



# Cluj-Napoca

## Tourist Guide

for visually impaired visitors



The project „Terra Mirabilis: Tourist Tracks for Visually Impaired Young People” was created and developed by **Asociația Babilon Travel (NGO) Cluj-Napoca**.

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The project was supported by the City Hall and the City Council of Cluj-Napoca.

The project supports the candidacy of Cluj-Napoca for the title of „European Capital of Culture 2021”.

The project supports the programme „Cluj-Napoca 2015: European Capital of Youth”.

**Partners to the project:**

- High School for Visually Impaired Cluj-Napoca
- Cluj-Napoca Tourist Information Center
- Blind Persons Association Romania
- Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania
- Cluj-Napoca Volunteer Center

**Project sponsor: Class Shoe SRL.**



# **Cluj-Napoca**

## **Tourist Guide**

### **For The Visually Impaired Visitors**

Babilon Travel NGO  
Terra Mirabilis: Tourist Tracks for Visually Impaired Young People



**CLUJ  
NAPOCA**



## **Introduction**

**A city of lights, a city of the future, always different, always unpredictable, proudly flaunting its cultural and artistic diversity, Cluj-Napoca doesn't cease to amaze. Hidden in the heart of Romania, one of the most beautiful areas in central Europe, the Transylvanian settlement is the kind of place you can't help falling in love with. The huge progress made in the last decades, as well as its ability to keep its traditions and local charm alive, stand as proof that Cluj deserves its honorable spot along other European locations, such as Prague, Vienna and Berlin.**

**With a rich, complex history and legends who make it the dream destination for mystery lovers, the Transylvanian city shows an interesting evolution over the centuries, which contributes to the diversity and multiculturalism that characterizes it today.**

**Attested for the first time almost 2000 years ago, the city of Cluj exists since Dacian times and is transformed into an important Roman colony after the conquest wars. The settlement, known then by the name of Napoca, survives the Dark Ages of the migrations and reappears in annals in 1173, to be devastated, just a century later, by a Tatar army.**

**Cluj makes a speedy recovery during medieval times, developing quickly after the earlier mishaps. Not long after that, it becomes known as**

**Klausenburg, one of the seven Saxon settlements from Transylvania which are surrounded by walls and which gave the province its original name: Siebenbürgen. The city, whose beauty was widely recognized, is protected over the years by several rulers, amongst whom we can count the king Carol of Anjou, the emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg and the king Matia Corvin, who helps build the Saint Michael's church, around 1480, monument that still exists today. Being appreciated by the most powerful monarchs of the era, Cluj enjoys many privileges, blossoming over the second part of the 16th century and earning the title „Treasure City“.**

**In 1918, as Transylvania finally becomes part of Romania, Cluj is a prosperous, modern settlement that continues its development throughout the interwar period. The city receives the name it bears today, Cluj-Napoca, in 1974, during the emerging nationalist communism, in order to emphasize its Latin origins.**

**A place of great importance for the understanding of our culture, Cluj-Napoca has many fascinating secrets as well, which don't cease to amaze the increasing number of visitors. Many believe in the existence of a hidden network of underground tunnels and catacombs that are supposed to be buried under most of the churches. Some basements, like the one beneath the „Children's Palace“ are thought to have witnessed the horrific tortures and crimes of the communists against different political prisoners.**

**The Transylvanian city is currently in a constant state of improvement, adopting European values and practices and proving that it deserves all the appreciation it has gained. With more than 300.000 inhabitants and over 100.000 students, Cluj is always young, bright and ready for progress. The inventiveness and vitality of the new generations are the ones who manage to keep the dynamic atmosphere of the place alive, transforming and changing it constantly.**

**Cluj-Napoca can be called, without a trace of irony, a spiraling storm of art and culture. With no less than two dramatic theaters, two opera houses, four cultural centers and 14 museums, the city is proud to be the host of countless events and shows, which attract the most talented artists, both local and foreign. Its streets are filled with architectural jewels from many different periods of time and all the monuments and churches are kept in great condition, waiting for visitors who are ready to discover their secrets and stories.**

**Acclaimed are also the fairs and festivals that take place periodically in Cluj, one of the most notorious ones being the TIFF (Transylvania International Film Festival), which is organized every year with the help of thousands of film-loving volunteers. Electric Castle is also an event worth mentioning, as it is the only European electronic music festival who takes place on the domains of a castle, a remarkable project, created by the young, for the young, who manages to attract visitors from all over the world, who are**

ready to spend a crazy summer weekend in the heart of Transylvania.

The cultural value of the city is recognized on an international level as well, Cluj having been chosen as the European Youth Capital 2015, an initiative that encourages brave new ideas and techniques for involving youth in the community development process. Continuously proving its worth, the municipality is also a candidate for the title of the European Cultural Capital 2021.

Cluj-Napoca was recently included in the new Art Cities of the Future guide, as the third city whose promising artistic evolution is to be watched over the following years. The place is on its way to become an internationally acclaimed cultural center, acknowledged by critics everywhere.

One of the most amazing things about Cluj remains its innate ability to blend the old and new, the modern trends and traditions, keeping the true spirit of the city alive. The place as we know it and as it deserves to be known is defined both by innovation and by its beautiful history, which is waiting to be explored. If you find yourselves in the position to visit Transylvania's true heart, make time to admire the present-day masterpieces, as well as the stunning aged gems. What you'll find, will definitely surprise you.

The present guide suggests a route through the city's historic center, easily covered by foot in about three hours.

**Starting from the Avram Iancu Square, going through the Union Square and the Museum Square, and finally reaching the city's Central Park at the end, we will discover the most important architectural, cultural and religious landmarks.**



**The Orthodox Cathedral**

## **The Avram Iancu Square**

**No more than an instruction area for soldiers at first, and later just an animal fair location, the Avram Iancu Square was built in 1850, in order to enlarge the pedestrian area of the city. Today, it is one of the most important parts of the locality, hosting three important historic monuments: The National Theatre, The Orthodox Cathedral and the statue of the man it was named after, Avram Iancu.**

**The National Theatre was inaugurated in 1906 and joined the Romanian Ruling Councils patrimony in 1919. The first show in Romanian was staged on the 14th May 1919, and the first performance of the Romanian Language Company of Cluj took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1919, celebrating a year since the "Great Union". Currently, the building houses both the Romanian Opera and the National Theatre, representing one of the most important cultural assets of the city.**

**Open: daily 11:00-17:00, depending on the scheduled plays.**

**Ticket price: depends on the play.**

**Phone number: +40.264.592.826.**

**E-Mail: [contact@teatrulnationalcluj.ro](mailto:contact@teatrulnationalcluj.ro).**

**Website: <http://www.teatrulnationalcluj.ro/>.**

**The Orthodox Cathedral was built in Byzantine style and was finished in 1930, under the patronage of the Virgin Mary. In 1973, it**

received the title of Episcopal Cathedral and, since 2006; it serves as a Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, as well as the Mitropoly of Cluj, Maramureş and Sălaj. It's the third highest church in Romania, after the Orthodox Cathedral in Timisoara and the Evangelic Cathedral in Sibiu. Its basement houses the wonderful Mitropoly Museum, an amazing exhibition of religious objects, some of them over 400 years old.

Open (museum): Tuesday-Saturday 10:00-17:00, Sunday 12:00-17:00.

Ticket price: 5 Lei - full price, 2 lei - pupils and students.

Phone number: +40.264.431.004.

E-Mail: [secretariat@mitropolia-clujului.ro](mailto:secretariat@mitropolia-clujului.ro).

Website: <http://www.mitropolia-clujului.ro/>.

The statue of Avram Iancu was built in 1995, replacing a monument dedicated to the Soviet heroes. Its imposing stature never fails to amaze. From the middle of the water fountain rises the statue's pedestal, made entirely out of stone blocks, symbolizing the rocks of the Apuseni Mountains, the birthplace of the great hero Avram Iancu.



**The Tailors' Tower**

## **The Tailors' Tower**

**The Tailors' Tower is one of the few parts of the fortification of the old Cluj that have been preserved until the present day. Its building was financed by the tailors' guild of the settlement. Each tower of the medieval fortification was financially supported by one of the town's guilds such as the tailors, the shoemakers, the carpenters, the soap makers, the wheelwrights, the potters, the builders, the girdlers etc. The tailor's guild had the role to maintain the tower in good condition and defend the town in that area.**

**The tower is located in the southeastern corner of the medieval fortification that was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (it was mentioned in documents in 1475). Between 1627 and 1629, during the reign of Prince Gabriel Bethlen, the tower was rebuilt. The monument was made out of chiseled stones and the massive walls still preserve the medieval loopholes. Towards the north, a large section of the fortification wall is preserved with crenellations and the wall walk for the guards.**

**During its history, the Tailor's Tower was destroyed and rebuilt several times. It was the location of an uprising of the unpaid mercenaries as well as of successive attacks of Mózes Székely (1603) and of Kuciuk-Pasha (1660). It was destroyed by an explosion caused by a lightning that hit the ammunition storage. During Ferenc Rakoczi's uprising (1703-1711) the tower was**

**detonated and was rebuilt by the Austrian general Kriegsbaum and acquired its present shape in 1718.**

**After the battle of Mirăslău in 1601, Baba Novac, one of Michael the Brave's generals and a priest called Saski were captured, tortured and executed in the fortress of Cluj. Baba Novac's impelled body was exposed near the Taylor's Tower in order to scare the population. In remembrance of this hero, a statue made by the artist Virgil Fulicea was raised in 1975.**

**The tower was restored in 1924 and made into a museum by the Commission of Historical Monuments. Another restauration took place in 1959. In 2007-2009, after two decades of neglect, the tower was restored again and is now hosting the Centre of Urban Culture. This includes a literary café in the basement, a conference room and exhibition spaces.**

**Open: Monday-Friday 9:00-19:00, Saturday-Sunday 10:00-18:00.**

**Ticket price: Free entrance.**

**Location: Baba Novac Street, nr. 35.**

**Phone number: +40.264.597.616.**

**Website: <http://www.primariaclujnapoca.ro/>**



**The Reformed Church**

## **The Reformed Church**

**The church was first mentioned in 1486 and was linked to the founding of a Franciscan Monastery in Cluj by King Matia Corvin. The document indicated that the king sent a certain Brother Joannes to coordinate the building of the monastery. It is documented that the church already existed in the year 1503.**

**When the Franciscans (the Minorite Brothers) were chased out of Cluj by the new Protestant rulers of the town, their possessions became town property and the church's altarpieces were destroyed. In 1581, the monastery was given to the Jesuit Order who initiated reparation and extension works. In 1603, the church and the new Jesuit buildings were devastated again by the Unitarians of Cluj. At that time, the vaults were destroyed and the roof demolished whereas the interior furniture was cut into pieces and the building became a hay deposit.**

**The building, which in time became a reformed church, acquired its current shape through many restoration works made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Saxon, Hungarian, Polish and Baltic workers. The church was consecrated again in 1641. The organ dates from 1765. The building was repaired several times during the 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> centuries.**

**The Reformed Church is the largest hall church in Transylvania. It is 60 m long, 15 m wide and 19**

m high. From an architectural point of view, it has analogies in Bavaria and Austria. In the interior, valuable pieces of liturgical furniture made at the order of Prince Rákóczi I are still preserved.

**Location: str. Kogălniceanu nr. 21.**

**Phone number: +40.264.591.270.**

**E-Mail: [hivatal@farkasutca.ro](mailto:hivatal@farkasutca.ro)**



**St. Michael's Church and Matia Corvin Statue**

## **The Union Square**

**The Union Square is the central point of the town of Cluj-Napoca, being one of the oldest and largest squares in Central and South-Eastern Europe.**

**It constituted the center of the city beginning with the Middle Ages and its various names, such as "The Main Square" or "The Big Square", suggested its importance. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was named King Matia Square after the Hungarian King Matia Corvin and it was changed into the Liberty Square during the communist period. Later, the old denomination from 1918, was adopted again, namely the Union Square.**

**After the revolution of 1989, the square became the location of various festivals, music concerts and other happenings. It is also the most appreciated meeting point of the young people of Cluj, behind the statue of Matia Corvin, in the spot colloquially named "at the horse's tail".**

**In the middle of the square are located two valuable historical monuments namely Saint Michael's church and the above-mentioned statue of Matia Corvin. On all its sides the square is bordered by several representative buildings like the Bánffy Palace, the present Art Museum, the so-called Mirror buildings, the Old Town Hall, the National Bank, the Continental Hotel (Conti) and others.**

**Consisting of five statues representing the riding King Matia Corvin and his four generals, the**

monument was inaugurated in 1902. The statue's model made by the artists János Fadrusz and Lajos Pákey received the great prize in 1900 at the Universal Exhibition in Paris. In time, this monument became a well-known emblem of the city.

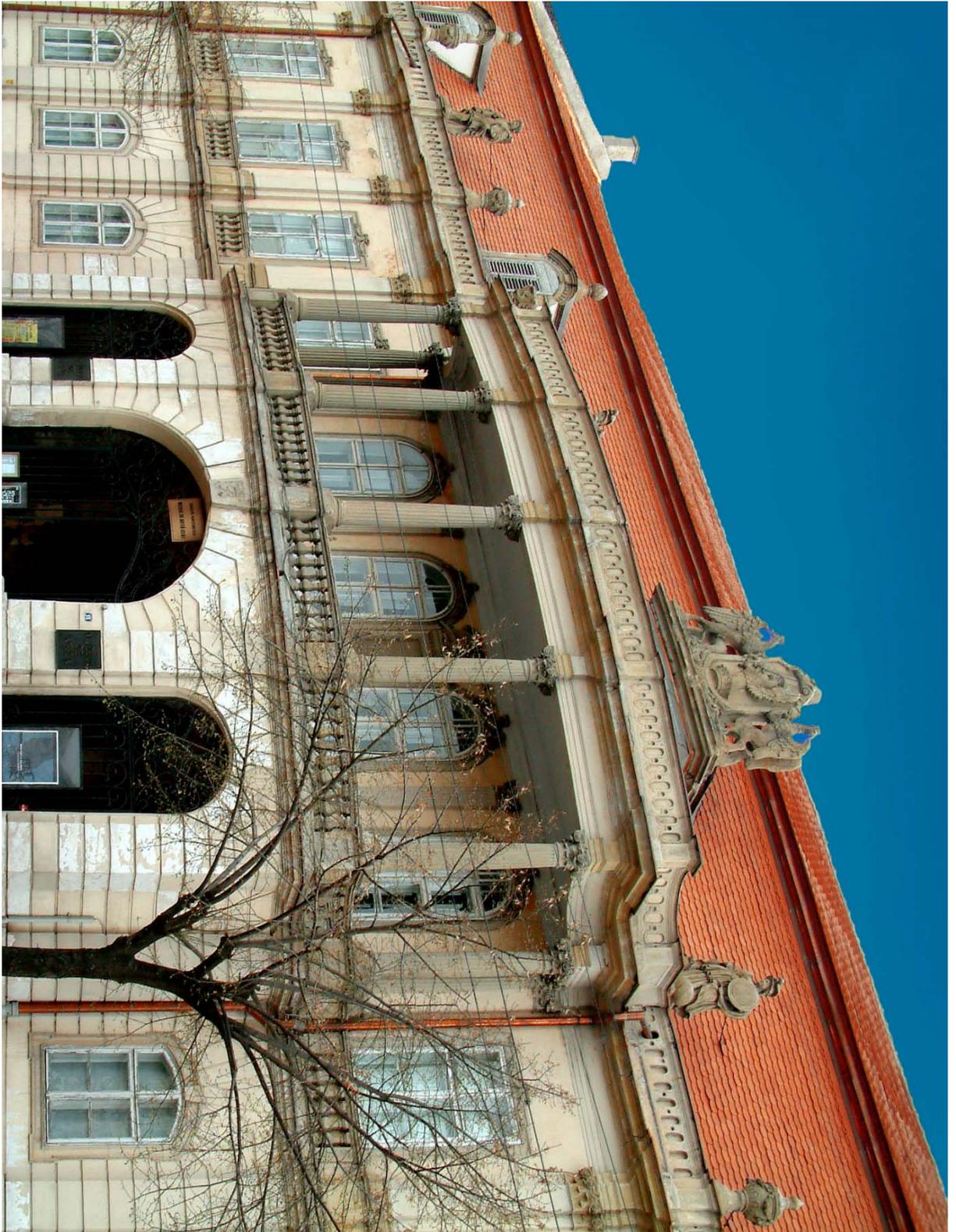
The roman-catholic church dedicated to Saint Michael was built between 1316 and 1390. It is a representative monument of the gothic architecture in Transylvania. The church was the location of several historical moments: the future King Matia Corvin was baptized there and the Queen Isabella of Hungary handed over the royal insignia to the messengers of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria. Recently, the tourists have gained access to the tower of the church, from which one can enjoy the panoramic view of Cluj from a 70 m height.

Open: Monday–Sunday 10:00-19:00.

Ticket price: free, access to the tower: 5 Lei.

Phone number: +40.264.592.089.

Another location worth visiting is the archaeological site in the Southern area of the square. The ruins were part of the old center of the ancient roman town of Napoca (II, III centuries A.C.) above which the medieval, modern and contemporary buildings were raised.



**The Bánffy Palace**

## **The Bánffy Palace**

**Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Bánffy Palace is one of the most important Baroque buildings in Transylvania. It is situated close to the famous "street in the mirror".**

**The palace has a rectangular shape, with the main façade towards the west. Above the main portal, one may see the Bánffy family coat of arms. The main courtyard is bordered on all its sides by galleries with massive pillars. The top of the building is decorated with statues representing Greek mythological characters.**

**The palace received important guests like the Emperors Francis I and Franz Josef. Since 1951 the building houses the famous Art Museum of the city where, in more than 20 rooms, works of famous painters like Nicolae Grigorescu, Stefan Luchian, Dimitrie Paciurea, Vasile Popescu and many others, are exhibited. The painting and sculpture collections illustrate the evolution of art in Transylvania as well as the multicultural environment typical for the area between the Carpathians.**

**Open: Wednesday-Sunday 10:00-17:00.**

**Ticket price: 4 Lei, 10 Lei/3 Exhibitions.**

**Location: Union Square nr. 30.**

**Phone number: +40.264.596.952.**

**E-Mail: info.muzeu@macluj.ro.**

**Website: <http://www.macluj.ro>**



## **The Pharmacy Museum**

**The Pharmacy Museum has always been one of the most appreciated landmarks for anyone visiting the city of Cluj-Napoca. The museum is hosting an extraordinary, comprehensive collection of great value.**

**The History of Pharmacy exhibition is hosted in a very special building, the Hintz House, a historical monument by itself, but moreover a building with a special signification, the first pharmacy ever built in Cluj. It is, therefore, the most suitable place to host a pharmacy museum. The building itself dates at least since the 16th century and it was the subject of multiple changes throughout the years, resulting in the mix of styles and architectural trends which define the museum today. During the communist regime, the building was nationalized and transformed into an ordinary bakery. In 1954 Professor Valeriu Bologna, former chief of The History of Medicine and Pharmacy department at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj, was able to convince the communist leaders of the monument's potential and established the museum, which can be visited today.**

**The Pharmacy Museum has a collection of Transylvanian patrimony objects, gathered by Professor Iulius Orient and it was enriched throughout the years with many other objects received as donations. Nowadays, the exhibition spreads into four rooms and a basement and**

**exposes 3000 objects: glass and tile pots, weights, laboratory instruments, ancient furniture, medication, recipes and medieval pharmacy sigils. Very appreciated by visitors are of course more specific objects, such as medieval powders, including the genuine mummy powder, an old electrocardiograph dating from 1915. There is also a mural painting, which is the only original work of art, regarding the pharmacy, kept in Romania. There are four symbolic representations, surrounded by oval and heart-shaped medallions. The main parts are a tree of life, located in the northern side of the room, a crane holding a stone in its claws, located on the south side and the two horns of plenty.**

**The museum was included in the famous Lonely Planet Guide that wrote: "We travel for such travel places – superb, offering great satisfaction and always surprising".**

**Open: Monday-Wednesday and Friday 10:00-16:00, Thursday 12:00-18:00.**

**Ticket price: 5,20 Lei.**

**Location: Piața Unirii nr. 28.**

**Phone number: +40.264.597.567.**

**E-Mail: [contact@muzeulfarmaciei.ro](mailto:contact@muzeulfarmaciei.ro).**

**Website: <http://muzeulfarmaciei.ro>.**



**The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania**

## **The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania**

**The first stop of any tourist interested in old occupations and Romanian traditions is The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania. Although it was founded only in 1922, the building has its origins in the sixteenth century and is one of many ancient architectural works of Cluj-Napoca. Between 1894 and 1895 it served as headquarters for the Transylvanian Diet.**

**With over 90 years of uninterrupted functionality, the museum is the largest of its kind in the country and one of the most prestigious in Europe with over 50,000 exhibits. Objects of art are exhibited in eight sections: Ceramics, Textiles, Occupations, Port, Home - Food, Habits, The International Section and The Outdoor Section, known as the Ethnographic Park Romulus Vuia which houses what locals call "The Village Museum". The museum's archive also possesses 50,000 photos, 5,000 slides and 12,000 journals.**

**In 2009, a special section for blind people opened. It contains copies of original exhibits that tourists can touch. The artefacts are grouped into five sections: Secondary Occupations, Agriculture, Livestock, Ceramics and Materials and Folk Costumes. Visitors can ask for guides printed with large characters, in Braille or audio guides in 4 languages, making everything easy to understand. Access to this area is facilitated by a 3D model of the interior, which can be studied to offer a general idea of the area, and a special band on the**

**ground, which helps people make sure they are on the right track.**

**Open: Tuesday-Sunday 09:00-05:00.**

**Ticket price: 6 Lei, visually impaired - free.**

**Location: Memorandumului Street, 21.**

**Phone number: +4 0264 592 344.**

**E-mail: [contact@muzeul-etnografic.ro](mailto:contact@muzeul-etnografic.ro).**

**Website: [www.muzeul-etnografic.ro](http://www.muzeul-etnografic.ro).**



**The Museum Square**

## **The Museum Square**

**Located centrally, inside the first fortified enclosure of the medieval town, Piața Muzeului (The Museum Square) hosts the Franciscan church and monastery, the Carolina Obelisk, the Mikes Palace and the History Museum of Transylvania.**

**The Franciscan monastery is one of the most beautiful and significant ancient churches in Cluj. Above the entrance of the sanctuary, one can see the grand statue of Virgin Mary, the protector of the church. Entering the halls, you can admire the pulpit decorated with a representation of Jesus Christ surrounded by the four evangelists. On the pulpit crown there is a portrayal of Jesus's ascent to heaven and on the main altar there is a replica of a painting of Saint Mary created in 1730 in „Santa Maria Maggiore” church in Rome. According to the Bible, the white lily petals symbolize virginity, pureness and the irradiant soul of the Virgin Mary, which is why the inner section of the sanctuary is embellished with a large number of these flowers.**

**The Carolina Obelisk is one of the oldest secular monument of Transylvania. It was built in the memory of king Francisc I and his wife Carolina Augusta. They cured the city by offering relief to those who suffered from hunger and plague, after the Napoleonic wars. On its sides, one can notice the carved portraits of the queen and the king, their carriage entering the city by**

**their suite of riders, their visit to the hospital and the city emblem. The monument's inauguration was celebrated on October 4, 1831, on the king's birthday and was placed in the Union Square. Subsequently, it was moved to its current location in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.**

**On the northern side of the square, one can admire the beautiful view of Mikes Palace. Currently, this area is crowded by terraces where people can enjoy a pleasant meal, a hot cup of coffee or they can refresh themselves with a nice, cold lemonade during summertime.**

**Just nearby, there is a remarkable building to be seen: Matia Corvin's House, a medieval architectural monument of Cluj, the only secular gothic building from the city.**



**The Casino: The Centre of Urban Culture**

## **The Casino: The Centre of Urban Culture**

**The old casino, an eclectic building, is placed in the Central Park of Cluj-Napoca and it is often host of cultural and artistic events of “the treasure city”**

**The Centre of Urban Culture is a genuine place in Cluj. The historic monument was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Viennese influences. It was designed by the well-known Pákey Lajos, who was also the architect of the Continental Hotel and the Museum of Industry (today the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca). Over time, the monument fulfilled the role of a casino, museum, School of Beautiful Arts and restaurant. It was recently rehabilitated by the City Hall, with no reimbursable European funds. Today the casino is meant to be a cultural destination and to host different events and exhibitions.**

**Open: daily 10:00-20:00.**

**Ticket price: free**

**Location: Central Park.**

**Phone number: +40.748.192.319.**

## **Final words**

**A treasure of the Transylvanian region, the Cluj county is located in the north-western part of Romania, one of the most profitable areas of the country, being easily accessible both for domestic tourists, as well as for those from abroad.**

**If you decide to travel to the city of Cluj, you can choose from a large variety of means of conveyance, no matter where you are coming from. The city has direct access to the main roads and railways, thus providing connections to the main cities of the country and the regional centers.**

**It is a strategic point in the European transport network, being crossed by no less than three national roads and three European ones. Motorway Transylvania, currently under construction, will link Cluj to Bucharest and the Western border of the country. Direct railway connections are maintained by the national company, CFR, there are even two international trains linking Cluj-Napoca to Budapest. The Central Station ensures movement toward Bucharest and the most important cities, through intercity trains.**

**In case you choose to travel by plane, you'll have plenty of options. The airport is located on the European road E 576, 10 km away from the city center and 12 km away from the railway station.**

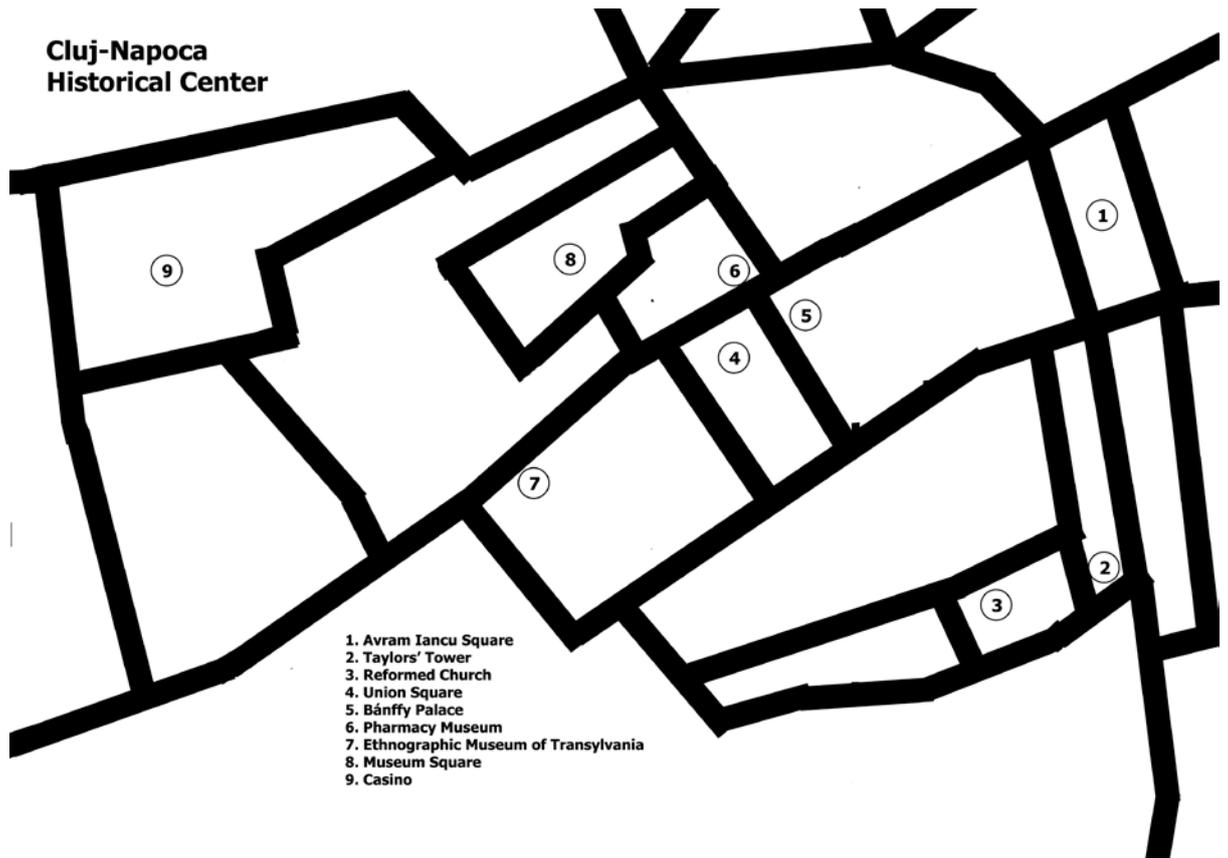
**The city, particularly the historical center, offers a wide variety of means of entertainment**

and a large number of bars, cafes and restaurants, where you can eat local and national specialties, such as the cabbage a la Cluj, sausages or stuffed cabbage.

**Useful information:**

- **Emergency call: 112**
- **Central Railway Station: str. Gării nr. 1-3, phone +40.264.592.952.**
- **International Airport Avram Iancu: str. Traian Vuia nr. 149-151, <http://www.airportcluj.ro>.**
- **National coaches and buses network: <http://www.autogari.ro/>.**
- **Romanian Blind Association – Cluj-Napoca: str. Baba Novac, nr. 15, ap. 3, phone +40.264.590.877, <http://www.anrcluj.ro>**
- **Tourist Information Centre: B-dul. Eroilor nr. 6-8, phone +40.264.452.244, <http://www.visitcluj.ro>, [www.visitclujnapoca.ro](http://www.visitclujnapoca.ro).**

**NOTES:**



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