

Timișoara

The first record of the city of Timișoara, built on the site of an ancient Roman fortress called *Castrum Regium Themes*, dates back to 1212. Over the years, Timișoara, the largest city in western Romania, has been influenced by many cultures. The Romans used it as an important crossroads fortress until the Tatars destroyed it in the 13th century. Conquered by Turkish armies in 1552, Timișoara remained under their protection until 1718 when the region of Banat came under Austrian rule for two centuries. Timișoara later became a vital medieval commercial and manufacturing town. Turks, Austrians, Germans and Serbs all left their mark and their influence can be seen in neighborhoods throughout the city even today.

The charm of this city, settled on the northern bank of the Bega River, lies in its distinct architectural character and vibrant cultural life. Frequently referred to as "Little Vienna," because it belonged for a very long time to the Habsburg Empire and the entire city center consists of buildings built in the Kaiser era, which is reminiscent of the old Vienna. Timișoara is home to year-round musical and theatrical performances, art galleries, museums and a buzzing nightlife. A progressive, cosmopolitan place, Timișoara was the first city in Europe and second in the world after New York, to use electricity to illuminate its public streets. It was also the second European and the first city in what is now Romania with horse drawn trams in 1867. Timișoara is an important university center with the emphasis on subjects like medicine, mechanics and electro-technology. There are numerous claims that Gustave Eiffel, the creator of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, built one of Timișoara's footbridges over Bega.

The old city consists of historic city quarters with several historic squares and proms. These are: Cetate (Belváros in Hungarian, Innere Stadt in German), Iosefin (Józsefváros, Josephstadt), Elisabetin (Erzsébetváros, Elisabethstadt), Fabric (Gyárváros, Fabrikstadt). Numerous bars, clubs and restaurants have opened in the old center in the fine old baroque square.

Timișoara's public transport network consists of 11 tram lines, 9 trolleybus lines and 15 bus lines, and is operated by *Regia Autonomă de Transport Timișoara* (RATT), an autonomous corporation of the City Hall. The city is served by Romania's second busiest airport, Traian Vuia International Airport, which is the hub of the Romania's second-largest airline, Carpatair. The city is connected to a series of major European and domestic destinations. Timișoara is a major railway centre and is connected to all other major Romanian cities, as well as local destinations, through the national Căile Ferate Române (CFR) network.

Johnny Weissmuller, Hollywood's original Tarzan, was born here.

Thanks to its mild climate, Timișoara has lots of public squares and lush green retreats. The city is easy to explore on foot. If you get tired, a tram will be along in a moment; the system is fast, frequent and efficient. The city also abounds with churches of several denominations, a Jewish quarter, an elegant baroque square and a pedestrian-only downtown area. Some of the monuments in the heart of the city afford panoramic views, while the many parks in this "city of flowers" provide an idyllic spot to take a break from sightseeing.

1. The Bega Chanel



2. The Victory Square



3. The Orthodox Cathedral



4. Flower Clock

