

MALA FATRA
REGION



Town of Zilina
Tourist Information Office



WELCOME TO ŽILINA

(ENG)

www.regionmalafatra.sk
www.tikzilina.eu



A bird's eye view of Žilina reveals that it resides in northwest of Slovakia in the Žilina basin, at the confluence of three rivers — **Váh, Kysuca and Rajčianka**. Since the early Middle Ages, Žilina with its ideal location was eligible to become the **metropolis of northwest Slovakia**. Thanks to its convenient location – **at the junction of trade routes**, Žilina has been tied to the development of trade and industry within living memory. And so it is up to this day: **Žilina is a dynamically developing modern city**, with a friendly atmosphere, full of colours and scents, which will immediately enthrall you - in short it is a city full of life.

We invite you to enjoy the atmosphere of Žilina so you can see with your own eyes **the uniqueness of our town**. The town centre does not occupy a large area. It is possible to get from one end to the other in a few hours and still have time to enjoy the atmosphere in the squares, the stylish cafés, restaurants and teahouses ...

If you come to our city by train or bus, proceed along the **Národná ulica** (National Street), locally called "Masaryčka". After a few minutes, a wonderful view opens in front of you: **the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity** with balustrade, reminiscent of the "Prague's Hradčany", also called "Žilina Athens". From **Andrej Hlinka Square**, dominated by the "Singing Fountain" – an essential background

of wedding photos - take the Farské schody (Parish Stairs) and Farská ulička (Parish Lane) to **Mariánské námestie (St. Mary's Square)**. It is **the historical heart of Žilina**. Its **square shape** (approximately 100 × 100 m) and **arcades** (locally called laubne) create an inimitable atmosphere unlike any in Slovakia. What was and is the function of laubne? In the past, the house owners, the city's rich merchants and craftsmen sold their goods underneath them. Today, many will appreciate their practicality, especially during hot summer or rainy days. **A baroque statue of the Virgin Mary called the Immaculata** is situated in the middle of the square. It is placed on a stand bearing a relief of **St. Florian**, the patron of firemen. The statue was erected in 1738 on the



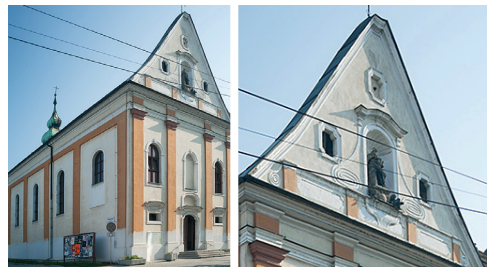
completion of the recatholization of the town. And what about St. Florian? He belongs in the square because the city has been affected by a number of **devastating fires** that changed its original character. The last one, the most devastating – in 1886 – is commemorated by **a flag with the date**, located on the building of the **Town Hall**, which boasts the **original Gothic cellars**. The square has many legends associated with it including that of connecting tunnels between the buildings. There is even a rumour that a secret tunnel leads under the square to the Budatín Castle. Currently, the only well-preserved underground catacombs are those under the Jesuit monastery and the Church of the Conversion of St. Paul. These Baroque buildings dominate the western side of Mariánske námestie

(St. Mary's Square). During World War II, a number of **Jewish children** managed to survive in the monastery, thanks to the help of the Sisters of the Order of St. Vincent de Paul.

You can enjoy the atmosphere of the square while sitting on benches or the summer terraces and listening to the sounds of the chimes or of an accordionist. An interesting thing is that **two streets** from each corner lead from it (of which two of them also have houses with laubne). If you select the former Golden alley (today's Hodžova Street with laubne), you will come to **the Church of St. Barbara** known for its priceless baroque interior. The church organ is worthy of notice. It consists of **a pair of instruments** (small and large), made by the renowned organ-builder Peregrín Werner. Not far

from the Church of St. Barbara the Hotel Dubná Skala is located, an Art Nouveau building from the early 20th century. Vojtech Tvrđý, one of its last owners, was also an important politician and Mayor of Žilina. For many years during the Socialist regime, a well-known wine bar, Dubná Skala, was located here. Whether you want to find accommodation directly in the city centre in a luxury suite, or arrange a meeting with your business partners in one of the three formal lounges, hotel Dubná Skala is the right place for you.

The first Slovak Government (12th December 1918 to 2nd February 1919) was located in **Bacher Villa** which is located opposite the Church of St. Barbara. It was during this period that **Žilina** became **the capital of Slovakia** for two



months. At the end of the next street (Sládkovičova) which leads from the square, you will come to the building of the former neologic synagogue, designed by renowned Berlin architect **Peter Behrens**. After many years, a restoration of its interior has finally taken place. The intention of the restoration is to remove non-original building interventions and the subsequent conversion of the building into a cultural institution. Opposite the synagogue you will see a building that looks familiar. You are not mistaken. It is a miniature imitation of the Vienna Castle Belvedere - **Rosenfeld's Palace**. If you select Jozefa Vuruma Street from the square, you will find the **House of Arts Fatra** (Grand Bio Universum) where **"Jánošík"**, the first Slovak actors film had its premiere in 1922. Currently, the House

of Arts Fatra is the seat of Žilina's State Chamber Orchestra which since its inception in 1974, is the only "Mozartean type" Orchestra in Slovakia. The season begins each year in September and ends with a grand finale concert in June.

You can get to **Burian's Tower** – a belfry adjoining the church - if, from the square, you take Burianova medzierka, which in the past was one of the most narrow streets in the town. The tower is reminiscent of the well-known Italian Bell Towers – **campaniles**.

And here – at **the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity** – our imaginary circular tour of the town centre of Žilina concludes. The church is one of the most important buildings in the city. Written documents indicate it is likely that **a castle** stood in this

vicinity from 1350 until 1457. In 1610, **the Žilina Synod**, the most significant event in the religion reformation in Slovakia took place here.

Enjoy the view from the balustrade next to the church with its vivid panorama of the surrounding mountains stretching out in front of you, which are a common aim of tours.

If you have some free time, take advantage of trips to the surrounding area of Žilina, which is known for its picturesque natural beauty and countless tourist attractions. You can take a stroll to **the Žilina Water Dam**, which is a very pleasant recreational and sporting venue. On the way to the Water Dam, stop at **Villa Nečas**, the site of the former Royal Salt Storage. Villa Nečas offers its visitors modern rooms suitable for business clients



as well as for families with children in a pleasant, undisturbed environment outside the bustle of the city.

Feel free to visit the **Budatín Castle**, by walking straight from the centre of the town. It is about a 30 minute walk from Andrej Hlinka Square. The Budatín Castle itself is closed to public due to the ongoing preparations and reconstruction since 2006. In close proximity to the castle is a beautiful park and also a renovated exhibition hall with a permanent display of tinkers' craft.

A variety of **cultural events**, held on regular basis all year round, will create a unique background of your Žilina tour. The largest cultural event of northern Slovakia – the Old Town Festival – which presents folk crafts, folklore, and the cur-

ent Slovak and foreign music scene takes place in June. You can enjoy concerts, theatre, film screenings and exhibitions during the Žilina Cultural Summer. In August, you can find yourselves in the Middle Ages for a whole day, then in the first week of September, all of Žilina delves into creativity and imagination during the Festival Jašdielňa, which benefits people with mental disabilities. The arrival of St. Nicholas and traditional Christmas markets enhance the winter atmosphere. **Sport enthusiasts** can fully enjoy themselves during ski, football, swimming, running and biking events. One of them, for example, is the "North against South" event, in which a football game is played right on Andrej Hlinka Square. "Run for life" has both a sporting and a charitable dimension. Along with

registered races, holiday sportsmen can compete in the popular Žilina Triathlon (running, cycling and swimming) in the Žilina Water Dam area.

Lovers of fine art will enjoy Žilina, too. All year round, galleries offer exhibitions of local and international artists. **Vincent Hložník**, Slovak painter, graphic artist and illustrator, has had his permanent exhibit in the Považská Gallery of Arts in Žilina since 2009. Plusminusnula Gallery offers the creations of young generation artists, architects and designers, and at the same time presents the works of well-known and established artists. If you want to take away a keepsake in the form of fine art from Žilina, visit the Gallery M which also hosts regular exhibitions.

Žilina is faithful to its reputation as **an impor-**



tant musical centre. The Central European Music Festival - an international festival of classical music - is held annually in April. The Central European Music Festival is considered one of the most prestigious music festivals of its kind in Slovakia, and is recognised by European cultural circles.

The Municipal Theatre in Žilina also offers a high quality artistic experience. The majestic building of the Municipal Theatre, in Italian neoclassicism style with a functional interior, was built in 1942-1944. The Municipal Theatre has its own permanent troupe. It was established on 1st January 1992 and from that date to the present has presented more than 100 premières. In 2012, the Municipal Theatre celebrated its 20th anniversary. On this occasion,

L'ubomír Feldek, Žilina native and well-known Slovak writer, donated his original authorial play called "Stalin in Žilina" to the theatre. The play is dedicated to the author's joyful and nostalgic memories of his early life experience in his home town.

We also recommend that you visit the events at **Station Žilina-Záriečie** a cultural centre which belongs to Trans Europe Halles, the international network of independent cultural institutions. It uses a dilapidated train station for cultural purposes. The centre regularly organises events and workshops with a focus on alternative music, theatre, contemporary dance, film, literature and architecture, and it is also a place for creative workshops for children. Its major events are festivals: Fest Anča, KioSK,

Žilina literary festival, Kinobus, One World and Memory Control.

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What you (perhaps) do not know about Žilina...

- in 2012, Žilina celebrated the 700th Anniversary of the first written mention of Žilina as a town,
- „civitas Zylinensis“ or „the town of Žilina“ was mentioned for the first time in a document in 1312, in which the hereditary title of portreeve was delegated to citizen Henrich in the village of Kolárovice,
- in 2008, Žilina celebrated the 800th Anniversary of the first written mention of Žilina,
- the town is surrounded by five castles – Lietava, Hričov, Budatín, Strečno and Varín (Old Castle),



- the name Žilina appears in several Slavic languages and means „a very watery place or otherwise rich in water“,
- as well as a Slovak town, Žilina is also the name of a village in the Czech Republic and a suburban part of town of Nový Jičín,
- Žilina is the only town in Slovakia which managed to buy itself out of a feudal relationship using its own financial resources,
- the Privilege granted by King Ľudovít I. the Great in 1381 to Žilina’s Slovaks is the oldest written document of Slovak rights in our country,



- Žilina’s arcaded corridors in St. Mary’s Square (Mariánske námestie) are the largest and the most coherent complex of covered streets in Slovakia and most likely in former Hungary,
- in 1903, the town held the Industrial Exhibition of Upper Hungary, a kind of “small world exhibition”, which showed the advance of dynamic Slovak entrepreneurs and freelancers,
- in the 17th century there was a brewery in Žilina, and its beer was so famous that even the Palatine of Hungary ordered 300 buckets to be transported to Pressburg,
- from the mid-19th century to the 1940’s, the Jewish community greatly influenced the face of the town and events therein,



- since 2008, the town has been the seat of the Diocese of Žilina,
- Žilina is the first town in Slovakia that received a covered, 50 metres swimming pool in 1963, which, at that time, met stringent Olympic criteria,
- the local football club of MŠK Žilina has participated in the Master’s League and UEFA

Places of interest

The oldest architectural monument in the territory of the town is the Church of St. Stephen the King located in the Dolné Rudiny town district. Its first written mention dates back to the beginning of the 13th century.



What can be admired?

- medieval wall paintings of the saints, originating around 1250,
- a chronoscope situated on the arch of triumph between the sanctuary and the nave of the church,
- the Chapel of the Body of Christ on the premises of the church,
- two Baroque side altars,
- field chapel



Places of Interest

The wooden Church of St. George, located in Trnové, a suburb of Žilina. It is the oldest preserved wooden Roman Catholic church in our region. The first written mention dates back to 1583. It is the only monument of its kind in the entire region of Žilina. The whole building was built of wood without a single iron nail. At the same time, it is the most westerly situated wooden Gothic sacral building. A complex renovation took place in 2011.



What can be admired

- a baroque altar with polychrome woodcarving, and an aureole of two angels at the top. Part of the altar is an oil painting on canvas featuring St. Anna and the Virgin Mary and floral ornament.
- two large Renaissance bells from 1604 and 1606,
- the painted ceiling, which was inserted in the church from another structure and is more than a hundred years older than the church itself,
- the wall of the church, designed by an unknown author, decorated with schematic white, red and grey ornaments.



Hiking Tip

The Žilina area provides great opportunities for hiking in any direction. You can admire the beauty of nature in the Strážov hills, in the Súľov rocks, in the youngest national park in Slovakia – the NP Malá Fatra, in the majestic Klák or on the marked trails of Strečno. Detailed tips on hiking can be found:

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Tips for active recreation

- **Rope Park Preles**
www.lanovyparkpreles.sk
- **paragliding at Straník**
www.abcpargliding.sk
- **Municipal indoor swimming pool**
www.plavarenzilina.sk
- **climbing wall K2**
www.anatomic.sk
- **beach sports area**
www.pivarskabasta.sk/aktualne
- **billiard**
www.biliardmiso.eu



- **Žilina Water Dam**
 - golf practice area
 - beach volleyball
 - mini beach football
 - miniature golf
 - pétangue
 - badminton
- **tennis courts**
www.tenisovyklubzilina.sk
- **ricochet**
www.sportcentrum-junior.sk/ricochet
- **skittle ground**
www.kolkaren.zilina.net
- **squash, tennis, bowling**
www.holidayinn-zilina.sk/sk/relax



- **badminton**
www.bedmintonzilina.sk
- **bike rental Recykel**
www.mulica.sk

Where you can stay and eat

Are you looking for information on hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafés or bars in Žilina and its surroundings? The Žilina Tourist Information Office offers a direct intermediary service or find more information:

www.regionmalafatra.sk
www.tikzilina.eu



Souvenirs

- **Ceramics shop** – Keramika Mária, 10 Mariánske námestie
www.keramikamaria.zilina.net
- **Ceramics shop** – Keramika Nika, 25 Mariánske námestie
- **Presents Shop** – Darčeky NIKA, 23 Národná
www.keramikanika.sk
- **Tobacco shop** – Trafika Fajka, 1 Radničná
www.slovenske-souveniry.sk
- **Modrý mauritius**, 1 Farská
www.modry-mauritius.sk



Further information on the Žilina area

- www.regionmalafatra.sk
- www.viator.sk
- www.regionzilina.sk
- www.ztt.sk
- www.slovakiatravel.sk



More information

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