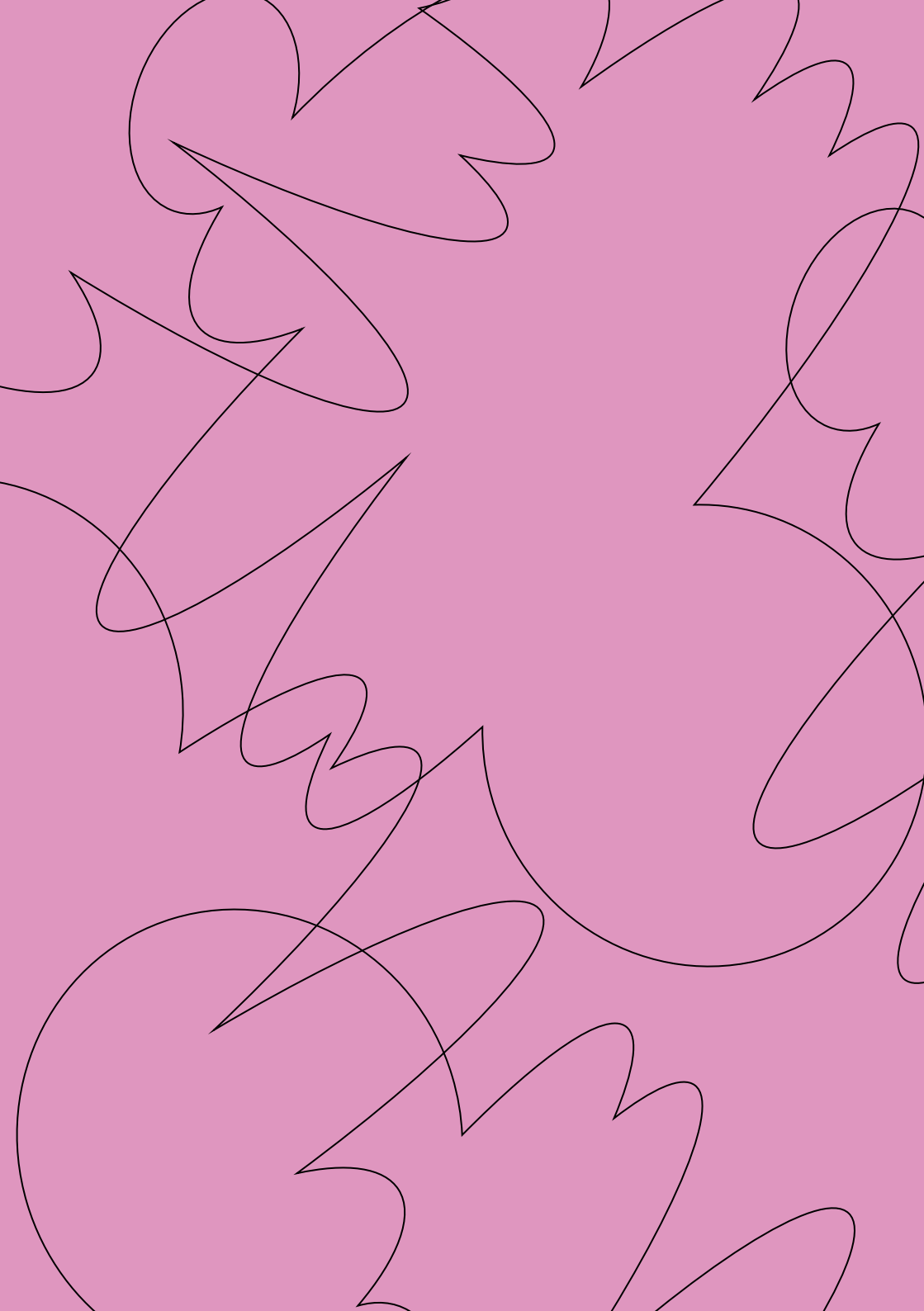


The Porter



Issue 1

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Where Every Newcomer Shapes the City's Story

Košice is a city with a rich history, vibrant culture, and a close-knit community. From its medieval roots to its modern-day energy, the city has always been shaped by the people who call it home. While many of our citizens have had the fortune to be born and raised here, we place great value on those who have chosen to make Košice their new home. Your decision to settle here is not only appreciated — it enriches our city by bringing new perspectives, experiences, and diversity that help us grow and evolve together.

We understand that moving to a new place can be both exciting and challenging. Adjusting to a different culture, building new connections, and learning the rhythm of a new city takes time and courage. I want to assure you that Košice is a city that prides itself on its welcoming spirit and strong sense of community. People here are open, friendly, and eager to share their city with newcomers.

Whether you are here for work, study, or to enjoy a new chapter in life, we hope you quickly feel at home. We believe that everyone has something unique to contribute, and we warmly encourage you to become an active part of local life — in your neighborhood, at cultural events, or through professional networks. Your voice matters here, and your presence helps make Košice more dynamic and inclusive.

Košice offers a variety of opportunities for both personal and professional growth, along with a wealth of recreational, cultural, and social activities. From world-class art and music to green parks, vibrant cafés, and a growing innovation scene, there is something here for everyone.

So, welcome. We are excited to have you as part of our community, and we wish you every success and happiness as you embark on this new journey.



Jaroslav Polaček
Mayor of City of Košice



Košice: A City in Continuous Motion

For centuries, Košice has flourished at the intersection of Europe's great trade routes. Down those roads flowed merchants, scholars, soldiers, and dreamers. In successive eras, Slovaks, Hungarians, Germans, Czechs, Rusyns, Ukrainians, Romanians, and vibrant Jewish and Christian communities shaped how the city grew. Each group contributed its own craft, faith, and enterprise, layering the heritage that still animates Košice today.

That legacy also sets the standard for the future. An international city is measured not by how many districts it has, but by the quality of its rail, road, and air links; by how effortlessly a visitor can switch from Slovak to English at a public counter; and by how quickly a newcomer becomes a neighbor. At BUSINESS KOŠICE, we hold ourselves to that standard, and I will challenge this team with three regular questions:

Attraction – What concrete steps did we take to bring new talent to Košice — whether from Bratislava, Brno, Bangalore, or Boston?

Retention – How are we helping the talent already here imagine a five-year horizon, not just a semester-long Erasmus stay, a short visit by a Ukrainian student who continues further west, or a week-long business trip?

Enablement – Which barriers — paperwork, language, infrastructure — did we actually remove so that living, working, and enjoying life here is easier than it was a year ago?

If the answers are thin, we iterate; when they are strong, we scale. The only sustainable marketing for this city is lived experience. A smoother commute, a welcoming community hub, a bilingual city website, or a direct flight where none existed will always outweigh a stack of glossy brochures.

Much work remains. Communities must be formed, digital services need fuller English coverage, and public projects demand faster delivery. Yet Košice is not short of one vital ingredient: a sense of urgency. From city hall to campus cafés, more voices than ever are talking about this city and its future — and they refuse to settle for endless plans, documents, and discussions. That impatience is an asset in change management, provided we convert it into action now.

Together, we will ensure that Košice continues to honor its history as a city repeatedly renewed by people who arrived, contributed, and chose to stay.



Peter Šoltés
Chairman of the Board
BUSINESS KOŠICE, n. o.



From vision to impact — Shaping the future of Košice

What need did the establishment of the non-profit organization BUSINESS KOŠICE respond to?

BUSINESS KOŠICE was established to address the pressing need for a structured, long-term approach to Košice's economic and urban development. While the city showed great potential, it lacked a neutral platform that could connect public institutions, private companies, and academia, drive systemic change, and represent Košice externally as an ambitious and future-oriented city. Our organization was created to fill that gap and has since become a key driver of data-driven sustainable development.

What is your main vision and mission?

Our vision is for a modern, innovative, and inclusive Košice — a city where quality of life goes hand in hand with talent development, entrepreneurship, and culture. BUSINESS KOŠICE's mission is to create an environment where both people and ideas can thrive. We drive collaboration, support talent, and work to internationalize the city's profile. Our work is grounded in trust, partnerships, and a long-term view of Košice as a strong, interconnected ecosystem.

What areas does BUSINESS KOŠICE focus on?

We focus on key strategic pillars: developing the business and innovation ecosystem, providing long-term support for investment, attracting and retaining talent, and managing data effectively.

Beyond this, we implement initiatives that improve the city's quality of life — from supporting investors and businesses, to offering services for foreigners, and fostering networking and cross-sector cooperation between education, science, business, and public administration.

What are the biggest obstacles holding back the region's economic growth?

Košice has a solid foundation and much to offer, but faces structural challenges common to cities in transition. Suburbanization shifts residents and businesses to surrounding areas, impacting city revenues and increasing pressure on transportation. Retaining young talent remains crucial, as many seek opportunities abroad. While transport infrastructure meets daily needs, continued investment is needed to enhance connectivity. Economically, Košice has strong industries and a growing tech sector but can further diversify and boost competitiveness. At BUSINESS KOŠICE, we focus on fostering collaboration across sectors to support strategic initiatives that strengthen connectivity, talent retention, and economic resilience.

One of your activities under the EU-funded project Innovative Košice 2030 is to attract and retain talent.

What is BUSINESS KOŠICE doing in this regard?
Within the Innovative Košice 2030 project, supported by the European Union, we implement activities aimed

at making Košice attractive to both local and international talent. We create resources that help newcomers integrate and navigate the city, support their professional growth, and organize events that foster connection. We also collaborate closely with employers, schools, NGOs, and public institutions. Our goal is for talented individuals not just to find opportunities here, but to build a genuine sense of home.

Do you see the potential for Košice to become a city that attracts people from abroad?

Absolutely. Košice offers everything a modern city needs: a high quality of life, creative energy, strong education, access to nature, and a thriving business and tech ecosystem. Many of our initiatives aim to position Košice as an open, internationally appealing city that offers not just work, but a meaningful life with a future.

What changes would need to happen for Košice to become more attractive for international residents?

We need to build on what's already underway — expanding multilingual information services, creating spaces for intercultural exchange, improving access to public services for foreigners, and supporting employment and labor market integration. It's essential that foreigners feel like full members of the Košice community, not just visitors. Inclusion and a sense of belonging are key to sustainable development.

How would you describe Košice? What does the city offer to people considering a move here?

Košice is a city of contrasts that work in harmony — where a rich historical heritage meets a growing innovation scene. Its vibrant city center is full of culture and creativity, while green spaces, startups, and global IT companies make it a place where you

can live fully and grow professionally. It offers a human-scale lifestyle, with all the advantages of a dynamic urban environment, without the downsides of overcrowding.

For some, Košice may still be an undiscovered gem — but for us, it's a city of the future, full of opportunities waiting to be explored and shaped. And above all, the greatest strength of Košice lies in its people — individuals who genuinely care about the future of this region and are willing to invest their time and energy into its success. Even business competitors come together to support a stronger ecosystem, which speaks volumes about the resilience, maturity, and shared vision of this community. At BUSINESS KOŠICE, we are proud to bring these people together to help shape the future of the city.



Martin Mudrák
Director
BUSINESS KOŠICE, n. o.



Košice, First in Slovakia to Receive The European Commission Award for Green Projects

Over the past five years, more than 30 green projects worth tens of millions of euros have been implemented in our city, with another 40 already in preparation. Thanks to these initiatives, the European Commission (EC) in Brussels selected Košice as one of 100 EU cities in the Mission EU project – 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030. As a result, Košice received the prestigious “Mission Label” from the EC, becoming the first city in Slovakia to reach this milestone. From Central Europe, only five Polish cities, three Hungarian cities (including Miskolc), and one Czech city have been successful so far.

Košice Receives Prestigious European Mission Label

Košice’s Vice-Mayor Marcel Gibóda recently accepted the award from representatives of the European Commission in Vilnius, Lithuania. *“It was on May 7th, Košice’s City Day, so we had even more reasons to celebrate. I want to thank all Košice residents, councilors, and experts from city hall who supported our vision of a green city in 2019. Currently, we are preparing the groundwork for projects through which we aim to secure external funding for further environmental improvements. I am very pleased that our hard work is being recognized by experts, and that the EC’s decision opens doors to future opportunities for financing in cooperation with the private sector or the European Investment Bank,”* said Gibóda.

Geothermal Energy to Help Cut Emissions

Together with dozens of partners from both the professional and general public, the city has developed a climate contract designed to accelerate Košice’s path toward climate neutrality. The plan focuses on key sectors such as energy, buildings, waste management, transport, and greenery, and includes concrete investment plans.

Košice has long been among the most active cities in reducing its carbon footprint. To build awareness and encourage wider participation, the city introduced the “Mission Label,” which will now mark sustainable projects and priorities. The main goal is ambitious: to reduce carbon emissions by 611,000 tons annually. This will be achieved by improving energy efficiency in buildings, expanding cycling infrastructure and public transport, revitalizing green spaces, and supporting the circular economy, which minimizes waste and promotes reuse.

Ecological Solutions as a Long-Term Priority

According to Mayor Jaroslav Polaček, ecological solutions are a long-term priority for the city’s leadership. Košice serves as an example for the rest of Slovakia, having already developed action plans for its climate strategy until 2030. The new Urban Plan foresees more than 30% of the city’s area devoted to greenery, supported by numerous partner projects.

A key initiative is the use of geothermal energy from wells in Ďurkov, Bidovce, Svinica, and Olšovany. The city has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with MH Teplárenský Holding and Geoterm to advance this project.

Energy Savings for NOCKE and Steel Arena

Besides cleaner air and reduced CO₂ emissions from the heating plant, residents can expect more stable heat prices thanks to geothermal energy. Once fully implemented, geothermal heat will cover a quarter of the plant’s total energy supply, raising the share of renewables in heat production to 42%.

“We have completed dozens of green projects that have improved both the environment and residents’ quality of life. With this award from the European Commission, we have been told that we are ready for even bigger things. These include geothermal wells in the Košice basin, which will provide renewable heating for residents. We have also recently opened NOCKE, where new technologies will significantly improve energy efficiency in swimming pools, and we plan similar upgrades for the next stage of Steel Arena’s modernization. The future of Košice’s sustainable development depends on the involvement of its residents. I’m glad that we have long been building a greener, more modern,

and energy-efficient city that can serve as an example for others,” said Mayor Polaček at the Oštepová kindergarten, which was also modernized as part of the city’s green projects.

New Opportunities for Košice

Richard Dlhý, head of the strategic development department and deputy director of city hall, emphasized the broader opportunities now available. *“In the past, the European Commission mainly negotiated with national governments. Now, local governments will have the authority to decide on the implementation of green projects. They know best what their residents need,”* he said.

According to Dlhý, Košice’s success in joining the Mission EU – 100 project will bring clear benefits: lower energy costs, better air quality, and safer public buildings that can withstand even the hottest days of the year.



Original version of the article in Slovak language vskratke.sk

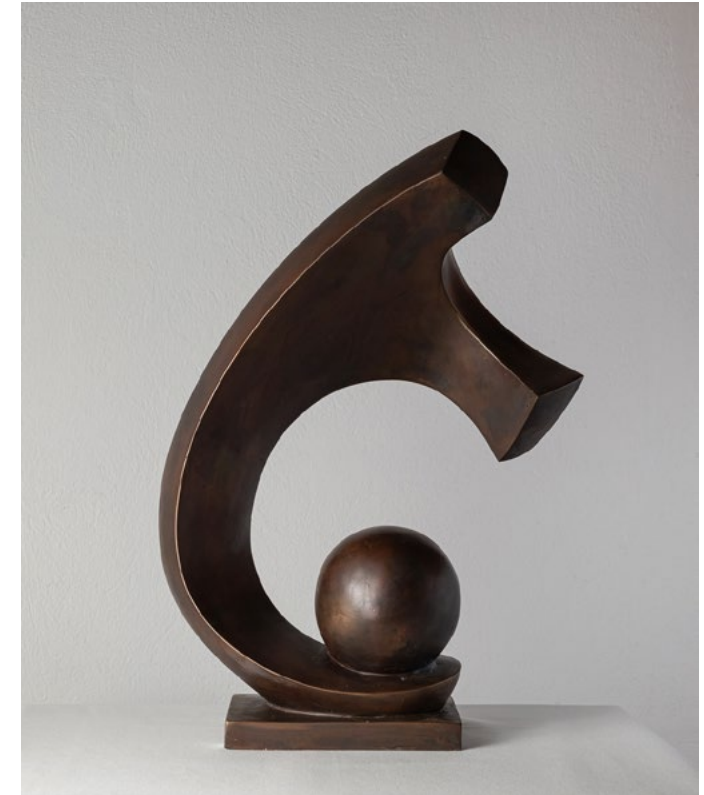


You can find the list of the city’s green infrastructure projects in the press release on the city’s website.

“We have shown our ability to build a better, more modern city when it comes to climate and environmental issues.

Now, we can join other European cities implementing similar programs and become their partners. This opens doors for us to learn from the best in Europe and develop partnerships that provide resources for our activities. For example, we have already received funding for project documentation to revitalize the park behind Sladovňa. At the same time, we are taking steps to replace conventional energy sources with renewables. This reduces dependence on traditional suppliers, especially from problematic countries, stabilizes prices, and lowers overall energy costs. When we spend less on energy, we can invest more in improving the quality of life in the city,” concluded Dlhý.

Jan Mathé A Sculptor from Another World



Despite — or perhaps because of — the adversity of the regime and the tragic turns of his life, he produced works of remarkable depth. His sculptures have become inseparable from Košice’s public spaces, lending them character and beauty. His talent was recognized not only in Slovakia, but throughout Europe.

Photo • Ondrej Rychnavský, Collection - Muzeum Villa Mathé, City of Košice

In the 1960s, one of the first post-war housing estates grew in the northern part of Košice. At its heart stands a fountain with a monumental sculpture titled Resting Family. Since 2013, the square has borne the name of its creator, who only gained recognition later in life. Nearly sixty years old, the sculpture carries the artist's message of goodness, love, and hope.

“Jano was a Košice man through and through — born here, he lived here for 90 years and passed away here. He was incredibly modest. He never imposed himself on anyone, never sought accolades, and spent most of his life alone in his studio. His sculptures didn't describe or depict anything. They expressed his inner world, the essence of life. When he died, Venus was crossing the Sun. That happens only once every 250 years. There is amazing symbolism in this — after all, Venus is the symbol of beauty and love...” recalls his wife, Eva, with whom he spent 53 years.

Searching

Ján Mathé did not have his first solo exhibition until 1984 in Bratislava — at the age of 62. A year later, a planned reprise in his hometown of Košice was rejected by the East Slovak Gallery, despite the fact that he had already prepared a catalogue. He had to wait two more years before presenting his work there.

Deliberately refusing to comply with the doctrine of socialist realism, Mathé chose a more difficult path of personal searching. *“Despite this, I never heard him complain — not about colleagues who were more successful, nor about the conditions in which he created. He never reproached anyone. He even respected colleagues who, unlike him, made their living from Lenin statues, Gottwald monuments, or other forms of socialist art,”* his wife remembers.

Faith

Mathé's artistic beginnings are linked to a dissection room. His father, originally a miner, later became the personal coachman of the State Hospital's director in Košice and eventually the head of the postmortem room. Like many other hospital employees — often Czech doctors who came to Eastern Slovakia during the First Republic to build modern healthcare — the Mathé family lived directly on hospital grounds.

Sometimes, his father would take the oldest of his four children to the dissection room. *“He did it very sensitively. He wanted to show him how fragile life is. There, Jano would draw the human body and study anatomy,”* says Eva.

While studying at the Premonstratensian Grammar School in Košice — where writer Sándor Márai was once a pupil — Mathé's great talent was recognized by his drawing teacher, József Nádaskay, a graduate of the University of Fine Arts and Pedagogy in Budapest. Nádaskay not only gave him a solid artistic foundation, but also instilled principles of morality, humanism, and faith that guided him throughout his life. *“He never strayed from them, no matter what,”* explains Eva Mathé.

“He not only received an excellent artistic foundation, but also absorbed the principles of morality, humanism, and faith that guided him throughout his life. He never strayed from them, no matter the circumstances,” explains Eva Mathé.



The sculptor's wife, Eva Mathéová, decided to donate the family villa with the studio — a national cultural monument — along with the entire estate, including artworks, to the city. On the condition that a J. Mathé Gallery is established there.

Pacifist

After the Vienna Arbitration in 1938, much of southern Slovakia — including Košice — was ceded to Hungary. In the fall of 1943, the freshly graduated Ján Mathé was drafted into the Hungarian army. After just two months of training, he was sent to the front lines in Ukraine, where he suffered serious injuries. When his wounds healed in Győr, he made a life-changing decision: he deserted. Together with a group of Hungarian soldiers, he crossed Austria to Pocking, near the Austrian-German border, which was already in American hands. The terrifying war was finally over.

Upon his return to Košice, Mathé created a composition titled The Horror of War. *“Even a few years ago, he was still haunted by nightmares, unable to understand how people could kill each other. He became a pacifist, an opponent of all violence. And even though he was a fighter all his life, he always fought for something — never against something,”* recalls his wife, Eva.



Name Change

In the fall of 1945, Prague's universities reopened for the first time after the war. Ján Mathé immediately set out to pursue his dream — admission to the Academy of Fine Arts. But he arrived too late and missed the entrance exams.

Seeing the young man in a simple suit sewn by his mother from a military uniform, a doorman took pity on him. *"He gave him some clay and a model to work with. Jano worked on it for two days. The doorman was impressed, called someone, and soon a man arrived, looked at the model, and said: 'I'll take you.' It was Professor Otakar Španiel. He used his right to admit one student outside the official exams."*

As a student, Mathé became a favorite — even an assistant — of Španiel, the renowned Czech sculptor, carver, and medallist, who had studied under Josef Václav Myslbek at the Prague Academy and Alexander Charpentier in Paris.

"Jano was very well liked. As a Francophile, he even changed his name. In his birth certificate, his surname had an accent on the 'a,' but he had it removed. 'Mathé sounds better in French,' he said. And so, that's how it was written on his diploma," smiles the sculptor's wife.

Family

The five years Ján Mathé spent in Prague shaped him profoundly, both artistically and spiritually. Alongside his studies, he joined the Catholic intellectual circle Rodina (Family). Its *"mother"* was the art historian and professor Růžena Vacková, and its *"father"* the distinguished theologian, philosopher, and art historian Josef Zvěřina.

In 1952, both were sentenced in the political trial Mádr and Co. for alleged *"espionage and treason."* Vacková

received 22 years and spent nearly 16 in prison. That same year, Zvěřina was given the same sentence and was released only in 1965. Both later became among the first signatories of Charter 77.

When Mathé learned that the communist regime had imprisoned these brilliant figures, it only deepened his conviction that he must follow his own path — a path of spiritual freedom — if he was to remain true to himself.

When Mathé learned, that the communist regime had imprisoned these brilliant people, it strengthened his belief, that he had to follow his own path, the path of freedom of spirit, if he didn't want to betray his own convictions.

Living Thanks to Friends

In the 1960s and 70s, Mathé became even more deeply immersed in the pursuit of free artistic creation. Although he never joined the Communist Party — and his faith in God as well as his rejection of socialist ideology were well known — he still received major commissions for monumental sculptures, particularly for the exteriors of newly built housing estates. To this day, his works continue to adorn the residential complexes of Sever, Terasa, and Nad Jazerom.

"During Košice's period of massive construction, investors were required to allocate two percent of their total budget for art. Jano was able to live thanks to his friends — his former high school classmates, many of them architects, who recognized both his artistic and human qualities. It was through this

close collaboration between artists and architects that the distinctive character of Košice's modern exterior art was born," recalls Eva Mathé.

"It was thanks to them that his work passed the scrutiny of the ideological commission. Without their defense, his sculptures might never have left the studio — remaining only as silent models."

Fruit of Life (Your Fruit)

One of Ján Mathé's pinnacle works is The Fruit of Life. A clear analogy to the Christian Madonna, the nearly two-meter-tall bronze sculpture on a travertine base was installed in 1976, during the harshest period of normalization, in the Nad Jazerom estate.

Welder • 119 cm, 1963, Bronze
Photo • From the Collection of the Eastern Slovak Gallery



The sculpture's approval owed much to architect Michal Baník, who defended it before the commission: *"What's wrong with the birth of life? After all, the family is the basic unit of socialism!"*

Over thirty-five years later, the statue had become almost completely hidden by trees. At one point, an "art lover" had even prepared it for transport. *"At the last minute, art historian Gabriel Kladek saved it, placing The Fruit of Life in storage..."*

Accident

In the summer of 1967, the Mathé family was preparing for a trip to Romania. The sculptor had worked through the night before their departure, while his wife packed their Škoda Tudor.

"It was my fault..." Eva Mathé still blames herself. *"We were supposed to meet friends from England in Budapest and continue on together. Time was pressing. Poor Jano was even changing a tire at the last minute."*

On the way, the tire came off. Their car swerved into the opposite lane and crashed into a tree. In Miskolc, the severely injured driver underwent emergency skull trepanation. He spent several weeks in a coma, fighting for his life. When he finally regained consciousness, he could neither speak nor move — he had to learn everything from scratch.

Only thanks to the immense patience and dedication of his wife Eva, a doctor by profession, did he survive the worst.



Act • 29,5x21 cm, 1955, Pencil
Photo • From the Collection of the Eastern Slovak Gallery

"Everyone had written him off. That was the luck in misfortune. He had peace, he worked on his own things. His art became part of the healing process. And in many ways, his artistic development went even further."

Henry Moore

August 1968. Another tragedy: Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia. A month later, Mathé received a package from Great Britain — a catalog from the world-famous British sculptor Henry Moore's exhibition at the Tate Gallery. Inside was a handwritten message: *"For Ján Mathé, wishing him all the best..."* signed by Moore himself.

"They kept in touch. Henry Moore wanted to give him new strength and optimism in this way."

Mathé and his wife met Moore in person for the first time in 1977, at his estate near London. *"He was hosting American art historians preparing his exhibition in the United States. He left them and spent time with us. We could walk through his studios and see his works. He was an incredibly humble and modest man. Just like my husband. Maybe that's why they understood each other so well."*

What impact did contact with the famous British sculptor have on Mathé's work? *"I don't think Jano copied him. But I do feel that Henry Moore helped him spread his wings even more."*



Original version of the article in Slovak language vskratke.sk

MarathonPoint: Košice's New Cultural Landmark



In the heart of Košice, just steps from St. Elisabeth's Cathedral and the National Theatre, a new cultural space has opened its doors. MarathonPoint, also known as Marathon House, is dedicated to the city's pride and tradition: the International Peace Marathon (MMM).

Every day from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, visitors can step inside and explore not only the marathon's century-long history, but also exhibitions, cultural events, and community gatherings inspired by the spirit of running.

From Pizzeria to Marathon House

The space at Hlavná 57 almost became a pizzeria. *"I thought it would be a shame if there wasn't something more representative here,"* recalls Mayor Jaroslav Polaček. Instead, he brought Branislav Koniar, head of the Košice Marathon, to see the location — and the idea of MarathonPoint was born.

Soon after, the city council embraced the plan. *"We established it to share the rich history and values of the oldest marathon in Europe, connected with modern technologies,"* Polaček explained. *"Our marathon is a wonderful event that unites not only Košice residents, but also people of different nationalities, cultures, and religions, who can now meet in these beautiful spaces."*

Where History Meets the Present

With MarathonPoint, Košice has given the oldest marathon in Europe a permanent, modern home — one where history meets innovation, and where residents and visitors alike can be inspired by a tradition that has united the city since 1924.

A Growing Cultural Network

MarathonPoint is the third museum to open in Košice under the mayor's tenure, following Dolná Brána and the Mathé Villa Museum. Later this year, the city will add a fourth — the Olympic Museum in the National Olympic Swimming Sports Center (NOCKE).

The city's commitment to the marathon runs deep. With annual financial support of nearly €150,000, Košice has pledged full and long-term backing for the MMM for the next 100 years.

More Than a Museum

For Branislav Koniar, MarathonPoint is not just about preserving history. *"It will be a place of presence, meeting, living memory, inspiration and motivation,"* he says.

At the heart of the exhibition lies MarathonPedia — an interactive installation with five large touchscreens. Packed with over a million characters of text and a rich visual archive, it invites both casual visitors and experts to dive into marathon stories like never before. But MarathonPoint is also meant to live and breathe. *"It's becoming a challenge for us to continually expand its content and bring as much interesting programming as possible,"* Koniar explains. Visitors can expect new exhibitions, cultural events, and even a good cup of coffee while they explore.

Original version
of the article
in Slovak language
vskratke.sk



What really drew her in was Košice's charm. While the Hlavná street with its lovely terraces and restaurants offers plenty of options, it's the hidden alleys that offer the real treasures. Behind doors you'd never guess lie pottery studios, art galleries, cozy cafés, museums and even quiet places to relax. It's a city of constant discovery, where both locals and expats alike are always finding new spots to enjoy.

Living in Košice, she notes, also offers a slower pace of life compared to larger cities. There's no daily rush, no endless traffic jams. Most things are within walking distance and public transport is reliable. It's a perfect city for those who love to walk or enjoy a slower pace of life without the stress of big city living.

One of the things that struck her most was the affordability of life in Košice. Compared to many European cities she's visited, the cost of living here is low. You can easily find an apartment in the city center at a reasonable price or even get a larger space if you prefer to live in the suburbs. For everyday groceries, well-known discount stores like Lidl offer good prices.

She also shared her love for the local food scene. Whether you're in the mood for local Slovak dishes or international flavors, Košice's food scene offers something for everyone. From hearty *halušky* (potato dumplings with sheep cheese and bacon) at VillaRegia, to Turkish breakfast at Turkish on Dominican Square and artisanal ice cream at ArthurGelato, there's a wide range of options. For those craving something more exotic, La Hacienda serves gourmet Mexican cuisine, though she admits she's yet to try it herself.

Her experiences also brought her to the local market in Košice's Dominican Square, where she enjoyed the ritual of Saturday morning shopping. Even though many of the vendors don't speak English, she managed to communicate with them in a mix of Slovak, Algerian and laughter. These interactions, she says, were a reminder, that despite our differences, people are often more alike, than we think.

Winter in Košice, however, was a different challenge. She had heard warnings about the cold and possible seasonal depression, but so far, she's embraced it. As she adjusts to the rhythm of the seasons, she's learned to navigate the cold with a mix of advice from locals and her own personal discoveries.

What she found was a city full of surprises, a place much livelier than the

Living in Košice has not just been about adjusting to a new environment, but also about adapting to herself. Moving from a North African culture to Central Europe was a challenge she wasn't fully prepared for, but it's been one of the greatest learning experiences of her life. Initially, she struggled with the fear of offending others, unsure of what was culturally acceptable. Now, after four seasons in Košice, she's more confident and slowly, but surely integrating into her new life.

For this Algerian expat, Košice has become more than just a place to live; it's a journey of discovery, personal growth and embracing change. While every day has its challenges, there's one thing she knows for sure: her decision to move to this charming Slovak city was, without a doubt, worth it.



found was a city full of surprises, a place much livelier than the maps & descriptions had suggested

Košice, contrary to what some might expect from a city of its size, is a vibrant hub. With its young population, it has a festive atmosphere that makes it feel alive at every corner. Lifestyle here, she found, is entirely

Want more?

Follow Hanane on her LinkedIn and live her expat life in Košice with her.



WHAT

So, you've landed in Košice. Maybe for work, maybe for love, or maybe just for a weekend escape. Whatever brought you here, one thing is certain: this city has far more layers than first meets the eye.

TO DO

From buzzing cafés and tucked-away wine bars to open-air culture and day trips into the surrounding hills, Košice is a place that can surprise you over and over again. Whether you've unpacked your suitcases for good or you're only passing through, here's a guide to help you experience the city like a local.



IN KOŠICE

Words by Local Nomad
localnomad.sk



UNESCO SITES

WITHIN

100 MINUTES

Not every city can boast about this, but Košice is simply the perfect base for day trips. Within just 100 minutes you can reach caves, medieval frescoes, wooden churches, castles, and even ancient forests. Here are some tips for where to start.

Words by Local Nomad
localnomad.sk

Spiš Castle

Perched proudly atop a rugged hill in eastern Slovakia, Spiš Castle beckons with its ancient charm and rich history. Over 800 years old, this UNESCO World Heritage site offers a glimpse into medieval life with its grand walls and sweeping views. Explore its winding corridors and Gothic architecture, and marvel at the scenic beauty of the Spiš region from its lofty ramparts. Spiš Castle is more than just a relic; it's a timeless adventure waiting to unfold. Come discover the magic of this historic gem and let its stories enchant you.

Tokaj wines

Tokaj wines, hailing from the Tokaj wine region, are renowned for their unique character and exceptional quality, making them truly special in the world of wine. What sets Tokaj wines apart is their traditional production method, which involves the use of noble rot, or *botrytis cinerea*, a beneficial fungus that shrivels the grapes and concentrates their sugars and flavors.

Medieval frescos in Žehra

The interior of the Church of the Holy Spirit is decorated with medieval wall paintings that have been preserved to this day. The paintings have a high artistic value and reveal a master who was based on Italian painting, but also knew elements of Byzantine art. Every detail and object of the fresco has multiple theological meanings and it is fascinating to study them.

Bardejov

If you are searching for a calm and wonderful historical town, you've just found it. Bardejov offers numerous historical buildings, a famous spa, an outdoor historical museum, and beautiful nature.

Krásnohorská jaskyňa

If you are looking for a cave off the beaten track, visit the Krásnohorská cave in the Slovak Karst National Park. It is full of beauty, adventure, and obstacles. Sporty types will love it.

Domica Cave

Domica Cave is the longest cave in the Slovak Kras and forms part of a cross-border cave system with Baradla Cave in Hungary, with a total length of approximately 25 km. Visitors can choose between two guided tours - a shorter route (780 m, approx. 45 min) and a longer one (930 m, approx. 60 min), which includes a 150-meter boat ride on the underground Styx stream. Domica is also an important hibernation site — home to 16 bat species, including the largest colony of the Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*) in Slovakia. It is the only cave in the country open from february until december.

Dobšiná Ice Cave

Located in Slovenský raj (Slovak Paradise), Dobšiná Ice Cave is the largest ice cave in Slovakia and ranks among the most remarkable in the world. Thanks to specific air circulation, it retains its ice year-round, with a total volume of up to 110,000 m³. The visitor route is 515 m long and leads through an underground world, where temperatures drop to -3.9 °C.

Jasovská Cave

Jasovská Cave is the oldest accessible cave in Slovakia, open to the public since 1846. Located in the Slovak Kras, it captivates visitors with rich sinter formations such as stone waterfalls, pagoda-shaped stalagmites and so-called "drums." Archaeological findings confirm Neolithic settlement and the cave contains the oldest known cave



↑↑ Bodružál
↑ Ochtinská Aragonite Cave
↗ Spiš Castle
→ Vihorlat Primeval forest

inscription in Slovakia from 1452. The cave also offers speleotherapy and serves as a winter habitat for up to 19 bat species. The tour route is 720 m long and takes about 45 minutes.

Gombasecká Cave

Situated in the Slovak Kras, Gombasecká Cave is known for its extremely thin and long sinter straws, which resemble stone rain. Discovered in 1951, it was opened to the public in 1955. It was the first cave in Slovakia used for speleotherapy in treating respiratory diseases. The accessible route is 530 m long and the tour lasts approximately 30 minutes. The cave maintains a stable temperature of around 9 °C and high humidity, contributing to its unique microclimate.

Ochtinská Aragonite Cave

Ochtinská Aragonite Cave is a world rarity — one of only three publicly accessible aragonite caves in the world. It is especially famous for its “Milky Way” chamber, featuring white aragonite crystals resembling stars. Discovered in 1954 and opened to the public in 1972, the cave offers a 230-meter tour lasting about 30 minutes.

Vihorlat Primeval Forest

Vihorlat Primeval Forest, with its entry point near Morské oko (the third largest natural lake in Slovakia), is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe.” It is home to ancient beech trees, the oldest of which are around 240 years old. Due to its remote location and strict protection, the forest has preserved a natural life cycle without significant human intervention. The area supports rare species such as the fire salamander, alpine longhorn beetle and Carpathian slug.

Levoča

Levoča, a medieval royal town in the Spiš region, lies about 20 km west of Spiš Castle and boasts nearly fully preserved city walls stretching over 2 km, with six towers and 15 original bastions. The Church of St. James houses 14 significant Gothic and Renaissance altars, including the tallest wooden Gothic altar in Europe, created by Master Paul of Levoča. Since 2016, the church tower has also been open to visitors, offering a unique view of the historic town center.

Spišská Kapitula

Spišská Kapitula is a historic ecclesiastical town above Spišské Podhradie. It forms a walled complex with two gates and a main street lined with about thirty canons’ houses. Its centerpiece is the Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral of St. Martin from the 13th century, which contains Gothic altars, valuable frescoes and tombs of notable figures. Since 1776, it has served as the seat of the Spiš bishopric and is often referred to as the “Slovak Vatican.”

Spišské Podhradie

Spišské Podhradie, a historic town located below the majestic Spiš Castle, likely originated in the 11th century, with the first written mention dating to 1249. It was a major center of trade and craftsmanship, known for butchers, weavers, dyers and shoemakers. Its historic core features Renaissance burgher houses, an 1875 synagogue, and characteristic arcades, creating a strong architectural link to the nearby castle. Today, the synagogue functions as a cultural venue.

Ruská Bystrá

Ruská Bystrá is a picturesque village in the Košice region, known for its Greek Catholic wooden Church of the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas. This three-part log church, built between 1720 and 1730, is a rare UNESCO-listed site since 2008. It features a solid wooden structure on a stone base, tall slender towers and a distinct shingled roof. The interior showcases Baroque and Rococo elements, including an ornate iconostasis and valuable icons older than the church itself. One unique feature is that the log walls are exposed, unlike most other wooden churches in eastern Slovakia.

Ladomirová

Ladomirová is a village in northeastern Slovakia, in the Svidník district, famous for its Greek Catholic Church of St. Michael the Archangel, built in 1742. This three-part wooden church (including a belfry with three bells) is one of the finest examples of Eastern-rite wooden ecclesiastical architecture in Slovakia. Built entirely without nails, its interior features a stunning Baroque iconostasis and icons older than the building itself.

Bodružal

Bodružal, located in the Prešov Region, is home to one of the oldest wooden churches of the Eastern rite in Slovakia — the Greek Catholic Church of St. Nicholas, built in 1658. This three-part log structure with three towers stands on a stone foundation and is surrounded by a wooden fence and a separate belfry. The interior is adorned with an iconostasis and rare icons from the 17th and 18th centuries. In 2008, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the “Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountain Area.”

Kežmarok

Kežmarok is a historic town at the foot of the High Tatras, known for its rich cultural heritage and landmarks. Its most precious treasure is the wooden articular Church of the Holy Trinity, built by Protestants in 1717 in just three months, entirely without nails — as required by the conditions of the Sopron Diet of 1681. The resulting sacred structure, made solely of wood, can hold up to 1,541 people and features a beautifully painted Baroque interior, including woodcarving by Master Ján Lerch.

Hervartov

Hervartov, a village in the Bardejov district, is renowned for its unique wooden Roman Catholic Church of St. Francis of Assisi — one of the most valuable sacred buildings in Slovakia. Built in the late 15th century as a log structure, it is considered the oldest preserved wooden Roman Catholic church in the country. Located in the upper part of the village, it is enclosed by a stone wall with a shingled roof. The interior features Gothic wall paintings, wooden altars and Renaissance pews. For its outstanding historical and artistic value, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2008.

SLOVAK COMFORT FOOD

We all know the feeling. When we travel abroad, landmarks and landscapes might draw us in first, but before long our focus shifts to something else – the local cuisine.

There are even people who choose the countries they visit based on food or drinks — that’s right, food tourism exists, and we totally get it. Deep down, every one of us is a foodie, though our tastes may lean toward different dishes. But food is a must. Food is joy, pleasure, and often, fun.

Each country has its own distinct culinary treasures — whether it’s Italy with pizza and pasta, Spain with tapas or paella, Greece with gyros, India with curry, or the Czech Republic with *sviečková*. Slovakia is no different. While Slovak cuisine may overlap in some ways with Czech or Hungarian dishes — which makes sense, since we’re neighbors and once shared a country with the Czechs — every nation has its own flavor. And Slovaks are definitely people who know how to enjoy their food.

As the world becomes more interconnected, cuisines blend. People fall in love with international flavors and explore new offerings. It’s perfectly normal; it’s globalization at the table. In Košice, for example, one of the most popular restaurants is the Mexican La Hacienda. And rightfully so.

However, there are dishes — especially from Slovak cuisine — that we simply can’t give up. In Slovakia, it’s never just about what’s on your plate, it’s about the whole experience. When you say “Slovakia,” several flavors immediately come to mind. They may not always be the healthiest choices — but that’s a story for another time.

Food could easily fill countless pages, because as the saying goes, “100 people, 100 tastes.” Everyone likes something different. Still, there are certain dishes that Slovaks simply can’t resist. The only downside? While the moment of eating is perfect, we often have to reach for a digestion tablet afterward. That’s the risk of our gourmet habits — and one we gladly take.

Slovaks love good food. But it’s not just about eating — it’s about how food turns into an experience, a joy, and even fun. Slovakia isn’t only about mountains, nature, and landmarks; it’s also about the culinary adventures that stay with you long after your visit.

THE MENU

MAIN COURSE

LEGENDARY

SOUPS

Bryndzové halušky

Slovaks grew up on them. What you’ll taste here is not just a regular meal, it’s a cultural experience. Traditional halušky with bryndza (sheep cheese), bacon and sour cream are so rich, you should know them even without a dictionary. Then there are variations like halušky with sauerkraut or bryndzové pirohy (dumplings). If you don’t try them, you don’t know, what Slovakia is about and how it tastes.

Kapustnica

Traditional Slovak cabbage soup, especially associated with the winter season and Christmas time. It’s a must-have. When the first snow falls in Slovakia, you can’t miss a hot bowl of kapustnica. But it’s not only about winter — at mountain huts in the High Tatras, tasting this soup is just as obligatory. Afterward, you’re ready to go hiking again, as it warms both the body and the soul.

Fazuľová polievka

One of the most popular and simplest everyday meals. Bean soup with sausage is a specialty, that continually brings older and younger generations together.

Zemiakové placky

Who could resist warm potato pancakes, crispy on the outside and soft and moist on the inside? They’re usually served with cheese, sour cream or even bacon. They are also a specialty at Christmas markets across Slovakia.

CRISPY

Vyprážený syr (Fried cheese)

Here, it’s hard to say, if we took this dish from the Czechs or vice versa, as people in both countries love it. But it’s something, that connects us with the Czechs. Ideally served with fries and tartar sauce.



BONUS



Egg Bread

This combination is known by almost everyone in Slovakia. Breakfasts in childhood were not really breakfasts without a slice of bread in egg. It’s not very well-known around the world and people might even cringe at the thought of it, but nothing compares to this combination. And the current situation proves it. When you go anywhere in Slovakia for breakfast at some bistro, egg bread is usually part of the breakfast menu. And it rightfully belongs there.

MEAT

Various types of meat

Slovaks are true enthusiasts when it comes to good meat. Traditional favorites include succulent roast piglet, hearty sausages, and a variety of juicy steaks. These specialties are most often enjoyed in good company—paired with a glass of fine wine or a refreshing beer.

COLD!

Treska

You cannot leave Košice without tasting this phenomenal dish, our Treska.

COD

WHERE TO EAT

This isn't a paid promotion—just honest recommendations from a local who loves food. Whether you're after traditional Slovak dishes, international cuisine, or regional specialties, here's where to find the best restaurants in Košice.

1

Villa Regia • Traditional Slovak Flavors Done Right

Craving an authentic Slovak meal? Villa Regia delivers. Warm, cozy, and reliable, this restaurant serves up hearty local specialties and traditional recipes that reflect the region's rich culinary heritage.

2

Camelot • For Beer Lovers and Meat Eaters

Just a minute from the Main Street (Hlavná ulica), Camelot is the go-to spot for hearty Central European dishes. Whether you're craving schnitzels, beef tartare, goulash, or ribs—this is where meat meets mastery. Don't miss the perfectly tapped Pilsner!

3

Villa Sandy • Gourmet Dining in the City Park

If you're in the mood to splurge, take a five-minute walk from the main street into the city park and discover Villa Sandy—one of Košice's newest culinary jewels. Sophisticated atmosphere, exquisite food, and perfect for special occasions.

5

Ohnisko • A Culinary Gem

Hands down the most exciting restaurant in town. Just a 10-minute walk from the city center, Ohnisko blends local ingredients with global inspiration. Expect creative dishes, craft beers on tap, and an excellent selection of regional wines. A must for food lovers!

4

Slávia • The Perfect Date Night Spot

Want something a bit more romantic? Slávia is your place. With its stunning Art Nouveau interior and elegant atmosphere, it's ideal for a lunch or dinner with your special someone. Classic European charm meets great food—Old Europe at its finest.

6

Le Colonial • Elegant, Classy, and Delicious

Looking for fine dining? Le Colonial serves up duck, veal, foie gras, schnitzel, and lamb in style. The chef's attention to detail makes this a top choice for slow dinners, family celebrations, or business meetings. Tastefully luxurious.

7

Hostinec • Slovakia's Oldest Restaurant with Timeless Quality

If you're not in the mood to wander far, stop by Hostinec—just steps from the main square. This historic spot combines Gothic architecture with consistently great food. Traditional Slovak cuisine, hearty portions, and craft beer await you.

IN KOŠICE?

Words by Local Nomad
localnomad.sk

TIPS

FROM A LOCAL

T O K A J

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

IT IS ONLY AN HOUR'S DRIVE FROM KOŠICE AND IS REGULARLY RANKED AMONG THE TOP 10 WINE REGIONS IN THE WORLD.

YES, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT TOKAJ.

Words by Local Nomad
localnomad.sk

How did it all start?

At the beginning of the 13th century, the Mongol hordes swept into Europe, leaving devastation in their wake. Large parts of Central and Eastern Europe were destroyed and depopulated. To revive these areas, King Béla IV of Hungary invited settlers from across Europe. Most were German miners and builders, but there were also Italians who, besides trading, excelled in viticulture. It didn't take long for them to discover that the Tokaj region offered ideal conditions for growing wine.

Tokaj are not only sweet wines

One of the most common misconceptions about Tokaj is that its wines are all sweet. In reality, that's far from the case. Alongside the region's famous sweet wines, you can also find outstanding dry wines, sparkling wines, orange wines, and straw wines. There's a whole world of flavors waiting to be discovered!

Tokaj wine tasting from Košice

If you want to truly experience Tokaj, we'd be delighted to take you there. We often collaborate with small, family-owned wineries from Velká Trňa. Alongside tasting exceptional wines, you'll hear their personal stories, explore historic cellars, and soak in the region's unique atmosphere. A Tokaj wine tasting from Košice is a perfect outing—especially on rainy days!

WHAT MAKES TOKAJ SO UNIQUE?

①

It is located on a **volcanic, tufa subsoil** that drains water well and at the same time retains and accumulates heat, which is excellent for the vines.

②

Thanks to the **unique climate** — there are short morning fogs in autumn, which help the growth of the noble rot *Botrytis cinerea*. It attacks the grape berries, which slowly dry up and shrink, due to which the concentration of sugar in them increases. These berries are used in the production of legendary sweet Aszú wines.

(wine of kings king of wines)

③

Wines are stored in **ancient cellars**, many of which were dug as far back as the 13th century, as a shelter from the Mongol invaders. People later discovered that if you store wine in them, it achieves exceptional qualities. The reason is — wine cellar fungus *Cladosporium cellare*. It lives on wine vapors and in return helps to maintain ideal humidity and temperature in the cellars.

8 ≠ AWESOME

Citlalli Petrik — Mexico

Meet Citlalli, an expat, who found her way to Košice after a journey, that began in 2005. Originally from Mexico and having lived in both the United States and China, she and her family ultimately decided to settle in Košice for its safe environment, excellent public transportation, and easy access to activities for their children.

With a strong background in education and a deep passion for teaching, Citlalli was eager to pursue a more international career. Soon after arriving, she found her place at Splash International, where she now teaches.

In this interview, Citlalli shares her story of adapting to life in Košice—what makes the city so special, the cultural differences she has observed between Slovak children and those from other countries, and her experiences integrating into the community. She also reflects on the challenges of learning Slovak and the unexpected pleasures of living in a city that continues to grow, evolve, and surprise her.

What is your story? How did the decision to move to Košice come about? What is your home country?

My story begins in 2005. While working for a consulting company in Pennsylvania, I met a group of Slovaks. In 2006, I visited Košice for the first time. Although it's only been 20 years, Košice was quite different back then. Eventually, I married a Slovak, and while we lived in the US, we frequently traveled to Košice starting in 2006. Over the years, it's been fascinating to watch the city evolve and grow.

After living in both the US and China, we ultimately decided to relocate to Košice. It offers an ideal environment for our teenage children — it's safe,

has excellent and secure public transportation (especially compared to the US), and provides easy access to a wide range of activities without the need for long travel. In the winter, we enjoy skiing, Tatry; in the summer, biking. Year-round, we take advantage of the many hiking, walking, and skating trails nearby.

What are the biggest differences between Košice and your home city/country?

My home country is Mexico, but I grew up in the United States. I attended university in both Mexico and the US. The biggest difference between these countries and Košice is the size. Košice is quaint and calm, yet you can find almost everything you need. It's easy

to get around, and there are plenty of interesting places to explore both within the city and in the surrounding areas.

Are there any particular places in Košice, that you enjoy visiting regularly?

Hlavna is small yet adorable, fantastic for an afternoon/ evening stroll any day of the week.

Are there any traditions or holidays in Slovakia, that you've adopted or enjoy participating in?

Not really, but we do have fish for Christmas. However I prepare it Mexican-style...."sarandeadó", accompanied by my father-in-laws recipe of potato salad.

What are the five things, that helped you the most, when adapting to the Slovak environment?

- Google translate
- MHD and Antik bus apps
- Self-check out at shops like Lidl, Tesco, Fresh (it's silly I know but I feel accomplished when I'm able to do things 100% on my own)
- My friends from Language Cafe
- My work colleagues from Splash International

Why did you choose to be a teacher in Košice?

Although I have an engineering degree, I always knew, that teaching could be a truly international career, especially since I speak both Spanish and English. We also knew, that we wouldn't remain in the US permanently, though at the time we didn't know where life would take us. I began teaching in the US, earning my Montessori Education certification.

When we moved to China, I quickly secured a position as an English teacher. Transitioning from Beijing to

Košice wasn't easy for many reasons. However, in Košice, I feel as though teaching found me. Wanting to integrate into the community and not just remain a foreigner, I spontaneously sent my résumé to Splash International. The directors welcomed me with open arms immediately. From my very first interview, I felt at home — comfortable, safe, and surrounded by a supportive caring environment.

I was thrilled when they offered me a teaching position. Since day one, the directors, teachers, parents, and students have treated me like family, even offering help beyond school matters — whether it's navigating doctor visits, handling appointments, or simply assisting with phone call translations.

What's the difference between Slovak and foreign children, for example, in terms of education?

There isn't much difference between Slovak children and those from the US or China. Children everywhere have hearts of gold; they're honest, unfiltered, and full of curiosity. Their minds are like sponges — eager to learn, explore, and ask questions.

The children I work with at Splash International have an impressive level of English. They challenge me every day with their inquisitive and sometimes surprising questions, and I do my best to challenge them right back and encourage them at every turn. I especially enjoy, how they laugh at my jokes and crazy stories — they truly brighten my day.

What was the biggest change for you in Košice? What did you have the hardest time getting used to?

Coming from Beijing, I missed the constant movement and energy — bikes, scooters, cars, and pedestrians all sharing the streets, often heading in opposite directions. While large crowds aren't really my thing and I usually try to avoid them, I ironically found myself missing that vibrant chaos when it wasn't there.

Navigating administrative offices and procedures has been a challenge. As a foreigner, it's possible to get things done, but it requires a lot of patience and the understanding, that the process will rarely be simple or straightforward.

Is there anything, that repeatedly pleasantly surprises you about Košice?

I am pleasantly surprised by how much Košice has grown internationally.

Twenty years ago, very few people spoke English, but today I often hear it — and to my amazement, I even hear more Spanish and have made wonderful Spanish-speaking friends.

At the same time, Košice has not lost its charm. I will never turn down a stroll along Hlavná, a good cup of káva, a glass of pivo, or a scoop of zmrzlina.

What's the funniest story you've experienced in Slovakia?

I have many funny stories, most focused around "lost in translation" situations. One was at the gym, attending a class. The instructor led the class both in Slovak and some English. On the toughest part, when we were doing squat after squat, she was energetically saying "Awesome!". I was thinking, "Thanks for the motivation lady, but there is nothing awesome about this!" After the fourth rep I realized she was actually saying "osem"....8 reps per set.

Have you ever felt like a true citizen of Košice? If so, what was the occasion?

Honestly, I don't yet feel like a true citizen of Košice — maybe I just need a few more years. The language, unfortunately, is quite challenging. I understand basic Slovak and sometimes even surprise myself with how much I can comprehend. However, speaking is a different story. I often panic and forget even the little I do know, especially under pressure. And with the complexity of Slovak grammar, I tend to stop myself from speaking, because I know I'm making mistakes.



WITH

Should you explore Košice on your own or join a guided tour? Whether it's climbing the chimneys for breathtaking views, discovering medieval Košice in the shadow of its walls, or simply experiencing the city from the window of a tram, one thing is certain—local guides make the difference.

On Sunday mornings, Košice often welcomes a wave of Polish tourists. You can spot their groups easily: the guides dressed in red, speaking Polish with animated enthusiasm. A few years ago, one such guide even booked me for a tour. While I led the group through Košice, he diligently took notes. The following Sunday, he was leading the same route himself. I didn't mind—but they could have had an even richer experience with a true local.

That's the magic of a local guide. They're not just storytellers; they're living updates. They know which street is currently closed and why, which

exhibitions are worth your time, and which theater performances shouldn't be missed—because they've been there themselves. They follow local news, attend vernissages and concerts, and keep their finger on the pulse of the city. Their stories are authentic because they've lived through the recent history of Košice firsthand.

A good guide adapts every tour. Hungarians will hear about Rákóczi and Márai, Poles about John Paul II and Alžbeta Piastowska, and Czechs about the achievements of the First Republic. A congress delegation, a bus full of retirees, a company team-building group, or even a kindergarten class—each receives a tour tailored just for them. And beyond the stories, guides share practical secrets: the best hours to visit hidden gems, where to shop for authentic, high-quality goods, or even who to call when answers aren't at hand. They don't just introduce you to Košice—they invite you to return.

Words by Milan Kolcun
Photo by Maja Bodnárová
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cike.sk

OR

A local guide is more than just a storyteller—they are connected. Friends with churchmen, building managers, receptionists, and fellow guides, they can take you to places you'd never find in Lonely Planet or on Google.

Of course, you might hesitate. A few dozen euros for a city tour may feel steep, especially for a family. You could just as well search online and set off with a map in hand. That works too—it's certainly better than nothing. But a local guide offers something different. They're not only experts but also passionate enthusiasts whose love for the city is contagious.

Exploring on your own has its charm as well. You don't need to be an introvert to enjoy wandering alone. As Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky wrote in his short story *White Nights* about strolling through St. Petersburg: *"I know the houses too. As I walk along, they seem to run forward in the streets to look out at me from every window and almost to say: 'Good morning! How do you do? I am quite well, thank God, and I am to have a new story in May,' or, 'How are you? I am*

being redecorated tomorrow;' or, *'I was almost burnt down and had such a fright; and so on. I have my favorites among them; some are dear friends; one of them intends to be treated by the architect this summer. I shall go every day on purpose to see that the operation is not a failure.'*

And indeed, you can talk to houses, trees, and other objects if you wander alone. But with a local guide, the city itself begins to speak back—sharing its secrets, stories, and spirit in ways that stay with you long after the tour ends.



TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU, I HAVE FOUR TIPS ON TOURS AROUND KOŠICE, WHICH YOU CAN DO YOURSELF AND YOU WON'T GET LOST.

WITHOUT

?



According to the cult book, KSC code from Východné pobrežie, chimneys represent a new kind of monumentality. They stand tall and highlight industrial points on the horizon — those in the city center now without smoke effects. For example, the **chimney of the Košice brewery** (65,3 m) was preserved during the reconstruction, which took place in 2007–2012. The chimney is also visible in the logo of the Cassovar residence, named after the brand of beer produced there at the time.

You can discover the **foundations of a chimney** on the premises of the Technical University. It is a remnant of a liqueur factory from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, of which it was a part. Another **chimney protrudes from the courtyard of the Old Town Hall**, and another beautifies the premises of the Old Hospital complex, which was completed in 1924. It is a national cultural monument.

However, the highest chimney in the territory of Košice is to be found in the former magnesite processing plant (115 m). Two 100-meter chimneys in the heating plant, the wide chimney of the U.S. Steel gas tank (112 m), and other local chimneys (111 m and 3x102 m) are still functional today. The high-altitude champion (the tallest building in Slovakia) is an anchored steel mast of the Dubník transmitter (1961), 318 meters high.

①
TAKE A
CHIMNEY
TOUR

TAKE (2) A RIDE IN A HISTORIC TRAM



EMAIL
THE TRANSPORT
COMPANY OF THE
CITY OF KOŠICE AT
DPMK@DPMK.SK

You can rent a historic tram and ride through the city on a pre-arranged route—perfect for celebrations, team-buildings, or even high school reunions. It's an especially great option for those who haven't been to Košice in years, or who simply prefer sitting to walking.

The Košice Transport Company, which has been serving Slovakia since 1891, will help you choose the right tram to fit your group. The fair rental price includes a driver, and you can even decide at which stop to board and where to hop off.

130 YEARS OF THE HOP-ON -HOP-OFF TOUR



In many cities with booming tourism, **hop-on-hop-off** buses circle the main sights, letting visitors jump on at any stop, see the landmarks, and listen to commentary over headphones. Košice, however, offers a cheaper—and far more authentic—alternative: **tram number 2**. (Insider tip: sit on the left side, facing the direction of travel.)

Line 2 traces the most spectacular route in the city, one that feels like a journey back in time. Starting at the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy, it rolls onto Komenského Street, following the historic first tram line from 1891. The monotony of the straight track breaks at Marathon Square, where a gentle—or sometimes sharp—turn to the left reveals a bit about the driver’s temperament. Here, the tram glides between the Division building and the East Slovak Museum before offering the first glimpse of Main Street.

On Hviezdoslavova Street, look right to admire the Art Nouveau Old Town Hall with its charming clock. The tram then passes the former riding hall, today’s Sports Hall, before swinging quickly down Kuzmányho Street. From time to time, fleeting views of the city center and Slovakia’s largest post office hall appear.

At the corner of Kuzmányho and Moyzesova Streets, the tram skirts the police headquarters, before pausing at a light that frames the elegant House of Arts. Soon after, a breathtaking view of St. Elizabeth’s Cathedral opens up. The modern silhouette of Aupark, crowned by its tower, suddenly makes Košice feel like a much bigger city. Finally, the tram pulls into the railway station—a fitting end, and for many, the beginning of another journey.

Perhaps one day, someone will lend headphones or design an app that syncs with GPS points, turning this ride into Košice’s very own hop-on-hop-off experience—for the price of a regular tram ticket.

WALK AROUND THE MEDIIEVAL CITY IN THE SHADOW OF ITS WALLS ④



If you look at a map of Košice, the city center is bordered by an oval line—the footprint of the old medieval walls. Walking this loop takes you back in time. In some places, you'll see original remains; in others, you'll have to imagine them. Either way, it's a fascinating journey.

Start in front of the State Scientific Library (Hlavná 10) and head down Vrátná Street, whose curved shape mirrors the former castle wall. From the 13th to the 19th century, the wall stretched to your left before it was gradually demolished as the city grew and military technology advanced. Today, some houses stand directly on top of those foundations.

Cross Alžbetina Street, where a strip of irregular tiles in the pavement marks the floor plan of the Western (Jozefská) Gate. In summer, water runs under the reconstructed bridge to help you imagine its original form.



Continue down the narrowing Vrátná Street, passing the market on Dominican Square, until you reach Baštová Street, where a **preserved 13th-century wall with shooting ranges still stands.**

From here, cross Poštová and continue toward Zbrojničná Street. Turn right, and you'll find yourself in front of the Secondary Industrial School of Transport, near the former **Upper (Northern) Gate.** On Main Street, look down again to spot the wall's floor plan marked in paving stones.

Next, head to Kasárenské Square, where sections of the wall still stand to the right of Kino Úsmev. From here, detour to Kováčská Street, as this part of the old perimeter cannot be walked directly. You'll reconnect with the fortifications on Hrnčiarská Street, where the Calvinist Church now stands on the site of the **Painted Gate.**

Continue to Mlynská Street, once home to the **Mlynská Gate,** and follow the curved Zvonárska Street back toward Main Street. Here you'll find the Lower Gate, today transformed into an underground museum—an excellent place to end your circuit.

In about 45 minutes, you'll have walked the line of Košice's medieval fortifications and located all five of its city gates. For more insight into how the triple fortification system looked—and to learn about the guilds who once defended the bastions—stop by the Crafts Lane (Hrnčiarská Street) next to the Calvinist Church.

KOŠICE IS NOT JUST A CITY



It is a Lifestyle

Words by Local Nomad
localnomad.sk

When you're a city guide, you hear all kinds of questions and observations from visitors. Igor Kupec, who leads tours through the Local Nomad project, knows this well. For him, the comments from foreigners often serve as a mirror to the city's soul—something completely unique that could be summed up in one word: bohemianism.

Košice locals are true bohemians. It shows in their everyday rhythm, their love of leisure, and their unhurried approach to life. Nothing illustrates this better than the city's Main Street—the heart and main artery of Košice. Visitors, especially from Asian countries, are often fascinated to see cafés and patisseries full of people even on weekday afternoons. Inevitably, they ask: When do the people of Košice work?

The answer, as Igor likes to say, is simple: they manage everything. Main Street is the best living room in Slovakia, and locals consider it almost an obligation to pass through at least once a week, greeting friends and savoring a coffee. It's not just a habit—it's a lifestyle.

And that's the real secret of Košice. The city is not just a place to live; it's a way of living. One walk down Main Street can recharge you for days ahead. Underpinning it all is a fierce local pride, an unwavering love for the city that every Košičan carries. Spend 24 hours here as a local, and you may just understand why.

**THE LIFESTYLE
OF KOŠICE
LOCALS IS
EASY TO READ.
WHAT DO THEIR
24 HOURS
IN THE CITY
LOOK LIKE? →**



9AM

Morning Coffee at the Market 🐣

After your morning routine, head to Dominikánske námestie, where locals start their day. Greet friends, pick up fresh vegetables and a light breakfast at the market, then settle in for coffee at the sleek San Domenico or the cozy Turkish café Orient's Heart. Sit back, sip slowly, and watch the city come alive around you.



10AM

A Little 🐕 Walk in Nature Never Hurt Anyone

Hop on bus number 29 and embark on a delightful nature walk to the iconic "mountain cottage" Hrešná. It's a great way to stay active and enjoy the outdoors. If the walk leaves you feeling a bit weary, you can grab a snack or have a regular lunch at the cottage. Aside from food, you also have the option to borrow a horse and explore the surrounding woods on horseback.



1PM

Lunchtime 🦊

Catch a bus back to the city and treat yourself to a delicious lunch. If you're feeling a bit fancy, head to Slávia or Le Colonial. For traditional Slovak cuisine, Hostinec is a fantastic choice. Craving something more exotic? Try La Hacienda for Mexican flavors or Little India for a taste of India. For late eaters, the absolute best choice is Ohnisko, known for its excellent local food and beverages.



2PM

Grab a Good Book and Savor 🍷 Your Siesta

Before you drift off, visit the charming bookshop Artforum, located right on the main historic square. Browse and pick up a book, then reward yourself with the city's best cake at the patisserie run by local Frenchmen—there's truly no place like Café de Paris. Now... it's siesta time.



5PM

Stroll like a Bourgeois 🐒

If there's one favorite pastime of locals, it's undoubtedly strolling around the main historic square, Hlavná ulica. Wander at your leisure, chat with friends, exchange smiles with the locals, and let your charm and charisma shine.



7PM

Wine and 🦄 Movies

Find some delightful company and take them to a local winery for a glass of exceptional Tokaj wine. This renowned beverage, cherished by luminaries such as Beethoven, Liszt, Schubert, Goethe, Heinrich Heine, Friedrich von Schiller, Bram Stoker, Johann Strauss II, Voltaire, and Louis XV, sets the perfect tone for an enchanting evening. Villa Cassa is the ideal spot to savor it. But don't get carried away—there's a cinema waiting for you. Kino Úsmev is a true local gem, offering a charming atmosphere and a diverse selection of films, from indie favorites to blockbusters. Enjoy your night!

Another proof that Košice locals live life to the fullest came from Igor's friend from France. She once asked him why people in Košice never do anything in moderation. How is that even possible?

You see, a French person might go out for a drink in the evening, have two glasses of wine, and then politely head home. When they feel like exercising, they might go for a 20-minute run and call it a day. But a Košice local? When they go for a drink, they'll have at least six beers. And to feel better afterward, they'll go for a run—not just a short jog, but a full marathon. Where's the moderation in that?

The answer is simple: we don't do things half-heartedly; we do them to the fullest. Whether it's enjoying coffee in the city center during a workday, spending an evening with friends or family, or diving into sports, everything is done with passion and perfection. Košice locals embrace life in every sense of the word.



**THAT'S JUST WHO
WE ARE AND WE'RE
PROUD OF IT.**

**A) ARE
B) YOU
C) KOŠICE
D) ENOUGH
E) ?**

Košice, a city brimming with history, humor, and hidden gems, has a unique charm that captivates both locals and expats. Whether you're a seasoned "Košičan" or new to the city, we bet you'll discover surprising facts about this remarkable place.

This quiz will test your knowledge of the city's quirks, traditions and local legends — all while having a bit of fun.

So, how well do you really know Košice? Take this quiz to find out—and let's see if you can get them all right... or at least have a good laugh along the way.



What is “Furča”?

- a) a, The “*Dargovských hrdinov*” residential area, but no calls it that.
- b) A mythical land, where you can even get lost.
- c) Košice’s version of Everest — you’re always going uphill.

Where do you go, when you say you're heading to the “Džungľa/jungle”?

- a) To the housing estate (because concrete jungles are real).
- b) To the shopping mall to survive Black Friday.
- c) To Furča at night without a flashlight.

Why would you go to Colloseum in Košice?

- a) For a concert, discussion, travel cinema or because of the jukebox.
- b) To watch gladiator fights, because life is a battle.
- c) Because you typed “*Rome*” incorrectly into Google Maps.

What is “Pokhoj”?

- a) A place, where you can escape the noise of the city.
- b) The loudest oasis of peace in the center of Košice with a variety of beers.
- c) Neither — peace (pokoj) only exists at home while enjoying a cup of tea.

What do you go to “Bužňa” for?

- a) To buy jewelry.
- b) For a Košice Philharmonic concert with an afterparty at Pokhoj.
- c) To see, if there’s anything left, that’s not a business center.

Where would you look for “Bašta”?

- a) Someone would say it’s by the city walls.
- b) Others would say it’s where they cook bryndzové halušky.
- c) And some would rather take you there than explain.

What is the main difference between Košice Castle and Bratislava Castle?

- a) Bratislava’s is finished, while Košice’s has been “*under construction*” since the 13th century.
- b) Košice’s offers a better view — with a bit of imagination.
- c) Košice Castle is a bit more adventurous — you never know, if you’ll discover a new part of it.

What is legendary “Ander from Košice” known for?

- a) A legend of Slovak humor — everything else pales in comparison.
- b) Everyone knows him, but no one knows why.
- c) He’s known for being where no one expects him.

A PLACE

Francisco Javier Pons Mata — Spain

Feelings about a place or a city can be captured in many ways—through text, video, or photos. In fact, photographs often say more than a thousand words. Spanish native Francisco Javier Pons Mata, who works as a People Manager at Holcim European Business Services in Košice, has chosen the camera lens to express his thoughts and feelings about the city.

Francisco Javier moved to Košice in 2015 after being offered the opportunity to join a project to establish a Business Service Center (BSC) for Holcim, specifically in payroll. He started as a Senior Payroll Specialist and, over time, grew within an international environment that encouraged both personal and professional development. He was promoted several times and now holds the position of People Manager for Payroll and Personnel Administration.

One of his biggest challenges was adapting to the local culture and learning the Slovak language. These were not easy at first, but they helped him grow and connect more deeply with both the people and the city. Even today, he still finds himself adjusting—especially when it comes to the local cuisine. The traditional Slovak diet includes a lot of meat, which has been a bit of a challenge for him, though he is definitely adapting.

What he loves most about Košice is the vibrant lifestyle it offers. As he says, events and festivals take place all year round, giving the city a dynamic and creative atmosphere. Its location is also ideal—just a short trip from many neighboring countries—and it is surrounded by beautiful nature and wildlife, making weekend escapes both refreshing and easy.

Eventually, he felt inspired to capture Košice through photography. It became a way to share how he sees the city—its streets, its spirit, and its quieter, unexpected moments. Photography allows him to tell the story of a place that has become not just where he lives, but truly his home.

Judge for yourself how much photographs can express—words are not always the only way to convey our emotions.

CAPTURED THROUGH



I CALL HOME

PHOTOGRAPHY





KOŠICE UNPLUGGED: THE LOCAL LINGO

Ever wondered what Košice locals are saying when they speak a mile a minute? Whether you're a native or just passing through, we've got you covered.

From curious expressions to words that might leave you scratching your head, this dictionary will guide you through the unique lingo that makes Košice... Košice. So buckle up and get ready to speak the language of the city - we promise you'll be "on point" in no time.

Brička	The tram
Mište	Great
Čaja	The girl
Šrác	The boy
Dža	Come on
Bars	Very
Brúdný	Dirty
Das	Approximately
Dzivý	Cool
Koňar	The citizen of Prešov for the citizen of Košice
Segiň	The poor man
Vraňar	The citizen of Košice for the citizen of Prešov
Ta	So
Vytrimať	To hold on
Dva piva	Dve piva (right form in Slovak), both mean two beers, but different pronounciation
Zos	From
Zrobiť	To do
Hej ne?	Right?
Furča	The residential area called Dargovských hrdinov
Valal	The village

If you want more, follow Francisco Javier on his Instagram profile @thespaniardexplores



HAVE



So, you live in Košice — but have you really seen it?

You've mastered the trams, figured out where to get decent espresso, and maybe even know how to pronounce "*bryndzové halušky*" (bonus points). But beyond the everyday routines lies a city full of surprises — from underground fortresses and hidden art spaces to bear-sized adventures just outside the center. And yes, the cathedral still wows, even on your fifth visit.

This list isn't about checking boxes — it's about claiming the city. Whether you're here for work, love, or life's strange twists of fate, Košice has something to offer beyond the basics. Think of this as your insider's guide to exploring like a local, loving it like a native, and maybe even impressing your weekend visitors.

We've put together a list to serve as your insider's guide to exploring Košice. Let's go — the best part starts now.

FUN!

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL LANDMARKS

St. Elisabeth Cathedral

The largest Gothic cathedral in Slovakia and the iconic heart of Košice. Climb the northern tower for a panoramic view of the city. Inside, you'll find a unique Gothic altar, the tomb of Francis II Rákóczi and countless historical details.

St. Michael's Chapel & Urban Tower

This Gothic chapel once served as a cemetery chapel. The Urban Tower, named after the Urban bell that survived a great fire, today symbolizes the city's resilience.

Historic City Centre & Hlavná Street

The beating heart of Košice, full of cafés, noble townhouses, the Singing Fountain, musical chimes, and the fairy-tale-like State Theatre from the 19th century.



MUSEUMS, GALLERIES & ART

East Slovak Museum

Home to the famous Košice Golden Treasure - 2,920 gold coins discovered by chance in 1935. Also features archaeology, local history, and natural sciences.

Mikluš Prison

A genuine medieval prison complete with torture chamber. Tours include access to the old city walls and a glimpse into the world of historical executioners.

Kunsthalle / Hall of Art

A former public swimming pool turned into a space for contemporary art. Hosts exhibitions, concerts, talks and performances.

Kasárne/Kulturpark

A modern creative and community space with coworking, galleries, and cultural events. Occasionally hosts street food festivals and design markets.





HIDDEN GEMS & ALTERNATIVE SPOTS

Lower Gate - Underground Exhibition
Preserved medieval fortification remains beneath Hlavná Street. Explore this unexpected archaeological site just under your feet.

Peace Marathon Memorial
Pays tribute to the oldest marathon in Europe (since 1924). Located next to the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel.

Tabačka Kulturfabrik
Vibrant cultural and creative center housed in a former tobacco factory. It hosts concerts, exhibitions, film screenings and community events in an industrial, artsy atmosphere. A favorite spot for locals and creatives, it blends café culture, coworking and underground energy.



Cinema Úsmev
It is Košice's century-old arthouse cinema, housed in a beautifully restored historical building. It features two screening rooms and also offers a vibrant bar, café, and street-food stalls — particularly buzzing during festivals and weekend events. The program focuses on independent, European, and mainstream selections, often hosting thematic parties and inclusive screenings.



Garden Cinema Úsmev
Located in a charming courtyard passage between Hlavná 80 and Mäsiarská 37, the summer-only cinema offers a relaxed, open-air movie experience perfect for film lovers. With casual seating and a friendly atmosphere, it screens a mix of classics, contemporary hits, and niche favourites in a charming open-air setting. It's the ideal spot to enjoy cinema with a drink in hand as the warm evening unfolds.



ACTIVE GETAWAYS & TRIPS NEARBY

Červený breh (Red bank)

Scenic hillside above Košice, known for its sunset views, bike trails, and laid-back atmosphere. A popular local spot for outdoor workouts, concerts, and summer evenings at Morská chata, a cozy terrace bar. Easily reached by foot, bike, or car, it offers a perfect mix of nature and city skyline vibes.

Hrešná Viewpoint (Kavečany)

A panoramic overlook above the city, easily combined with a visit to the zoo, the cable car, or nearby hiking trails. Popular with paragliders and mountain bikers.

Alpinka & Čermel' Narrow-Gauge Railway (Children's Railway)

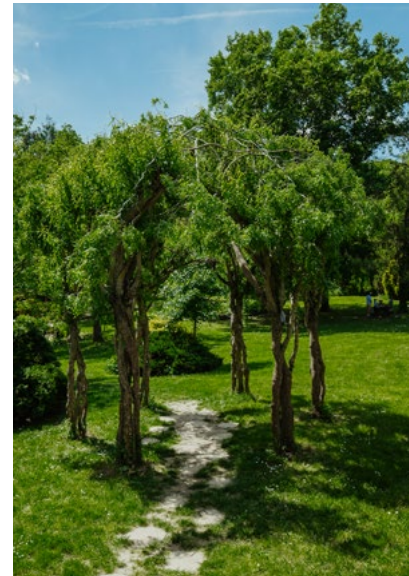
A retro ride perfect for kids and nostalgic adults. Runs from spring to autumn through the Čermel' Valley to Alpinka, where you can enjoy mini-golf and BBQ spots.



NATURE & ANIMALS

Košice Zoo (Kavečany)

Spread across 288 hectares, Košice Zoo is one of Europe's largest by area. Wander through the largest bear enclosure in Central Europe, explore Dinopark's interactive dinosaur models, meet Hucul horses, or follow the educational trails and bird-of-prey habitats. Perfect for families or anyone looking to spend a full day surrounded by nature and animal wonders.



Botanical Garden of UPJŠ

Step into a lush world at Slovakia's largest botanical garden. Stroll among tropical greenhouses, marvel at vibrant succulents and delicate butterfly exhibits, and discover rare plants collected from all corners of the globe. A paradise for plant lovers and photographers alike.

City Park

Košice's green heartbeat lies right in the city center. A serene pond reflects the surrounding trees, playgrounds echo with laughter, jogging paths invite early morning runs, and cozy cafés line the walkways. Seasonal cultural events add a lively, local vibe, making it a perfect spot to unwind, people-watch, or soak up the city's energy.



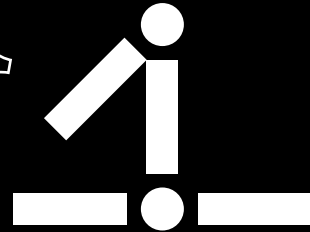
UPCOMING EVENTS



Magnetize Conference, October 9th

Košice is brimming with young talent from around the world, yet many students leave after graduation. Why does this happen, and how can we make Košice a city where young people not only study, but also live, work, and thrive?

These are the questions at the heart of the Magnetize Conference, which will explore the future of talent in the city. The event aims to identify barriers that prevent young people — particularly international students from Ukraine — from entering the job market and to propose practical solutions. Topics will include stronger links between education and real-world practice, as well as ways to foster cultural integration and community engagement. The program features three panel discussions and multiple presentations, including insights from international experts. Representatives from government, universities, employers, and students will share perspectives, offering a platform for dialogue, fresh ideas, and collaborative solutions.



AllInOne Business Cocktail, November 26th

A unique networking event in Košice that brings together key players from academia, public administration, the private sector, and civil society. Designed to foster long-term collaboration, the event encourages informal connections, idea sharing, and the exploration of common challenges. Attendees can look forward to a rich and engaging program that inspires new joint initiatives for the benefit of the region.



Words by BusinessKošice

If you want more info about our events, follow our LinkedIn profile [BusinessKošice](#)



KOSICEMARATHON.COM

International Peace Marathon, October 5th

The oldest marathon in Europe and the third oldest in the world, held in Košice since 1924. An unbeatable atmosphere of unity and joy from both Slovak and international runners, the energy-filled historic city center and the applause of enthusiastic spectators — all of this you'll experience during the International Peace Marathon in Košice, always on the first Sunday of October. Come and support the runners with your cheers, or join them on the asphalt loops around the largest urban heritage conservation area in Slovakia.

BIELANOC.SK

White Night Festival, October 10-12th

For over a decade, the White Night Festival has been lighting up the streets of Košice's historic center, where art and culture enthusiasts meet to discover unique installations by local and international artists. This legendary European festival first took place in Košice, making it the first city in Slovakia to host such an event. Together with the White Night festival in Bratislava, it now connects Slovak cities with European metropolises in the realm of contemporary international art. Visit Košice for White Night and enjoy the vibrant streets, open theaters, and galleries, even in the late-night hours. All events for young, older, and the youngest, for families with children, in short, for everyone can be found here.

Words by Visit Košice
visitkosice.org

IJF.SK

International Jazz Festival, October 7-10th

Jazz was born in the heart of New Orleans, with its historic roots dating back to the 19th century. Today, the stylish melodies of jazz are heard in Košice too. Visit this event, which comes alive every autumn with a quality lineup of musical artists and dance rhythms. The International Jazz Festival has been held in Košice since 1995, regularly featuring both local and international performers who share their jazz talent with a musically inclined audience in various parts of Košice.

ATDAYS.SK

Art & Tech Days, November 27th

Join us for a unique festival celebrating the intersection of technology, digital culture, and art, organized by the city's non-profit Creative Industry Košice. Visit the November Art & Tech Days, which reflects Košice's title as the only UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts in Slovakia. Art & Tech Days is designed for anyone interested in art, technology, innovation, and unconventional solutions. It's a week packed with a program for all ages. The event annually features a wide range of activities including a thematic conference, artistic performances, installations, workshops, hackathons, and unconventional exhibitions.

From the young to the young at heart, for families with children — in short, for everyone — you'll find all events here



TO WRAP IT UP...

The city of Košice proves time and again that it is truly open to foreigners. This openness is not only due to its proximity to neighboring countries but also because we recognize the value that foreigners bring to the city and appreciate their contributions to its growth and vibrancy.

ABOUT US

The non-profit organization **BUSINESS KOŠICE** fosters collaboration between the private sector, academia and local government to drive economic growth and innovation in Košice.

It supports businesses, investors and talent by creating a strong ecosystem for development, attracting foreign investment and enhancing the city's competitiveness. Through initiatives like Brainport Košice, it also helps international professionals and returning diaspora integrate and thrive in the region.

SOFT-LANDING PLATFORM BRAINPORT KOŠICE



Living and Working in Košice: Support for Expats and Returning Slovaks.

Our soft-landing platform supports talented professionals and helps them navigate life and work in Košice. Whether you're an international newcomer or a Slovak returning home, Brainport Košice provides everything you need — from job opportunities and housing to education, healthcare, and local regulations.

We also organize networking events, professional meetups, and community-building activities, helping newcomers connect, exchange ideas, and feel part of Košice's vibrant professional and social community. Brainport Košice is your one-stop hub for making Košice truly feel like home.

→ brainportkosice.sk

USEFUL SPOTS

First Contact Office for Foreigners

Hlavná 68, Košice
Tel: +42155 6419 190
centerumH68@kosice.sk

IOM – Migration Information Centre (MIC)

Free legal, work & social counselling, Slovak courses, requalification support
Tel: 0850 211 478 (SR)
mic@iom.int
www.mic.iom.sk

Human Rights League

Free legal aid for refugees, asylum seekers & foreigners with protection
Strojárska 3, Košice
Tel: +421911720 093
ukrajina@hrl.sk
www.hrl.sk

Mareena

Community, language & cultural programs, career support, volunteering
Strojárska 3, Košice
Tel: +421948 113 947
info@mareena.sk

Foreigners' Service Centre (Ministry Of Interior of the Slovak Republic)

“One-stop shop” for students, workers & returnees; counselling on residence, jobs & services
Trieda SNP 35, Košice
Tel: +421961570 333
csc@minv.sk
www.minv.sk/?centres-of-services-for-foreigners

Foreigners support centre

A specialized Foreigners Support Center has been established at the Košice City Hall, which performs many tasks aimed at people from abroad.

1. Monitors EU legislation and applies it in the city.
2. Proposes legislative changes.
3. Prepares strategies for foreigner integration.
4. Implements and coordinates integration activities for third-country nationals.
5. Provides advice on jobs, education, healthcare, housing, culture, sports, social security, and legal rights.
6. Works with partners on integration.
7. Assesses integration risks.
8. Manages files and registries.
9. Prepares materials for city leadership and council.
10. Responds to council member inquiries.

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HAVE A TIP OR FACING A PROBLEM? WE'RE ALL EARS!

We kindly ask for your cooperation. If you have any questions in Košice, face a problem, would like to provide feedback related to your daily life and the services essential to it or you have any ideas for improvement in the city, please, don't hesitate to contact us at office@bizke.sk. We are here for you because we are really grateful, that you have chosen Košice as your home. Thank you for being the part of our amazing city.

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SLOVAKIA

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A O U T
Y E R V I C E
S E R V I C E