

**Shine your light,
be present!**







It was September 2016 and Timișoara was filled with enthusiasm: we had just won the title of European Capital of Culture in 2021! Shine Your Light was the tagline which encompassed the amazing energy of the city. A few years later, a pandemic hit and the world closed until further notice. Lights seemed dimmer and the European Capital of Culture title was postponed for 2023.

The two years of delay were time well spent, as cultural operators had the chance, and the proper context, to further test their concepts and to scale their capacity to deliver. In 2022 alone, over 2000 operators and artists were involved in over 400 events produced locally, including collaborations with over 26 countries. This time we can safely say that the time is now!





About Timișoara

The capital of the historical province of Banat, Timișoara is the residence of Timiș County and the cultural and economic centre of the western part of Romania. With a population of 306,462, the city crossed by the Bega River has long maintained its reputation as a western, cross-border, young and entrepreneurial city.

The city was built over an ancient Roman fortress, and the first documentary attestation dates back to the 12th century. Timișoara owns the largest ensemble of old buildings in Romania, consisting of the urban ensembles of the Cetate, Iosefin, Elisabetin and Fabric neighbourhoods. The varied architecture, the influences of the Viennese Baroque and the multitude of parks have earned Timișoara the reputation of "Little Vienna" and the "City of Parks".

Between 1880 and 1914, Timișoara was the most important industrial, commercial, financial and cultural city in the region, admired for its artistic excellence in music, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture, as well as for its technical and scientific innovations.

Even before 1989, in the middle of the Cold War era and a totalitarian political regime, Timișoara was considered an experimental and ingenious city, where conceptual art Sigma Group and the rock band Phoenix started. It was the only place in the country where artists were performing in public spaces.

It is a multicultural city, influenced by various ethnic communities, especially Roma, German, Hungarian and Serbian, but also Bulgarian, Italian and Greek. Also, Orthodox believers, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Lutherans, Reformed, Muslims and other denominations practise their religion in harmony. In Timișoara, the meaning of the word "tolerance" has evolved to "fraternity".

Timișoara is an important intersection of destinations in Europe, with seven major capitals in Central and South-Eastern Europe within a radius of 600 kilometres: Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Zagreb, Skopje and Bucharest. It is also an important railway centre, while the Bega Canal is the oldest navigable channel on the current territory of Romania.

Why Timișoara?

Sometimes big changes start on street corners. In 1884, Timișoara was the first city on mainland Europe to have electric street lighting. In 1989, the sparks of the Revolution against Ceaușescu's regime were ignited on the streets of Timișoara. In 2023, in the streets of Timișoara – European Capital of Culture we will spark a needed conversation about courage and tolerance.

For Timișoara 2023 comes with a challenge: Shine your light – Light up your city! We can illuminate the city together with our glowing curiosity, love of art and respect for diversity, our determination to take a step forward and take a stance for our common European values.

What should you expect from Timișoara?

Openness. The city of over 300,000 people remains true to its spirit, currently hosting 21 cultures and 18 religions. In 2023, you should expect hundreds of celebrations of our openness, from contemporary dance performances in hidden courtyards to sound installations in synagogues.

Insight. The city takes pride and inspiration in its past – as it hosted the first public library with a reading room in the Habsburg Empire or the first cinema screening –, while exploring the transformative power of culture to shape its future. Timișoara is a friendly and user-friendly city, with more than 40,000 students, a vibrant creative sector, and an array of welcoming cultural institutions. In 2023, the city will host a series of exhibitions highlighting important figures of Romanian and European art, while transforming the plazas and the parks into worldwide connected stages.

Wonder. The richness of the urban texture, including over 10,000 historical buildings, generous public spaces, and historical neighbourhoods with distinct identities, combined with the development of blue-green corridors along the Bega Canal, makes the city appealing for families, the relocation of professionals from across the world, but also for the free spirits backpacking Europe. In 2023, you will be able to explore the city and its heritage while enjoying a concert on the riverbank or parking your scooter to the next open air performance.

Three more reasons to come back to Timișoara 2023

While our city is already an interesting and welcoming destination for business or leisure travellers, in 2023, the title of European Capital of Culture gives us a new set of reasons to shine. Our lush parks alongside the Bega River and our generous public spaces will host a vast array of events, from concerts to immersive theatre, while hidden courtyards or prestigious institutions will showcase collaborations between European and local artists or performers. Besides the shows and the exhibitions that will be quite impossible to miss, here is a short list of reasons (for you) to keep us on your shortlist.

Fusion. For 2023 expect to expand the definition of local multiculturalism with subcultures and countercultures: from digital nomads to vegan curators and techies, from bohemian festival goers to cut-to-the-chase movie producers. If you want to experience 50 shades of English accent, look no further than any terrace bordering Piața Unirii. If you want to see how heritage pairs with craft beers while respecting the genuine texture of a historic neighbourhood, don't miss Piața Traian or Piața Maria. Don't be shy to ask for recommendations, to join a conversation or an opening for an art show. We are a friendly city and a user-friendly European Capital of Culture.

Networking. There is no shame in looking for opportunities and in talking shop after the applause ends. Timișoara is an emerging hub for contemporary arts, design, architecture, publishing, photography, art-sci projects and crafts, so 2023 is your best chance to gather portfolios and business cards. Recurring events dedicated to upcycled fashion or independent publishing, or boutique festivals are the best places to meet the makers. Let them help you discover coworking hubs, artist-run spaces or local studios. Expect to meet promising local artists and entrepreneurs, as well as to extend your network in other Romanian and European cities.

Going off the beaten path. Timișoara 2023 can also be the perfect excuse, if you need one, to explore the region. Some of the events will take place in villages and cities nearby such as Dumbrăvița, Lugoj, Jimbolia, Arad, but the European Capital of Culture year will also give you the opportunity to discover some unexpected gems of contemporary art in the post-industrial city of Reșița or the artistic communities in the Instagram-ready villages of Caraș Severin. On the other hand, we designed our decentralised programme to honour a complementary cultural map of the city, creating cultural sparks in dormant, while charming, neighbourhoods, while providing context and contemporary content to the historical districts of the city.



The European Capital of Culture is a continuous process, marked by festive events and peaks of celebration. Through the innovative cultural programme prepared for the year 2023, we will have a transformative journey mapped around three main territories:

People

The essence of the community, from their daily habits and forgotten dreams, to their collective joys and challenges.

Places

Reclaiming people's right to the city, engaging residents in more balanced and just urban development.

Connections

People of Timișoara, Romania and Europe - all together and allowing the city to share and evolve.

Along our cultural journey, each territory will host stations (programmes) and trails (projects and focused programmes).





Full programme on
timisoara2023.eu



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When is the best time to come?

Undoubtedly, every week of 2023 brings new opportunities to meet European and local culture, on stage, in performance halls and art galleries, or even on the street. The cultural program includes 300 non-stop days of modern and contemporary art exhibitions. The city hosts more than ten music festivals starting in May, from baroque to rock, from jazz to electronic experiments. Timișoara 2023 is equally defined by the events that begin from and return to the community, from film screenings in border neighborhoods to events in parks and artistic explorations of historic neighborhoods.



Will I enjoy it?

We've done our best to give you hundreds of reasons to come and return, whether for a weekend, a week or a lifetime. In 2023 you will (re)see with different eyes an open and diverse city, a European center directly connected through ideas, art and technology to other European centers, in France, Hungary or Sweden, to give just a few examples of the more than 30 countries with which we collaborate...


Timișoara 2023 is also an opportunity not to be missed so as to better understand the spirit of the place: from the courage of contemporary art to the diversity of cultures that call Timișoara and Banat home. Timișoara 2023 is the best arrival and departure point for those who want to discover, whether it's dancing with new friends at a festival in a forest, being amazed by the gastronomy, learning the stories of your favourite historical building, or discovering the studios of local artists.



What should I bring?

We look forward to welcoming people who have packed their curiosity and questions. Timișoara 2023 means, first of all, a lively dialogue between creators and thinkers from Europe and Romania, between established artists and newcomers, and between heritage and experiment. Expect projects and events that refuse clichés and are not afraid of the essential European themes of the moment: from migration to climate, as well as from equality to identity.

We are happy to welcome you, along with friends and family. Timișoara 2023 promotes and supports a people-friendly city, with cyclists and strollers sitting on the grass and leisurely telling stories. A city that has time for things that matter. We are thrilled to welcome people who want to make new friends. We are pleased to answer greetings and questions.



Can I be of help?


You sure can. Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture belongs to all Romanians, just as it belongs to the entire continent. It is our time to share parts of our past, present and future with the whole world. We need your help to write and carry forward the stories of the city, the region and the country to create connections that cross borders. When you talk about Timișoara 2023 with your friends or colleagues, with every Share in social networks, with every invitation to an event in the program sent in an email or message, you are the ones who make the city shine brighter on the map of Europe. We promise to be good hosts!

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Full programme on
[timisoara2023.eu](https://www.timisoara2023.eu)





A young girl in a winter hat and jacket is looking at a large, illuminated, geometric structure made of blue light beams. The structure is composed of many thin, intersecting lines that create a complex, crystalline pattern. The scene is set at night, and the overall atmosphere is futuristic and artistic. In the background, other people are visible, but they are out of focus.

Full programme on
timisoara2023.eu



Closing Event

16-18 December 2023

The symbolic closing of the European Capital of Culture will be a handover, a moment to reflect on the takeaways. These three days will explore ways of cultivating memory, celebrating resilience and civic awareness. They will include an important milestone in the city's recent history and identity, the 17th of December, a moment of introspection and commemoration dedicated each year to the victims who fell in the struggle for freedom in December 1989.

The events grouped in this context are inspired by the city's identity and the route taken this year, reflecting Timișoara as: an open city of shared experiences with the family of European Capitals of Culture, the whole of Europe and a cultural world without borders, a landmark of revolt in the face of oppression and hope through solidarity, a place of collaboration, dialogue and continuous and shared learning.

For Saturday and Monday, the programme will include a series of performances and events spread throughout the city, as well as interactive installations in cultural nodes confirmed or inaugurated through the cultural programme.

For Monday, a symbolic start of a new cycle, the content will be predominantly proposed and produced by the future European Capitals of Culture in 2024 and 2025, functioning as an informal relay handover.

We will dedicate 17 December as a day of reflection and remembrance of resistance in the face of oppression and abuse, in Timișoara and around the world, through a series of events distributed throughout the city with a focus on areas such as photography, film and literature, as well as cross-cutting components such as education and integration, encouraging formats that are in the spirit of local commemoration.



WRITE DOWN YOUR SCHEDULE

European Echoes

European Echoes is the core cooperation and international exchange platform of our cultural programme. It was designed based on consultations with the ECoC family as well as the mapping of tens of collaboration proposals received from international cultural operators and institutions during last years, concerning both the outgoing and incoming cultural projects, exhibitions or shows. With a significant allocated budget, it will function as an open call destined to international and local artists and operators, covering products and projects related to our values and core themes, that will take place in Timișoara, or national and international cultural destinations.

As an outbound platform, European Echoes aims principally to increase the international impact and outreach of cultural productions developed in the Timișoara 2023 framework, from “plug-and-play” exhibitions, shows and performances to follow-ups to artistic research and trans-border collaborations. It also provides a dynamic context that encourages the operators to document, develop, iterate and itinerate their content, making it suitable for dissemination in cultural centers such as the ones of the Romanian Cultural Institute, or cultural hosting programmes such as future ECoCs.

As an inbound platform, European Echoes aims to strengthen European and international collaborations with local and Romanian operators, especially in the production of location-specific interventions and shows. In this regard the programme will serve as a vital expansion of our programme toward international excellence. On the other hand, the programme aims to provide a one-stop-shop collaboration interface for programmes and projects with a similar scope developed by future ECoCs.

A transversal objective of the European Echoes programme is the know-how transfer as it functions as a learning and reflection opportunity, not only as display of cultural products. Through its diverse offer this programme will also provide additional touchpoints for our citizens and guests, enriching their experience and interaction occasions.

2023 Facts & Figures

1,000+

events and projects produced locally

artists and managers in residence

100+

2,500+

artists and cultural operators involved

volunteers

2,000+

30+

countries represented

tourists

500,000+

3,000,000+

coffee

shared steps per day

42,000,000+