



ZALAEGRSZEG

FIND THE EXPERIENCE





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*„You can get to know a landscape by learning from a textbook, but the experience gained on the spot still means incomparably more.”*

## Dear Guests, Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Municipality of the City of Zalaegerszeg with County Rights, I would like to give a warm and respectful welcome to all the readers of our tourist publication with the idea of Zoltán Moys, the director of the homeschooling and tourism magazine titled “Homecoming”, and I encourage you to skim through the pages of his book and explore the county seat of Zala, which lies in the northeastern corner of the Göcsej Hills.

The cultural and natural values, the special gastronomy and the hospitable population of the settlement, which is surrounded by vineyards and forests, can be a pleasant and refreshing experience and activity for everyone, be it a tourist visiting from a remote corner of the country or a local patriotic person.

Our history and knowledge of traditions are essential to make our days livable and the future predictable, so our city takes great care not to forget our ancestors and the events that determine the fate and development of the settlement. Our museums not only offer attractions by themselves, the events taking place within their walls interweave past and present, tradition and modernity. Visitors can also get acquainted with folk crafts on the shores of Lake Gébárt, but – if they wish – they can have exceptional water experiences. Unique natural wonders, hiking trails of varying difficulty, stunning panoramas, a cavalcade of theatre and music, unforgettable taste experiences, numerous opportunities for sports -these are all offered by a settlement proud of both its natural and created values.

Nowadays, leisure travel and recreation from everyday life are becoming more and more prominent in our lives. Tourism has undergone serious changes in recent decades, and the trends and needs of the traveling public are not ignored in Zalaegerszeg either. In keeping with our motto, we strive to make our settlement not only a city of the past and present, but also a city of the future!

Browse these columns of the website named [www.zalaegerszegturizmus.hu](http://www.zalaegerszegturizmus.hu), and then get started! Get acquainted with the sights and values of Zalaegerszeg, for this we recommend this booklet as a travel companion with all the important information and event offers in it.

I wish all our readers a meaningful, pleasant stay and good fun!



**Zoltán Balaicz**  
Mayor



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Zalaegerszeg open-air museum is a real essence of Göcsej, one of the most archaic regions of the country, which existed in almost untouched seclusion until the middle of the 20th century.



# TIME TRAVEL

## Step in!

Zalaegerszeg is home to the country's first open-air ethnographic museum, the **Göcsej Village Museum**, which is located around the backwater of the Zala River that runs through the city and an old watermill, and has been welcoming visitors since 1968. A 19th-century village in Göcsej has been reconstructed from the collection of nearly 30 settlements in Zala, where you can see hundreds of furnishings. The mud-covered houses are covered with straw and can be visited in a charming natural environment.

### LARGE NUMBER

The highest drilling rig on display is **50** meters. Another interesting fact is that you can see most of these tall structures here in our country.

The **Hungarian Oil and Gas Museum** (its entrance is identical to the open-air museum) located next to the village museum and spreading over an area of 30 thousand square meters is similarly special and it is the second largest open-air technical museum in Hungary and the second most significant hydrocarbon industry museum in Europe. Numerous curiosities raise the standard

of the institution: the smallest patience glass in the world, the largest sculpture park in Western Transdanubia, or even the memorial room presenting the life of Vilmos Zsigmondy, a prominent representative of water mining.

The recently renovated **Göcsej Museum** has found a home in the former savings bank headquarters, erected in 1890, and awaits visitors with four permanent exhibitions in the city center. The exhibition titled "The Life of Our Ancestors" presents the history of the citizens of Zalaegerszeg over the centuries in an interactive way. We can also see the exhibitions of sculptor Zsigmond Kisfaludi Strobl, ceramic artist János Németh and interior designer György Fekete.

### TIP

Also visit the Mindszentyneum – Mindszenty József Visitor Center in the new wing of the Göcsej Museum.





# TRADITIONS

## ■ Live it!

The mission of the **Göcseji Knowledge Centre - Zalaegerszeg Local Product Market** is truly special in the historic downtown, in Market Square: it presents, enlivens and perpetuates the many hundreds of years of knowledge of the locals. Thus, the center is a special place in the city market, where you can taste, buy and even master the preparation of local handicrafts and food from Göcsej!

If you want to get acquainted with the traditions of folk crafts, feel free to do so in Zalaegerszeg. In the northwestern area of the city, in the **Gébárt Regional Folk Artisan Creative House**, which stands on the shores of Lake Gébárt, and in the **Panorama Folk Art Gallery**, which has found its home in the building, the love of customs and respect for old crafts is almost palpable. The fact that artists have hearts and works of art have souls can also be seen by visitors in the permanent and temporary exhibitions of the creative house.

## ■ OFFER

If you are attracted to folk crafts, be sure to take a trip to the creative house, which is open all year round, visit the programs regularly organized by the Open Workshop Galleries' Day!

## ■ TIP

Enter (barefoot) the felt tent reminiscent of the conquest era and experience how our ancestors lived in a yurt!

## ■ LARGE NUMBER

In the area of the **Traditional Wooden Grave Markers Memorial Park of the Carpathian Basin**, which is located next to the handicraft house and can be freely visited, 113 head trees represent the cemetery culture of our ancestors. Most of the tomb markers are Protestant headstones, however, you can see some Catholic crosses, memorial columns, as well as a belfry from Göcsej, which is a characteristic piece of the folk architecture of Zala County.





## TOP 5 EXPERIENCES

- Refresh yourself in our baths!
- Get romantic at sunset!
- Get to know the world of the lake on the learning path!
- Discover the tradition of our ancestors in the house of craftsmen!
- Adventure with the kids in the playground next to the lake!

## AT LAKE GÉBÁRT

TIP



# RECHARGE

## Relax!

There is a beach, a thermal bath, an aquapark and even a dog beach on the shores of **Lake Gébárt**, the largest artificial lake in Zalaegerszeg, which is only a few kilometers from the city center. There are walking paths around the lake, a lake beach on its peninsula and a year-round campsite with log apartment buildings.

### TIP

Take a selfie on the shores of Lake Gébárt, with the tower of the aquapark in the background!

### DID YOU KNOW?

The aquapark provides **6,000 m<sup>2</sup>** of water surface for those who want to have fun.

One of the largest wave pools in Hungary is located in the **Aqua City Water Slide and Adventure Park**, which awaits lovers of water experiences regardless of age group with numerous pools, slides, water and land attractions in the summer.

In addition to the water paradise, the vaulted, domed structure of the **Zalaegerszeg Thermal Bath**, built in a unique style, offers a wonderful sight. The three adventure pools connected to the waterfall at 33-36 °C offer different water pampering opportunities, and in the children's castle there is a rainbow slide and water toys for the little ones.

### LARGE NUMBER

The thermal water rises to the surface from a depth of **1716** meters and has a temperature of **98 °C**, therefore it must be cooled for bathing.







# PANORAMA

## WHAT YOU CAN SEE FROM HERE:

- The undulating countryside of Göcsej
- The Alps
- The volcanic buttes of Ság and Somló
- The towers of Mary Magdalene Parish Church and the aquapark
- Zala ZONE Automotive Test Track
- Peak of the Peace Stupa of Zalaszentő

## Explore!

One of the great attractions of Zalaegerszeg is that you can enjoy a wonderful panorama at many points, whether you are climbing to the highest point of a lookout point or walking along our hiking trails on the hills.

The 95-metre-high **TV Tower** above the Azalea Valley is said to be the best by far which stands on the roof of Bazita and has a circular panoramic café at an altitude of 53 m from spring to autumn. The open terrace below also has a nice view of the city and the hills of Zala.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The tower in Zalaegerszeg is one of the four TV towers that can be visited in Hungary.

A lovely view is also provided by the nine-and-a-half-meter-high **lookout tower in Jánka hill**. Even before it was built, many people would walk up to the back of the hill and to the inn here for the panorama. However, we have an even more beautiful view, from the heights: we have a view of the city and even the famous panoramic point of Zalaegerszeg, the TV tower in Bazita can be seen.

### TIP

Walk to Calvary and belfry in Jánkahegy, not far from the lookout point.

### LARGE NUMBER

There are more than **100** kilometers of hiking trails with an elevation of up to 590 meters.

Whether we roam the routes of the **"Horhosok Trail"** or the **"Páfrányok (Ferns') Trail"**, it is certain that we will witness the peaceful co-existence and harmony of nature and the built environment. On both routes, three hiking trails of varying difficulty can be traversed by tourists in boots and on bikes, too, so they can explore the values of the eastern part of the city. The hiking network is extended with the **"Tölgyek (Oaks') Trail"** in Alsóerdő.





## FLOOD OF FLOWERS

- March: checkered lily, Carpathian saffron – Zalavölgy Park Forest
- April: ramson – Csács area
- May: Azalea – Azaleas valley
- June: Lavender – Lavender Garden

# DEEP IN THE WOODS

## ■ Feel it!

Zala is one of the most forested counties in the country, a hilly region that invites people for excursions and recreation. What it's like to be deep in the woods can be experienced by visiting the **Alsóerdő** in the southern part of the city, which is the most important nature destination in the area.

At the end of the forest area there is the **Aranyoslap - spring**, which is an important site in the history of the city, it is already mentioned in a charter dated 1381. As it was in the early Middle Ages, it is still regarded as a significant resting place today. In 1974, it became the first nature reserve of local importance in Zalaegerszeg, and later it has become a nationally protected area.

**The Azaleas Valley** is the most significant area of the Alsóerdő from touristic point of view, in spring it is the jewel box of the city, which was voted one of the natural wonders of Zala County in 2010 by the votes of the general public. A couple of decades ago Rhododendron bushes were planted in the valley formerly known as the Fox and Snake Valley, which can be visited all year round and has a peculiar microclimate. The plant consists of five varieties and the landscape bursts into flowers in May. Azaleas with mainly yellow flowers and a wonderful scent unfold their petals at this time.

### ■ LARGE NUMBER

**3,000** azalea shrubs have been planted in the valley since its creation in 1973.

### ■ TIP

Rest in the depths of the shady forest, at the Cold Fountain Spring on "Páfrányok (Ferns) Trail".

### ■ DID YOU KNOW?

The professional development of the 240-hectare Alsóerdő began in 1965. This was the second park forest established in Hungary -after Buda. Alsóerdő is both a resort forest, a panoramic-, and a walking forest.

All the domestic tree species can be found in the 83-hectare **Csácsbozsok Arboretum** at the eastern entrance of the city, next to the highway 76. The park, dotted with bushes and Rhododendrons, has a special sight, and along the "Öregbükkös (Old Beech) Trail" you can get to know the flora and fauna of Zala County.





# RARITIES



## Admire it!

**Tower(less) clock – the only one working on earth:** do not miss the curiosity of the Tower(less) clock during your visit to Zalaegerszeg, which is on the square in front of the Hevesi Sándor Theatre and the Griff Puppet Theatre.

### LARGE NUMBER

The **250-year-old** clock structure, which was formerly the tower clock of the Parish Church of Mary Magdalene, can now be viewed in operation in its glass cage, in a unique way in the world. A special curiosity is that they cannot include it in the Guinness Book of Records, since it has no counterpart in the world.

### DID YOU KNOW?

A special piece of the open-air exhibition of the oil museum are the three different types of drilling rigs that have been used for decades, the height of which exceeds 40 meters.

### TIP

An enlarged version of the daguerrotype can be viewed in the exhibition named "The Life of Our Ancestors" at the Göcsej Museum.

**The only known daguerrotype of the city:** The city's former market square, today's Kazinczy Square, is depicted in a daguerrotype (the ancestor of photography) taken in the middle of the 19th century. One of the special features of the recording is that it was found in Paris in 2019. According to our knowledge so far, it may have been taken a year before the revolution and war of independence of 1848-49, making it one of the oldest photographs depicting a public square in Hungary.

### FURTHER TOP 3 DOWNTOWN SPECIALTIES

- the country's first statue of Ferenc Deák in Deák Square
- this is how it was and this is how it is – castle mock-up and city model in Mindszenty Square and in the square in front of the Mayor's Office
- magnified postcards on the facade of the apartment building next to Kossuth Square







# CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

## Join us!

Those who are looking for cultural opportunities in Zalaegerszeg will not be disappointed. **The City Concert and Exhibition Hall**, nicknamed “Zsini” by the townspeople, organizes numerous exhibitions and concerts. Due to its excellent acoustics, as well as the organ consisting of 2107 whistles, it provides a unique location. The former synagogue was built in 1904 according to the plans of József Stern in an eclectic style. The building lost its religious function after the Second World War, but there is a permanent exhibition called “The Memory of the Jews of Zalaegerszeg” on the second floor of the building.

### ■ LARGE NUMBER

City walks: **153** stories, **19,499** steps, **350** minutes of experience and adventure in the summer period organized by the Tourinform office.

### ■ DID YOU KNOW?

The new organ of the Parish Church of Mary Magdalene was inaugurated in 2022, and the number of whistles is even more than the organ in the concert hall: it contains a total of 2165 pieces.

The demanding and entertaining performances of the **Hevesi Sándor Theatre** and the **Griff Puppet Theatre** offer a useful and meaningful pastime for young and old alike. In the summer, the plays performed in the open-air theatre in the courtyard of the **Quarter House** provide a quality program to the audience. The latest cultural venue of Zalaegerszeg is the beautiful **Korona Salon** on the site of the old Korona Hotel, which serves as home for chamber music concerts and performances.

Visitors to Zalaegerszeg can witness countless national and international events and festivals, where people of all ages can find a way to relax according to their own taste.







# INHERITANCE

## ■ Get to know it!

The two-towered **Parish Church of Mary Magdalene** rises in the city centre. It was built by the former landlord of the settlement, the Bishop of Veszprém, Márton Padányi Bíró and his successor, Ignác Koller between 1747 and 69. The frescoes of the baroque-style parish church and the main altarpiece depicting the city's patron saint, Mary Magdalene, were created by the Austrian painter, Johann Ignaz Cimbal. The Madonna of White (or Pieta statue) stands out from the values of the baroque-style interior of the church, which was originally placed at the end of the city's main street on a high white stone pedestal. Next to the building there is a statue to honour the memory of József Mindszenty. The square in front of the church, named after Mindszenty, is decorated with the statue of the Holy Trinity, erected in 1810.

### ■ DID YOU KNOW?

József Mindszenty (original name: Pehm), archbishop of Esztergom and the last prince-primate of Hungary, served as an abbot in Zalaegerszeg for 25 years, therefore his name is associated with many buildings; a square, a garden and a school are also named after him.

### ■ CURIOSITY

Two signatures of the fresco maker master can be seen on the main altar picture: one is on the detail of the rock, the other one is "hidden" behind the altar, and has only been recently "discovered" during the restoration of the church.

### ■ TIP

Download the Mindszenty City app!



Android



iPhone

**The Heart of Jesus Parish Church** was built by Abbot József Pehm (Mindszenty) in memory of the last Hungarian king, Blessed Charles IV 1925-26. The richly decorated tower of the neo-baroque church rises to the right of the facade. It is joined by a neo-baroque monastery building, in which Franciscan monks live today, who run the parish. Next to the church, **the Mindszenty Garden** was created and opened in 2016, where there is a statue of Mindszenty and a crossroad that strengthens the sacral character of the place and serves religious immersion.

The Göcseji Museum has been extended with a new wing, **the Mindszentyneum - Mindszenty József Visitor Center**, which pays tribute to the memory of József Mindszenty. The interactive experience space commemorates the life and work of the cardinal, archbishop of Esztergom, and the story of Christianity persecuted by the communist dictatorship in Hungary.





## ADRENALINE CHART

- Climb the climbing wall to a height of 12 meters, slide down the wire slide or try the exciting skiing simulator in the Alsóerdő Sports and Adventure Park!
- Head to the pool of the aquapark!
- Ride your bike on the pump track in the Bike Park!
- Run away from paint bombs on paintball courts!
- Speed on the kart track in Zalaegerszeg!



DRIVE

## Speed up!

Sport has always played an important role in the life of the city, which is best proved by the **National Sports City award**, which was granted to Zalaegerszeg in 1996. The city's modern indoor and outdoor sports facilities host prestigious national and international sport events.

The pride of the city is the renewed **ZTE Arena** in accordance with the requirements of the 21st century. The most popular sports are basketball, football, bowling and chess.

### TIP

Take a selfie in Dísz Square, at the beloved statue of one of the city's most successful sports, the Chess Players!

### DID YOU KNOW?

In Zalaegerszeg, in addition to the popular sports – due to the green nature of the city – we can also find many active pastime opportunities for relaxation. One of the best examples of this is the **Alsóerdő Sports and Adventure Park**, where all guests who want to relax and play sports are welcomed in a fabulous green environment, in the fresh air, on an area of more than three hectares.



The newly opened **Zalaegerszeg Sports and School Swimming Pool** is also a venue for sport events of international level, and in the summer there is also a pool and an outdoor water playground. The **Zalaegerszeg Ice-Skating Ring** with its 1560 m2 surface of ice welcomes not only the professionals but pastime skaters, too. Occasionally an ice disco provides an amazing atmosphere.





FORETASTE

## ■ Taste it!

The specialties of Zala cuisine have a long history. Those who taste our succulent dishes will be enriched with a lasting gastronomic experience. Our hosts offer unforgettable homemade dishes such as "prósza", "dödölle", "Göcsej mushroom soup" or even wild dishes prepared in a variety of ways.

In the **Market Square** and in the **Market Hall**, delicacies of local producers are available, and occasionally thematic programs with tastings (strawberry day, "lecsó" and tomato day, pig slaughter day, etc.) await lovers of culinary delights.

In the **Göcsej Knowledge Center**, located in the market area, visitors are welcomed by a large number of artisans, who can not only see but also try to learn the tricks of various crafts. The Knowledge Centre and the square in front of the building provide a venue for the farmers' and artisans' market, as well as the regularly held trade circles.

### ■ TIP

Traditional Göcsej dishes and modern flavors go well together, try any of them in Zalaegerszeg! You can have a real gastro adventure if you visit our gastronomic festivals!

### ■ YOU CAN EVEN TAKE IT HOME:

- the city's jam
- the ethnographic regional Göcsej oils: pumpkin seeds, walnuts, poppy seeds, etc.
- the Göcsej pear brandy, which is a hungaricum
- wines made from grapes aged on the surrounding hillsides
- chocolate from the local artisanal manufactory







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