

Szeged



Lower city Roman Catholic church and monastery



The name Szeged might come from an old [Hungarian](#) word for corner (*szeg*) because of the turn of the river [Tisza](#) there.

Szeged and its area have been inhabited since ancient times. [Ptolemy](#) mentions the oldest known name of the city: *Partiscum*. It is possible that [Attila](#), king of the [Huns](#) had his seat somewhere in this area. The name Szeged was first mentioned in 1183, in a document of King [Béla III](#).

During the Mongol invasion the town was destroyed and its inhabitants fled to the nearby swamps, but they soon returned and rebuilt their town. In the 14th century, during the reign of [Louis the Great](#), Szeged became the most important town of Southern Hungary, and – as the Turkish armies got closer to Hungary – the strategic importance of Szeged grew. King [Sigismund of Luxembourg](#) had a [wall](#) built around the town. Szeged was raised to [free royal town](#) status in 1498.

Szeged was first pillaged by the [Turkish](#) army on 28 September 1526, but was occupied only in 1543, and became an administrative centre of the Ottomans. The town was freed from Turkish rule in 1686, and regained the free royal town status in

1715. [Piarist](#) monks arrived to Szeged in 1719 and opened a new grammar school in 1721. They also held scientific lectures and theatrical plays. However, these years brought not only prosperity and enlightenment; between 1728 and 1744 [witch trials](#) were frequent in the town; in 1728-29, the perhaps [largest Hungarian witch trial](#) was held here. In 1720, the population of the city totalled 193 households, of which 99 were Serbian.

Szeged is known as the home of [paprika](#), a spice made from dried, powdered [capsicum](#) vegetables. Paprika arrived in Hungary in the second half of the 16th century as an ornamental plant. About 100 years later the plant was cultivated as a herb. Szeged is famous for [Szekelygulyas](#), a goulash made with pork, sauerkraut and sour cream.

The citizens of Szeged played an important part in the [Hungarian Revolution of 1848](#). The [Habsburg](#) rulers punished the leaders of the town, but later Szeged began to prosper again, the [railway](#) reached it in 1854, and the town got its free royal town status back in 1860. Mark Pick's shop – the predecessor of today's world famous Pick [Salami](#) Factory – was opened in 1869.

Today the inner city of Szeged has beautiful buildings and wide avenues. This is mainly due to the great [flood](#) of 1879, which literally wiped away the whole town (only 265 of the 5723 houses remained and 165 people died). Emperor [Franz Joseph](#) visited the town and promised that "Szeged will be more beautiful than it used to be". He kept his promise. During the next years a new, modern city emerged from the ruins, with palaces and wide streets.

After the [first World War](#) Hungary lost its southern territories to [Romania](#) and [Serbia](#), thus Szeged became a city close to the [border](#), and its importance lessened, but as it took over roles that formerly belonged to the now lost cities, it slowly recovered. The [University](#) of Kolozsvár moved to Szeged in 1921. In 1923 Szeged took over the role of [episcopal](#) seat from Temesvár. It was briefly occupied by [Romanian army](#) during [Hungarian-Romanian War](#) in 1919.

Szeged suffered a lot during the [World War II](#), 6,000 inhabitants of the city were killed, the [Jewish](#) citizens were confined to [ghettos](#), then taken to [death camps](#), and the [Soviet army](#) occupied the city in 1944. During the [Communist](#) era Szeged became a centre of [light industry](#) and [food industry](#). In 1965 [oil](#) was found near the city; the area now satisfies 67% of the country's oil demand.