



Western Transdanubia

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Best Places to Eat

- » Taverna Flórián (p143)
- » La Maréda (p123)
- » Pityer (p136)
- » Kalóz Fregatt (p117)
- » Vadkörte (p145)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hilltop (p116)
- » Kastély (p132)
- » Portré Hotel (p142)
- » Spirit Hotel (p140)
- » Wieden Panzió (p128)

Why Go?

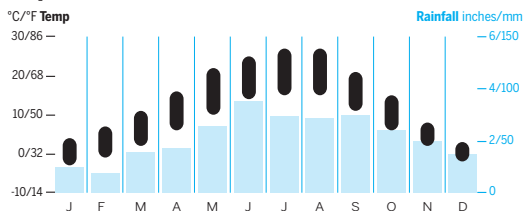
A visit to Western Transdanubia is a must for anyone wishing to see remnants of Hungary's Roman legacy, medieval heritage and baroque splendour.

This swathe of land bordering Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia largely avoided the Ottoman destruction wrought on the country in the 16th and 17th centuries. Its seminal towns – Sopron, Kőszeg and Győr – all managed to save their medieval centres from total devastation, and exploring their cobbled streets and hidden courtyards is a magical experience. Equally rewarding are reminders of Roman settlement in Szombathely, with its rich collection of ruins and a wealth of funereal treasures. Even the Romanesque period has its say in these parts – the Benedictine Abbey Church of Ják is among the finest examples of 13th-century architecture in the country.

Wine connoisseurs will also enjoy the trip, as the region is known for its fine tipples – particularly its reds.

When to Go

Sopron



May A great time to visit Őrség National Park, with warm weather but few crowds.

July Rock out to a host of local and international musicians at the VOLT festival in Sopron.

October Get your fill of Hungary's best wines in Sopron and Győr after the grape harvest.

History

The Danube River was the limit of Roman expansion in what is now Hungary, and most of today's Western Transdanubia formed the province of Pannonia Superior. The Romans had a big hand in the area's development, building some of their most important towns here, including Arrabona (Győr), Scarbantia (Sopron) and Savaria (Szombathely). Because of their positions on the Amber trade route from northern Europe to the Adriatic Sea and Byzantium, and the influx of such ethnic groups as Germans and Slovaks, these towns prospered in the Middle Ages. Episcopates were established, castles were built and many of the towns were granted special royal privileges.

A large part of Western Transdanubia remained in the hands of the Habsburgs during the Turkish occupation, and it was thus spared the ruination suffered in the

south and on the Great Plain. As a result, some of the best examples of Romanesque and Gothic architecture in the country can be found here, as well as Hungary's first baroque churches.

Tata

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There is no escaping water in Tata, a small historical town with a massive lake as its centrepiece, surrounded by the remains of a proud castle and a smattering of neoclassical mansions. This is the legacy of the Esterházy family, who paid for the town's facelift in the 18th century, employing the skills of architect Jakab Fellner. In medieval times, Tata was the favourite retreat of kings, though it fell into disrepair after being ravaged by the Turks in 1683. Tata's many watermills, left over from its heyday, are now in various



Western Transdanubia Highlights

- 1 Exploring 1000-year old **Pannonhalma Abbey** (p116) – the architecturally splendid spiritual heart of Hungary in a lofty hilltop location
- 2 Wandering the cobbled streets and peering into picturesque hidden courtyards of **Sopron's** medieval Inner Town (p124)
- 3 Calling in at Ják to admire the beautiful, intricately carved stone portal of the **abbey church** (p137)
- 4 Linger in **Kőszeg's Jurisics tér** (p141), arguably Hungary's finest medieval centre
- 5 Exploring **Őrség National Park** (p145), a region of unspoilt rural beauty where three countries meet
- 6 Pondering the wealth of Roman remains at **Iseum** (p133), Szombathely's superb archaeological museum
- 7 Visiting the tomb of Bishop Vilmos Apor and marvelling at Imre Patkó's collection of exotic objects in **Győr**