

# UNESCO



“There is no architecture without environment and there is no beauty

of nature without people for there would be no one to acknowledge

it. Nature, people and the culture created by people in a given area are

fundamental treasures for every nation. The damage or destruction of

any part of such cultural or natural heritage is an irreplaceable loss to the

national heritage...”

(UNESCO, Recommendation concerning the safeguarding of beauty  
and character of landscapes and sites, 1962, Paris)



In the spirit of this motto, the General Conference of UNESCO at its 17<sup>th</sup> session in Paris adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage with the aim of creating conditions to support the preservation and protection of the cultural landscape as a unique composite of objects, natural sites and human activity, and based on their outstanding importance, that they should be preserved as the common heritage of humanity.

Within the Prešov Region can be found the biggest concentration of architectural, cultural and natural monuments. It is also the area where four out of the seven Slovak World Heritage Listed locations, approved and listed by the committee, can be found.

Discover the colourful picturesqueness of the **historical centre of the town of Bardejov**, and the medieval charm of the area around **Spišský Castle, Levoča and surrounding cultural monuments**, renew your spiritual strength by wandering around the **wooden churches of the Slovak Carpathians** and get to know the captivating wildness of the **primeval Carpathian beech forests**.



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## The historical centre of Bardejov

The picturesque Town Hall Square is lined by forty-six townhouses, dominated by the Basilica minor of St Giles and its secular opposite, the Town Hall, and surrounded by uniquely preserved city walls and a mysterious Jewish suburb. They are all living testament to the time when Bardejov proudly bore a free royal town status and lived the busy trading and artisan life of a rich medieval centre. Their exceptional historical and cultural significance brought honour to the town in 2000 when it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.







### The city walls

The right to build the stone walls was granted to the town in 1352 by Louis the Great of Anjou. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the town was profiting from a perfect fortification system consisting of a stone wall with three main town gates and a moat with a drawbridge. Reinforcing bastions were added in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



### The Town Hall Square

Illustrating the golden age of Bardejov is this picturesque square, standing in the embrace of forty-six traditional townhouses, the grand Basilica minor of St Giles and the Town Hall. The central square, with its juxtaposition of secular and religious buildings, reflects the transition between architectural styles typical to the medieval town during the Gothic and Renaissance periods.







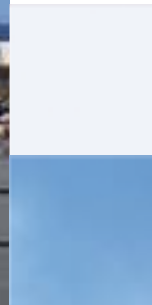
### The Basilica minor of St Giles

Originally a Gothic building from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it will impress thanks to its eleven wing altars with paintings. It underwent numerous restorations with the last in 1878 after the town was devastated by fire. One of the most significant points of the sacred space is the main neo-Gothic altar, from 1878, completed with statues of St Giles, St Stephen and St Ladislaus. Other features include the anatomically precise Golgotha sculptures from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, depicting the crucified Christ alongside the two thieves. The sacral importance of this building and spiritual place was recognised in 2000 by Pope John Paul II when he elevated it from a church to a basilica minor.



### The Town Hall

Built at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it marks the arrival of Renaissance architecture. It became a symbol of a flourishing economical and social life, which brought with it the need to build a more representative place for meetings of the town council. Architectural details such as decorated portals, decorative shield paintings, coats of arms, and the beamed ceiling and furniture of the Council Hall increase the artistic value of the premises, which currently houses the Šariš Museum.



### Jewish suburb

In accordance with regulations that for centuries made it impossible for Jews to reside within free royal towns, one of the most important cultural heritage sites from the 18<sup>th</sup> century grew outside of the city walls: a group of buildings including a nine-vault synagogue dating from 1836, rich with ornamental decoration and home to an impressive Hebrew poetic chronogram, and a school and ritual baths.







form, located in the area of two regions and several districts. In the context of world heritage they represent historically unspoilt locations of medieval settlements in the Spiš Region that, despite their geographical proximity and connections have never merged. Their cultural significance has been acknowledged by the entry onto the UNESCO World Heritage List of the historical centre of Levoča with the art of Master Pavol, Spišské Podhradie and Spiš Kapitula.



# Spiš Castle, Levoča and surrounding cultural monuments

The biggest medieval square in Europe, a church with the tallest Gothic altar from Master Pavol, and one of the largest castle complexes. This is only a very brief account of the unique cultural monuments that originate from the Middle Ages and are preserved in their original





### Levoča

A magnificent historical town that hides great cultural wealth behind its walls. It grew on the busy trade route Via Magna where two Slavic settlements stood originally. Thanks to its strategic location and privileges granted by the Hungarian kings, the town successfully traded with Krakow, the German Hanseatic League and Venice in

the Middle Ages. King Bela IV mentioned 'Leucha' for the first time in documents from 1249, and 22 years later it became the capital of the Spiš community. Levoča was granted free royal town privileges by Charles Robert of Anjou in 1317, with the town entering its golden age between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it experienced unprecedented trade and its cultural peak.



The character of medieval Renaissance and Gothic monuments situated in the biggest medieval square in Europe is complemented by the almost completely preserved 2.5 km long city wall. The **three-nave Church of St James from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century** dominates the square. A main attraction is the **altar of Master Pavol**, which thanks to its height of 18.62 m and width of 6 m is considered the tallest late-Gothic wooden altar in the world and also the only work of Master Pavol with his distinct signature. Another sacral monument with national significance is the well-preserved **cloister in the Minorite Monastery**, a one of a kind in the country. Secular monuments that contribute a unique character to the town are the **Town Hall** built between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, **Thurzo House** with its impressive sgraffito features and the **townhouses**, considered to mark the peak of secular Renaissance architecture in Slovakia. The **Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary from the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the chapel on the Marian hill above** is one of the most significant pilgrimage sites in Slovakia and a spiritual landmark of the town.





### Spišské Podhradie

Underneath the monumental rock walls of the Spiš Castle can be found another witness to medieval life in the Spiš basin. Its history as a typical servile town is inseparably tied to the castle. The first written reference to the town dates back to 1249, with town privileges granted in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As a part of the Spiš community, it became an important artisan centre and at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as many as 250 artisan workshops operated there.

**Well-preserved townhouses**, in Gothic and Renaissance style with some Classical and Baroque features, reflect the contemporary architecture of the time as well as inhabitants' standard of living.

An architectural landmark of the town is the Romanesque **Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary** from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, later altered to include Classical features and a Gothic winged altar.

**The renaissance Town Hall** from 1546 with a preserved town coat of arms is a secular authority in the historical centre.

Since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the town had its own hospital located in the **Augustine Monastery of the Order of the Brothers of Mercy**.

**A replica of the original Baroque Marian Column from 1726** is a reminder of the plague that raged there in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is decorated with an Immaculata statue.

**A Jewish synagogue** from 1875 is a reference to the time when the town was home to a strong Jewish community.



Part of the interior is the oldest preserved Romanesque **travertine statue** in Slovakia – **Leo Albus**.

In 1493, Palatine Štefan Zápoľský gave an order to build a **burial chapel**, in which he was later buried. Gothic architecture and late-Gothic features are complemented by impressive colourful stained glass.

Other well-preserved objects include the city wall with lower and upper gates, the Gothic and Renaissance houses of the canonists, a late-Renaissance palace with baroque features from 1652 and the **clock tower from 1739**.

### Spišská Kapitula

An ecclesiastical town and later the spiritual centre of the Spiš region, established at the intersection of important routes near the Spiš Castle in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and granted town status in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries it became the residence of the Spiš provost and in 1776 the seat of the Diocese of Spiš. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it acquired a reputation as a trustworthy place and fulfilled the role of notaries in medieval times. In 1819, the oldest educational institute of the Kingdom of Hungary was established here.

Dominating the town is **St. Martin's Cathedral** from 1245–1273, where you can find rare Gothic furniture and decorations.

**A fresco painting from 1317** depicting the coronation of Charles Robert of Anjou.







## The wooden churches of the Carpathians

The Carpathians. The crossroad of eastern, western, southern and northern cultural influences and various religions. 61 unique sacral buildings – wooden churches, the living witnesses of a peaceful coexistence and mixing of different cultures between the 16th and the 18th century. Unique Roman Catholic, Protestant churches and Eastern Rite churches built without a single nail, located on a dominant site outside of the village and often difficult to access. Timber buildings roofed with shingles and often accompanied by a belfry and cemetery. Their characteristic

feature is a division of the space into three sections that symbolise the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is emphasised by the gradual division of the towers with their height increasing towards the west. In addition to altars and liturgical objects found in the interior of the iconostasis can be found a wall covered with icons depicting scenes from the Old and New Testament and of the Apostles. In 2008, eight of these unique buildings were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List for their uniqueness, authenticity and level of preservation. Four of them can be found in the area of the Prešov Region in the following locations: Hervartov, Kežmarok, Bodružal and Lodomirová.







### Bodružal

The Church of St. Nicholas from 1658 is a Greek Catholic church of the Eastern Rite dedicated to St. Nicholas the Wondermaker, Archbishop of Myra. White gold baroque decorations are complemented by wall paintings from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century depicting the Apocalypse and Crucifixion. A three-row Rococo iconostasis dates from the same period.



### Hervartov

A Roman Catholic Church of St. Francis of Assisi from 1500, it is the oldest and best-preserved wooden church in Slovakia. An altar to St. Catherine, the Virgin Mary and St. Barbara dominates the interior of this Gothic building, while late-Gothic paintings of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Christopher and St. Catherine of Siena will also attract attention.



### Kežmarok

A Protestant wooden articular Church of the Holy Trinity from 1717 built on the basis of special permits and articles issued by the Šoproňa Council in 1681. Protestants from across northern Europe contributed financially towards the building of the church that was supposedly carried out by Swedish sailors, which is why the upper part of the interior resembles an upside down ship's bow. A sophisticated ceiling painting of the Twelve Apostles and four Evangelists completes the interior.



### Ladomirová

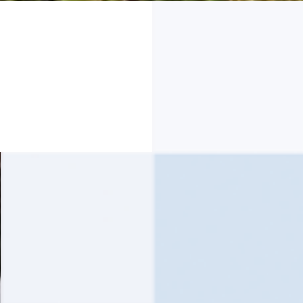
The Church of St. Michael the Archangel dates back to 1742. The altar and five-row iconostasis dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century have the biggest artistic value.







forest in the Vihorlatské vrchy hills, have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2007.



## Carpathian beech forests

On the borders of Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine are several indigenous mountain forest reservations. Beeches, firs and maples grow to unprecedented proportions alongside a few endemic species native to this area and other rare types of fauna. Four of these exceptional areas – the Stužica, Havešová and Rožok forests in the Bukovské vrchy hills and the Kyjovský







**Havešová**

At an altitude ranging between 440 and 740 metres above sea level, trees grow to unusual heights thanks to the humidity of the region. The maximum height of any beech was recorded at 53 m. Other species found in the area include the sycamore, Norwegian maple, European ash and Golden Wych elm.

**Kyjovský**

In the western part of the Vihorlat mountain range around Kyjov hill, at an altitude between 610 and 821 metres above sea level, is another unique reservation with a preserved homogeneous beech forest where trees with an age of 240 years and older are commonly found. On the rocky peak of Kyjov can be found ash with a circumference of up to 380 cm. Other species include the Golden Wych elm and Norwegian maple with shrubs such as Hazel, Pink-flowering Dogwood and gooseberry also prevalent. Some of the rare animal species living in the area are the Rosalia longicorn, Leptura thoracica, Yellow-bellied toad, Carpathian newt, Fire salamander and European adder. Bird species include the opera singing Black woodpecker, White-backed woodpecker, Hazel grouse and slender Black stork. And the masters among the predators are the European lynx and Grey wolf. European bison represents the original Carpathian fauna.



**Stužica**

The dominant species found in the biggest beech forest, which covers an area of 761.49 hectares, is paradoxically the white fir with a lifespan of up to 500 years. The oldest queen of the forest is almost 50 m tall with a trunk circumference of 518 cm and is more than 300 years old. In her company are beech, ash, elm and maple trees. The unspoilt appearance of this place, situated in the valley between Kremenec hill and Stužica river at an altitude between 647 and 1210 metres above sea level, pictures perfectly the primeval forests of the past. Within the forest can be found 500 types of mushrooms, 105 types of lichen and 190 bryophytes, many of which are endemic in the eastern part of the Carpathians. Mostly birds, many of which are endangered species, make up the fauna of the area. It is also home to the red deer, grey wolf, brown bear, Eurasian lynx and European otter.



**Rožok**

The forest covers an area of 66 hectares across the slopes of a hill of the same name at an altitude ranging between 460 and 780 metres above sea level. The main species is the European beech occasionally accompanied by sycamore. The difficult to access location of the reservation has contributed to the preservation of much of the native vegetation.







European Regional Development Fund  
"Investing in your future"

**A collection of systematic informational and  
promotional materials about PSK  
(Prešov Autonomous Region)**

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