

Hungary

PECS



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Geographical Location and Population

Pecs, the fifth largest city of Hungary, is situated in the south-west of the country, 30km far from the border of Croatia. It is the administrative and economical centre of Baranya County. Pecs, the city of the largest and first university in Hungary (founded in 1367), is also the educational and cultural centre of its region. It is the seat of Roman Catholic Diocese of Pecs as well. Pecs is populated by 156,644 inhabitants (2008), including important ethnic minorities as Croats, Germans and Gypsies. During educational season this number approaches 200 thousand, thanks to the nearly 35,000 university students.



History

The oldest memories of human culture improving the territory of the present city were already populated 6000 years ago. In the second century, Rome conquerors arrived at the region inhabited by Celts that time and they founded several wine-producing colonies.

In the first half of the 4th century Sopianae became an important Christian city. The first Christian cemeteries, dating back to this age, are inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Until the arrival of Hungarian conquest at the end of the 9th century. The territory was lived by Avars and Slavs. The name Pecs appears in documents in 1235. It comes from Slavic origin and meaning phonetically "furnace" in the Slavic languages.

During the medieval times the first university of Hungary was founded by King Louis the Great, in 1367. In the 15th century the most important medieval humanist poet of the country, Janus Pannonius became the bishop of Pecs. He strengthened the cultural importance of the city.

In the first half of the 16th century, the Ottoman conquest reached Pecs, which was staying under Ottoman rule for nearly 150 years. During this time, the city was changed: the Ottomans fortified it and turned it into a real Ottoman city.

After the end of Ottoman rule, high number of German and southern Slav settlers arrived at the city and its countryside whose descendants still give the considerable part of the population.

The city has grown and developed much in the last centuries. After the end of Socialist era (1989), Pecs and its county were hit hard by the changes: the unemployment rate was high, the mines and several factories were closed, and the war in neighboring Yugoslavia in the 1990s affected the tourism.



Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Heritage Festival is the region's oldest festival of the combined arts. It's the kind of festival where you can have a good time whether you live here or have travelled from further away. An opportunity for the city to rewrite its own history,

to look upon half-forgotten buildings, lifestyles and discussions as an inheritance, and to begin to reconceptualise those things that are seen as one's heritage, in order to fashion a cultural message which makes the city different from other settlements.

The European Convivial Song Festival is exclusively devoted to the performance by male voice choirs and vocal ensembles of songs in celebration of wine, organized by the choral Olympics champion B la Bart k é ó Male Voice Choir and Pécs Cultural Centre. Male voice choirs, vocal ensembles and folk music performers are invited to Pécs and the county of Baranya from all over Europe, and every fourth year from all over the world.

