



Zalalövő

AMBER ALONG THE
ZALA RIVER

CLOSE TO NATURE SINCE THE ROMAN PERIOD



Interreg

Austria-Hungary

European Union – European Regional Development Fund

City Cooperation II





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Invitation for guests

It cannot be coincidence that ancient Romans had long discovered the possibilities of the area and its wonderful natural treasures, and established a thriving city at the place where today Zalalövő is located. The settlement still preserves the memories of that age, and also attends to the culture and traditions of later centuries with great care.

The friendly small-town atmosphere, the hospitality and the friendly ways of the locals delights any visitor. Zalalövő is a hiding place where everyday difficulties and stress can be left behind, and delighting in the wonderful harmony of the built environment and nature will ensure relaxation and energization. No matter if we set out on foot or by bike, the scenic places to visit - the lake and the nearby beech wood - and the National Blue Hiking Trail that passes through here, invite the visitors to new adventures.

In the following pages we would like to present you our city's diverse cultural and tourism offers, and assist you in compiling the program most suited to you in order to ensure that your stay at Zalalövő is as exciting and adventurous as possible.

All of us living here are happy to share stories and our favourite hiking routes with our guests, or reveal the secret location of our best places to fish. We'll take you by the hand, show you around, and offer you the best of the city!

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Historical background

Zalalövő - with a little over 3,000 inhabitants, located in the western part of Transdanubia - is bordered by the Gőcsej area from the south and the east, and by the Őrség region from the north and the west; it was created by connecting several formerly independent settlements.

The first traces of the city's more than 2,000 years of history show the presence of Celtic tribal settlements, who were later followed by the Roman legions sometime in the 1st century. At first it served as one of the bases for the troops reaching the Danube - aimed at occupying Pannonia, since one of the important natural crossing points over the River Zala was here. In addition to the military camp, a village inhabited by craftsmen and merchants was also formed. When the new settlement was granted city rank in 124 by Emperor Hadrian - under its new name Municipium Aelium Salla - it started to develop significantly, and became a dominant stopping point in the immediate vicinity of the famous Amber Road. Its blooming period was ended in the 2nd century by Germanic tribes, when the city was destroyed, and it only started to revive in the 4th century. A sturdy stone building was built at the site of the old military camp, which at first served as a stopping point along the road, but was later turned into a guest cottage - at that time called villa publica - also suitable for housing high-rank guests; but later, in the 5th century, when the Roman legions left, the area once again became deserted.

After the Hungarian conquest, the village that settled on the two banks of the River Zala defended the newly founded country against the German attacks from the west. Such defense position remained unchanged later, too; according to a royal charter issued in 1295, royal archers were stationed here for the protection of the border - the settlement was most likely named "Lövő" due to this fact. After the Turks occupied Szigetvár in 1576, a palisade was built at the location of today's settlement, next to the old Roman road. Usually 50 infantry and cavalry soldiers were stationed at the "Castellum" house.

The settlement Lövő was granted the title of market town in the medieval period, and also received the right to hold markets, awarded by the king. The former settlement structure is preserved by the houses lined up along the streets. In 1780 it became the district centre. During the Habsburg Monarchy, the development continued uninterrupted due the high number of craftsmen, restaurants, workshops and stores - and for the first time, by the end of the 19th century it reached a population of 1,000 persons.





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Its development was hindered due to the two world wars, since a significant proportion of the male population was killed during serving the country. The darkest chapter of local history books is that during the Holocaust the entire Jewish population of the town - 122 people - were deported and murdered.

Today's Zalalövő was established in 1925 by joining the settlements Zalapataka, Zalamindszent, Nagyfernekág, Irsapuszta, Pusztaszentpéter and Lövő.

Post-war nationalization, and the collectivization of agriculture also affected the village. The economic boom in the 60s had a positive impact on the region: the Zala bridge was built, later the local school was expanded, and then, in 1985, Borostyán-tó (Amber Lake) was created to serve the recreational needs of the population, and it still plays an important role in the life of the locals, and also attracts the tourists visiting the city.

The construction of the Slovenian-Hungarian railway connected the settlement to the international railway network in 2000.

On 1 July 2000, Árpád Göncz, President of Hungary, granted city rights to Zalalövő, acknowledging the city's history, 2000 years of efforts by the locals, as well as their results.

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Walking tour in the city: in the footsteps of built heritage and folk traditions

Zalalövö is a quiet, family-friendly small town close to nature, and it has a long history as well. Although the stones of the ancient village were carried away for other purposes, the memory of the once thriving Roman city is revived by the ruins found during the excavations started in the 1970s, and displayed today in the "Romkert" and Museum Salla. The buildings from the Roman Age, the remnants of Villa Publica and the Amber Road, as well as the museum space present valuable historical material, hosting the exhibitions "Roman Age in Zala County" and "Trade, amphorae and terra sigillatae".

A typical building in the centre of Zalalövö is the Neo-Gothic King St. Ladislaus Church, which was completed in 1927 based on the design by József Metzner. The three ornate glass windows of the shrine show St. Ladislaus, St. Elizabeth and St. Margaret, while the altarpiece - which remained from the previous church building that was at the same place - shows the beheading of John the Baptist. There are four bells in the church tower.

The rustic centres of each, once independent settlement joined in the course of times are adorned by church buildings. St. Anne's church in Zalapataka - under cultural heritage protection - was built in the middle of the 18th century, while the roots of All Saints' Church in Zalamindszent go back to even more distant times, to the 13th century.



Places of commemoration:

statues and monuments in the city

Budafa's Heroes Monument - commemorates local heroes killed in the two world wars.

World War I. Memorial - the statue represents soldiers throwing grenades and shooting; it was constructed to commemorate soldiers killed in World War I; the names of 32 victims are engraved on it.

World War II. Memorial in Zalalövő - on the top there is a relief of a young man kneeling; he bows his head in memory of the heroes and victims, while placing a wreath. In the plaque at the bottom the names of soldiers killed in battles, and the names of the Jewish victims are engraved.

Column of Loyalty - the four panoramas on the marble column in the park next to the station present the city's history in the ancient, medieval and modern age, as well as the present development of transport; its top is decorated with a clock.

Monument of Joining the European Union - on 1 May 2004, Hungary became a member of the Union, and on this occasion a plaque was unveiled in the Millennium Park.

Statute of Cardinal László Lékai - it commemorates a famous native of Zalalövő, who - in the middle of the twentieth century - was the archbishop of Esztergom, and the Primate of Hungary. The bust is located next to the fountain in Millennium Park. His birthplace in Zalamindszent is embellished with a plaque.

Petőfi Memorial - it was unveiled in the city's main square, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the famous Hungarian poet, Sándor Petőfi.

And an odd one ...: the wall of the Town Hall is decorated with a special plaque, with the anthem of Zalalövő in it. When reading the lines, the deep respect of the residents for their native land cannot be doubted.

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DR LÉKAI LÁSZLÓ
BÍBOROS



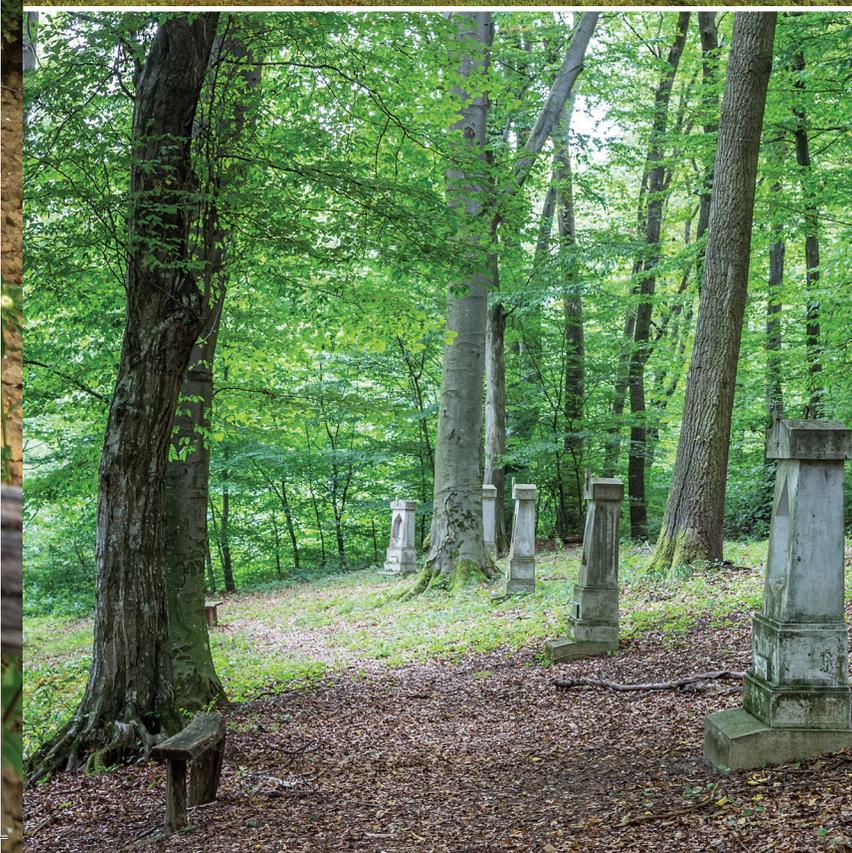


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What do you think contemporary rural folk life was like?

The answer can surely be found at the traditional house of the region in Zalalövő, displaying an exhibition in a farmhouse built in the early 19th century. Today, most of us cannot have any memories of the authentic furniture, household items, or tools, all of which were common in every household 100-200 years ago. Lots of interesting items can be found in this house equipped with a thatched roof; the house includes a clean room, a kitchen with tile stove, and bedrooms furnished with 150-year-old carved furniture and other everyday objects, showing the visitors the traditional way of life here. The cellar and the pantry were used for storing food. The courtyard also includes the stable, barns and the shed for storing everyday tools of agriculture, as well as the typical accessory of courtyards in Zalalövő: the wheel well.



Protecting traditions and cultural life

The unique atmosphere of Zalalövö becomes even more lovable through living traditions, and the locals allow deeper insight into their roots, and who they really are. Fortunately, many people make efforts to make local traditions and arts available for others, and to ensure that they are not forgotten - one of them is Mrs. Istvánné Bicsák, whose diverse and colourful embroideries are invited to exhibitions and cultural events, spreading the city's good reputation.

The Salla Choir was established more than 10 years ago as a church choir, and today they have a wide secular repertoire, including folk songs, classical and pop pieces. They regularly participate at various events in the city and the neighbouring settlements, and - due to our sister city partnerships - they are able to attend international events, presenting our local cultural heritage.

St. Veronica Youth Choir, with primarily ancient and modern religious music in their repertoire, operated within the framework of King St. Ladislaus Parish has completed a number of performances in Hungary, and they regularly present musical performances and concerts in Zalalövö.

Salla Folk Dance Group uses the language of music to present values, showing on the stage the traditional dances and habits of specific areas and villages.

Interesting details:

Zalalövö is crossed by St. Martin European cultural route, which joins certain outstanding memories and sites related to St. Martin from Szombathely in Hungary to as far as Tours in France. An important Christian saint in Europe - who was highly respected because of his modesty, friendliness and the wonders he did; he was born in the early 4th century in Savaria (today Szombathely), and crossed the area around Zalalövö on his way to Italy.

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The city embraced by nature

The residents of Zalalövő have always lived close to nature, so it is no wonder that the main attractions of the city include the green forests around it, the wide variety of protected plant and animal species living in the forests, as well as Borostyán-tó with the various recreational opportunities it offers.

There is another possibility for hikers, since the route of the National Blue Hiking Tour crosses the area, which is a good way for hiking across the entire region. In addition, cyclists and hikers can crisscross the beautiful landscapes of Kerka-mente Natural Park and Órség-Vendvidék Natural Park nearby. In this area there are a number of rare plant and animal species under natural protection; you can come across for example, cyclamens, snowflakes, checkered lilies, adder's tongues, dogtooth violets, or globe flowers.

With a water surface of 35 ha, Borostyán-tó - located to the west from the town - offers an idyllic setting to relax in, bathing and sports. It offers visitors a finely developed beach, buffets, and a variety of water sports. The lake is very rich in fish, and has places specifically built for fishing, so the lake is ideal for those who love fishing. The availability of nearby rural accommodations further enhances the attractiveness of the lake.

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Adventures on bicycle

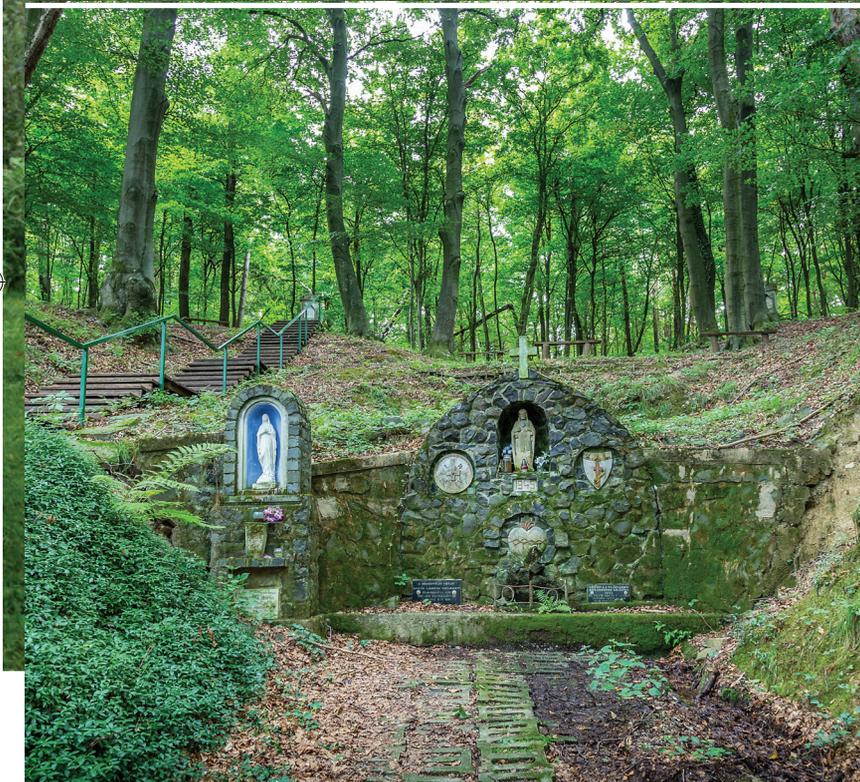
The 16-km long bicycle route between Zalaövö and Teskánd - located in place of the former railway line is a popular route for visitors on two wheels; it is suitable for people of all ages, fitness levels or preparedness, since there are no height differences. During cycling we can enjoy the sight of the Zala Valley, or the villages along the path, and we can spend a few hours in a safe and peaceful environment - we may even take a short rest at Zalaszentgyörgy. The path is part of the bicycle route between Felsőőr-Kis-Balaton, and ensures undisturbed travel on two wheels between the surrounding settlements.

An altar in the shadow of beech forests

When walking in the pleasantly shady beech forest of Borostyánvölgy (Amber Valley) - not far from the city centre - you can find the sacral Szentkút (Saint Well), where you can experience revival in body and soul. Szentkút, with fresh spring water, was erected to commemorate the end of World War II. Its stone altar, with the sculpture of Christ placed in the dome, the Stations of the Cross statues around, as well as the beech tree canopies reflect unusual calmness - no wonder it has always been a popular place of pilgrimage.

And one more tip:

Beautiful view opens up from the top of Pacsa-hegy and Pataka-hegy. If you don't find them, just ask for help from the locals, and they will always be happy to give directions, and the owners of the wine cellars on the hill might even invite you for a good glass of wine! After sunset, you can easily find Pataka-hegy, since there is a lighted cross that is visible from a distance of ten kilometres.





Access

By rail: Zalalövő is a railway junction, it is part of the only direct international railway line between Hungary and Slovenia, and the direct connection to Budapest ensures comfortable and fast travel.

On road: Secondary road no. 86 crosses the city in the north-east direction (European Road no. E65). There is a back road crossing the settlement in east-west direction, connecting Zalaegerszeg and Óriszentpéter, with more moderate traffic.

Distance:

251 km from Budapest • 184 km from Vienna • 119 km from Graz
177 km from Zagreb • 233 km from Ljubljana