

Esztergom

The seat of the leader of the Hungarian Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Esztergom, lies next to the Danube. The first Hungarian king, **Saint Stephen, the Founder of the State** (1000-1038), was born in the castle built in this town in 972.

The town's symbol, the **Primate's Cathedral** (in Szent István Square), rebuilt in classicist style in the 19th century, is the second largest church in the country. The altar-piece, which is painted on a single piece of canvas, is the largest such painting in the world.

It is a striking curiosity that the only undamaged Hungarian Renaissance building - **the red-marble Bakócz Chapel from the 16th century** - is 300 years older than the church itself!

The **richest collection of ecclesiastical treasures** is the invaluable collection guarded in the cathedral treasury. This collection includes 400 exquisite goldsmith's works, textiles, horn-goblets, chasubles, the Gothic masterpiece known as the Suky Chalice and King Matthias' calvary, ornamented with precious stones and gold. In the undercroft, Primate József Mindszenty's grave is a place of worship.

In the neighbourhood of the cathedral, the royal private-chapel, the castle-chapel with fresco ornaments, and the rose-windows evoke the royal palace from the Roman Age. The exhibition in the renovated halls of the **Castle Museum** demonstrates the history of the Castle of Esztergom (Szent István Square 1).

The home of the leader of Hungarian Catholics is the **Primate's Palace** (Berényi Zs. Street 2), where the most valuable provincial collection in Hungary can be found in the **Christian Museum**. Among its medieval treasures can be found the Calvary altar painted in 1427 and the Lord Garamszentbenedeki Coffin. Masterpieces of all arts can be found in the very rich foreign material - from early-Renaissance Italian paintings to modern religious paintings.

The **baroque atmosphere of Széchenyi Square** comes from the civil houses and the Town Hall. Baroque style dominates the Viziváros (Water Town), and its two-steeple Franciscan church and the monastery (Pázmány Péter Street 18.) are characteristic of the town's architecture.

The sixteenth-century treasures of **Balassa Bálint Museum** (Mindszenty Square 5) and the exhibition in the **Duna Museum** (Kölcsey Ferenc Street 2) demonstrating the history of the Danube and Hungarian water-supply engineering are worth visiting. The most prominent representatives of public life and literature from the 19th century have left their mark on the "autograph" wall of **Mihaly Babits Memorial House** (Babits Mihály Street 11).

The program series of the **Esztergom Castle Theatre** runs from June to August. The international **Guitar Festival** is an attractive program in August.