A UNITARIAN TASTE OF TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvanian Pilgrimage, 2027 September 7 - 18

"It is an honor to welcome you to Transylvania, a land where East meets West, where diverse cultures have flourished side by side for centuries, and where the spirit of religious freedom was born. It was here, in 1568, that the Edict of Torda was proclaimed – a landmark moment that made Transylvania a beacon of tolerance and understanding in Europe.

This is the birthplace of Unitarianism, a faith that champions freedom of belief and the dignity of the human spirit. As you explore the rolling hills and majestic mountains, you are invited to walk in the footsteps of those who stood for faith and tolerance. Transylvania's breathtaking scenery, rich cultural heritage, and welcoming communities make it a unique destination for spiritual reflection and renewal."

Rev. István Kovács, Bishop of the Hungarian Unitarian Church



HUNGARIAN UNITARIAN CHURCH

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ITINERARY:

Arrival day: September 7, Kolozsvár

Organized pick-up from Cluj-Napoca International Airport, accommodation in the 1568 Guesthouse, welcoming dinner and orientation walk in the Old Town.

September 8, Kolozsvár

Kolozsvár, the unofficial capital of Transylvania, is one of Romania's educational and economic center, often competing with the capital Bucharest. It's four names: Napoca in Latin, Klausenburg in German, Kolozsvár in Hungarian and Cluj in Romanian, reflect the city's rich history, ethnic and religious diversity, and the friendly atmosphere that led to becoming the birthplace of a new religion, the Unitarianism. David Francis, returning from his studies abroad, was elected as the minister of the city, quickly introducing the new and emerging ideologies of the West, becoming the founder and first bishop of the Unitarian Church.

To this day, the city is home to the most important institutions of the Church and offers much to discover, not only in religious terms but also in terms of the history of Transylvania as a whole. Its main attractions include St Michael's Church (Unitarian for 150 years), the Franciscan church and monastery (the latter housed the first Unitarian school), and the university, which has been serving science at an academic level since 1581. In addition, it is a major cultural center, the cradle of professional Hungarian theater and, if the First World War doesn't break out, Kolozsvár would probably become the capital nowadays of the film industry. To discover this vibrant city, always buzzing with new ideas, one day is the mandatory minimum.

Breakfast, lecture about the history of the Unitarian Church, then visit to the Hungarian Unitarian Church's Headquarters, Bishops Office, Unitarian High School, Unitarian Church, Statue of David Francis, House of Religious Freedom. Lunch, and then guided tour in Kolozsvár. Accommodation in 1568 Guest House.

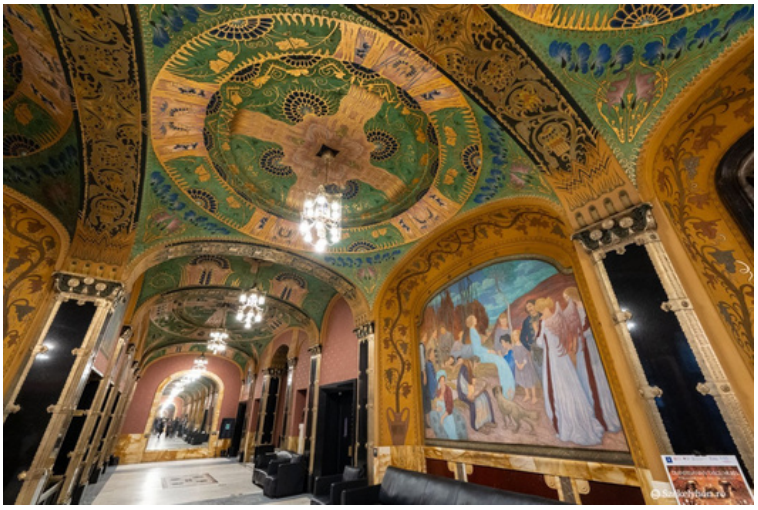




September 9, Marosvásárhely and Segesvár

Breakfast, then departure to **Marosvásárhely**, one of the major cities of Transylvania, home to a masterpiece of the Hungarian Art Nouveau, the **Palace of Culture**, built between 1911 and 1913. We immerse ourselves in the magic of the floral decorations and arts, visit the art galleries of the museum and discuss about the szekler people. Marosvásárhely is the western gateway of the Szeklerland, a mainly Hungarian-inhabited region with it's people called "szeklers". Once we recharged our floral batteries, we head to the **Teleki-Bolyai Library** (called "Teleki Téka"), the first public library of Szeklerland, opened in 1802, established by the Africa-researcher Teleki Sámuel. Amongst the library's treasures we can find an authentic copy of the Declaration of Independence.

After lunch, we continue our journey to **Segesvár/Sighisoara** (UNESCO World Heritage Site), famous for it's charming old town and for being the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler, Dracula. Segesvár was part of the Royal Lands or Saxon Lands, a German-inhabited territory directly ruled by the Hungarian King, with their inhabitants called Saxons. Their old towns reflect the power and wealth of the Saxon community in the medieval ages. We have a lazy sightseeing walk in the Old Town, then we have dinner and check into our accommodation.







September 10, Székelykeresztúr, Székelyderzs and Énlaka

After enjoying our breakfast in Segesvár, we reenter Szeklerland and start to discover a more rural world. First, we visit the Berde Mózes Unitarian High School in Székelykeresztúr where we get a glimpse of the everyday challenges of schools and congregations of the Unitarian church.

At noon we visit **Székelyderzs** with it's UNESCO-protected fortified Unitarian church, dating back to the 14th century. We are proud to have one of the 7 Transylvanian fortified churches being on the UNESCO list, but what makes our pride even bigger is the best preserved Saint Ladislaus legend fresco in the whole Carpathian basin. Another peculiarity is the tradition of storing grain and meat within the fortifications, which was a widespread habit during the Middle Ages but is nowadays only alive just here. have a lighter lunch in the shades of the fortifications.

After lunch we visit **Énlaka,** home of the oldest authentically dated runic inscription (in Hungarian), dating back to 1668. The whole village was burnt down by tatars in 1661 and it's church was rebuilt using (partially) the stones of an old roman Jupiter sanctuary. After finishing the renovations, they decorated by installing a beautifully painted panel ceiling, and one of the panels tells us the date, and the painter, becoming the oldest authentic Hungarian runic inscription discovered until today. In addition, Énlaka's well-preserved archaic village architecture also added to it's popularity amongst the visitors. We have dinner and accommodation in Székelyudvarhely.









September 11, Szejke Unitarian Gathering and pottery wokshop in Korond

On Saturday, we are about to visit the biggest Unitarian event taking place in Transylvania, the **Unitarian Gathering at Szejkefürdő.** This day, people from all Unitarian Congregations gather here for an annual meeting, the most important moment being a sermon and Commnunion. Beside it's religious aspects, there are commemorations and lectures taking place, all within a handicraft fair atmosphere. The initial idea of the event was to create a World Unitarian Meeting, so your presence will be honored. Szejke is the resting place of Orbán Balázs, "the greatest Szekler". He was a polymath and an active politician, his best known achievement being The description of the Szeklerland, the first comprehensive ethnographic and historic description of this land. Later in his life, he converted to the Unitarian faith. He bought and developed the baths of Szejke, creating a mineral bath resort, and according to his will, he was buried here. In front of his grave stand 7 artistically sculpted szekler gates.

Filled with the joy of meeting and celebrating together, we take a trip to **Korond**, the village whose name has become synonymous with pottery. A whole country knows what Korond pottery means, the main street of the village is flooded with handicraft shops and you cannot find a market in Romania without Korond pottery. To give you a glimpse of how these masterpieces are created, we invite you to a **pottery workshop** lead by Ilyés Vészti Rózsika. In the evening, we head back to Székelyudvarhely for dinner and accommodation.



September 12, Okländ, Miklósvár, Nagyajta



This day promises spectacular churches and lovely villages. The first stop will be the Unitarian church of **Okländ**, embellished with a panel ceiling and a Saint Ladislaus fresco, which contribute to the characteristic atmosphere of Transylvanian churches. Both the colorful panel ceiling and fresco initiated several scientific disputes on how we should interpret their message. Panel ceilings appeared in Transylvania in the Renaissance era, but the local adaptation of this interior design element lead to the use of Hungarian folklore in the ornamentation. Okländ's church has two panels that sparked the curiosity of scientists, one that represents the heliocentric model of our Solar System and one you can calculate the date of Easter in any given year with.



The next stop is going to be **Kálnoky castle of Miklósvár**, where we have a glimpse of the life of Transylvanian noble families. The Kálnoky family, similarly to other noble families, played key roles in the politics of Transylvania until 1948, when the emerging communist power nationalized their properties and forced them to flee the country. But since hope is the last to die, after the fall of the communism, they restarted their life here, and later, count Kálnoky Tibor became the friend of nowadays King Charles III. of the United Kingdom, who owns several properties in Transylvania.



Followed by lunch, we arrive to our last stop in **Nagyajta**. In 2025 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the death of the great bishop and ethnographer Kriza János, who was born here in 1811. The bastions of the fortress houses exhibitions about the origins of the Transylvanian Unitarianism, regional history and ethnography, Kriza János, and many more topics. Once we finish our visit here, we head to Sepsiszentgyörgy for dinner and accommodation.

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September 13, Saint Anna Lake Mohos Peat Bog and Csernáton

This day is about to be a more active day. In the morning discover volcanoes, but not in a way you expect it. The Csomád is the youngest mountain range of the Carpathians, with the last eruption taking place nearly 32.000 years ago. This eruption formed a twin crater, one of them being the Saint Anna Lake and the other one the Mohos Peat Bog. We will take a walk in the protected area with our local tour guide, then head to Csernáton.

We hope you enjoyed the pottery workshop and the villages you visited, because we are about to have a second handicraft session, but now in a village museum. **Haszmann Pál Museum** in **Csernáton** is a mainly open-air museum with old-school farm machinery, traditional houses of the region, a furnace collection and many more, presenting the everyday life of szeklers. The museum park also houses ateliers where each summer 750-800 students learn woodcarving and furniture painting, which you can also try. After improving your handicraft skills, we assure the well-being of your stomach by baking some delicious chimney cakes together. In the evening we return to Sepsiszentgyörgy for dinner and accommodation.





September 14, Nagyszeben

After having breakfast and waving goodbye to Sepsiszentgyörgy, we continue our journey to **Nagyszeben/Sibiu/Hermannstadt**, European Capital of Culture in 2007. The city was honored by this title during the times it's mayor was Klaus Johannis, the former president of Romania. Sibiu was the political, cultural and educational center of the Saxons, and during the late 19th and early 20th century it became an important cultural hub of the Romanians too. Sibiu is home of the Brukenthal museum, opened in 1817, with an art gallery that showcases paintings of globally renowned artists, such as Albrecht Dürer, van Dyck, Meytens, Bruegel and Rubens. The city is just as pleasing to the eye as the art gallery, the network of medieval streets, embellished with good stories and beautiful buildings easily trap the unsuspected visitors. The other main attraction of the city is the ASTRA Village Museum, first established in 1905, as an achievement of the Romanian cultural movements in the city. Our dinner and accommodation will be in Nagyszeben.



September 15, Déva and Vajdahunyad



Before we sail back to Unitarian waters, our day starts at one of Transylvania's landmarks, the **Corvin Castle in Vajdahunyad/Hunedoara.** It has always been a castle difficult to defend, but so symbolically important that, during the late 19th century renovations, the plan was to transform it to the residence of the Hungarian Royal Family. There are rumors that the builder of Vajdahunyad castle was actually the illegitimate son of the Hungarian King, that's how it became so impressive and important.

Lunch is followed by visiting the citadel of **Déva**, the place where David Francis, the founder and first bishop of the Transylvanian Unitarianism was imprisoned for his beliefs and eventually died in 1579. Our descent from the citadel is followed by a visit in the tiny and lovely Unitarian church and pilgrimage center. Dinner and accommodation in Déva.





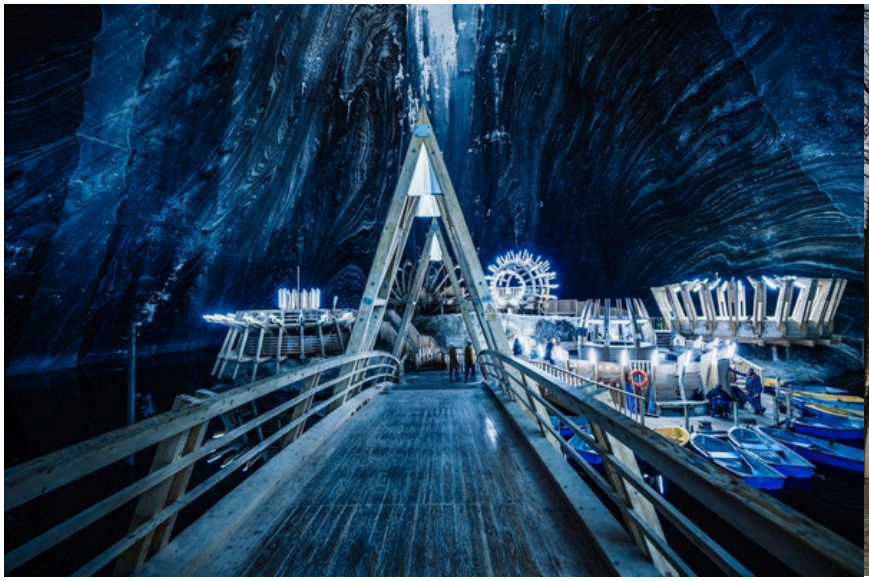
September 16, Gyulafehérvár

As we slowly head towards Kolozsvár, we cannot miss one of the former capital of Transylvania, **Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia**. The city itself is an impressive star-shaped fortress, housing several historically important establishments. In the fortress we can find the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese (founded in 1009), the Coronation church where the coronation of King Ferdinand and Queen Marie as monarchs of Greater Romania was held in 1922, the Princely Palace and the Batthyaneum Library with Romania's most precious collection of books. In the Roman Catholic Cathedral you can pay tribute at the sarcophagus of the first Unitarian Prince János Zsigmond.

After lunch we depart to **Torockó/Rimetea**, perhaps the most picturesque Unitarian village in Transylvania, winner of the 1999 Europa Nostra Award, „where the sun rises twice". We discover the beauties of Torockó in the afternoon lights, then we depart to Kolozsvár for dinner and accommodation in 1568 Guest House.









September 17, Torda

Our last trip is linked to the event we are the proudest of. With the dignity of the last stop, we will guide you around **Torda.** Between 6 and 13 January 1568**,** the annually held diet, responsible for the governance of the country, enacted a law that was different, than the others. This diet first enshrined the religious freedom in law in Europe, and one of the main characters of this diet was the founder and first bishop of the Unitarian Church, David Francisc. This date is considered the day the Unitarian Church was established. We visit **Torda Salt Mine, Monument of Religious Freedom and local Roman-Catholic Church.** In the early afternoon we return to Kolozsvár, and provide free time to take a last walk in the Old Town, buy some souvenirs, and prepare for your journey back home. Keep in mind that we plan a farewell dinner and the folk show as the final momentum of your pilgrimage. Accommodation in Kolozsvár.

September 18, Kolozsvár

Breakfast, saying goodbye to Transylvania, transfer to the airport and departure.
Your Transylvanian journey ends here. Hopefully not forever. We will be here, waiting for your return with new adventures.

Price Offer

Date: 7-18 September, 12 days, 11 nights

Prices are for a group of 20-25 members
Under 20 participants the price will be adjusted
Price: 3200 USD, 267 USD/day/pers
Single supplement: 500 USD

Services included :

11 nights of accommodation in 3 and 4 star hotels
29 meals (11 B, 10 L, 8 D)
Expert-led lecture and trips
An expert group leader
Coach bus, airport transfers
All entrance fees

Not included:
3 dinners
Airplane tickets

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