



**The synagogue of Liptovský Mikuláš**, which was built in 1842 – 1846 as a 1-storey classicistic building with a flat beam ceiling and a simple interior, is one of the biggest and most stylish synagogues in Slovakia. The present-day form is the result of a renovation which was performed in 1906 but the original construction is a significant part of the synagogue even today – and forms its outer lining. Leopold Baumhorn, an architect from Budapest built a new framework of steel beams and supports on the existing foundations. A unique steel net system that holds an only 5-centimetre-thin plaster shell enabled to vault a quite large 3-nave space and add galleries for women to the concept as well. It is the innovatory technological vault solution which was not frequently used in our area at those times that makes the synagogue of Liptovský Mikuláš a significant technological monument.

At the same time, it shows the ability of the architect to adapt the original object to new requirements by changing the disposition very sensitively with respect to the original work of art. By doing so, the author managed to create harmony between the prevailing classicistic aspect of the frontage but preserved the character of the original roof and the Art Nouveau character of the interior including a cupola with beautiful stained glass. The interior is dominated by a rich blue-golden stucco decoration. The Art Nouveau character of the interior is emphasised by metal chandeliers and stained glass windows with floral motifs.



1

# The synagogue of Liptovský Mikuláš



**SACRAL MONUMENTS**  
LIPTOVSKÝ MIKULÁŠ

Hollého ulica 4, Liptovský Mikuláš  
Phone: +421/44/552 25 54, +421/915 317 490

**Available for the public:** 1<sup>st</sup> July – 31<sup>st</sup> August  
daily 10.00 – 18.00

**admission:** adults 2 €, children: 1 €, meant to support the renovation of the sacral monument.



Advance arrangements via the Museum of Janko Král outside the summer season:

Námestie osloboditeľov 31, Liptovský Mikuláš  
Phone: +421/44/552 25 54, +421/915 317 490  
www.muzeumjankakrala.sk  
daily 10.00 – 18.00



*The Synagogue is included also in the 1-hour sightseeing tour Mikuláš's Jews. Booking:*



Námestie mieru 1  
+421/44/16 186, +421/44/552 24 18  
info@mikulas.sk www.mikulas.travel

1. 7. – 14. 9.: Mo-Su: 9:00-17:00  
15. 9. – 30. 6.: Mo-Sa: 9:00-17:00, Su: closed



## AUDIO GUIDE

to synagogue of Liptovský Mikuláš

See:  
www.mikulas.travel



Published by: INFORMATION CENTRE of the town Liptovský Mikuláš, Town of Liptovský Mikuláš, Museum of Janko Král in Liptovský Mikuláš, OOCR REGION LIPTOV, 2020. Photos: © Gabriel Lipták, archive of ICM LM and the Museum of Janko Král. Graphic design: © Štúdio HARMONY s.r.o. Banská Bystrica, www.studioharmony.sk.

The project is financed by the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic.



# THE SYNAGOGUE OF LIPTOVSKÝ MIKULÁŠ



guide service LIPTOVSKÝ MIKULÁŠ

Hollého ulica 4, Liptovský Mikuláš  
www.mikulas.travel



**The history of the Jewish community** started to be written already in the 1720s when the first Jewish families from the village of Holešov, Moravia settled down in the region of Liptov. Eminent local landowner Samuel Pongráč accepted them with hope that they would help develop trade in Liptovský Mikuláš and the area. He even leased several houses on the main town square to them. More and more families began moving to the town and were trading with wood, leather, textiles, spirits and tobacco. The Jewish religious community was founded in 1730 and the first synagogue was built of wood one year later. The community established a Jewish elementary school of Torah and Talmud in 1752 and a yeshiva for rabbis in 1776. In the early 19th century, Liptovský Mikuláš was nicknamed "Jewish Athens" or "a town of wise men and Hebrew Scripture experts". Jewish inhabitants had a significant influence on the cultural and social life, and Liptovský Mikuláš was the first town in the Hungarian empire to have a Jewish mayor – in 1861! In 1842, the growing Jewish community decided to build a new synagogue in the area where it stands today although in a little different form. It served its purpose already in 1846. A school with 6 classes where everything was taught in the German language was built near the synagogue and attended also by Christian children. Liptovský Mikuláš became the centre of the Jewish culture in the region of Liptov. When the town was hit by fire in 1878 and 1904, and the synagogue was damaged as well, the community decided to start a big reconstruction.



The history of the Jewish community in Liptovský Mikuláš ended tragically during the Second World War. Based on a decision of the Slovak government in March 1942, 885 Jewish inhabitants had to be transferred to concentration camps. Only some of them managed to survive.



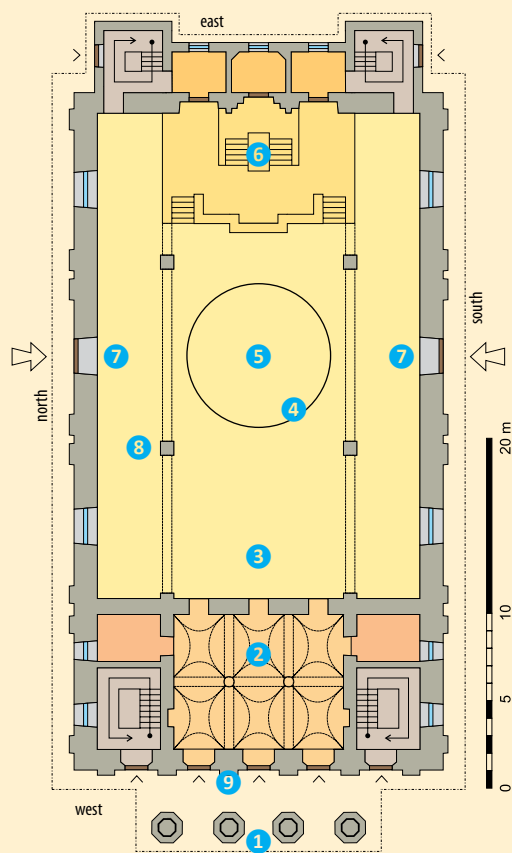
7



8



8



Up: The view of the prayer room with several vaults from the gallery with original Art Nouveau benches. Floral decoration, which is typical for the Art Nouveau period, is less expressive in the synagogue.

Right: The synagogue hosts a Gesharim-Bridges concert with popular Slovak and international artists every year.



3



6

1 The front facade with five windows and entrance gates faces the west. Four massive antique columns support a big forward gable with a tympanum. The classicistic interior has a quite high number of windows – there are 30 of them along with 9 entrances on three sides of the building.

2 The entrance area with the front facade is divided in six equal fields by two decorative columns which support a barrel vault. Adjacent spaces were used by the community for storing register records.

3 The spacious inside area is the result of the renovation of 1906. The synagogue was changed to its atypical present day form which combines a classicistic exterior with an Art Nouveau interior.

4 Above the centre of the synagogue where the vaults of the main nave cross, the architect opened the ceiling 17 metres high and created a cupola with a diameter of 10 metres. Its top features big stained glass.

5 The sun in the middle of a blue sky is the central motive of a decorative stained-glass ceiling which used to be lit by bulbs from the attic. The ceiling and stained-glass windows were the most precious and also the most expensive parts of the prayer room. They were gifted to the synagogue by four rich Jewish families from Liptovský Mikuláš.



2

6 The entrance to the heart of the synagogue itself – “Aron-ha-Kodesh”, where Torah used to be kept, is designed as an imposing gate. A double arch in its top symbolises stone tablets of Moses with commandments of God.

7 As for the original interior furniture, only Art Nouveau wooden row benches in galleries designated for women were preserved. Besides them, there were also metal chandeliers, candlesticks, banisters on galleries and stained-glass windows with floral motifs. The stained-glass decoration was removed in the 1990s so that it did not get destroyed. The last two pieces are displayed in the exposition of the Museum of Janko Král.

8 The stucco decoration of columns, pillars and banisters on galleries as well as the central space of Aron-ha-Kodesh is noticeably polychromed with mainly golden and blue colours. Golden and blue dominate the paintings on vaults and the cupola as well. Strictly stylised floral motifs gently emphasise ornaments which are based on geometric rules and inspired by the Orient.

9 The relief on the front facade of the temple which is dedicated to Holocaust victims reminds of the saddest chapter of the Jewish history in Liptovský Mikuláš. A copy of the famous relief is located inside the national monument to Holocaust victims in Jerusalem, 6 other copies decorate synagogues around Slovakia. It was made by Michal Kern, a painter from Liptovský Mikuláš.