

# Celebrating Busójárás



Story and Photos by Ashlyn Hochschild

Last year, to celebrate our final spring in Hungary before moving on to new duty stations, my best friend and I planned a trip to the village of Mohács for the most unique and interesting event we experienced in our four years in the country: Busójárás. Terrifying masks? A five-hundred-year-old tradition? Opportunity for a new adventure? We packed road trip snacks, finalized a playlist, and set out for one of Hungary's southernmost towns.

Located near the borders of Serbia and Croatia, the UNESCO festival of Busójárás is similar to many annual Carnival events celebrating the end of winter across the world; the festivities take place over six days and end just before Ash Wednesday. However, unlike other spring commemorations, Busójárás is filled with noise-making locals (typically men and boys) dressed as monsters and parading throughout the town.

Named for the mask—Busó—worn by village residents, the legend of Busójárás boasts two origin stories as to how the festival began.

The first legend (although not rooted in historical fact but remains the popular story) stems from 1526 and the Battle of Mohács. The small native Šokci population carved frightening masks and, under the noise of a storm, terrified the occupying Turkish troops who mistook the local population for demons and left the following morning. Another popular story holds that the tradition was brought by the Šokci when they arrived from the Balkans, and the mask-and-noise-wielding Busós literally scared away winter.

## Pro-Tips



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Either legend you choose, the festival is a quirky and exciting celebration that completely engulfs the small town of Mohács each February.

Hundreds of Busós, donning their own unique masks and giant sheepskin coats, march through the streets supplying spectators with the traditional Hungarian spirit of pálinka, scaring attendees with noise-makers, and showering non-Busós in flour.

In addition to the parades of Busós with their pranks, the festival also includes folk dancing, cooking classes, music, giant bonfires, and cultural exhibits. Be sure to visit the beautiful Serbian Church (Holy Trinity Church) for traditional food and music, as well as the Busóudvar (Busó museum) located in the heart of Mohács. Arrive hungry! Busójárás boasts Hungarian, Croatian, and Serbian cuisine throughout the town, with food trucks in both the center of the festivities and along the main Busós parade route.

Unfortunately, the festival was canceled due to Covid-19, but cheers to celebrating the event in the coming years. Egészségérel!



## More to see

Make a weekend of your trip! Stay in the nearby historic city of Pécs—only 33 minutes by car—for great food and beautiful sites.

The Hungarian wine region of Villány (world-renowned for its reds) is only a 30-minute drive from Mohács. Stop by and pick up a few bottles (Sauska boasts a beautiful restaurant and view, along with award-winning wine, while the biodynamic Wassmann Wines by two German expats is a favorite).



### PARKING

If driving, park at one of the nearby grocery stores and explore the festival on foot.



### EXPLORE

Wander, wander, wander! We found our favorite and most interesting spots on side streets and in neighborhood courtyards.



### EAT

The food is amazing! Food trucks offered both traditional and non-traditional favorites, including vegetarian and meat-friendly options. Don't forget to bring Forint (Hungarian currency)!

Find more of Ashlyn's adventures at [middleworldadventures.com](http://middleworldadventures.com)