

Synasc 2006 - Venue

The city of Timisoara hosts several prestigious academic institutions (the University of the West, the Technical University, the University of Medicine, the Agricultural University, and others). The city and the surrounding region have an unique history in Romania, being over the centuries an object of dispute for several states (Roman, Hungarian, Ottoman, Austrian), which left their still visible marks, and, above all, a very multicultural society which constitutes a beautiful example of harmony in Romania and in the Balkans (30 Km from Serbia). The openness of mind of its inhabitants is probably one of the reasons for starting the anti-Communist movement in Romania and for being now one of the economically most advanced locations in the country.

Useful Timisoara map (click to open)

Online information about Timisoara:

- <http://www.eng.timisoara.ro>
- <http://www.timisoara.com>
- <http://www.timisoara.ro> Timisoara: A city of Romanian and European Firsts

1718 - Oldest Romanian beer factory

1745 - The contry's first municipal hospital (24 years before Vienna)

1771 - First newspaper published in Romania

1857 - The introduction, as a first for Romania, of public gas lighting

1867 - Horsedrawn tram, before Bucharest, Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main

1884 - First European city with electric street lighting, using 731 streetlamps

1886 - First emergency medical unit in Romania and Hungary

1899 - First electric tram in Romania

The Citadel (after an article in Insight @Tarom 2005)Baroque is very much at home in Timisoara, but the city is much older than its 18th century buildings that have survived until today

Historians believe that a Roman fortress, known as Zenobara or Zambara, existed in the fields along the Timis and Bega rivers, and traces of a moat are still visible today. It seems that Prince Glad reigned in this area at the end of the 9th century. Four centuries later, Timisoara became the district capital with a feudal province. In 1154, the Arab geographer Sarif al Idrisi mentioned in his work entitled "Book of Delights" that Timisoara was "a pleasant city ... which offers great riches". Later, a Turkish chronicler called it "a fortress to be envied, the most powerful and important in Transylvania ... wanted by all Sultans". German colonists increased industry and commerce, and construction similarly followed suit. Some 250 years ago, Timisoara had urban architectural plans based on which an entire generation of buildings were raised. Most of the designs were created not in Vienna, but by local architects. At the end of the 18th century, Timisoara was considered one of the most beautiful and cleanest cities in Europe. Its wide expanses were protected by trees, forming a ring of gardens around the center, leading to the name "City of Parks" or "City of Flowers".

History is still alive Historic Timisoara is cross-shape, and its "heart" is home to Liberty's Square, the center's most popular area, packed with cofee shops, stores and beer halls. "16 December 1989" Boulevard is a favorite spot for walks of Timisoara's inhabitants and tourists alike. Up ahead is the peaceful Union Square, surrounded by colorful buildings dating back to the 18th century. Huniazilor Castle was built by Carol Robert d'Anjou in 1316. Iancu de Hunedoara redecorated and expanded it. The castle is today home to the prestigious institution known as the Banat Museum, which chronicles the medieval era, its citadels, fortified cities, and guild objects and marks. Rope makers, harness makers, saddle makers, cabinet makers, shoemakers, tanners, boot makers, fishermen, butchers, candle makers and organ builders. The fortifications of Banat, of Timisoara, that guarded the Western border, also still has numerous arms, harness, pottery, drawings and maps. The bastion is now home to the Ethnographic Museum, which has an ample collection of peasant art, hand-made costumes, ornaments and tools. It was raised in 1770 by its Turkish inhabitants as a exclusive Muslim meeting place, and still spots the Arabic inscriptions and stone ornaments.

Welcome to the Opera

The construction of the Cultural Palace, which also houses the Romanian Opera, began in 1871 and ended four year later, in 1875. The design was that of Viennese architects, Helmer and Fellner, the authors of numerous concert halls in Budapest, Vienna and Odessa. The murals in the concert hall are painted by Kiriakoff, and are inspired by history and popular Romanian fairlytales. Opera in Timisoara was appreciated as far back as the end of the 18th century. Mozart's "Abduction from the Seraglio" was performed here during his lifetime. Joseph Strauss started out as Musical Director at Timisoara, where he composed and presented the world premiere of "Faust's Life and Deeds". Franz Liszt performed in Timisoara on 2 and 4 November 1846.

Bells tolling at the Metropolitan Cathedral

The grand Orthodox Cathedral has room for 4000 believers to attend mass. The light is filtered through the well-preserved stained-glass windows. The paintings emanate originality, beauty, humanity, expressivity and traditionalism, and were created by Banat artists who stamped there-on the air of the region's popular art. From the windows of the belltower, some 40 meters off the ground, one can admire all of "Little Vienna", as Timisoara was once nicknamed. One of the cathedral's attractions is its electric bell-tolling. The bell weights eight tons, and is made of very rare metals, imported from Sumatra and Borneo. Their harmony rivals that of the greatest Western cathedrals.