



# LEVOČA

The old Levoča is situated at the foothill of the Levoča Mountains, in the hearth of characteristic Slovak region Spiš. The oldest archeological finds found in Levoča area date back from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The name Levoča was first mentioned in document of king Bello IV from 1249. Another document of king Štefan V from 1471 introduced Levoča as the capital of the Association of Spiš Saxons. The town had many rights and privileges. Significant aristocratic families and personalities lived there. Since 2009 Levoča and the work of Master Pavol have been added to the List of World Heritage UNESCO as a part of locality "Levoča, Spiš Castle and surrounding monuments". Let's go and discover the magical history of this superb town.



## STOPS OF THE INSTRUCTIVE ROUTE

### 1. Košická Gate and fortification system



Fortification enclosing the town originates back in the 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of the signs of developing town. It was characterized by sophisticated system of three parts of town walls and a water ditch. The walls were fortified by several bastions and towers. Originally there were three entrance gates to the town. Only Košická and Menhard Gate remained preserved till today. There is another gate – the Polish Gate, which was not an entrance gate in fact. The town walls had been rebuilt and renewed during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, according to the progress of military technology. The fortification system 2.5 km long (4/5 of original length have been preserved) is the most well-preserved in Slovakia.



### 2. The House of Master Pavol



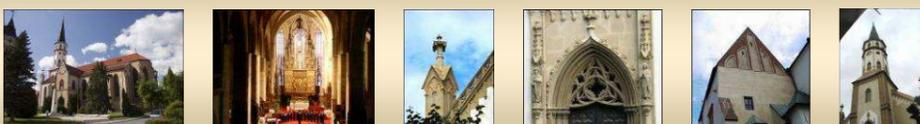
The facade of the Master Pavol's House draws the attention with its shell design. Here, in the exposition of the Spiš Museum, we can find out about Master Pavol of Levoča – the author of the highest gothic wing altar in the world, about his life and work. By means of his most valuable work the visitor can come into the late middle ages, late gothic and early renaissance. Photo-documenting material and premises introducing the story of this talented woodcarver, his jewels of art – magnificent statues and altar architectures, full of sense and sensibility, can be seen and admired by whole world in churches in Slovakia.



### 3. The Church of St. James – National Cultural Monument



The Church of St. James from the 14<sup>th</sup> century with its 11 gothic and renaissance altars and with another valuable interior, is the second biggest gothic church in Slovakia. The late gothic altar - architectural jewel from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is the highest in the world at its height of 18.62 m. The altar is made out of lime wood in the workshop of Master Pavol of Levoča, who is considered as the best medieval artist in Slovakia. The other monuments are the renaissance organ, the baroque pulpit, burghesses' epitaphs, timber burghesses' pews and many gothic wall paintings.



### 4. The Levoča Town Hall



The Town Hall with impressive renaissance arcades was originally built in gothic style. The facade is decorated by paintings representing symbols of citizens' virtues: temperance, prudence, fortitude, patience and justice. The Town Hall used to be the seat of the town council. Today there is an exposition of the Spiš Museum. Apart from other interesting things, there is the valuable chandelier – a gift of the queen Maria Theresa, the mayor's wand serving to punish those, who did not honour him, the painting of Levoča White Lady and a piece of her dress, the torturing bench - the biggest punishment was 30 beats, the torturing wheel used for rib breaking.



### 5. The Cage of Opprobrium



This medieval metal pillory from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, standing on fixed bases, is situated next to the Town Hall. It is decorated by wrought hearts and lilies – symbols of the innocence and love. It was serving for punishing women, who were caught walking at the streets without the man's guide after dark. The punishment in cage lasted usually 24 hours. The first punished woman in this cage was the mayor's daughter, who broke the curfew restriction. She got double punishment, because she ought to set an example for other women. She had to stay locked in cage for 48 hours. Today this pillory is a big attraction for the visitors of Levoča.



### 6. The Evangelic Church



The church with a cupola and of the Greek cross shape was built in 1825-1837. Its valuable interior consists of the altar painting showing the Christ walking on the sea by Levoča artist Jozef Czauczik, the baroque wooden and metal cross and the pews with the name-plates. The valuable baroque organ from 1697, the historical kettledrums and especially the valuable historical music library with lots of books and manuscripts of the oldest baroque music by home composers, show evidence of rich music history of the town.



### 7. The Spillenbergs House



This two-storey's gothic and renaissance house with rich renaissance decoration was owned by accounted family of physicians and pharmacists. In this house Júlia Korponay – known as Levoča White Lady lived for a certain time. The legend says, that in period of class uprisings when Levoča was besieged by the royal army, Júlia fell in love with the captain of the royal army Štefan Andrassy and so she betrayed the town and let by stealth the royal soldiers to get in, later she was executed for that. Her story became a motive for the famous novel by Hungarian writer Mór Jókai.



### 8. The Krupek's House



The beautiful decorated facade indicated that the owner of this house was the one of the richest burghers of the town. It represents the illusive renaissance architecture with extensively used ashlar stones. Above the portal there is the Krupek family coat-of-arm and on the first floor between the windows there are the figural scenes representing St. Sebastian, Mettercia and St. Christopher. Sebastian Krupek settled in Levoča in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He belonged to significant Krakow merchants, who dealt in ore. In Levoča he directed the trade with Hungary.



### 9. The Máriássy's House



The strange portal of Máriássy's House reminds oriental style. The renaissance house with arcades is typical for Levoča. The name Máriássy is not derived from well-known card game. Members of prominent Spiš aristocratic family were its holders. They owned many villages in regions of Spiš, Šariš, Gemer, even around Pest. Ján Máriássy was the first aristocrat who was allowed to buy a house in Levoča in 1654. Aristocracy was not represented in medieval Levoča meantime. The rules then did not allow aristocrats to own real properties in town.



### 10. The Hain's House



This house was owned by Levoča's chronicler Gašpar Hain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who gave it as a present to evangelic church. The Evangelic Lyceum had been established which became famous especially in period, when Ľudovít Štúr's students studied there in 1844. Ľudovít Štúr was the significant representative of the Slovak nation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Slovak national anthem "Lightning over the Tatra" was first sung in this lyceum. Nowadays the house serves for the Spiš Museum exposition presenting the progress of sculptural and painting art, as well as the progress of art crafts in Spiš. The interior is decorated by wall paintings and a beautiful renaissance portal.



### 11. The Secession High School Building



In this majestic building the High School of Janko Francisci – Rimavský is situated, named by Slovak national revivalist who studied in Levoča's Evangelic Lyceum. School system in Levoča reached the high standard in past. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the first secondary school in town had been established. The principal of school Ján Mylius formed its study regulations, one of the best in that period. Leonard Cox – poet and the first educator of the English king Henry VIII worked at this school as well as Maximilián Hell – a mathematician, inventor and world famous astronomer worked here in 1746-1747.



### 12. The Old Minorites Church – The Black Church and the Monastery



In the Black Church the statue of Madonna and wall paintings from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century remained preserved from the gothic interior. The altars and the other church equipment are in baroque style. In the monastery there is an arcade type corridor, the only one of its kind in Slovakia, with the paradise inner ward and fragments of fresco decoration. At night, around the church we can sometimes hear rustling leather sandals of headless cloaked monk, whose ghost is still watching the place, where the old important well used to be. A monk's headless body was discovered nearby archaeological finds in the monastery. Next to the church there is the Polish Gate forming the part of town walls.





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