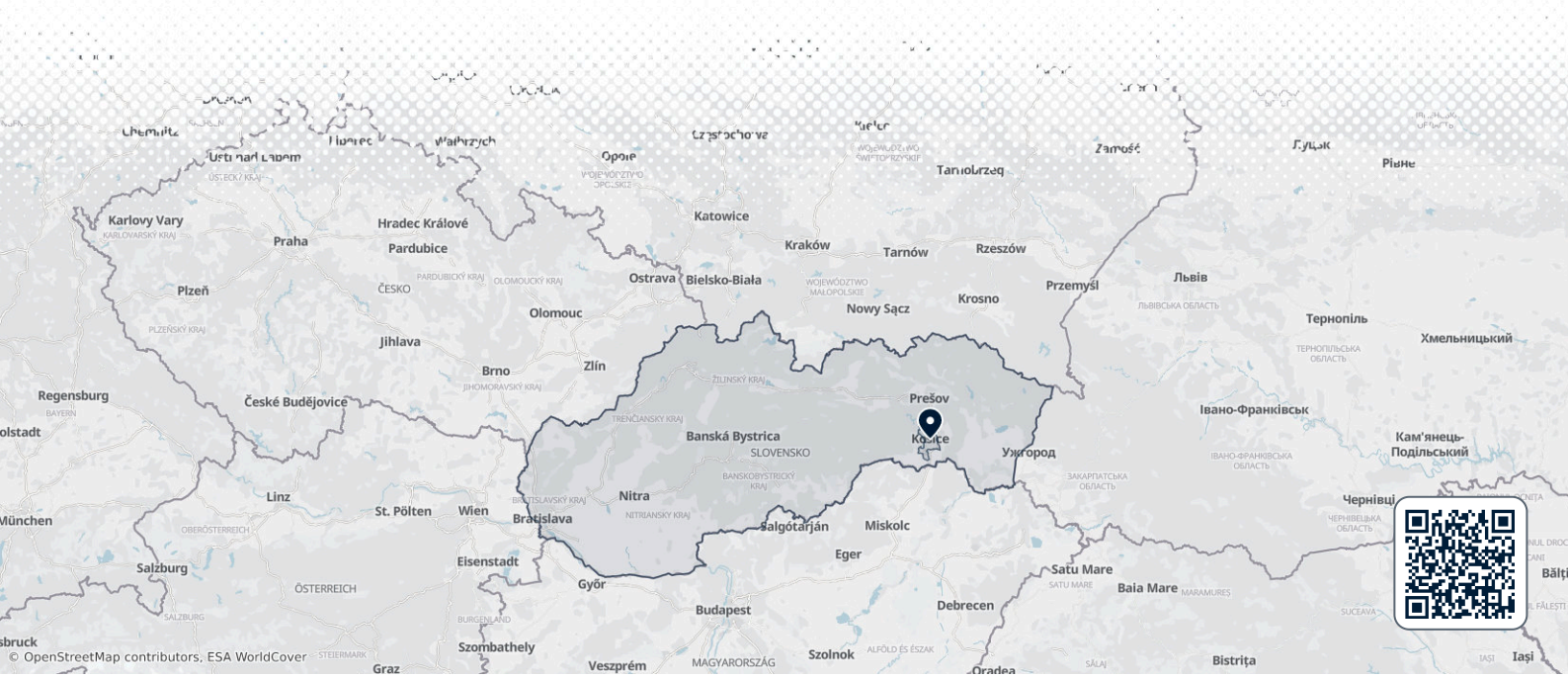


Kosice

Kosice Region · Slovakia

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Slovakia's second-largest city sits in the east of the country, far enough from Bratislava that it has always felt like its own capital. Its compact historic centre is built around a single long square, The Singing Fountain and the Gothic Saint Elisabeth Cathedral at its heart — a mix of Hungarian, German, and Slovak history that shows in the architecture on every side street.

In 2013, Košice shared the title of European Capital of Culture with Marseille, and that year left the city with converted industrial spaces now used as galleries and performance venues, plus a young, student-heavy population. It suits a traveler who wants cafés, theatre, and a walkable core, without the crowds of Bratislava or Prague.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are mild and comfortable, the best time to walk the old town without summer heat or winter cold. Summers are warm with occasional storms, and winters are cold enough for snow, with a Christmas market filling the main square in December.

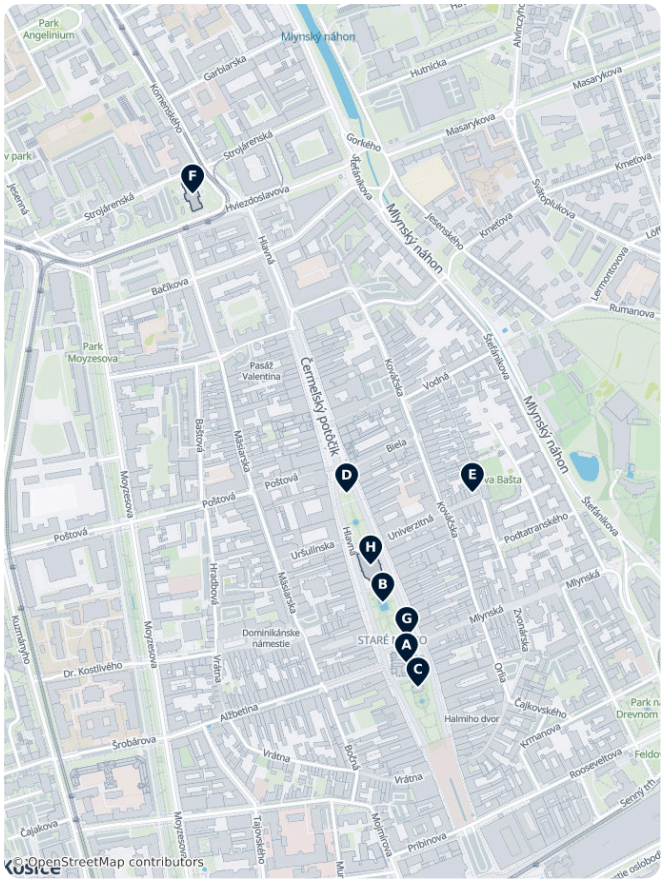
Time a visit around the first Sunday of October if you can: the Košice Peace Marathon, first run in 1924, is one of the oldest marathons still running anywhere in the world and turns the whole centre into a day-long street festival, even for people who never planned to run.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	0° / 6° Feels like -5°	-6° / -15°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	4° / 12° Feels like -1°	-5° / -15°	Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	10° / 18° Feels like 5°	-1° / -8°	Dry air
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 23° Feels like 13°	4° / -2°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	10° / 4°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 31°	14° / 9°	14 rainy days · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 33°	16° / 11°	15 rainy days · Calm winds
August	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 34°	15° / 10°	Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 29°	10° / 5°	Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for sightseeing	15° / 23°	5° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 15° Feels like 5°	1° / -5°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	1° / 6° Feels like -3°	-4° / -13°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: May, June, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Saint Elisabeth Cathedral anchors the whole city: it's Slovakia's largest church and the easternmost Gothic cathedral of its kind in Europe, with a dark, richly carved interior worth the climb up the tower.

Just outside its doors, B The Singing Fountain puts on a free light-and-music show most evenings, timed choreography of water jets that draws a crowd of locals as much as visitors.

Next to the cathedral, C St Michael's Chapel is a small Gothic gem that's easy to miss but worth a look for its carved stone doorway.

A short walk south, D Plague Column (Immaculata) is a Baroque monument raised in thanks after the plague epidemic of 1710 — a reminder of how much the city has survived.

E Mikluš's Prison is a genuinely unusual stop: a historic jail turned museum, with cramped cells and instruments of punishment that tell a grim but memorable story of Košice's past.

For a broader view of the region's history, art, and natural history, F East Slovak Museum occupies several buildings around the centre and is the city's main museum.

Climb G St. Urban Tower, the surviving bell tower next to the cathedral, for one of the better rooftop views over the old town.

End an evening at H State Theatre Košice, a grand neo-Baroque building from the late 19th century that still hosts opera, ballet, and drama — even if you don't see a show, the building itself is worth a look from outside.

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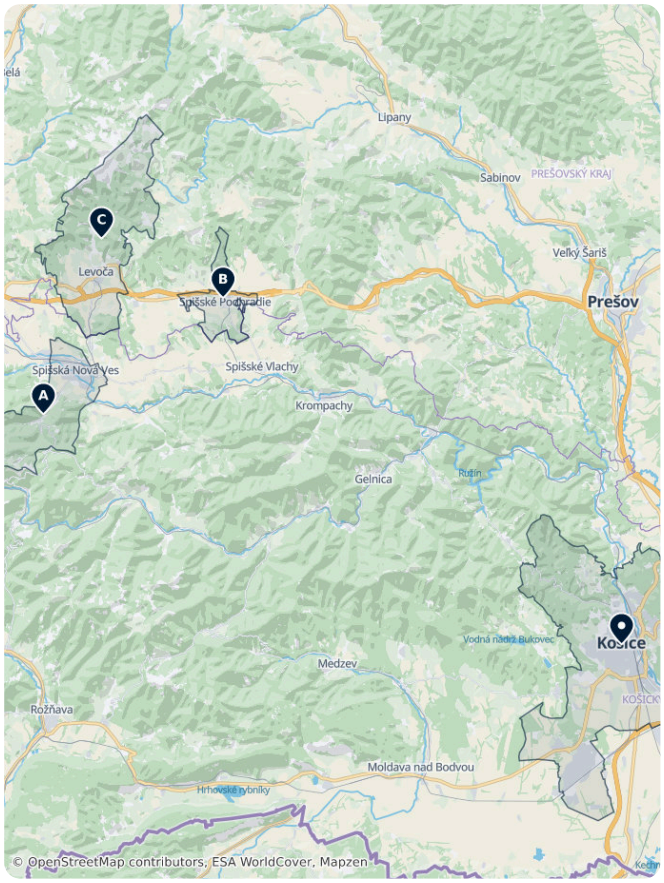
What to experience

- **Catch the Singing Fountain's evening show.** Most evenings after dark, The Singing Fountain runs a timed sequence of jets set to music and coloured light — a low-key local ritual that fills the benches around it.
- Ride the narrow-gauge Children's Railway. Košice Children's Historic Railway is a small working train that carries passengers through the wooded Čermeľ valley on the edge of the city, run largely by young volunteers — a favourite with families, but a genuinely pleasant ride for anyone.
- Browse the Christmas market. In December, wooden stalls fill the main square around the cathedral with mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, and local crafts.

Day trips

Eastern Slovakia's biggest draws are all within an easy day trip of the city, from wooded gorges to a UNESCO castle.



- Jasov Monastery and Cave — ≈35 min by car or bus. A working Premonstratensian monastery with a striking library, next to a show cave with rare bat colonies.
- Herľany Geyser — ≈45 min by car. A cold-water geyser that erupts roughly every 34–36 hours, one of only a handful of its kind in the world.
- Slovak Paradise National Park — ≈1 hour by car or train to A Spišská Nová Ves. Wooden ladders and via ferrata-style trails climb through narrow gorges and past waterfalls; a full day is easy to fill.
- **Spiš Castle** — ≈1 hour by car, or by train to B Spišské Podhradie plus a short uphill walk. One of the largest castle complexes in Central Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with sweeping views over the Spiš region.
- C Levoča — ≈1.5 hours by car or train. A walled medieval town, also UNESCO-listed, known for its Gothic altar carved by Master Paul, the tallest wooden altar in the world.
- Tokaj wine region — ≈1.5 hours by car toward the southeast. The Slovak side of the historic Tokaj wine area around Malá Tŕňa and Viničky, known for its sweet dessert wines.

Getting there

- **By air**: Košice International Airport (KSC) is about 6 km south of the centre, with seasonal and scheduled links to Vienna, Prague, Bratislava, Warsaw, London, Dublin, and a few other European cities. Bus 23 runs from the airport to the main train station in about 20 minutes; a taxi takes about 15.
- By train: Direct trains connect Košice to Bratislava in roughly 4.5–5.5 hours. There are also direct or one-change services toward Budapest and, on some routes, farther into Central Europe.
- By bus: Long-distance coaches link Košice to Bratislava, Prague, and several regional towns; useful as a cheaper but slower alternative to the train.

Getting around

- Public transit: DPMK runs trams, trolleybuses, and buses across the city — Košice has had trams since 1891, among the oldest networks in the region. Buy a ticket from the onboard machine (most take bank cards) or through the DPMK mobile app before you board; there is no tap-in card reader at the door. DPMK Košice
- Taxi / ride-hailing: Bolt operates in Košice and is the easiest way to book a ride from a phone.
- On foot: the historic centre is small and entirely walkable — most top sights sit within a few minutes of the main square.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The historic centre is compact and fully walkable — nearly every top sight sits within a 10-minute walk of the main square.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The city has a growing but still incomplete network of bike lanes; cycling is pleasant along the river and in the Čermeľ valley, less so in dense traffic streets.

Driving

- Is a car worth it?: No for the city itself — the centre is walkable and a car is a burden to park. Yes if you plan to reach Slovak Paradise, Spiš Castle, or the smaller villages of eastern Slovakia, which have limited public transport.
- **Parking**: Metered street parking covers most of the centre; pay by app (EPARKING or a local operator) or at a pay machine. A few multi-storey car parks sit just outside the historic core.
- Restrictions: Part of the main square is pedestrianised and closed to general traffic.

Food & drink

Košice's food scene runs along and just off Hlavná, the main pedestrian square — a dense stretch of cafés, wine bars, and casual restaurants that fills up on warm evenings. Prices here are noticeably lower than in Bratislava or Prague for a similar meal.

Look beyond the main square too: the narrow passageways and courtyards behind Hlavná hide smaller, less touristy spots, and the Slovak Technical Museum area on the eastern edge of downtown has a growing cluster of specialty coffee shops and craft-beer bars.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Bryndzové Halušky · Bryndzové halušky
Potato dumplings with tangy sheep cheese and bacon, Slovakia's national dish.

Cabbage Soup · Kapustnica
Sauerkraut soup with sausage and smoked meat, a traditional Christmas dish.

Goulash · Guláš
A hearty meat stew, often served with bread dumplings or bread.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Potato Pancakes · Zemiakové placky
Grated potato pancakes, often served as a side dish or snack.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Poppy Seed Dough Rolls · Šúľance s makom
Sweet potato-dough rolls coated in poppy seeds and sugar.

Trdelník
A sweet pastry made from rolled dough, grilled and topped with sugar and walnut.

DRINKS

Kofola
A popular herbal cola-like soft drink.

Slovak Wine · Slovenské víno
Slovakia has a long tradition of winemaking, particularly in the Small Carpathians region.

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Safety & health

Košice is a safe city for tourists, with violent crime rare in the areas visitors spend time in. The most common issue is ordinary pickpocketing around the train station and on crowded trams — keep bags

zipped and valuables out of back pockets.

Tap water is safe to drink throughout the city, in line with the rest of Slovakia.

History

Košice's confidence goes back a long way: in 1369, it became the first town in Europe granted its own coat of arms, a mark of the trading wealth it had built as a stop on routes linking Hungary to Poland and the Baltic. Construction of Saint Elisabeth Cathedral began soon after, in the 14th century, and it grew into the largest church in present-day Slovakia.

For centuries the city sat inside the Kingdom of Hungary, and that history is still visible: Ferenc Rákóczi II, leader of an early-18th-century Hungarian uprising against Habsburg rule, is buried inside the cathedral, his remains brought back from exile and reinterred there in 1906.

Beneath the main square, archaeological excavations uncovered the remains of the medieval town's fortifications, now displayed at Dolná brána (Lower Gate) — a rare chance to walk through the walls that once protected the city.

The 20th century brought Czechoslovak statehood, wartime occupation, and decades under communist rule, followed by rapid change after 1989. That history culminated in 2013, when Košice shared the title of European Capital of Culture with Marseille, a project that converted former industrial and military buildings across the city into galleries, studios, and performance spaces still in use today.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Slovakia at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

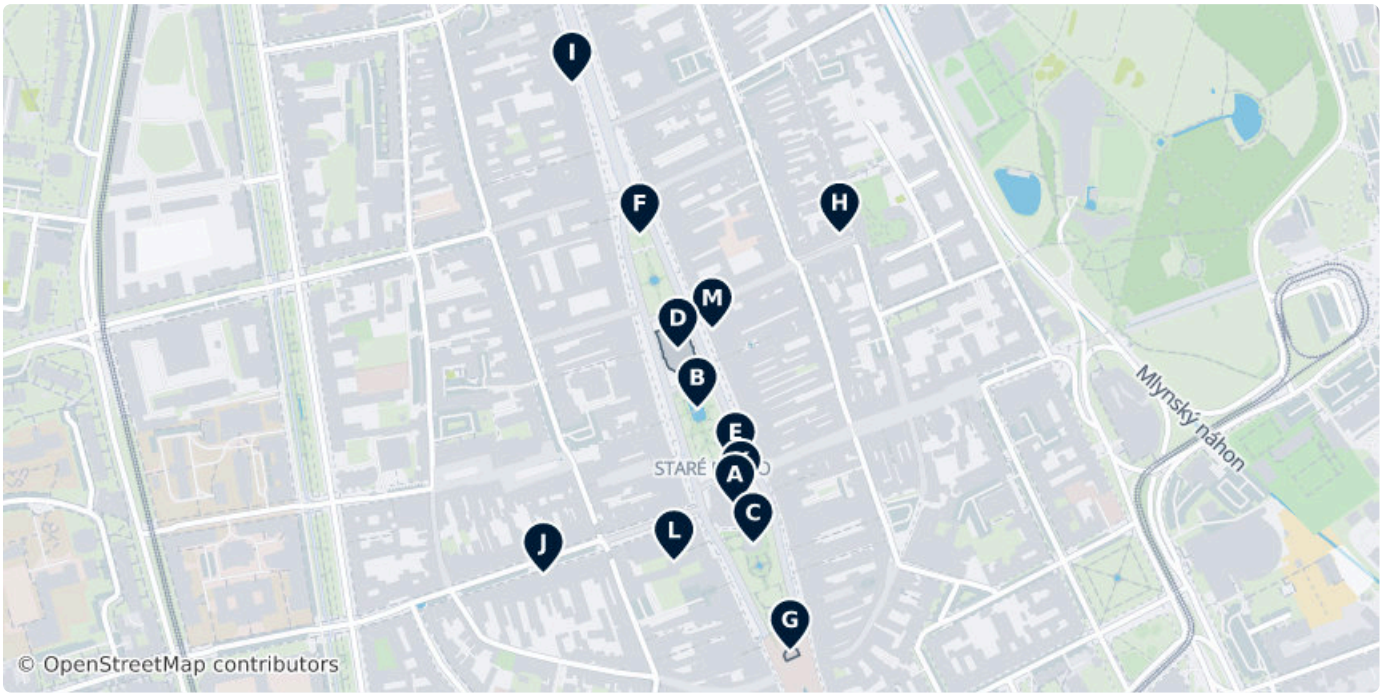
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Slovak

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Košice Essentials

Košice's historic center is anchored by the St. Elizabeth Cathedral, the easternmost Gothic cathedral in Europe, and the 14th-century St. Michael's Chapel. The central promenade features the Art Nouveau Slávia building, the Neo-Baroque State Theatre, and the 1986 Singing Fountain. Beneath the streets lie the archaeological ruins of the medieval Town Gate, while the 15th-century Mikluš's Prison and the Baroque Plague Column offer glimpses into the city's complex past. Cultural institutions like the Slovak Technical Museum and the East Slovak Art Gallery are housed in landmark historic buildings.





A Saint Elisabeth Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. Elizabeth, also called Saint Elizabeth Cathedral, is a Gothic cathedral in Košice, Slovakia.

Hlavná 40, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.72028, 21.25815)

Mo–Su 06:00–21:00

dom.rimkat.sk, +421 55 622 1555



B The Singing Fountain

The Singing Fountain was built in 1986 and to this day remains an inspiration for others of its kind.

97/53 Hlavná, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.72118, 21.25762)



C St Michael's Chapel

St Michael's Chapel was built in the 14th century on a cemetery which was then moved underground into an ossuary.

2/3 Hlavné námestie, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.71991, 21.25841)



D State Theatre Košice

The National Theatre Košice is situated in the centre of Košice, Slovakia.

Hlavné námestie 4/2, 04001 Košice, SK (48.72173, 21.25734)

sdke.sk, +421 55 245 2200



E St. Urban Tower

The Urban Tower in Košice, Slovakia is a renaissance prismatic campanile with a pyramidal roof.

43 Hlavná, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.72067, 21.25816)

Mo–Su 12:00–17:00

youtube.com/watch



F Plague Column, Košice

The Plague Column or Immaculata is a Baroque plague column in Košice, Slovakia.The column is situated in a small park and commemorates the...

70 Hlavná, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.72280, 21.25680)



G Town Gate

The Lower Gate, as it's called by locals, is an area of historical and archeological value.

119/9 Hlavná, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.71891, 21.25893)



H Mikluš's Prison

Mikluš's Prison was built in the 15th century and originally served as a residential house.

Pri Miklušovej väznici 10, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.72281, 21.25963)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Fr	09:00–17:00
Sa	14:00–18:00

vsmuzeum.sk, +421 917 755 594



I Slovak Technical Museum

The Slovak Technical Museum is a major Slovak technology museum, based in the eastern Slovak city of Košice, with branches throughout...

Hlavná 88, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.72422, 21.25584)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Fr	09:00–17:00
Sa–Su	12:00–17:00

stm-ke.sk, +421 55 622 4035



J East Slovak Art Gallery

The East Slovak Gallery, established in 1951, was the first regional gallery in Slovakia.

Alžbetina 670/22, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.71963, 21.25544)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	10:00–18:00

vsg.sk, +421 55 622 2647



K Francis II Rákóczi

Francis II Rákóczi was a Hungarian nobleman and leader of Rákóczi's War of Independence against the Habsburgs in 1703–1711 as the prince of...

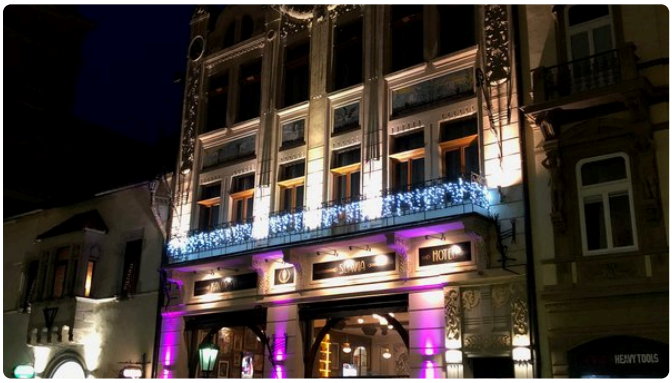
3/1 Hlavné námestie, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.72040, 21.25824)



L Archbishop's Palace

The Archbishop's Palace of Košice, Slovakia, is a rococo-classical building, formerly the home of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph I.

689/4 Alžbetina, Košice 04001, Slovakia (48.71975, 21.25729)



M Slávia

An iconic Art Nouveau building on the main street, Slávia features an ornate facade and a famous historic café. It stands adjacent to the Levoča House and directly opposite the State Theatre.

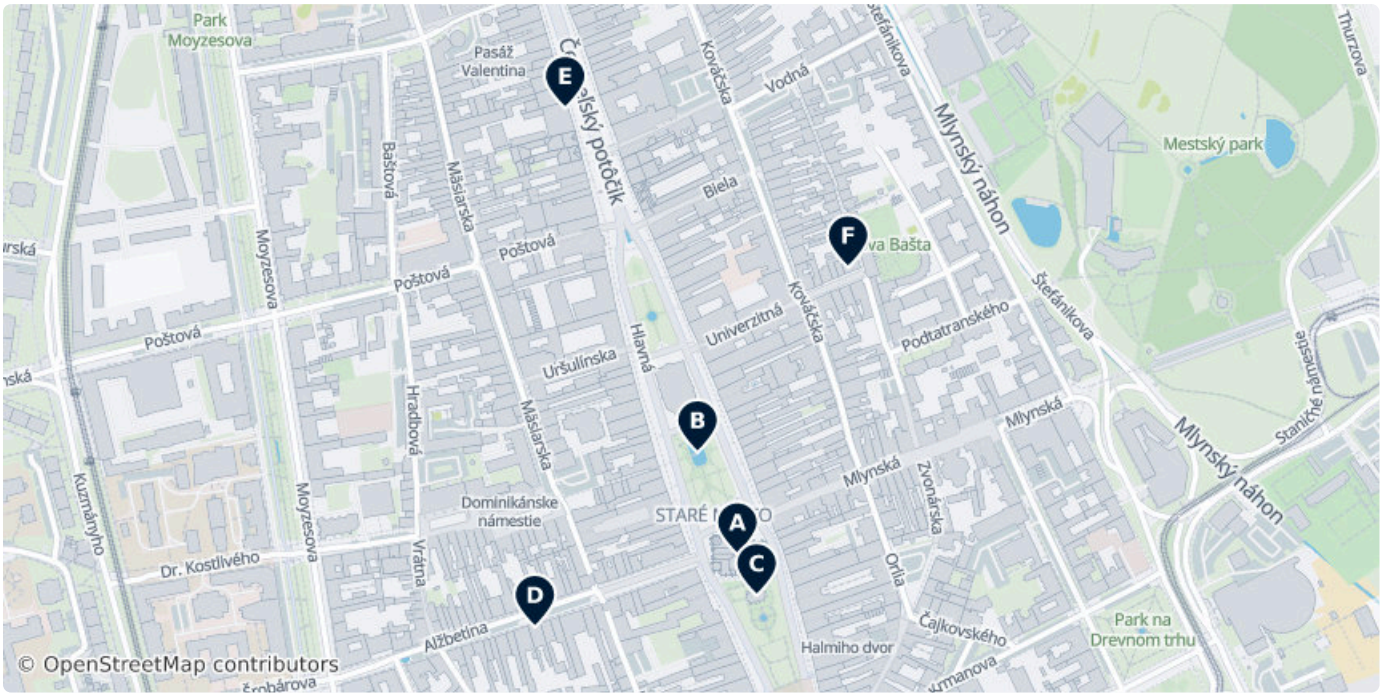
Hlavná, 040 01 Košice, Slovakia (48.72192, 21.25783)

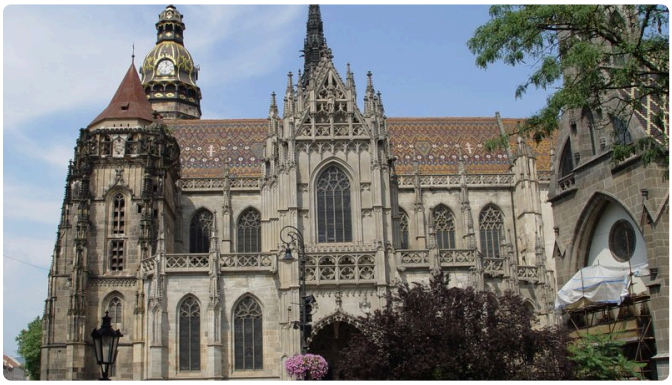
Mo–Th	10:00–23:00
Fr	10:00–01:00
Sa–Su	10:00–23:00

kaviarenslavia.sk

Editor's Choice

Košice's historic center is defined by the 14th-century Gothic architecture of Saint Elisabeth Cathedral and the neighboring St Michael's Chapel, which sits atop a former ossuary. The central park features the 1986 Singing Fountain, a pioneer in synchronized water and light displays. Cultural exploration continues at the East Slovak Art Gallery, the nation's first regional gallery, and the Slovak Technical Museum. The list is completed by Mikluš's Prison, a 15th-century residential complex that served as a city jail for centuries and now houses historical exhibits.





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Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	10:00–18:00

vsg.sk, +421 55 622 2647



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Hlavná 88, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.72422, 21.25584)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Fr	09:00–17:00
Sa–Su	12:00–17:00

stm-ke.sk, +421 55 622 4035



F Mikluš's Prison

Mikluš's Prison was built in the 15th century and originally served as a residential house.

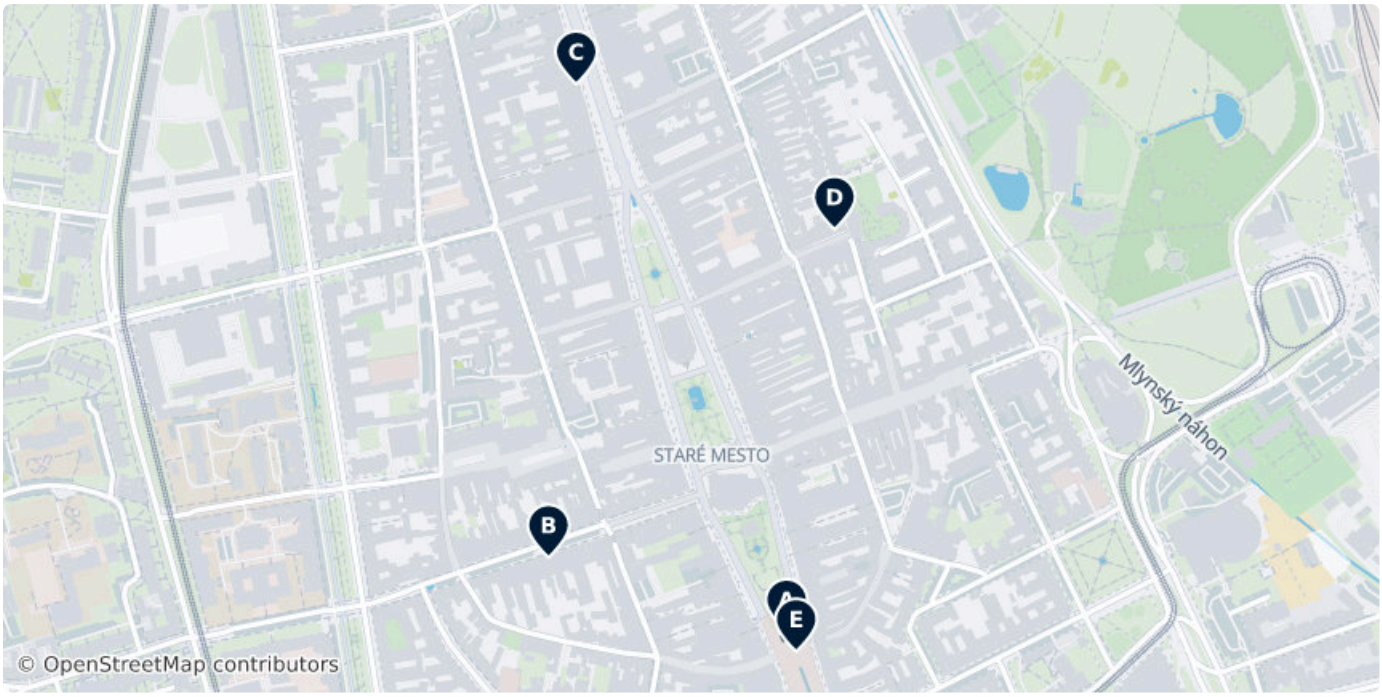
Pri Miklušovej väznici 10, 04001 Košice, Slovakia (48.72281, 21.25963)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Fr	09:00–17:00
Sa	14:00–18:00

vsmuzeum.sk, +421 917 755 594

Museums & Art Galleries

Košice's cultural landscape includes specialized institutions ranging from technical history to medieval archaeology. The East Slovak Gallery, established in 1951, showcases regional art, while the Slovak Technical Museum documents industrial heritage. Historical insights are found in the 15th-century Mikluš's Prison and the underground archaeological complexes of the Lower Gate, which reveal the city's 13th-century fortification systems and defensive architecture discovered during modern excavations.





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Sa	14:00–18:00

vsmuzeum.sk, +421 917 755 594

E Archeologické múzeum

This underground museum displays the excavated remains of the city's medieval fortification system, featuring the 13th-century Lower Gate and remnants of the original stone bridge.

(48.71872, 21.25907)

Mo–Fr	10:00–18:00
Sa	10:00–22:00

k13.sk/kulturne-centra/dolna-brana/

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