

# CITY WALKS



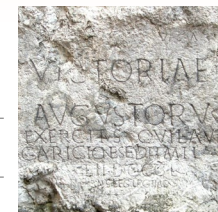
## City Walks

City of Trenčín is located in the watershed of the Slovak longest river - Váh, overlooked by the Strážovské hills. Its good geographic location contributed to the city's important historical role. The city's original name, Laugaricio, appeared already in 179 A.D in a Roman inscription on the rock massif below the castle as a testimony to a victorious battle of the Romans over the Quadi tribes. The inscription is considered a unique and original written monument of its kind in Central Europe. Trenčín was first the seat of the border district, later it became centre of the royal and administrative District of Trenčín. Beginnings of this city below a majestic castle can be traced back to the time it was still a local market settlement mentioned in 1111 and located on the old road from the Váh's shallow area under the Brezina hill. History of the castle and the fate of the city were to be closely intertwined over the following centuries. In 1241, the city was ransacked by Tartaric raids. Its period of new prosperity started after 1275, when the castle became property of Peter Czak. His son - Matthew Czak of Trenčín - also known as the lord of the river Váh and Tatra mountains used the castle to subdue to himself almost the whole Slovakian territory. In the Middle Ages, Trenčín was given various rights and privileges. In 1412, Sigmund of Luxembourg granted the city privileges of a free royal city. Trenčín was also afflicted by many catastrophes. General Katzianer, serving under Ferdinand of Hapsburg, conquered the city and the castle. In the middle of the 17th century the city withstood many Turkish raids, only to be stricken by a plague in 1710. In 1790, the castle and the whole city burnt down. From that time onward, the upper castle remained abandoned. Nevertheless, development of the city was halted neither by wars, nor by calamities. Since the middle of the 19th century, Trenčín has become an important commercial and industrial centre of the Central Váh region. Today's Trenčín is a modern city living the legacy of centuries past.

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## 1. Roman Inscription on the rock massif and the structure of Hotel Elizabeth

Hotel Elizabeth, Ul. Gen. M. R. Štefánika 2,  
phone: +421 (0)32/650 61 11, [www.hotelelizabeth.sk](http://www.hotelelizabeth.sk)



Most northern Roman monument that shows Roman presence in Central Europe. During the Marcomani wars, the Romans penetrated through the Váh watershed as far as today's Trenčín, where they spent winter in a settlement called Laugaricio. This is evidenced by a Latin inscription hewn into the rock massif, originating in 179 A.D. In it, Maximianus expresses his thanks for the victory of the emperors and the troops of the second auxiliary legion, numbering 855 soldiers. Roman inscription is visible from the terrace of hotel Elizabeth (formerly known as hotel Tatra). It was built by the order of Earl Armin Popper in 1901 on the place of a former inn called By the Red Star. Popper named the building Erzsébet (Elizabeth), after the wife of Emperor Franz Joseph. Café Sissi, which is part of the hotel, still bears her name. In 1919, the hotel was purchased by Tatra banka bank, and in 1921 its name was changed to Tatra hotel. It was the latter of these, in 2011 - 2012, that gave the hotel its different look as well as the name. In September 2012, the hotel again opened its door to guests, this time as hotel Elizabeth.

*Der genaue Text der Inschrift:*

**VICTORIAE AVGVSTORV(m) EXERCITVS QVI LAV GARICIONE SEDIT MIL(it)es L(egion)is II DCCCLV (Marcus Valerrius) MAXIMIANVS LEG(at)us LEG(ion)is II AD(i)utricis CVR(AVIT) F(aci)endum**

Which translates as follows: „*To the victory of the Emperors and the army that resided at Laugaricio, numbering 855 soldiers of the II. legion, made by the order of M. V. Maximianus, legate of the II. auxiliary legion.*“



## 2. Trenčín Castle

Phone: +421 (0)32/743 56 57, [www.muzeumtn.sk](http://www.muzeumtn.sk)

The castle was built as a royal watching fortress at the place of an old Slavic settlement. Its beginnings go back to the 11th century when the structure comprised only a residential tower with rotunda, with remnants still visible in the upper courtyard. By the end of the 13th century, the castle became property of Matthew Czak who by then had subdued a vast territory and became the legendary lord of the river Váh and Tatra mountains. The tower, known as Matthew's Tower, offers a beautiful view of a large part of the river Váh watershed. Later, the king Louis of Anjou added to the upper castle a new palace and a fortification - called Louis' fortification. (exposition of cold and shooting guns from the 13th to the 19th centuries) Sigmund of Luxembourg gave the castle to his wife Barbora as a gift and ordered that a new palace be built for her bearing her name, together with a chapel. In the late 15th century, Stephen Zapolsky who became the castle's owner began major reconstruction activities. Zápolský Palace hosts the largest exposition of the Ileszhazi family gallery and paintings collected from the family's residences. The lower castle is typical for its cannon bastion, chapel, and a well called the Well of Love that tells a legend of love between a Turk Omar and his beautiful Fatima.



## 3. Trenčín Museum

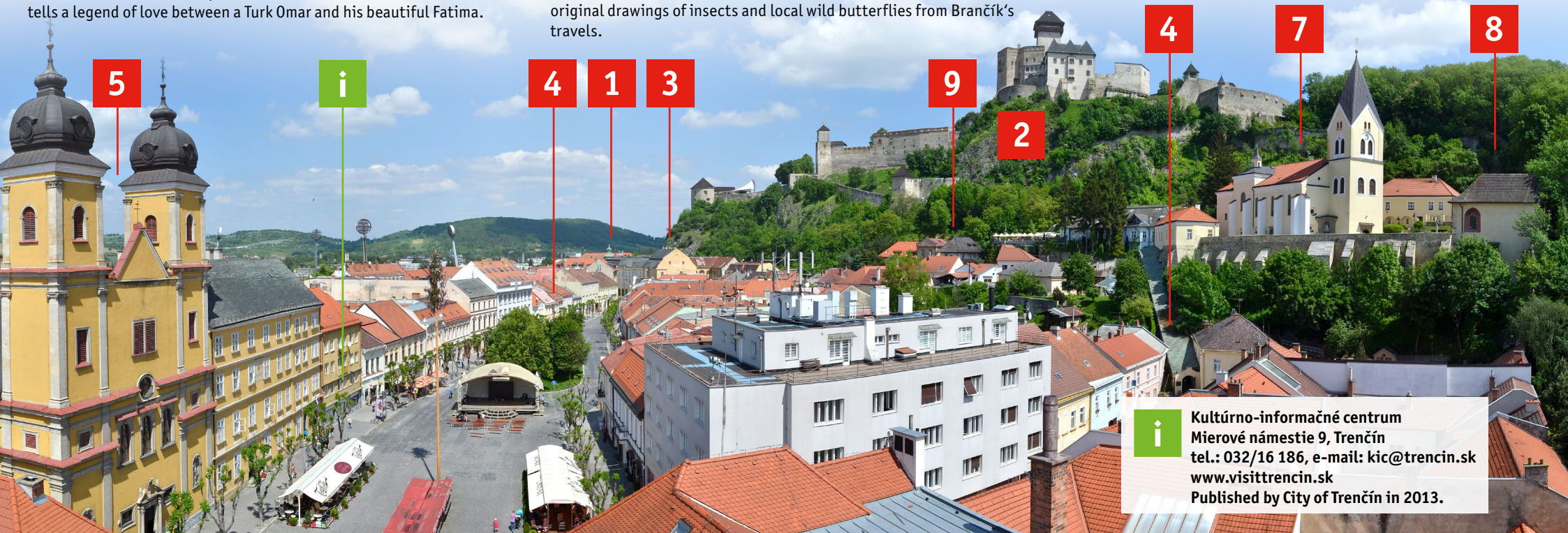
Mierové námestie 46,  
phone: +421 (0)32/743 44 31, [www.muzeumtn.sk](http://www.muzeumtn.sk)

The Museum resides in the building of a former District house with a richly decorated façade and the district coat of arms located over its entrance. It was founded in 1912, and its first director was MUDr. Karol Brančík, a district physician and an internationally-known entomologist. Trenčín Museum, being part of a region with a rich history and culture, houses collections from the history of the city and its surroundings that are part of the exposition called From the history and culture of the free royal city of Trenčín and the former Trenčín District. The Museum owns and administers historical, artistic, natural, literary, and national history collections, together with rich collections of coins, military articles and weaponry, and artistic crafts. Most valuable collections of Trenčín Museum include a voluminous art and history collection of paintings of the Ileszhazi family, and lords of the Trenčín castle in the years 1594 - 1835, installed in the gallery hall of Trenčín castle. Natural and scientific collections also include collections of the Museum's founder - comprising more than seven hundred species of butterflies and other insects, together with original drawings of insects and local wild butterflies from Brančík's travels.



## 4. Mierové Square, Parish Stairway, and Plaque Pillar

Mierové Square is the historical city centre. In the middle of the 15th century, gates were built on both ends of the square. The upper gate that was built near the Trenčín Museum has not survived to this day. The lower gate was built as part of the municipal fortification system that was a continuation of the castle's fortification system. In the middle of the 17th century, the Jesuits built a church with a monastery on the southern extreme of the fortification, called Church of St. Francis Xavský, today's Piarist Church. Mierové Square and the castle are connected by a roofed Renaissance-style Parish Stairway that used to represent a defence trail used by the members of local crafts guilds in their deployment for defending the city walls. At the same time, it served as an access road to city armoury built next to the ossuary. At present, the stairway is open to the public and connects the city centre with the Parish Church compound, the castle, and the Brezina municipal woods. Stairway is open daily from 6 am to 9 pm. In 1710, Trenčín was struck by a plague. Earl Nicolas Ileszhazi ordered that a plague pillar be built in the centre of the square to commemorate the plague victims.



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Kultúrno-informačné centrum  
Mierové námestie 9, Trenčín  
tel.: 032/16 186, e-mail: [kic@trencin.sk](mailto:kic@trencin.sk)  
[www.visittrencin.sk](http://www.visittrencin.sk)  
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## 5. Piarist Church of St. Francis Xaverský

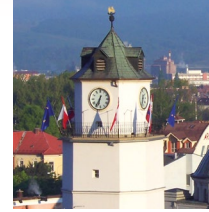
Originally Jesuit, later Piarist, the church was built in 1653 – 1657 in the early Baroque style. Dominant feature of the western part of the square, the church represents one of the significant sacral Baroque monuments in Slovakia. It was especially the Ostrihom bishop Juraj Lippai, who is to be credited with building the church. The building's cornerstone was laid by the Jesuits, while the construction was carried out by builders of the Italian origin - Pietro and Gothard Spazz. They were inspired by a Roman church of Il Gesú, whose architecture became the basis for a vast group of Jesuit temples, especially in Central Europe. The fire that afflicted the city in 1708 caused a significant damage to the church. During the reconstruction works, the interior of the church acquired its present Baroque character. The style represents a unique symbiosis of architecture, fine arts, sculpture, and stucco decoration. The roof illusive painting from 1711 - 1713 belongs to the most interesting late-Baroque wall paintings in Slovakia. Together with the main altar's image, it is an artwork of the painter and architect Kristof Tausch. In 1653-1662, the church was added a monastery building. After the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773, the church and the monastery became property of the Piarists. Today, the monastery houses the Piarist Order, and the Piarist gymnasium of J. Braneký. The monument is accessible only during religious services held inside the church.



## 6. City Tower

Sládkovičova Street, phone: +421 (0) 32/16 186, [www.visittrencin.sk](http://www.visittrencin.sk)

Lower gate, today's City Tower, was built as part of the municipal fortification system, in the early 15th century. Since the late Middle Ages, it has been the western entrance to the main Mierové square. Later, the gate was rebuilt, more stories were added, and the building was fortified with a semi-circular barbican structure with a small front bastion accessible through a drawbridge. The tower was gradually erected into an octagonal form consisting of six stories, and measuring 32 metres. Fortification was torn down in 1857 after it ceased serving its original function of defending against the Turks. Top of the tower originally housed a Renaissance clock machine from the 16th century, replaced in 1934 by an electric tower clock. The original Renaissance machine is now part of the exposition inside the Headsman House. Over the pedestrian pass is the municipal coat of arms picturing the Passover lamb and a plaque with Trenčín's medieval motto inscribed in Latin: „Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain“.



## 7. Roman Catholic Parish Church of the Birth of Virgin Mary

Roman Catholic parish office, Mariánske square 2

Built in 1324, the church is one of the most valuable and oldest sacral monuments in the city. Together with the ossuary, city parish office, and former armoury, the church forms the compound located on the Marian hilltop. The whole compound, fortified before 1412, used to form a separate defence unit with own system of fortification. Two stone portals with rich Renaissance adornment still add much flavour to the monument's attractiveness. Interior of the church houses a burial chapel of the Ileszhazis from the year 1648. It was rebuilt in the middle of the 18th century after a model presented by a Bratislava-based sculptor Ludwig Gode, who was also author of the decorative wrought mesh and the altar of the Crucifixion. In the early 20th century, during the last major reconstruction, the church acquired its present look. The monument is located at the Marian square and is accessible only during religious services inside the church.



*„Nisi Dominus custodierit Civitatem, frustra vigilat, qui custodit eam.“*



## 8. St. Michal's Ossuary

Trenčín Museum, phone: +421 (0)32/743 44 31,  
[www.muzeumtn.sk](http://www.muzeumtn.sk)

Built in the second half of the 15th century, near the Parish church of the Birth of Virgin Mary, the building was originally an ossuary. It served for storing bone remains from the near cemetery. Its back wall connects to the original city's fortification system. Today's overground part was added in the beginning of the 16th century, and after the fire of 1528 the building served as a chapel for some time. In 1560, facing the Turkish threat, the ossuary was transformed into a municipal armoury. In the basement of the building was a metal-casting equipment used to make weapons by casting. The building was later abandoned and finally reconstructed in 1973 - 1989. Today, this small but impressive space is used as an exposition site of sacral arts from the Gothic times until the Baroque period. The collection provides an overview of fragments collected from altar structures. In the part of so-called Podlužanský altar - Taking down from the cross, dating back to the middle of the 15th century, one can see tragedy of the moment in the protagonists' gestures. Written texts offer information related to the dramatic history of the Parish Church.



## 9. Headsman's House

Trenčín Museum, Matúšova Street,  
phone: +421 (0)918/498 745, [www.muzeumtn.sk](http://www.muzeumtn.sk)

Represents a typical Trenčín medieval townhouse with a wooden encircling balcony. The name has its origin in a verbal tradition in which the house in the 17th century was allegedly home of the city headsman and the municipal prison. In 1412, Sigmund of Luxembourg granted to the city of Trenčín the title of a free royal city with the right of sword. Executions were carried out by a headsman who either beheaded or hanged. The house was opened to the public in 2004 and stores two permanent expositions that introduce the development of legal code and sentencing in Trenčín. The exposition shows execution swords, bench for flogging, rack, three-line whip, and articles of municipal justice such as the mayor's stool, decorated chest of Trenčín magistrate, weapons, sabres, rifles, and other. Room on the second floor is used as an occasional exposition hall. Headsman house exposition also stores the original clock machine from the 16th century that used to be located on the city tower.

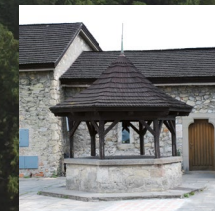


## 10. Synagogue

Trenčín synagogue belongs to the most exquisite and interesting works of its type in Slovakia. Built in the vicinity of the old synagogue in 1913, the building was designed by a Berlin architect Richard Scheibner. This historic iron and concrete building with a number of progressive and modern features showing Byzantine and Moorish elements, stands in the northern corner of the Štúrovo square (today's Hviezdova Street). Streets in the Synagogue's neighbourhood formed the centre of the local Jewish community. Although the first Jews in Trenčín are mentioned in 1300, their massive influx took place in the middle of the 17th century. This Neologic synagogue was used for religious purposes until the 2nd World War, during which it was desecrated and its inventory destroyed. The monument was renewed in 1974 - 1984. Interior of the building still preserves the original blue dome with a lush chandelier and colourful window vitrage decorated with ornaments and plant motives. A small worship room in the rear part of the facility was restored in 1990. Today, the building's central part under the dome is used occasionally as an exhibition hall, open to the public only during exhibition times. Opposite the Synagogue is a two-story building that from 1868 used to house a public Jewish school.



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Well of Love



Castle entrance



Canon bastion