

IN SEARCH OF EXPERIENCES IN
*the Prekmurje
Region*



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Published by

Pomurska madžarska samoupravna narodna skupnost –
Muravidéki Magyar Önkormányzati Nemzeti Közösség

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Printed by

Digifot, fotografija in tisk d.o.o.

Circulation

250

Year of Publication

2026

This publication has been published with the financial support of the 'Program for the Promotion of the Economic Basis of the Hungarian National Community 2025-2028'.

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The publication is not for sale.

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji

Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

908(497.411)

FEHÉR, Bea

In search of experiences in the Prekmurje region / [text by Bea Feher ; English translation Petra Bobovec]. - Lendava : Pomurska madžarska samoupravna narodna skupnost = Lendva : Muravidéki Magyar Önkormányzati Nemzeti Közösség, 2026

Vsebuje tudi besedilo, tiskano v obratni smeri: Auf der Suche nach Erlebnissen in der Region Prekmurje / [Text Bea Feher ; Deutsche Übersetzung Petra Bobovec]

ISBN 978-961-97163-5-9

COBISS.SI-ID 281060611



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA LOKALNO
SAMOUPRAVO, KOHEZIJO
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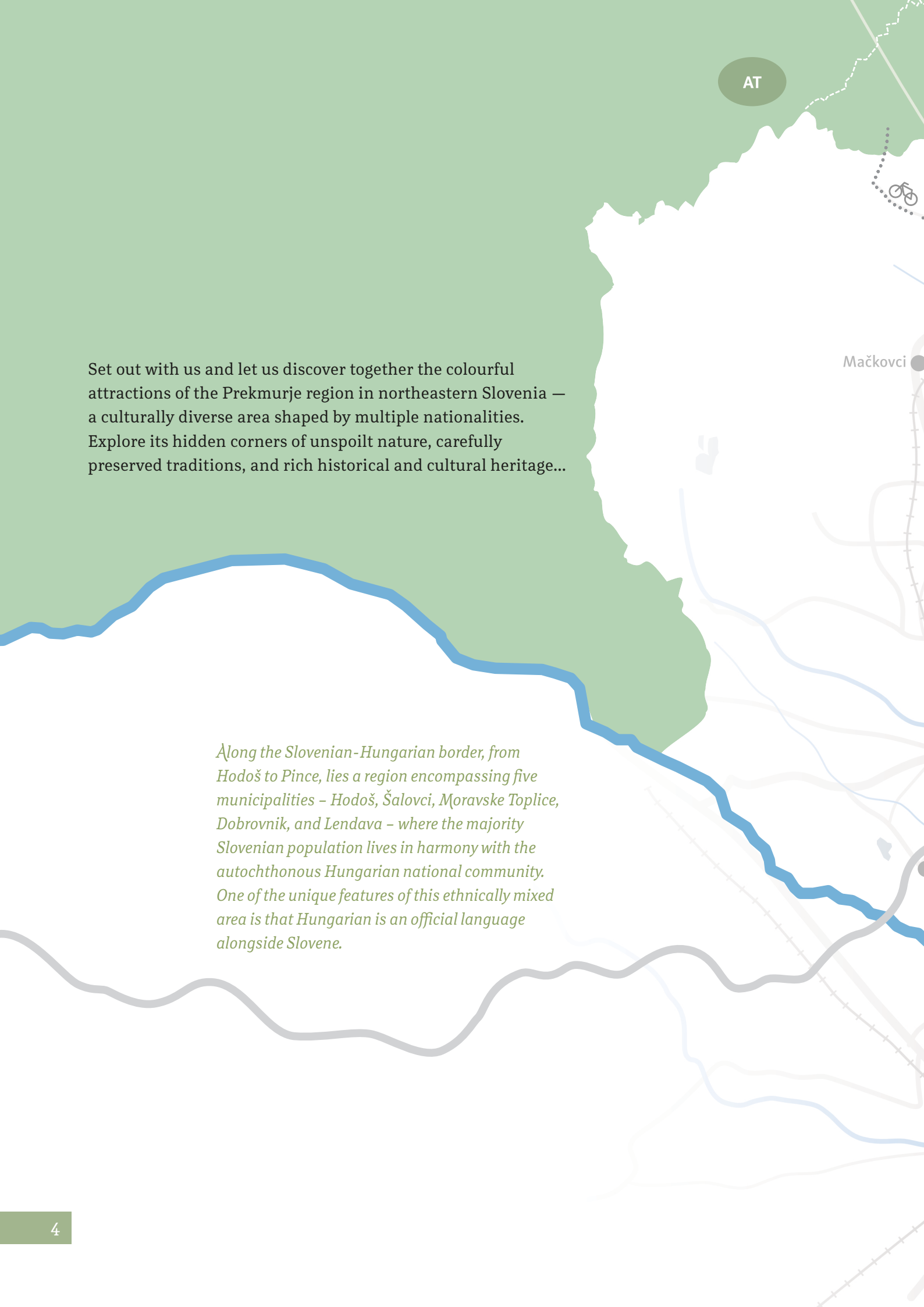
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Set out with us and let us discover together the colourful attractions of the Prekmurje region in northeastern Slovenia — a culturally diverse area shaped by multiple nationalities. Explore its hidden corners of unspoilt nature, carefully preserved traditions, and rich historical and cultural heritage...

Along the Slovenian-Hungarian border, from Hodoš to Pince, lies a region encompassing five municipalities – Hodoš, Šalovci, Moravske Toplice, Dobrovnik, and Lendava – where the majority Slovenian population lives in harmony with the autochthonous Hungarian national community. One of the unique features of this ethnically mixed area is that Hungarian is an official language alongside Slovene.



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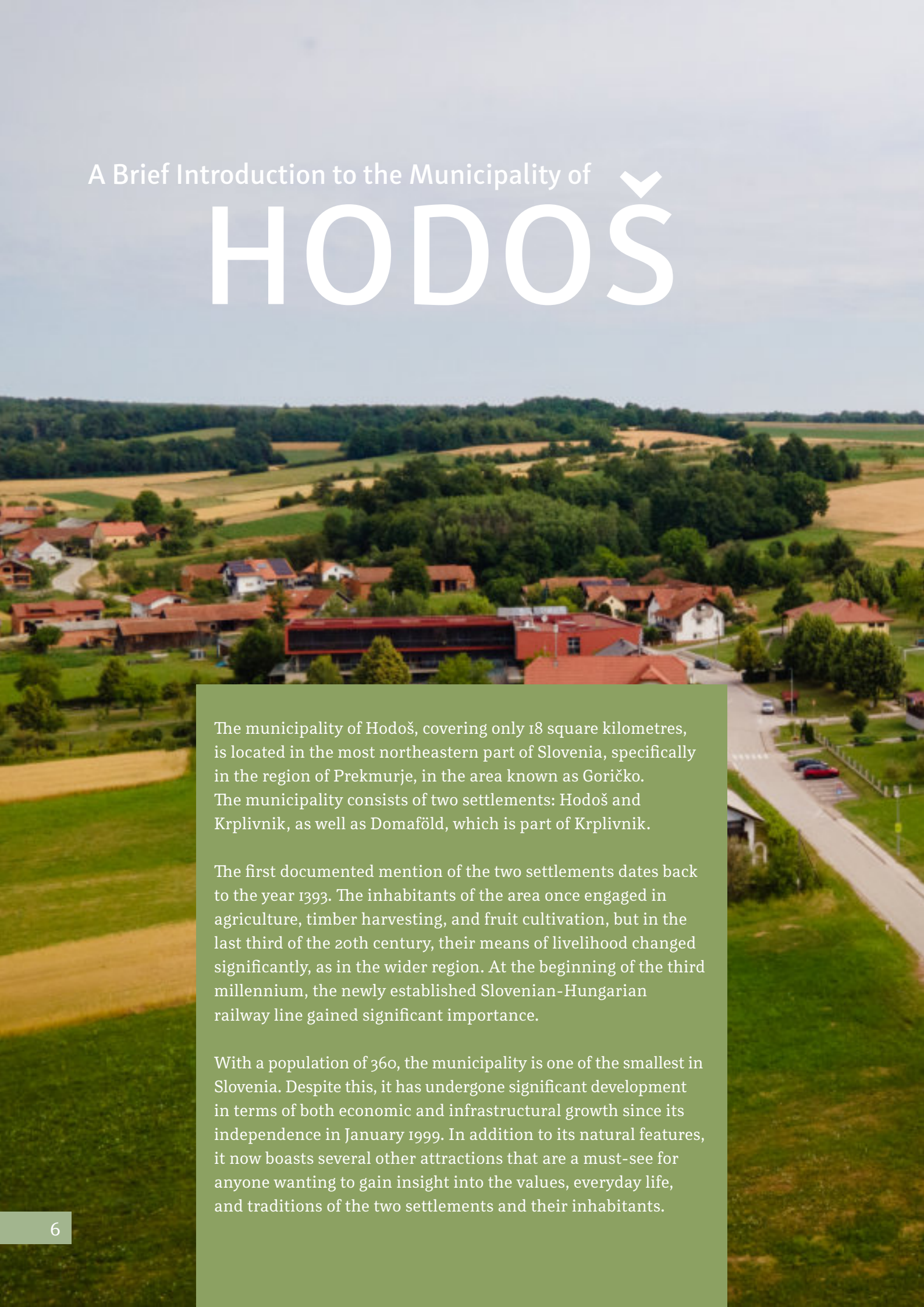


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A Brief Introduction to the Municipality of HODOŠ

The municipality of Hodoš, covering only 18 square kilometres, is located in the most northeastern part of Slovenia, specifically in the region of Prekmurje, in the area known as Goričko. The municipality consists of two settlements: Hodoš and Krplivnik, as well as Domaföld, which is part of Krplivnik.

The first documented mention of the two settlements dates back to the year 1393. The inhabitants of the area once engaged in agriculture, timber harvesting, and fruit cultivation, but in the last third of the 20th century, their means of livelihood changed significantly, as in the wider region. At the beginning of the third millennium, the newly established Slovenian-Hungarian railway line gained significant importance.

With a population of 360, the municipality is one of the smallest in Slovenia. Despite this, it has undergone significant development in terms of both economic and infrastructural growth since its independence in January 1999. In addition to its natural features, it now boasts several other attractions that are a must-see for anyone wanting to gain insight into the values, everyday life, and traditions of the two settlements and their inhabitants.





THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL HOUSE IN KRPLIVNIK – A GUARDIAN OF THE PAST

The ethnographical museums set up in the ethnically mixed region of Prekmurje play an important role in preserving the material and spiritual heritage of our ancestors. One such museum is nestled on the hillside of Krplivnik, offering a unique view of the Goričko landscape below. In the past, Krplivnik, along with its part of Domaföld, was a typical village of the Őrség Region, which is why it is no coincidence that it is exactly here where we can find the ethnographical collection, showcasing the lives of the people who once lived here, and serving as an important historical resource.

The Krplivnik Ethnographical House, also known as the **Krplivnik Local History and Ethnographical Collection**, opened its doors in June 1997. It is housed in the former house of the Škerlak family, built in the early 20th century. Visitors enter the building through a small veranda adorned with a lean-to roof, which originally served as the family's sun-protected summer retreat, furnished with a table and corner bench.

The long, narrow hallway – its walls covered with archival sources and various written documents – leads to the first room, where photographs from the Könye family archive are displayed. In the early 20th century, one of the family members, Lajos Könye, was also involved in photography. In the corner, a bookshelf is filled with literary and religious books, next to a now-yellowed document listing the 289 books owned by the family.

Continuing down the hallway, we enter a kitchen with a stove and a traditional chimney, where embroidered wall hangings can be seen, each featuring a love message, along with the well-known house blessing:

*Where there is faith, there is love;
where there is love, there is peace;
where there is peace, there is blessing;
where there is blessing, there is God;
where there is God, there is no need.*





↓ The wattle and daub winepress house with its winepress, along with the adjacent apiary, are characteristic elements of the region's cultural heritage.



↑ The selection made from the preserved glass negatives faithfully reflects moments of former village life..

A table with a chest-of-drawers, covered with woven cloth, is surrounded by a corner bench, with ceramic pots, flasks, milk jugs, as well as a baking shovel, dough kneading trough, and other small household items on display behind it.

In the back room of the former house, visitors can admire a green lead-glazed, tiled stove built at the turn of the 18th to 19th century, along with a few tulip chests that once held a bride's dowry, and a series of beautifully decorated glazed pottery. In the centre of the room stands a loom, passed down from generation to generation, alongside a former school desk with an ink pot, quill, and a slate board with a holder for the punishment cane.

The outbuildings surrounding the ethnographical museum also hide true treasures: in the nearby single-room building, there is a woodcarving workshop, next to it a beehive, and beside that, a wine cellar, typical of the Őrség Region, where the pressing of the grapes took place after the harvest. In the threshing barn, agricultural tools are displayed. Once, the Škerlak family operated the only larger-scale distillery in the area, and a related exhibition can also be seen here.

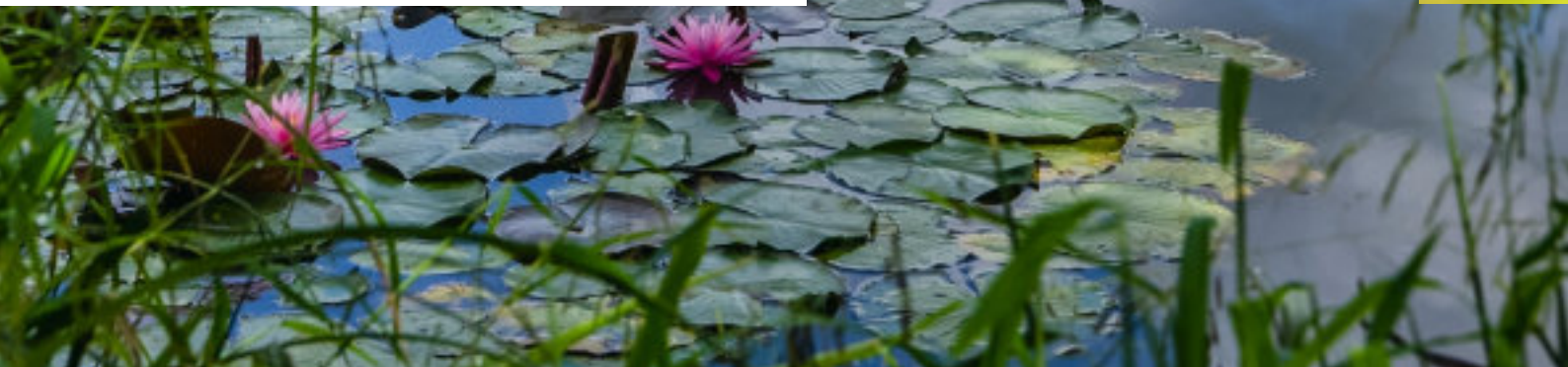
In the yard there is the so-called **Tündérkert** orchard, which was created for heritage protection purposes, to preserve the indigenous trees of the area. Among them, the most popular is the very rare and valuable sorb tree. Its fruit resembles that of an apple or pear tree – its base colour is yellow, with a beautiful red tint on the sun-exposed side. ♦

↓ Lake Hodoš plays an important role in preserving the region's biodiversity.



IN THE EMBRACE OF LAKE HODOŠ AND THE KRPLIVNIK SPRING

In today's fast-paced world, we often forget how important it is to spend time outdoors. It is well known that being close to nature has a positive effect on our mood and vitality, and in addition, we can discover many beautiful wonders if we take a long walk outdoors...





On the edge of the village of Hodoš, amidst soaring trees, blooming meadows, and rich fields, lies **Lake Hodoš**, which was created at the end of the 20th century by damming the Dolenci Stream that flows into the Krka River. This artificially created lake has become known as a paradise for anglers and an important water habitat. The lake is home to water insects such as beetles, common pond skaters and dragonflies, while in the more marshy, shallower areas, newts and tree frogs thrive. The still waters also attract many bird species – ducks, herons, kingfishers – and the reedbeds offer protection to nesting water rails. Informative signs about the local wildlife and plants, as well as designated resting spots, make the walk around the lake even more interesting. One must not forget the birdwatching hide located along the forest, from which visitors can observe the waterfowl living in the lake, and those with sharp eyes may even catch a glimpse of a few otters.



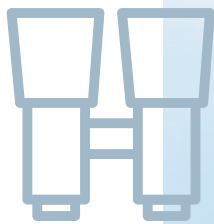
In Krplivnik, beneath the shady trees, in a small grove, lies the natural spring known locally as the **Krplivnik Spring**. The water from the spring is still consumed today, and the locals believe that this water is especially healthy, since those who regularly quench their thirst with it live to a ripe old age. No one knows exactly when the spring began to flow, but locals say that already in the 1800s, people from the neighbouring village of Szalafő would come to collect water, transporting it in wooden barrels by horse-drawn carts. Some villagers, however, believe it flowed much earlier, even during the time of the Ottomans. The spring has always played a significant role in the lives of the villagers, and many stories are connected to it. In the past, after finishing the hard work in the fields, women would come here to fill their black pitchers with refreshing water. They would discuss their daily tasks, share in each other's joys, and comfort each other in times of sorrow. Even today, memories live on of the tradition of making small bouquets:

young people would go to the spring on New Year's Eve, and decorate the well with bouquets tied at home, hoping for fresh water all year long. ♦



↑ The Krplivnik Spring, which plays a significant role in the lives of local residents, is a defining part of the region's historical and natural heritage.

→ The watchtower in Hodoš, renovated in 2018 and now serving as a tourist attraction, rises proudly into the sky.

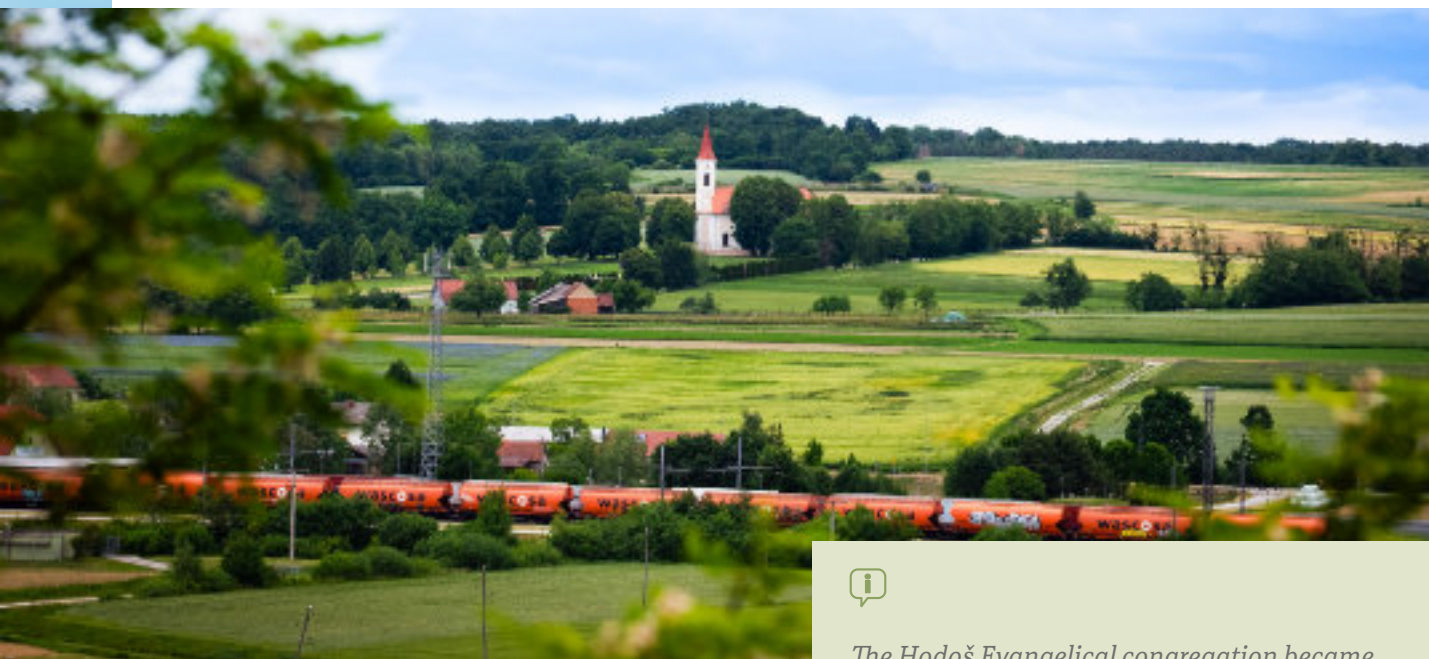


A VIEW THAT REACHES INTO THE PAST

Admiring the Ōrség from above is truly a special experience, and the two military watchtowers in Goričko – more precisely in Hodoš and Krplivnik – which were renovated in 2018, provide an excellent opportunity for this.

Near the Slovenian-Hungarian border stands the approximately 15-metre-high, metal-structured **Hodoš watchtower**. The stairs running around the building lead to the enclosed observation level, from which one can see the Krka Valley and the broader surrounding area – the cultivated lands, the beautiful forests, and the diverse architectural heritage.





↑ View from the watchtower in Krplivnik — the railway in the foreground, and the 19th-century Evangelical church behind it.

Arriving in **Krplivnik** from Hodoš, we can climb the interior stairs of the brick-built border **watchtower** to reach the upper level, which was once used for military surveillance. The structure was built around 1945 near the Slovenian-Hungarian border. This watchtower is unique because it is the only surviving brick building of its kind in this part of Slovenia.

What makes the two observation towers special is that their upper levels offer a view of the **Evangelical Church**, as well as the railway station of Hodoš. ♦

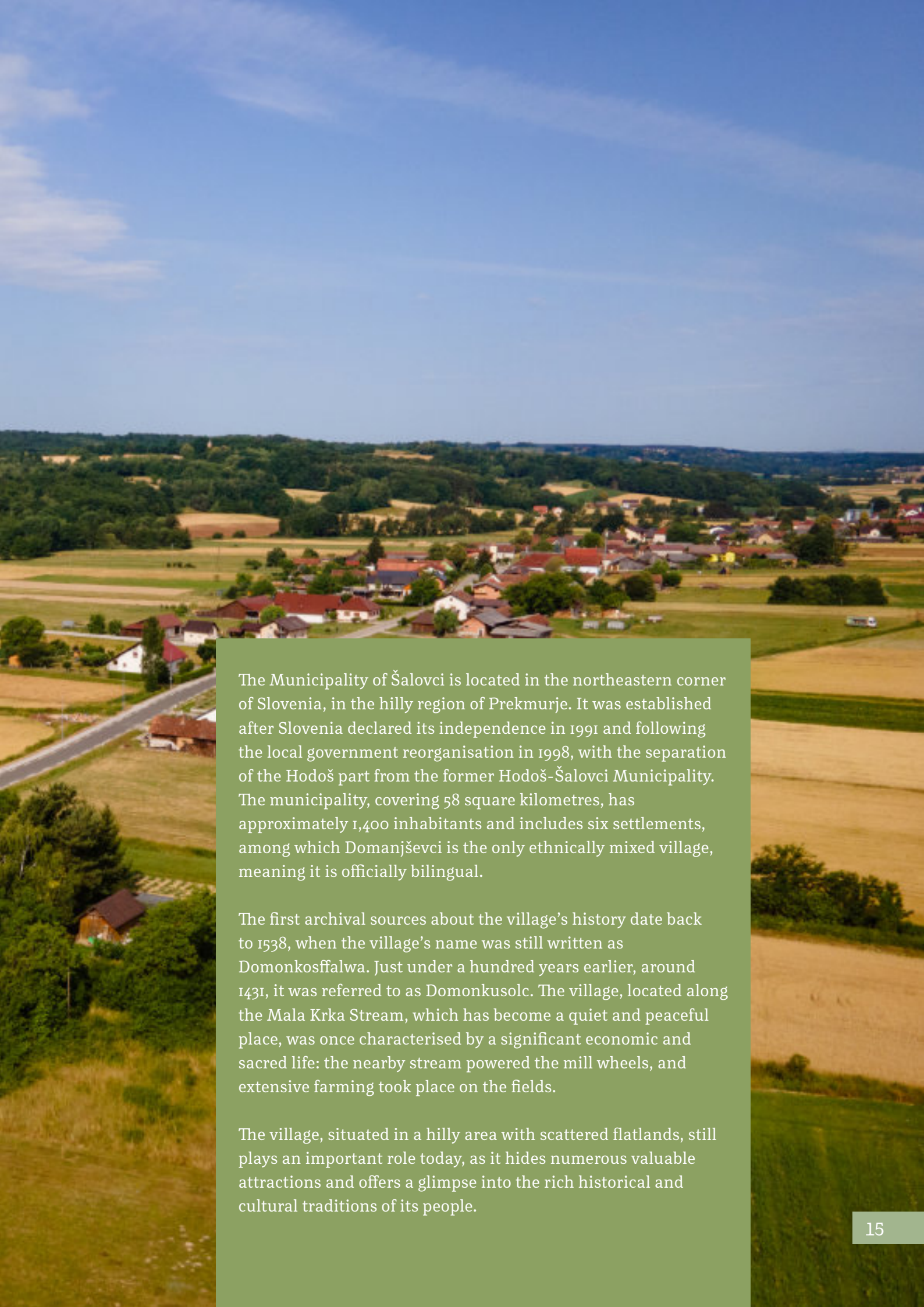


*The Hodoš Evangelical congregation became followers of the new faith very early on, after the appearance of the Reformation in Hungary. During the Counter-Reformation, they were the only congregation in the region that remained faithful to the Reformation, and the memory of this is preserved in the Luther rose in the municipality's coat of arms. In 1783, a wooden church was built, and in 1840, the construction of the new **Evangelical Church**, which still stands today, began. At that time, the congregation was led by Pastor János Kardos. After five years, under his leadership, the parishioners also built a school and a residence for the cantor teacher.*

Among the treasures of the village is the Hodoš railway station. From the last quarter of the 19th century, the region's merchants also became involved in the country's economic circulation: the trade of cattle and pigs flourished, as did the purchase of fruit suitable for distilling – this was when the idea of building a railway was born. This period also marks the demographic growth of Goričko, the rise of the Evangelical population which came into wealth, and the economic advancement of both local intellectuals and intellectuals who had moved here from other places. Thus, after 1882, the establishment of a railway connection with Murska Sobota was increasingly advocated, which was realised at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, Hodoš remains an important station on the railway line.

An aerial photograph of a village in Šalovci, showing a cluster of houses with red and grey roofs, surrounded by green fields and a dense forest in the background. A church with a white steeple is visible on a hill in the distance.

✓ A Brief Introduction to the Municipality of ŠALOVCI



The Municipality of Šalovci is located in the northeastern corner of Slovenia, in the hilly region of Prekmurje. It was established after Slovenia declared its independence in 1991 and following the local government reorganisation in 1998, with the separation of the Hodoš part from the former Hodoš-Šalovci Municipality. The municipality, covering 58 square kilometres, has approximately 1,400 inhabitants and includes six settlements, among which Domanjševci is the only ethnically mixed village, meaning it is officially bilingual.

The first archival sources about the village's history date back to 1538, when the village's name was still written as Domonkosffalwa. Just under a hundred years earlier, around 1431, it was referred to as Domonkusolc. The village, located along the Mala Krka Stream, which has become a quiet and peaceful place, was once characterised by a significant economic and sacred life: the nearby stream powered the mill wheels, and extensive farming took place on the fields.

The village, situated in a hilly area with scattered flatlands, still plays an important role today, as it hides numerous valuable attractions and offers a glimpse into the rich historical and cultural traditions of its people.

WHERE PEASANTS WORK AND CUSTOMS COME TO LIFE

The Domanjševci Homestead, located in the heart of Domanjševci, is one of the ethnological houses that faithfully preserves the region's history and culture, covering various themes. Upon entering through the large wooden door, we are transported back in time, into the everyday lives of the former residents of the village.

In the place of the old traditional house, Sándor Kalamár and his wife built a new residential building in the 1930s, which now functions as an ethnological museum. The multi-generational building was expanded several times with new rooms and structures, which included a wine cellar and a distillery. In the barn, they stored hay, straw, and unthreshed grains before threshing. The Kalamár family farmed on about ten hectares of land, raising cattle and pigs, and in addition to arable land, they also owned meadows and vineyards.

In the former Kalamár house, now known as the **Domanjševci Homestead** ethnographical house, the first exhibition was opened in 2012. In the main building, you can view residential rooms that showcase the characteristics of the early 20th century: the bedroom and the kitchen. In the case of the bedroom, a unique blend of urban and peasant tastes can be observed: the furniture is arranged differently, the beds are paired, nightstands have been placed beside them, but the room's furniture set still features folk versions of historical style elements. Due to the tradition of sticking to the old eating habits, the kitchen preserved the longest-lasting blend of older and more modern elements that seemed natural: in the corner of the kitchen stands the diagonal, elevated tiled stove, while on the old shelves, traditional kitchen utensils are still displayed.

The building complex offers insight into numerous traditions and past work activities.



↑ The Domanjševci Homestead offers a glimpse into the world of traditional crafts — including shoemaking.

→ Among the objects displayed in the kitchen are various clay jugs.





A significant focus of the exhibition is weaving, for which various raw materials were used – willow, birch, and hazel twigs, reed and rush plants, rye straw, corn husks, and broom corn – all of which were made into practical household items. On a traditional peasant farm, there were many tasks that could only be completed through the community's cooperation, through helping one another. One such task was pumpkin seed shelling. In honour of this, one of the exhibition rooms in the outbuilding allows visitors to learn about pumpkin cultivation, cleaning and drying pumpkin seeds, as well as making and storing pumpkin seed oil. The exhibition also showcases the olden methods of food processing and preservation. In the past, pig slaughtering played a key role, and its main goal was to ensure a year-round supply of lard and smoked meats to last until the summer agricultural work began.



The courtyard behind the farmhouse serves as

an authentic location for the largest outdoor event in Domanjševci: the traditional harvest and threshing demonstration. On this day, there is a bustle on the homestead, behind which lies the wheat field, where the crop is harvested with sickles and scythes, tied into sheaves, and then arranged into cross-like structures. The sequence of tasks ends with threshing. In the past, children also helped with the day's work, learning early on that the small wheat grains ground into flour are the most important staple in people's daily diets. The preservation and transmission of this tradition is demonstrated by the richly furnished agricultural exhibition, as well as the newly installed mill, which also serves to revive the old traditions.◆



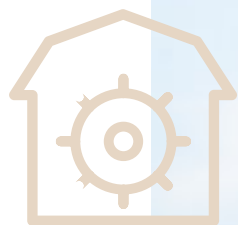
WHEN STREAMS TURNED MILL WHEELS

In the past, millers had plenty of work until the first frost arrived, as the watermills ran continuously from the middle of summer. In Domanjševci, the power of the Mala Krka Stream drove the grinding mechanisms of the watermills. The Žlebič and Čahuk mills are no longer operational, but the remaining buildings, with their millstones and mill wheels, still preserve the traces of the once-thriving milling life.

In the past, hand harvesting was considered one of the biggest tasks for farmers.

The workers, carrying their scythes on their shoulders, set out early in the morning for the wheat fields. The harvested wheat and grain were tied into small bundles, which were then loaded with a pitchfork onto the cart. This was followed by manual threshing, and then the golden-coloured grains were taken to the mill, where the miller ground flour from corn, wheat, oats, and rye, which the women used to bake delicious bread.

→ Čahuk Mill, which once ground grain, now only preserves the memory of the past, evoking the traditions of rural life.





↑ The sharpening stone was an essential tool for honing the blade, keeping it razor-sharp time and time again.



In Domanjševci, two preserved mills bear witness to the former peasant way of life. **Žlebič's Mill**, partially built from brick and partially from wood, was established in the early 20th century. A unique aspect of the mill is that the entire wooden structure – including the cogwheels and the cylinder – was crafted by the miller himself, József Žlebič. His son later converted the mill into a steam-powered mill, enabling the cogwheels to operate even during dry periods. At the edge of the village stands **Čahuk's Mill**. This peasant mill, also built partly from wood and partly from brick, was purchased by its owner, János Čahuk, in the early 1900s. Around the 1920s, he also acquired a steam engine for the mill. From that point onwards, they could grind all kinds of grain here, just as they did at the neighbouring Žlebič's Mill. Farmers from the surrounding area brought their grain here. The mill remained in operation until 1982. ♦

→ The Agnus Dei depiction on the southern gate of the Church of Saint Martin deserves special attention due to its uniqueness.

↓ In the foreground is the Evangelical Church of Domanjševci, visible in the background is the Church of Saint Martin from the era of the Árpád dynasty.

NURTURING THE PAST, PRESERVING THE FAITH

The ethnically mixed region of Prekmurje is home to numerous sacred landmarks and religious buildings waiting to be discovered. A fine example of this is Domanjševci, a village that is religiously diverse as well, as it is inhabited by both Catholics and Evangelicals. Here, followers of both faiths are welcomed by two churches standing close to each other: St. Martin's Church and the Evangelical Church.

The church from the era of the Árpád dynasty, is dedicated to St. Martin and stands on a hill on the southern edge of Domanjševci. This Romanesque-style church is one of the earliest of its kind in the Prekmurje region, dating back to around the 1230s. Originally, the interior of the Roman Catholic church was adorned with frescoes, though these have since been lost to time. A distinctive feature of the church is its southern arched portal, supported by three columns on each side. One column is unadorned, another is decorated with plant motifs, and the innermost features a mythical bird. The Agnus Dei depiction above the portal — showing the Lamb of God — is especially intriguing, as the carved figure is not a lamb, but rather a lioness or panther holding a cross. The animal's tail branches into a lily-shaped, three-part form. This unusual portrayal has sparked the interest of many historians and art historians alike, though no definitive interpretation has been agreed upon.

Near the Roman Catholic St. Martin's Church stands the Evangelical Church, which can accommodate around a thousand worshippers. The first Evangelical church in the village was a wooden structure built in the 1800s.





The congregation's first known pastor was István Kuzma. Construction of the new, present-day church began in 1901 and was completed the following year. The building was designed by architect Alojz Kleiber, and the construction was overseen by Tivadar Rátkol. At the time, the construction and furnishing of the church cost 45,000 gold crowns, a sum fully donated by the faithful. In 1932, the interior of the church, the teacher's residence, and the school were all renovated — once again with the support of donations from the congregation. The Neo-Romanesque sanctuary stands atop a hill overlooking the village, in accordance with Helvetic traditions, adjacent to the school building where preachers once taught children to read and write. ♦

A Brief Introduction to the Municipality of

MORAVSKE TOPLICE





Located at the meeting point of the Ravensko and Dolinsko Plains and the hilly region of Goričko, the municipality of Moravske Toplice spans an area of 144 square kilometres. With a population of approximately 5,900, the municipality is officially recognised today as an ethnically mixed area. However, of its 28 settlements, only five are officially bilingual: Motvarjevci, Čikečka vas, Pordašinci, Prosenjakovci, and Središče.

Unspoilt nature, hidden corners, tranquillity, the hospitality of villagers, numerous religious monuments that bear art-historical significance, a rich cultural life, traditional local dishes, and flavourful wines, all characterise the settlements of the municipality. In this ethnically mixed area, special attention is still paid to the preservation of old customs — such as feather stripping and pumpkin seed shelling. On winter evenings, when the whole village gathered together, women spent their time stripping feathers, while men shelled pumpkin seeds. Naturally, work was accompanied by conversation and merrymaking. The stripped feathers were used to fill duvets and pillows, while the shelled pumpkin seeds were pressed into delicious pumpkin seed oil.

WHEN BEEKEEPING AND FOLK TRADITION INTERTWINE

Beekeeping took root not only in Prekmurje but also in other parts of Slovenia, becoming an integral part of traditional cuisine and the preservation of the local population's cultural heritage. Bees play a crucial role in sustaining life on Earth, including that of humankind, which is why, on 20th December, 2017, a Slovenian initiative was adopted to declare 20th May as World Bee Day, marking the birthday of Anton Janša, an outstanding 18th-century beekeeping expert and the first head of the beekeeping school at the court of Empress Maria Theresa.

In Motvarjevci, the former traditional house of Géza Vass was brought back to life in the spirit of the aforementioned traditions in spring 2018, when the Beekeeping Education and Visitor Centre, known as **Alvarium**, was officially opened. The Alvarium — which means beehive — is a type of ethnographical museum that plays a key role in the tourism concept of the Prekmurje region. It showcases bees, beekeeping, honey production and usage, as well as its culinary, health-related, and other applications.

Over the course of history, the walls of what is now the Alvarium aged — but they have been revitalised, and the rooms have found a new purpose. After its renovation, the building



opened its doors to the public as a place rightfully deserving the title of ethnographical museum, as some of its rooms have been furnished with preserved original furniture and objects. Upon entering through the large wooden door, visitors are greeted by a long hallway that leads into the various separate rooms. What was once the house's best room (tiszta szoba in Hungarian) now serves as an educational and exhibition space, dominated by a large, solid wood table. Along the wall, old wardrobes display the handcrafted creations

and products of local artisans. Next to it is a well-equipped kitchenette, while at the other end of the house, there are two guest rooms, both furnished with original pieces. On the shelves mounted to the walls of the rooms, a variety of beekeeping-related products are on display.

The courtyard surrounding the ethnographical museum also offers numerous points of interest. The final goal of the renovation of the homestead was to establish a well-designed nature trail that would showcase beekeeping and honey-producing plants. This trail includes informative signs related to the topic, while at the back of the courtyard, there is a meadow full of flowers and an orchard created to preserve indigenous trees.

- ↙ A modern blend of Slovenian traditions and local folk art at the apiary in Motvarjevci.
- ↓ Old wardrobes, a solid wood table, and chairs give visitors a sense of local life in the past.



A true curiosity is the newly established beekeeping house with 16 hives. Beehive decoration has a long-standing tradition in Slovenia, which dates back to ancient times. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this practice became widespread. The beehive painters of that era immortalised various stories, legends, and everyday motifs of peasant life on their hives. The decoration of the Motvarjevci beehive is partially based on Slovenian traditions, but it focuses on local folk art in a modern style, evoking a giant tulip chest.

However, Alvarium is not solely aimed at tourism. It also plays an important role in involving local producers, artisans, beekeepers, the rising generation, and children from the local bilingual primary school and kindergarten. The building and its surroundings host workshops, training sessions, and lectures, among other activities.◆

↓ The ruins of the castle still bear the family coat of arms on its façade.



IF WALLS COULD TALK...

Under a veil of mystery, there are a few old, partly abandoned, or seldom visited buildings. In the culturally diverse area of the Municipality of Moravske Toplice, we can speak of two such iconic buildings, each with its own unique story.



In the village of Prosenjakovci in the Goričko region, under the shade of massive plane trees, red beech, poplar, and pine trees, lie the ruins of a once magnificent mansion, the first written mention of which dates back to 1876.

The mysterious-looking **Matzenauer Mansion** evokes great times even in its dilapidated state. Built in the Neoclassical style, the last owner of the castle was Carl von Matzenauer, an Austrian consul, who, after his wife became ill with tuberculosis, purchased the estate in 1900. The count was seeking a quiet and healthy environment for his wife to recover, and thus learnt that a mansion was for sale in Prosenjakovci, along with 150 hectares of land, mostly forest and farmland.



Years later, in 1920, when the International Boundary Commission arrived in Prekmurje to determine the state border between Hungary and Yugoslavia in the northeastern part of Slovenia, the count offered the mansion for their use, providing accommodation and workspaces for the commission. Towards the end of World War II, the Russian army set up a hospital in the mansion, and after the war, both the mansion and the estate were nationalised. The building was used by the Yugoslav army for a time, and later, it was converted into apartments for the workers of the agricultural cooperative.

The former grandeur of the mansion is hidden beneath the veil of slow decay. From the once unparalleled beauty of the mansion, only the family crest on the façade remains intact, while the surrounding park, once beautifully maintained, is now only marked by a few soaring trees.

Also in the municipality of Moravske Toplice, in the middle of the forest in Motvarjevci, in a quiet little clearing, stands **Vogler's House**, built in 1934. It was constructed by János Vogler for his wife, who longed for a peaceful, secluded life. The woman was deeply religious, so she had a statue of the Virgin Mary placed on a nearby pine tree. After her death, the statue was moved, and a coffin was made for her from the wood of the pine tree.

With the beginning of World War II, the house was no longer used, and in January 1945, it became a refuge and hideout for a partisan unit called "Prekmurska četa". In honour of the unit, a memorial plaque was placed on the wall of the building, and a museum section was established inside the house. The hunting cabin is now considered a cultural monument. ♦

↓ The walls of the Vogler's House display portraits, letters, and notes belonging to members of the partisan unit.



↓ The chapel in Čikečka vas rises towards the sky in a peaceful, idyllic setting.



SACRED BUILDINGS AT EVERY TURN

On the religious map of Prekmurje, alongside the Catholic majority, the presence of a significant number of Evangelical and Reformed believers is testified by the sacred monuments located in the Goričko region of the bilingual area.



← This sanctuary, built in the 20th century, is Slovenia's only Reformed church.

The unique **Reformed Church in Motvarjevci** is the centre of the Christian Reformatory Church in Slovenia. In 1968, the local population transformed the bell tower (which was built in the early 1900s) into a small church, with two bells in its tower. This church is the only Reformed church in Slovenia. In 2014, the congregation decided to renovate the building. The minimalist-looking church, with its restrained decoration, still has two bells in its tower.

The **Neo-Romanesque chapel in Čikečka vas**, built in the first half of the 20th century, has an unclear history regarding the extent to which the Evangelical and Reformed Churches were involved in its construction. On the western side of the chapel stands a massive, two-storey bell tower, decorated with tall, semi-circular windows on its façade. An interesting feature is the Čikečka vas cemetery, where some very old Reformed headstones can still be found.



In Prosenjakovci, located a few kilometres away, there are two ecclesiastical buildings: one is the **Evangelical Chapel**, and the other is the **Roman Catholic Chapel of St. Joseph** on the opposite side of the road. These buildings do not carry much external or internal grandeur, as their decoration is quite modest. However, a point of interest is the bust of Floriš Kūhár, a theologian and priest from the village, who once served in the Vatican. His bust was erected in 2016 and can be found in front of the Catholic chapel.

In the peaceful setting of **Središče**, where a mixed religious population lives, there is a small **chapel**, built in 1902. The chapel, which has undergone several renovations, operates in an ecumenical spirit, as it welcomes both Evangelical and Reformed worshippers. Pastors from different congregations hold services there. ♦

A Brief Introduction to the Municipality of

DOBROVNIK





The Municipality of Dobrovnik, established in 1998, is located on the former Pannonian Sea area and is adjacent to four other municipalities — Kobilje, Lendava, Moravske Toplice and Turnišče. The municipality covers an area of 31 square kilometres and has a population of about 1,300. It includes three settlements: Strehovci, Dobrovnik and Žitkovci. The latter two are areas with an ethnically mixed population, where the majority of the population is of Hungarian nationality.

Dobrovnik's first written mention dates back to the 1320s, when it was first referred to as Dobronok, later as Dobrolnok and Dobrunak. Since 1389, it has been referred to as a market town, indicating that it was considered a more significant settlement than the surrounding villages. The nearby settlement of Žitkovci, located about 2-3 kilometres away, was first mentioned in 1381, when it was known as Sypkolch. Notably, historical records indicate that the ancestors of Ferenc Deák, the "Wise Man of the Nation", were residents of Žitkovci as early as the 17th century.

The municipalities' outstanding treasures include numerous vineyards and orchards, golden fields, and flourishing meadows. Towering forests surround the area, and nestled within them is Lake Bukovnica, known for its healing spring water and energy points. For those seeking adventure, the nearby adventure park offers a chance to test their skills and courage.



WHERE HISTORY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP INTERTWINE

Where the striped landscape of the vineyards separates the Lendava region from the hilly landscapes of Goričko, lies Dobrovnik (Dobronak), a place that is rich in natural and cultural landmarks. In the centre of the village stands a unique, yellow-coloured house that invites visitors into its courtyard with its striking appearance.

↓ The wooden furniture, religious paintings, and ornate wall tapestry create a cosy, intimate atmosphere.



The House of György Dobronoki, opened in 2006 and home to a local history and ethnographical collection, was named after Jesuit teacher György Dobronoki — a famous native of the village and the first rector of the University of Trnava — who lived here in the 17th century. In the 20th century, the building served various purposes, including housing for a local notary, then for a doctor, and later functioned as a tavern. During its renovation, special attention was paid to preserving the traditional folk architecture of the region. Today, it welcomes visitors in its original form, featuring the typical 'kódisállás', which is a sheltered entryway, typical for the houses of the region.

Stepping through the large wooden door, visitors are transported back in time... On the



↑ Corn husks are an incredibly versatile material that has inspired artisans for centuries.

left, the largest exhibition room showcases various historical documents offering insight into the life of György Dobronoki, as well as the history of the local parish and the Church of St. James the Greater. The collection also highlights the significant role that traditional celebrations and communal work once played in the daily life and customs of the village; therefore, the house offers a place to presentations and revivals of olden customs, all with the intention of preserving cultural heritage.

Upon entering the room opposite the entrance, visitors encounter an interior reflecting bourgeois taste, evoking the world of the 1950s. Next to it, a kitchen arranged according to the model of brick houses built at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries features a closed system with both a cooking surface and an oven, no longer resembling the black kitchens of the past. In the room to the right of the kitchen, materials related to household work and artisanal crafts are displayed — old looms, beautifully woven textiles, and tools made from corn husks and wicker.

In 2018, the **House of Crafts** was grandly opened in the courtyard of the House of György Dobronoki. The purpose of this establishment is to preserve the cultural values of the region, revive traditional folk crafts, pass on heritage, and stimulate tourism development. The house showcases products made from corn husks, wicker, and other natural materials, along with a stunning collection of intricately decorated honeybread biscuits and batik-painted Easter eggs. Moreover, the House of Crafts regularly hosts various themed workshops, exhibitions, and professional lectures.

A few years after the opening of the House of Crafts in October 2022, a newly-built **barn** was opened in the rear courtyard of the building complex. This structure serves not only as an exhibition space for agricultural tools but also as a venue for various events, performances, and community programmes. Traditionally, barns were important centres of community life, hosting numerous collective folk activities and craft workshops. The barn in Dobrovník was opened with the intention of reviving these and other customs, while also contributing to the preservation of the region's cultural heritage and the promotion of local tourism development. ♦

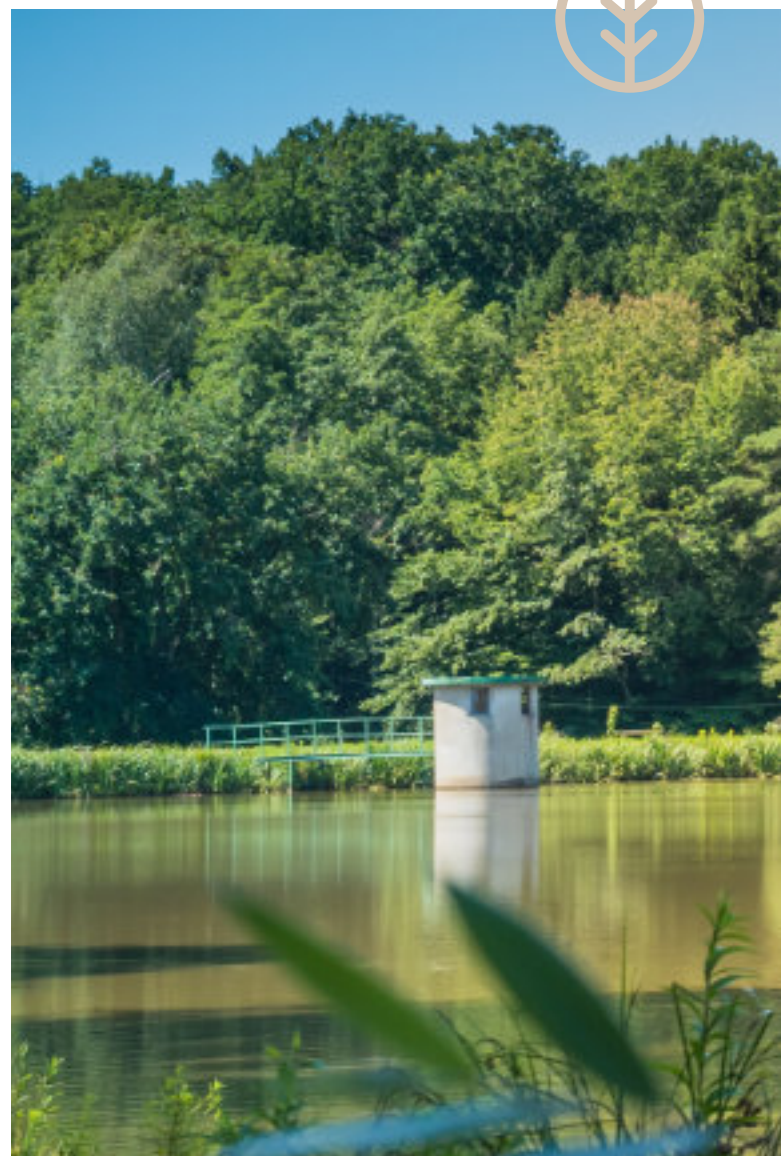
RELAXATION AND RECREATION EMBRACED BY NATURE



Lake Bukovnica and its surroundings, nestled among leafy trees, offer excellent opportunities for angling, mushroom picking, picnicking, walking, and even cycling. In addition to its breathtaking attractions – such as the lake itself, the Chapel of St. Vitus, St. Vitus' Spring, and the energy points – visitors can enjoy a variety of recreational activities. Adventure seekers can challenge themselves on the treetop adventure course, young children can have fun in the playground, and those fond of local goods and delicacies can browse the nearby market stalls.

On a small hill, right near Lake Bukovnica, under the soaring leafy trees, stands the Chapel of St. Vitus, where once only a wooden cross used to stand. In 1828, the locals built a chapel in place of the cross, and every year, on the first Sunday after 15th June, the celebration of St. Vitus' Day is held. The legend of St. Vitus and important moments from his life are depicted on the interior walls of the chapel by the artist Janez Mežan. The chapel and its surroundings are made even more valuable by the miraculous spring water and the healing energy points.

Just a few metres from the Chapel of St. Vitus is St. Vitus' Spring. According to locals, the spring water has healing powers, which is why visitors often wash their faces and eyes or drink the water in hopes of its miraculous effects. They believe it can enhance their hearing, improve their eyesight, and alleviate digestive and neurological problems, as well as skin conditions. A local legend tells that once, woodcutters saw a child dressed in a glowing white robe in the pond in front of the spring. They believed the child might have been



a celestial being, as it vanished when they approached – some even refer to the spring as the “Spring of Idris Baba” because of this story.

Bountiful nature has made the area around Lake Bukovnica even more valuable by adding healing spring water and energy points, which have a calming and tension-relieving effect on visitors. Out of the 50 energy points, 26 are individually marked, and through repeat visits, they help in overcoming various diseases and health issues, positively influencing both physical and mental well-being... ♦

→ On the chapel's altar stands the statue of Saint Vitus, behind it is the wall painted by Janez Mežan.



→ The tranquillity of nature and the benches surrounding the energy points offer a true experience of rejuvenation.



↓ The rest areas set up under the shade of the trees provide ideal stops for hikers.



BOUNDLESS LANDSCAPE, BOUNDLESS MEMORIES

There, where history intertwines, where memories are revived, where borderless friendships are forged... The locations that evoke historical events or even individuals, are vital spaces of memory, which, among other things, are considered significant from national, regional, or even minority perspectives. They provide an opportunity for visitors to experience these important events and glorious moments of the past.



← The furnishings, evoking the atmosphere of bygone times, occupy a cosy corner of the room.



In 2014, the **Hetés Friendship Park** was ceremoniously opened along the green border between the Slovenian village of Žitkovci and the Hungarian village of Bödeháza, where the former Iron Curtain once persisted. The area that used to be borderland, has taken on a new identity and become a popular hiking destination and host to various events, while also symbolising the friendship between the two communities. It is home to a monument, the “Borderless Bird”, made from remnants of the former Iron Curtain, symbolising freedom. Nearby, information panels provide context, and there is a resting place beneath the tall trees. At the actual site of the former border, a wooden cross and a memorial commemorate the date of the accession to the EU on 1st May, 2004.

Just under a kilometre away, in the middle of the small village of Žitkovci, which has only

about 110 inhabitants, there is a chapel and a **memorial room** dedicated to the “Wise Man of the Nation”, Ferenc Deák, and his family. According to reliable sources, Deák’s ancestors were already residents of this small village in the 17th century, and several documents from the early 1700s show that members of the Deák family were recorded as inhabitants of Žitkovci. The first known member of the family, János Deák, owned vineyards and arable land in the area of Dobrovník in 1644. The beautifully decorated room not only preserves the memory of the Deák family but also offers a glimpse into the history, culture, and traditions of the village. The exhibition places special emphasis on pottery, showcasing various clay objects, as well as weaving and woven textiles. In one corner of the room, visitors can find a traditionally furnished sleeping area with a wooden table and chair, next to a wicker storage chest, and embroidered wall hangings adorning the walls. ♦

A Brief Introduction to the Municipality of

LENDAVA





The municipality of Lendava is located in the easternmost part of Slovenia, along the Slovenian-Hungarian and Slovenian-Croatian borders, covering an area of 123 square kilometres. The municipality spans 18 local communities and 23 settlements, with a population of approximately 10,500 people. It is a region with an ethnically mixed population, as, apart from the settlements of Benica and Hotiza, the majority of the population is Slovenian, living alongside the autochthonous Hungarian national community.

The earliest written source regarding its existence is a donation letter from 1192. In the following centuries, it gained the status of a market town, and by the 20th century, it had expanded both northward and southward, resulting in a population of 3,500–4,000 people. Even the frequent migration of the population during that time did not alter these demographic figures.

The municipality offers sacred monuments and museums that showcase its rich past. Visitors can enjoy beautiful parks, picturesque landscapes, and towering viewpoints. Idyllic wine cellars are also must-see stops. For relaxation, roadside cafés and cake shops offering delicious treats await travellers.

SLOVENIA'S FIRST MODEL FARM – PREKMURJE MODEL FARM

Located not far from the town of Lendava, between the Bukovnica and Ledava streams, lies the village of Banuta, which has around 60 inhabitants.

In recent years, it has become well-known not only for the bell tower in the centre of the village but also for the Prekmurje Model Farm, which officially opened in 2023.

Nestled within the vast, golden meadows, the Prekmurje Model Farm's primary goal is to promote agriculture, stimulate the production and processing of local agricultural products, and increase both their supply and demand. As visitors stroll through the Model Farm, they are greeted by a rich array of animals — Kisber horses, Krškopolje pigs, Mangalica pigs, Hungarian Grey cattle, donkeys, and for the little ones, a few dwarf rabbits eagerly await

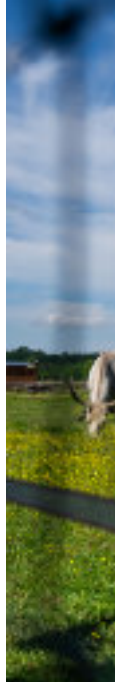
being petted by their gentle hands. The farm not only offers a glimpse into the colourful world of animals but also showcases the growing processes of various vegetables (such as lettuce, asparagus, carrots, different types of squash) and fruit (such as strawberries, blueberries, currants, apples).

One of the highlights of the already fascinating Model Farm is its aquaponics unit, based on the harmonious co-existence of fish and plants, which combines hydroponics and aquaculture in a continuous cycle. The principle behind it is that the fish waste provides nutrient-rich water for the plants, while the plants purify the water for the fish. This system, which allows for the breeding of various freshwater fish species, is also suitable for growing a variety of above-ground vegetables and herbs (for instance lettuce, tomatoes, courgettes, and rocket), which can grow up to three times faster than by using traditional gardening methods.

Other locations of the Prekmurje Model Farm showcase activities and traditions that primarily enrich the agricultural landscape of the region. ♦



↑ Lettuce grown in an aquaculture system, where fish and plants co-exist in harmony.





↑ Visitors can get up close to experience a true "Hungarikum": the world-famous Hungarian Grey cattle.



One of them is in **Krplivnik**, the local **ethnographical house**, where, for example, the acquisition of a modern fruit distillery has opened the possibility for adaptation to current trends and market demands while at the same time has enabled the preservation of the long-standing tradition of fruit processing.

Another location is in **Domanjševci**, at the **Domanjševci Homestead**, where the traditional harvest demonstration event takes place annually. In this case, the Model Farm contributed to the preservation of local culinary heritage by purchasing a modern mill.

The third location is the **Alvarium**, the Beekeeping Educational and Visitor Centre in **Motvarjevci**. In its courtyard, alongside an orchard planted with indigenous fruit trees, a modern beehive has been set up. This not only offers the possibility of honey production but also provides a practical demonstration of beekeeping.

The next location is in **Dobrovnik**, where its office spaces function as a sort of "incubator" for local farmers, encouraging innovation, sustainability, and growth in the agricultural sector.

The former **Rožman Wine House**, located on the hills of Dolga vas, is also one of the farm's remote locations, where the primary focus is on planting old table grape varieties, with an emphasis on sustainable cultivation and minimal insecticide use.

The last location is the **Ethnographical House in Dolina**. Its goal is to encourage local farmers to process pumpkin seeds and produce pumpkin seed oil. This unique product is an important part of the local culinary and agricultural heritage, closely tied to the Prekmurje region, which is renowned for its high-quality pumpkin seed oil.

CULTURAL HISTORY TOUR IN LENDAVA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Where once pivotal battles were fought, where intrigues were woven, and where history was written, today the past and present merge, revealing the wealth of preserved values, and the local traditions hidden behind them...

Approaching Lendava, the castle towering over the town on a hill greets us from afar. It is believed that a fortress stood at this location as early as the 10th century. After the Tatar invasion in the 1240s, **Lendava Castle** was built, and received its present “L” shape in 1712. Over the centuries, the building has been used for various purposes and since the early 1970s, it has served as a worthy home for the **Gallery-Museum Lendava**. The castle houses several exhibitions, including the memorial room of György Zala, the memorial room and butterfly collection of Štefan Galič, the permanent historical exhibition titled “The Castle on the Lookout” featuring replicas of mediaeval weapons, an ethnographical exhibition, a display of stone remains and sacred objects from the Lendava region, a collection of bronze statues created at the International Art Colony in Lendava, and temporary exhibitions that further enrich the offerings.

→ Štefan Galič's remarkable butterfly collection, consisting of nearly 400 specimens, reflects the diversity of our planet.



↓ The pharmacy furnishings from the late 19th century not only evoke the history of pharmacy but also hold cultural and historical value.



In the **Museum of Bourgeoisie, Printing and Umbrella Manufacture**, visitors can explore the modern history of the town, housed in one of the most impressive Neo-Baroque-style

buildings on the town's main street, Glavna ulica. Upon entering the museum, one is immediately immersed in the bourgeois lifestyle, with exhibits designed to resemble a bourgeois study and a parlour. On the left, a pharmacy display with a rich history catches the eye: the first pharmacy in the Prekmurje region, the so-called "Szentháromság Patika" (Holy Trinity Pharmacy in English), was established in 1835 in Dolnja Lendava. Lendava is also proud of its umbrella factory, the first of its kind in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the museum showcases the processes of umbrella manufacturing. Special attention is given to

the history of printing in Lendava, which began in 1889, primarily through the efforts of printer Ernő Balkányi. Thanks to his endeavours, by the late 1910s, the printing industry in Lendava had become highly significant.

Only a few kilometres from Lendava, in the village of Dolina, stands the building that was converted into an **ethnographical house** in 2022. It is regarded as the first brick-built structure in the village. Set in an idyllic environment, the primary purpose of the ethnographical house is to serve community goals and activities focused on preserving traditions. The building also functions as an educational centre and hosts summer camps, as well as training programmes. ♦



ON THE TRAIL OF SACRAL MEMORIAL SITES AND BUILDINGS

Both Roman Catholics and Augustinian Evangelicals (i.e. Lutherans) continue to nurture their faith and live in harmony in the Lendava region. The region's mixed religious nature is reflected in the remaining sacred memorials, churches, chapels, and pilgrimage sites, especially considering the fact that the Jewish community played a prominent role in the area until 1944.

In the settlements of the municipality, one can find numerous sacred buildings. One of the most well-known is the **Parish Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria**, located in the heart of Lendava. Its predecessor was likely the church built by Kristóf Bánffy in 1608 to commemorate the anti-Turkish battles. Above the entrance, there is a Latin inscription with the year 1751 and the following text: "Built as a pious vow in honour of St. Catherine, virgin and martyr." The church's Baroque tower and main altar are of significant artistic value. The ceiling was once decorated with frescoes, but they were lost during various renovations. In the church square, three statues can be found: a statue of St. Florian, the patron saint of firefighters, a statue of St. Stephen commemorating the millennium of the Hungarian state foundation, and a statue of Anton Martin Slomšek, the former bishop of Maribor.



Continuing from the church, on Lendava Hill, at an elevated point rising above the vineyards, stands the **Chapel of the Holy Trinity**. The construction of this chapel was initiated by the noble Gludovác family in 1727–28, after the Turkish wars. The Baroque-style building is particularly notable for the fact that, according to local tradition, it houses the mummy of Mihael Hadik, the Lendava captain and hero of the anti-Turkish battles led by Kristóf Bánffy in the 1600s. After its discovery, the mummy was placed in a glass coffin.

Although the population of Lendava is predominantly Catholic, the Protestant religion has had significant cultural and historical consequences on the town's history. The **Lendava Evangelical Church** was built relatively late, in 1934, and it was also officially consecrated in that year. In contrast to the Christ bas-relief adorning the facade, the interior decoration of the church is tastefully restrained. Above the altar, there is a work by the notable painter from Dolnja Lendava, Lajči Pandur.

Two sites commemorate the once significant role of the Jewish community. In the centre of Lendava stands the **synagogue**, the most



← The small chapel next to Mother Mary's Tree is adorned with exquisite stained-glass windows by the artist László Hermán.



↑ The interior of the church, with its gilded elements and marble decorations, exudes a stunning Baroque atmosphere.

↗ The synagogue's permanent exhibition commemorates the Jewish community of Lendava, which lived here until World War II, bringing the past to life through documents and artefacts.

important architectural monument of the Dolnja Lendava Jewish community. It reflects the community's past, social role, and culture. Its construction began in 1866, during the time of Rabbi Moses Schacherlesz. Once, when it was still a place for religious ceremonies, the main hall offered 80 seats for men, while the gallery could accommodate 60 women. It functioned as a sacred establishment until 1944, after which religious ceremonies ceased following the deportation of the Jews. Just a few kilometres away, in Dolga vas, lies Slovenia's second-largest remaining Jewish cemetery, where members of the Jewish community have been buried since the 1830s. On the gravestones facing towards Jerusalem, Jewish names can be read in both Latin and Hebrew script. The cemetery is still maintained today, although there are no descendants of the Lendava Jewish community alive anymore. As a result, the stones placed on the graves have also diminished... ♦



Along with the regions Órség and Göcsej, Hetés is also known for its abundance of belfries, which can probably be attributed to the fact that the area is rich in forests, and men have long been skilled craftsmen in woodwork. These structures received their popular name – *skirted belfries* – from the skirt-like shape of their roofs. The size of the bell towers is such that they are usually of the same height as the village buildings, or only slightly taller. In the Prekmurje region, specifically in the Lendava area, skirted belfries can still be found today: in Kamovci, Genterovci and Pince.

The region also boasts two very well-known pilgrimage sites. One of them is the so-called 'Mother Mary's Tree', located in the forest Črni log near Radmožanci, which bears a long history. Numerous legends related to the pilgrimage site are still alive among the people: one is about a man who took an axe to cut down the oak tree under which the Virgin Mary appeared, but he was unable to carry out his task; others are about various visions of the Virgin Mary and miraculous healings... Even today, many pilgrims visit Mother Mary's Tree to feel the power of the sacred site. Similar to Radmožanci, Kot is also a notable pilgrimage site, as the *Danijel Halas Memorial Park* was established near the oxbow lake of the River Mura. In 1945, the body of pastor Danijel Halas was discovered at this site by the local miller. The memorial park is complemented by the Stations of the Cross of Danijel Halas in Hotiza. The 14 stations are lined up along a walking path from the village to the former riverbed of the Mura. A large wooden cross has also been erected in the park.

