take you to the sights of Mátrafüred, but also to the forest. The course, which stretches for over 100 kilometres, has been designed so that even if you've never tried segwaying before, you can still get into the fun, with a beginner's mini-tour available. Once confident with the vehicle, you can take off for the Kallók Valley, the Forager lashup or the Parkerdő walking trail, or even the winding road to the rocks of the Bábakő, where tradition has it that witches used to be burned. But lovers of heights will also enjoy the Segway tour, as the route also includes the Kozmáry Lookout, from where you can enjoy a stunning panorama of the Mátra Valley and Gyöngyös.



## ADRENALINE CHART



# Enchanted fairytale landscapes in the Bükk National Park

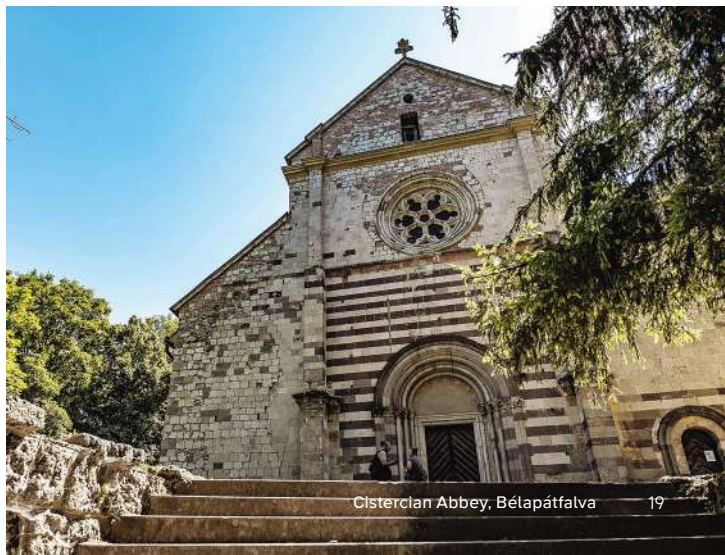
Writers could not have imagined a more beautiful setting than the Bükk National Park. Here, the road leads through deep forests and past trout lakes to attractions such as Fátyol Waterfall, Lillafüred, and Szilvásvár. If you visit in good weather, you can also admire the periodic karst springs, or “geysers”, of the Bükk. After heavy rainfall, but especially after snowmelt, karst water rises to the surface with a huge roar. In the national park you can also learn about the history of the world-famous Lipizzaner horses and their stud farm.

## GET CLOSER TO THE SKY IN THE BÜKK!

The Bükk National Park, also known as the third Hungarian stargazing park, offers stargazing opportunities at several points, including the Cistercian Abbey of Bélapátfalva, the Három-kő or the Kalapati Lookout near the Szalajka Valley in Szilvásvár. This landscape is also special because here in the mountains you can physically get closer to the wonders of the sky, which you can admire through a thinner layer of air. Astronomical observations, night walks, and forest schools are organised all year round in the area of the Stargazing Park, but it is also worth visiting the unique visitor centre, the Bükk Observatory, which has been opened in Répáshuta.



Lookout, Szilvásvár



Cistercian Abbey, Bélapátfalva

# Szalajka Valley: a fairy tale come to life

Imagine a meandering stream lined with alder trees, with a forest railway, riding stables, a wildlife park, a lake full of trout, an open-air museum, a cascading waterfall, and a postcard-worthy spring emerging from a cave. This place exists in real life: it's called the Szalajka Valley, and it's the perfect destination for a family trip.

## CARRIAGE RIDES WITH WORLD-FAMOUS HORSES

The famous Lipizzaner stud farm was saved from Napoleon's armies in Mezőhegyes, and today you can see it in Szilvásvárad, even after a ride in a carriage. If you can't get enough of horses – or history –, take a tour of the sulky and horse exhibitions!

## FOLLOW THE SOUND OF THE PLUMMETING WATER TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CASCADES!

### FÁTYOL WATERFALL

One of the country's most famous waterfalls is located in the Szalajka Valley, where the water runs down 17 metres of wide tuffaceous limestone stairs.

### ILONA VALLEY WATERFALL

The highest natural waterfall in Hungary is an ideal destination for an easy walk in the forest from Parádüfűdű, in an area of the Mátra with paths, rest areas, and chestnut trees.

### LILLAFÜRED WATERFALL

In summer, you can refresh yourself with a spray of water cascading down from 20 metres. In winter, with a bit of luck, you can admire giant icicle formations in the Palace Hotel's hanging garden.

# Ancient caves and fresh fish in Miskolc -Lillafüred

Just like the Szalajka Valley, Lillafüred and its surroundings are a fairytale landscape. Go on a leisurely stroll through the terraces of the hanging garden beneath, Palace Hotel before taking a selfie with the 20-metre waterfall and discovering some of the most spectacular underground sights: the limestone formations of Anna Cave, the stalactites of St Stephen's Cave, and the ancient relics of Seleta Cave. After admiring the gigantic, more than 200-year-old iron shelter of Újmassa and enjoying a pleasant boat ride on the tree-lined Hámori Lake, you'll enjoy a bite of freshly caught and prepared fish at the trout hatchery even more.



## AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE BÜKK FORESTS

Take the Lillafüred cable car and glide above the ground, listening to birdsong. With views like these, the 16-18 minute journey to the 606-metre-high Jávorhegy will almost seem too short.



# In the depths of the forest on the narrow gauge railway

## STATE FOREST RAILWAY OF FELSŐTÁRKÁNY

When the thaw sets in, you can see karst springs, as well as mouflons and deer passing by the wildlife park.

## STATE FOREST RAILWAY OF FELSŐTÁRKÁNY

Take the country's steepest funicular railway from the racecourse to the waterfall in the fairy-tale Szalajka Valley!



State Forest Railway, Szilvásvárad

## MÁTRA RAILWAY

You can take the tourist train to the Kozmáry Lookout, the Harkály House or the Palóc ethnographic exhibition, but there are also historic cellars and a geyser cone along the route. You can also visit the Mátra Museum in the Orczy Castle, at the starting point of the Mátra Railway in Gyöngyös.

## STATE FOREST RAILWAY OF LILLAFÜRED

The adventurous route winds through hillsides and lakeshores, crossing valley bridges and tunnels.

# Atmospheric walks in Eger, the city of the brave

25



CASTLE OF EGER

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE ENSEMBLE

ARCHDIOCESAN LIBRARY

24



MINARET

BASILICA OF EGER

VALLEY OF SZÉPASSZONY



25

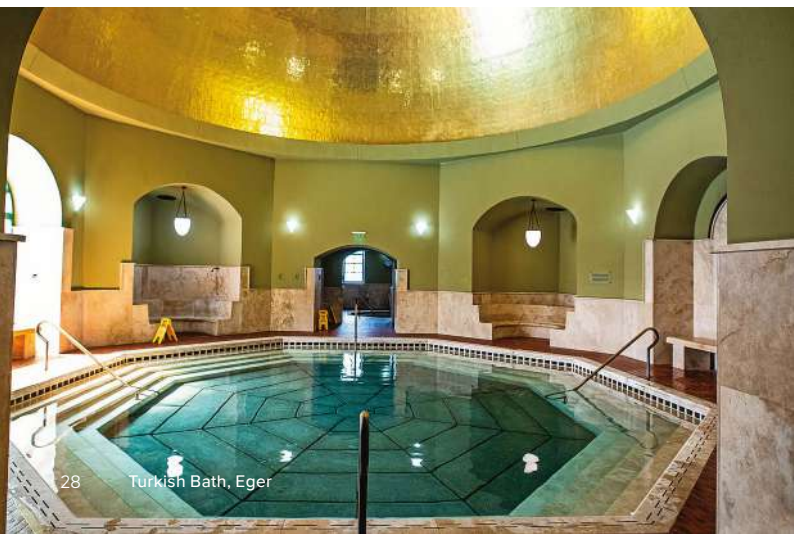
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The city may have been made famous by its heroic defenders, but Eger means so much more than just the memory of a famous battlefield: a baroque jewel box with winding historic streets, excellent restaurants, fine wines, and a lively festival scene. Enjoy the heavenly acoustics of organ concerts within the walls of Hungary's second largest church, admire the ceiling fresco of the Archdiocesan Library depicting the Council of Trent, then tour the elegant halls of the Archbishop's Palace Ensemble and the cool corridors of the underground city, the Archbishop's labyrinthine cellars. In glorious sunshine, explore the city's airy squares with sculptures and terraces, or picnic in the picturesque Archbishop's Garden.

# What did the Turks give Eger?

150 years of Turkish rule have not passed without a trace. Hungarian and Turkish culture certainly influenced each other, especially in peacetime. Wherever the Turks appeared, they immediately got busy building. On the one hand, they erected religious buildings – the best preserved minaret throughout Hungary is in Eger –, and on the other, they built baths. Eger is home to one of the most lavish Turkish baths in Hungary, named after Pasha Arnaut, but the ruins of the hamam of the Valide Sultan are also impressive. The Turks also left their mark beyond the buildings they built here. They loved and propagated roses, and also cultivated coffee and tobacco.



28 Turkish Bath, Eger

It was at that time that Hungarian cuisine became typically pork and fat-based, as these were not taken from the villages by the Turkish soldiers. But the Turks also gave the Hungarians the cauldron and paprika, pepper, tomatoes, aubergines, and poppy seeds to put in it. We wouldn't have the stuffed cabbage, tarhonya (egg barley), lecsó (Hungarian ratatouille), and lángos (the traditional Hungarian fried dough) without their influence. Without them, we wouldn't know how to call our boots and slippers today – csizma, papucs, and mamusz are among our many Turkish loanwords –, although it is also true that they introduced the korbács (whip), too.





# Battles and life with the Turks

## EGER AND THE BORDER CASTLE BATTLES

Eger Castle suffered two sieges in the second half of the 16th century. The story of the first of these is the most famous, as in 1552, under the leadership of István Dobó, the captain of the castle, the brave defenders were able to repulse the attack of the Turkish army, which vastly outnumbered them. But less than half a century later, in 1596, the Turks made no more mistake: the castle, defended by Captain Pál Nyáry, couldn't withstand the attack this time. The majority of the defenders decided to surrender: the captain was handed over to the besiegers, and the castle was abandoned, remaining in Turkish hands until 1687.



The well-preserved castle offers thousands of experiences: you can take a selfie with István Dobó and visit the sultan in the panopticon, shiver at the dungeon's assorted torture methods or go on a 3D time travel in the castle cinema. You will surely notice the only intact minaret in Eger already from the castle. If you are in good shape, the 97 steps are well worth climbing for the view.

# Castles in the area – history you can touch

## THE HOLLÓKÓ CASTLE

The jewel of the Cserhát is the irregularly shaped castle perched on a 400-metre-high cliff. The associated legend is, of course, much more colourful than the historical reality. It tells us that the village and the castle are actually named Hollókő (Raven's Stone) after the pieces of a castle that a lord had built around a kidnapped woman were taken by hellions in the shape of ravens. In reality, the castle was started by the Illés branch of the Kachich tribe during the Tartar invasion, and over the centuries it has had many owners who have always made changes to it, which is why it has such irregular walls. It was demolished around 1700, its stones were scattered, and it was only in 1966 that excavation and restoration began.



## THE CASTLE OF KISNÁNA

For legend-hungry visitors, this is paradise, pure and simple. Do you want to find out if the dragon is yawning while it sleeps its thousand-year sleep? Throw a coin into the well of the castle, and if it doesn't make a sound, the dragon swallowed it while yawning, so you're in luck! But you may also hear about King Matthias and the lion, or László Móré, the robber horseman to whom the castle's end days are linked, as the Buda Pasha grew tired of his attacks on Turkish merchants and had it destroyed in 1543. It was never again restored, but the inhabitants of the area used the pieces as building materials. The castle, built by János Kompolti more than five hundred years ago, has become one of the most attractive historical monuments in the Mátra Valley after its reconstruction in 2010-2011. The interactive features, the breathtaking panorama from the Old Tower, the candelabra-lined walkway, the drawbridge, and the castle games will take adventure hunters back in time.



## THE CASTLE OF SIROK

The road to the most significant castle ruin of the Mátra is a minor hike in itself, as it is built on the summit of a former volcano. Perched on top of the Castle Hill, on the border between the forests of the Bükk and Mátra, the fortress was carved into a boulder and built on top of it. This unique building can be reached by a sometimes steep hiking trail, but it is well worth the effort. Huge passages, staircases, and chambers have been carved into the bowels of the rhyolite tuff mountain, which can be entered and explored. Mysterious windows open from the cavities and the complex system of casemates onto the road to the castle. The permanent exhibition of the fortress takes visitors back to the time of the Ottoman occupation, but, in a unique way in Hungary, not to the Hungarian border castle soldiers, but to the everyday life of the Ottoman soldiers who lived here between 1596 and 1686. Last but not least, you can enjoy an amazing panorama from the castle.



## CASTLE OF DIÓSGYŐR, MISKOLC

The Gothic castle, built by Louis the Great in the 14th century, stands on a rocky hill at the foot of the Bükk, in the valley of the Szinva stream. The castle of Diósgyőr is also known as the castle of the queens, as for more than a century it was owned by the wives of monarchs who received it as a wedding present and used it as a country residence. Today, the castle is full of life again: period furnishings, costumed animators, and historical games take visitors back to the past. Knights' tournaments, guided tours in period costumes, weapons demonstrations, archery... there are plenty of things to do for everyone who comes to Diósgyőr Castle. It also has the largest knights' hall in central Europe from the reign of Louis the Great.

# Sightseeing and festival experiences in Miskolc

Take a stroll along the pedestrian street, read the flower clock on St Stephen Square, admire view from the Avas Lookout, then sit in one of the restaurants or cafés and taste the special artisan beers. Miskolc is worth at least a day, but the world-class events that return to the city and its surroundings year after year attract hundreds of tourists to stay longer.

## THE WOODEN CHURCH

Although one of the city's outstanding historical and architectural landmarks, the renewed Wooden Church (Deszkatemplom) the Szekler gate, was inaugurated in 1999, the site still preserves the memory of a bygone era, as there has always been a church there since 1698, each with an interesting history.

## AVAS

The Avas Hill, which rises in the centre, is worth a visit not only for the view, but also for the almost 400-year-old wine cellars, which are unique in Europe, the medieval Gothic Reformed church, the 16th century bell tower, and the monumental cemetery, which are also symbols of Miskolc.



# Events that make the area buzz with vitality



## **CINEFEST MISKOLC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

At Hungary's leading film festival, audiences, professionals and, of course, the international jury can enjoy the year's most important films, many of which are screened here for the first time in Hungary.

## **AVAS WINE FESTIVAL (AVASI BORANGOLÁS)**

The Avas Hill, rising in the heart of Miskolc, is home to one of the most unique wine festivals in the country. In mid-May, thousands of people toast on the cobble streets of the mountain, while listening to exhilarating music.

## **MEDIEVAL BUSTLE IN THE CASTLE OF DIÓSGYŐR**

On the last weekend in July, nearly two hundred traditionalists will make the audience feel as if they've stepped into a medieval historical movie: spears crash on the shields in the Tournament Square, archers' arrows and falcons whizz through the sky, fairground comedians entertain the audience, and court orchestras set the mood for the medieval dance show.

# World-famous settlements where time stands still

A colourful cavalcade of village life awaits you in Hollókő, which is on UNESCO's World Heritage List as the safekeeper of Palóc traditions – just like the Matyó embroidery that inspires fashion designers and still flourishes in Mezőkövesd.



## HOLLÓKŐ

All the charms of the unspoilt countryside come alive in this cul-de-sac village. Stroll past the shingle-roofed church, past the farmhouses with their ornate porches, and learn some tricks of the old trades in the craft workshops. You just have to experience for yourself what Easter in Hollókő is like! The streets are filled with folk music, homemade strudel is baked to go along with brandy, and girls in fancy folk costumes run from the lads who want to sprinkle them with water, according to custom. If you're walking in the woods surrounding the village, discover the Vár-alja educational trail, which leads along the valley of the Vár-forrás Spring and presents the natural and cultural history of the area.

# Discover Matyóland and its capital!

Where does the name Matyóland come from? The inhabitants of the town and its surroundings, situated at the junction of the Bükk Region and the he Hungarian Plain (Alföld), were (and still are called) Matyós. The origin of the name is disputed, but it is said to have been born from the nickname of King Matthias, who elevated Mezőkövesd to the status of a market town in 1472.

## **WHERE THE RED MATYÓ ROSES BLOOM**

Over time, the city has become world-famous for its embroidery culture, which even has a legend attached to its origins. According to this story, the devil once kidnapped a Matyó lad whose sweetheart begged the devil to return him. The devil finally said to the girl: "You'll get your lover back when you bring me the most beautiful flowers of summer in your apron." The girl was in big trouble, as it was wintertime. In the end, she embroidered the beautiful roses of the garden on her apron and brought that in exchange for her sweetheart. This is how the Matyó embroidery culture was born. The local people cherish their two centuries of folk art, welcome visitors with open arms, and can't wait to show off their treasures, which were inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2012 and the Collection of Hungarikums – Collection of Hungarian Values in 2013.



In Hadas you can also take a closer look at the eye-catching, colourful Matyó patterns in the Hadas district, with the most important motif being the Pentecost rose or the Matyó rose. Initially, embroidery appeared only on bedspreads and blankets, but later also on women's and men's clothing and tablecloths. Over time, their motifs were painted on crates, plates, and cutlery, some of which can still be seen in the local Matyó Museum.



### THE HOUSE THAT COMMEMORATES THE MOST FAMOUS MATYÓ

A prominent figure in Matyó folk art is Bori Kisjankó, whose former home you can visit anytime you're in the skansen-like Hadas district of the city. The area, with its winding streets and thatched-roof farmhouses with whitewashed walls, seems like a veritable Matyó universe, taking you back in time a century or more, recalling the way of life in a former farming town. The name of the city centre, Hadas, means "kinsfolk": families who were related to each other were fellow warriors (hadak) and often lived in the same region. The former house of the embroiderer and pattern designer, who was also awarded the title of Master of Folk Art, has been converted into a memorial house, where you can see her exceptional drawings and a period Matyó house. The neat cottage, faithfully preserving the characteristics of the folk architecture of Mezőkövesd, was built around 1850.



# Refreshing experiences for body and soul

If you need to heal, relax or have fun, the answer is water. Take a deep breath of crystal-clear air in the depths of a beautiful cave in the embrace of 30 °C thermal water – or pluck up your courage and slide down the kamikaze slide in a modern water park!

## MOUNTAIN WELLNESS

If you want real refreshment and total relaxation, visit a forest guest-house or hotel and experience the luxury of nature. Relaxing in the jacuzzi with your sweetheart, enjoying the heat of the sauna, and admiring the forests and mountain scenery... what could be more magical? Off to the Mátra-Bükk!



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Mátra and the Bükk is famous for its medicinal climate. In Lillafüred and the Szalajka Valley, you can relax by hiking in the crystal clear air, while in Mátraderecke or Parádfürdő you can try the dry baths, which are recommended for cardiovascular problems, thanks to the carbon dioxide gas eruptions, or mofettes for short, that rise from a depth of 1,000 metres and work their beneficial effects through the skin. It is also worth tasting the medicinal gift of the dry mofetta, the csevice of Pará, which is nothing other than sulphurous, carbonated sour water.

## TURKISH BATH OF EGER

Most atmospheric attraction of Turkish bath is the large reflecting pool. Take a dip in it – and besides the bathing experience, the view will also be extraordinary! You'll have huge dome of 200,000 gold mosaics shining over your head, while sulphurous thermal water bubbles up from the crevices in the stone slabs from beneath your feet. Absorbed through the skin and lungs, this curative water has anti-inflammatory and soothing effects.

## DIP IN ONE, SIP FROM THE OTHER!

Those who want to relax and bathe should visit the spas of Bogács and Mezőkövesd. The latter is famous for having the highest sulphur content in Hungary with its thermal water at 60 °C. Some medicinal waters in the region – for example in Bükkszék – are also good for stomach ailments when used as a water cure.

### **EGERSZALÓK SALT HILL**

The 1,200-square-metre limestone deposit of Egerszalók is an iconic and a global rarity, with only two other natural formations like it in the world. The hot spring water from the depths found its way to the surface on the top of a hill, and the precipitated lime on the hillside created a brilliant, snow-white surface. It's also the perfect location for taking fun photos together.

### **MISKOLCTAPOLCA**

Miskolctapolca Cave Baths are unique in Europe. Guests can bathe here in natural halls and cave passages formed over thousands of years, admire the extraordinary natural formations, listen to the echoes of the starry hall and enjoy the pleasant massage of the wild water flow.



# Characterful wines of a distinctive landscape

The unique feature of the 13,000 hectares of the Upper-Hungarian wine region is that the vineyards are mainly planted on 200-300 metre high plateaus and on the slopes of the hills, which also influence the character of the wines. Complexity, elegance, and playfulness – the Mátra wine district produces the country's most fragrant, beautifully acidic wines, while the Bükk boasts white and red wines with a vibrant, lively character and a modern approach, which you can also taste in the 300-400-year-old cellars of the Avas Hill in Miskolc.

The most notable of the three is the Eger wine district, which boasts a 1,000-year history and whose emblematic wines are the Egri Bikavér and its counterpart, the Egri Csillag, a white cuvée made from a blend of Carpathian Basin varieties. You can discover their distinctive flavours in excellent wineries and trendy wine bars along the streets of Eger – and for gourmets, a trip to Noszvaj, Egerszalók, Szomolya, Ostoros, and the Nagy-Eged Hill is a must. Here, you can taste local wines in cellars, some of which are carved into the hillside.



## MOST FAMOUS WINES OF THE THREE WINE REGIONS

### 1. EGRI BIKAVÉR

One of the country's most famous wines, the Bikavér, based on the Blaufränkisch grape variety, was first made by Jenő Gróber in 1912. According to the rules, at least three blue grape varieties must be blended and aged in wood barrels for 6 months to make this wine. You can choose from superior or grand superior bikavér wines – the most famous ones come from the Nagy-Eged Hill, where the highest vineyards in Hungary are located.

### 2. EGRI CSILLAG

The idea of 60 local winemakers to blend white grapes from the Carpathian Basin to create the white counterpart of the Egri Bikavér. Taste the fresh vintage at wine festivals in Eger and you'll understand why it has become so popular – and in record time!

### 3. MÁTRAI ITALIAN RIESLING (OLASZRIZLING)

Reminiscent of reseda on the nose and bitter almond on the palate, this wine with its rich aromas has been practically reborn and has found its best version in recent decades.

### 4. BLAUFRÄNKISCH

The region's – and the country's – most important, most widely grown grape variety, it produces surprisingly complex, fine wines ranging from the refreshing rosé to full-bodied, single vineyard reds.

### 5. IRSAI OLIVÉR

The largest quantities of this grape variety are grown in the Mátra wine district. If anywhere, this is the place to taste this fresh, fruity wine with greenish-yellowish tone, Muscat taste, and soft acidity.

# Traditional flavours served in classic and modern ways

For a taste of the local cuisine – and the justly famous village hospitality –, you can visit a tavern with carved chairs and embroidered tablecloths for some strapacka potato dumplings. But thanks to the gastronomic revolution, you can also book a table in premium restaurants, where you can discover, for example, the harmony of duck breast and fruit aged in wine vinegar, in a modern setting.

If you're tempted by the simplicity of perfectly simple, richly spiced dishes, Palóc cuisine is not to be missed!

There's a wide repertoire of soups thickened with slurry – the cabbage and mushroom soup is a real speciality – and potatoes are used in many ways: they are cooked in the famous Palóc goulash with green beans, boiled and used in the laska – also known as the Palóc potato pancakes –, and grated and fried until crispy for the tócsni.

The sweets include the molnárkalács (miller's wafers), made on the baking plate and inspired by holy wafers, and the pampuska, or ribbon donuts, which are the real deal, with some jam, at any carnival.

## WHITE ON WHITE

If you get hungry in the fresh air of the Szalajka Valley, some crispy fried white-fleshed trout with potatoes, cucumber, and a glass of fresh Egri Csillag is the best choice.

Trout bred and reared in home waters are found in very few restaurants today. In the Szalajka Valley in Szilvásvárad, however, this is the main course. Here you can taste it hot-smoked – but it is still to be eaten strictly cold. The other option is Lillafüred, where, once you've explored all there is to see, it's worth continuing a little further towards Bánkút. The owners of the local trout farm have opened a four-season gastronomic workshop, where you can enjoy the fish bred and reared here, smoked or fried in puff pastry, perhaps with lemon mousse, home-grown herbs, crispy kale chips, and puffed capers.

The name of the famous Palóc soup (palócleves) is rather a linguistic invention of the master chefs of the Gundel kitchen. Mikszáth Kálmán, the writer they called "the greatest Palóc", was surprised on his birthday by the dynasty founder János Gundel with a soup similar to goulash soup, but lighter, rich in green beans, and soured with sour cream.

# Our favourite photos of the region

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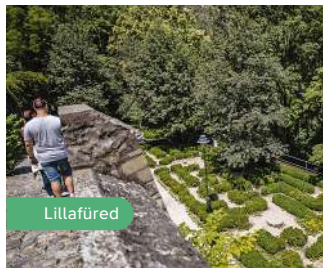
Castle of Diósgyőr



Mátaszentistván



Galyatető



Lillafüred



Noszvaj



Eger

# Nearby sights

## **KNOWER OF THE SECRETS THAT LIE BENEATH THE EARTH: THE AGGTELEK NATIONAL PARK**

Aggtelek is the first Hungarian national park dedicated to protect geological values, the karst phenomena of the landscape, and the famous dripstone caves. No less than two of the park's caves are world record holders: the 25-kilometre-long Baradla-Domica cave system, which extends into Slovakia, is the longest cave with an underground river in the temperate climatic zone, and the Szilice ice cave is the lowest-lying ice cave in the world. Besides the mysterious caves with beautiful stalactites, the fauna and flora of the region is also remarkable, and the Hucul horse farm in the park is also well worth a visit. The Hucul horse is a small horse, only 130 centimetres tall, also known as the pony of the Carpathians.

## **GET SPIRITUALLY RECHARGED AT THE HOLY WELL**

Legend has it that the hoof of St Ladislaus' horse caused water to spring up from the ground, and the water magically gave back the voice of a mute boy. Later, a religious tourism complex has been built around the fountain at the pilgrimage site in Matraverebély. After a tour of the magnificently decorated baroque church and churchyard, you can sit in the pews of the vast outdoor mass location to admire the holy images behind the altar.





### **THE UNIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AT IPOLYTARNÓC**

In the Bükk National Park you can see shark teeth, petrified trees, leaf imprints, and prehistoric animal footprints in excellent condition, thanks to a volcanic eruption 17 million years ago.

### **LOOKING FOR FINE WINES AT SUNSET**

If you want to experience the unadulterated atmosphere of Tokaj wine region, don't miss the vineyard tour, which is now offered by several wineries. Tokaj Hegyalja lies on hills of volcanic origin, so scenic views are guaranteed. While on your way, taste the Tokaji aszú, which is admired the world over.

### **CANOEING AMIDST THE CHIRPING BIRDS**

At some point in their lives, everyone should try paddling on the most popular water touring route on the Upper Tisza. It's an ideal place for beginners as well to learn the technique, while Tisza makes the hours spent here adventurous for everyone with countless bends and sandbanks.

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