



# CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY

## **Pittsburgh Chapter 2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia June 23 – July 2, 2009 Visiting Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia**

Dear Friends,

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society is pleased to present this Rusyn Tour of Eastern Slovakia. Many of you have expressed interest in visiting your ancestral Rusyn villages in Šariš, Spiš, and Zemplyn counties. In response to your requests, we are offering such a tour that will be a memorable experience for all involved.

The purpose of the Rusyn Heritage Tour to Slovakia is to experience Rusyn culture in its fullest extent in Eastern Slovakia. We will visit major cities, both Rusyn and Slovak, attend a Rusyn Folk Festival, go to Divine Liturgy in Rusyn churches, see and listen to Rusyn performing ensembles and musical groups, visit Rusyn wooden churches, go to Rusyn museums both indoor and outdoor, and meet many of the leaders of the Rusyn movement in Slovakia. We will learn about Rusyn history with a focus on Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia. We will also provide you an opportunity to visit your ancestral village, do some genealogy research, and possibly find living relatives in those villages.

Tour Price:	Single Occupancy	Double Occupancy
	\$ 2900	\$2750

To secure your reservation on the 2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia, please follow these instructions:

1. Email or phone your interest in the tour to:  
Dean Poloka (Tour director) at:  
[pittsburgh@c-rs.org](mailto:pittsburgh@c-rs.org) 412-262-9425 home or 412-877-9351 cell  
or Jack Poloka (Tour Director) at:  
[jpoloka@c-rs.org](mailto:jpoloka@c-rs.org) 412-331-3124 home
2. Review the itinerary to see if you would like to register for the tour.

3. Complete your initial Registration Form with deposit of \$350 per person (checks made payable to Rahway Travel) and mail to:

Dean Poloka  
2201 Forest Grove Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108-3355

4. Send your final tour payment by **MAY 15, 2009** to:

Rahway Travel  
35 East Milton Avenue  
Rahway, NJ 07065 USA  
1-800-526-2786 tel.  
732-381-9890 fax.  
Member, American Society of Travel Agents

Since space will be limited to approximately 30 people, we will reserve spots on a first come/first served basis. Please submit your information as soon as possible and SIGN UP EARLY!

If you have any questions or concerns about the 2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia that you would like to have answered before making a commitment, feel free to contact us at your convenience at any of the methods written on the previous page.

We look forward to you joining us on promises to be a great trip.

Sincerely,

*Dean Poloka*

*Jack Poloka*

Dean & Jack Poloka



Jack (left) and Dean (right) Poloka at the tomb of Alexander Duchnovič in Prešov.

## **Brief Biographies of Your Tour Directors:**

### **Dean Poloka**

Dean has extensive travel experience in Slovakia and has lead many tours to the Rusyn Homeland. Dean has lead three C-RS sponsored tours as well as Slavjane's Homeland Tour in 2005.

Dean holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh in History, specialization in Eastern European History and an Undergraduate Certificate in Russian and Eastern European Studies (REES) Program with a specialization in Slovak language and culture. Dean is currently a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon's Heinz School of Public Policy and Management. He is pursuing a Masters Degree in Public Management.

Dean studied one full college year at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. After those semesters in 1993 and 1994, Dean conducted field research in Eastern Slovakia in the areas of Rusyn song, music and dance. In addition to that, Dean was successful in finding his Rusyn families in the villages of Hostovice, Rokytov pri Humennom, and Šumiac.

Dean is currently the President of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the C-RS and the Associate Director of the Slavjane Folk Ensemble. Dean is also a Fellow of the World Academy of Rusyn Culture.

### **Jack Poloka**

Jack has been involved in actively preserving his Rusyn roots for over 50 years.

Jack is the founder and Director of the Slavjane Folk Ensemble and a Trustee for the National Board of Directors for the C-RS.

Jack was the Tour Director for Slavjane's Homeland Tour in 1992, and Assistant Tour Director for Slavjane's Homeland Tour in 2005.



Road sign in Miková,  
ancestral village of  
Andy Warhol.

## **YOUR ALL-INCLUSIVE TOUR INCLUDES**

Round-trip economy airfare from Pittsburgh, PA, to Kosiče, Slovakia.  
Affordable prices based on the lowest airfares and currency exchange levels in effect.  
Accommodations in standard class hotels with private bath or shower.  
Two meals daily (breakfast and dinner), including a traditional vatra.  
Travel within Slovakia by modern, air-conditioned motor coach with panoramic windows, reclining seats, and emergency toilet facilities on board.  
Entertainment, entrance fees, taxes, and service charges.

## **NOT INCLUDED**

Cost of passport and travel insurance.  
Transportation to and from Pittsburgh International Airport.  
Excess or overweight baggage charges.  
Gratuities/tips to local guides, bus driver, entertainers, churches visited, etc.  
Lunches and any food and beverages not included in scheduled meals.  
Food and beverages not on the tour menu, and alcoholic and bottled beverages (unless otherwise specified.)  
Items of a purely personal nature, such as room service, laundry, telephone calls, mini-bar, Pay TV, and internet usage.  
Airport departure taxes, inspection and security fees, and fuel surcharges imposed by the airlines subsequent to the printing of this itinerary.  
Cost of optional excursions to villages, car rentals, interpreters for family searches, etc.  
No provisions can be made for special dietary or handicapped needs.

## **HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS**

The 2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia is a vigorous tour with plenty of free time and relaxation. However, it will include a fair amount of walking, sometimes in hilly and remote areas, up and down stairs and other inclined surfaces, and along poor roads and paths. The nature of the Carpathian Mountains in Eastern Slovakia is mountainous and rural. Comfortable walking shoes are a necessity. Most attractions are not handicapped accessible. Those with walking difficulties should seriously consider whether or not such a tour is right for them. People with allergies and/or other health conditions should bring a sufficient supply of their medication to last the duration of the trip, plus a few extra days in case of emergency.

## **PASSPORT – IMPORTANT!!!**

A valid U.S. passport is required for the tour. It should be valid for 6 months after your return date. If your passport expires before JANUARY 2010, be sure to APPLY FOR A NEW PASSPORT IMMEDIATELY.

## **TOUR PRICE**

Tour prices are \$ 2750 for double occupancy and \$2900 for single occupancy.

## **BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE**

You are allowed one suitcase weighing 50 lbs. or less. Carry-on baggage is limited to one carry-on and one personal item (such as a purse). Additional costs associated with baggage in excess of these limits are the responsibility of the individual. It is advisable to pack a folding bag for purchases you make abroad. Baggage handling at airports is not included.

## **RESERVATIONS**

Couples residing at the same address only need to fill out one reservation form. People sharing accommodations but residing at different addresses should each fill out a separate reservation form and indicate the name of the person with whom they will be sharing on the line provided.

## **SHARING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Individual travelers wishing to share a double room rather than single occupancy should indicate so on the registration form. If you already have a roommate, fill in that person's name. If not, we can provide you with names of others wishing to share so that you can contact them directly. However, there are no guarantees that all sharing requests can be accommodated.

## **PAYMENTS**

A deposit of \$350 per person must be paid at the time of registration. Space cannot be reserved without a deposit. If you are paying for anyone in addition to those on your reservation form, write their names on the line provided. Deposits and final payments may be made by check or credit card. Make checks PAYABLE TO Rahway Travel. Final payment is due by **MAY 15, 2009.**

## **DOMESTIC FLIGHTS**

If you are not flying from Pittsburgh, for air travel from your local airport to New York's John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport, contact Rahway Travel Agency as soon as possible to book that flight for you as part of your round-trip travel so they can get you the best fare available. The earlier you book, the better the chances of locking in the lowest fare.

## **TOUR BUS ACCOMMODATIONS**

The motor coach used for the land portion of the tour will be modern and air-conditioned with reclining seats, large windows, and emergency toilet facilities on board. However, there are no special accommodations for disabilities. Seating is open, so you may sit wherever you like. Rest stops are taken approximately every 1 1/2 hours.

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Once you are accepted for the trip, the travel agency will send you a brochure describing travel insurance, its coverage and costs. We strongly suggest you consider purchasing some travel insurance

## **CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS**

If you cancel your reservation, these are the arrangements:

Land and airfare arrangements:	61 days before departure	-- full refund
	60 – 46 days	-- forfeit deposit
	45 – 32 days	-- forfeit airfare
	31 days or less	-- forfeit 100% of costs

## **CURRENCY AND MONEY EXCHANGE**

Slovak currency as of January 1, 2009 has transformed to the Euro (€), which is divided into 100 cents. You can exchange dollars into Euro at the airport and many exchange offices, called Zmenareň, located throughout Slovakia. Bills should not be damaged or marked. Traveler's checks are not accepted at Zmenareň but at most banks in Slovakia. It is recommended that you take mostly cash with you and that you carry it in a money belt or other accessories of this type available in luggage departments and travel stores. Dollar bills are acceptable for donations at churches, tipping, etc. Credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club, American Express, and Carte Blanche) are accepted in many shops in larger cities, major restaurants, hotels and nightclubs. However, American

Express is not as widely used as VISA or MasterCard. ATM machines (called BANKOMAT) are common in major tourist areas in large cities. Cash advances on credit cards can be obtained at major banks but in Euro only. Many of the remote areas we will be visiting take only Euros and no credit cards.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

William Vislocky Travel, Inc. d/b/a Rahway Travel and/or its associate companies, agents, or the sponsoring organizations (Carpatho-Rusyn Society) act only in the capacity of agent for the passengers in all matters connected with hotels, dining services, transportation, sightseeing, and other services associated with the tour. The company and associate organizations neither own nor operate any of the suppliers or services. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society reserves the right to cancel, change, and substitute any service; to decline to accept or retain any tour member at any time for any reason; or to cancel the tour if there are an insufficient number of participants. **THE ITINERARY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THERE ARE NO REFUNDS FOR UNUSED SERVICES.**

## **CONFIRMATION, TICKETING, ETC.**

Once your completed reservation form and deposit have been received, you will be sent confirmation by telephone or e-mail. Immediately after receiving confirmation, if you need air travel to New York, contact Rahway Travel to book that flight as part of your round-trip ticket. They will do everything possible to get you the lowest airfare available. Also contact Rahway Travel if you wish to make any variances to the tour, joining the tour in Slovakia, leaving the tour early, or extending your stay beyond the end of the tour.

Several weeks before departure, you will receive all pertinent information, nametag and packing suggestions. The information packet lists all hotels and contact information.

Approximately 7-10 days before departure, Rahway Travel will send you your tickets, along with special luggage tags and some travel tips with answers to frequently asked questions. Be sure to attach the luggage tags to your bags. No tickets will be issued without final payment.

About a week or two before the beginning of the tour, we will conduct an information seminar where you can ask any questions pertaining to the trip and its itinerary.

**2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia**  
**June 23 – July 2, 2009**  
**Visiting Rusyns in Eastern Slovakia**

**ITINERARY**

**TUESDAY JUNE 23 (DAY 1) – PITTSBURGH – NEW YORK – PRAGUE**

We will depart Pittsburgh and fly to New York where we will change planes and fly overnight to Prague, Czech Republic.

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 24 (DAY 2) – PRAGUE – KOŠICE TO PREŠOV**

We land in Prague in early morning and transfer planes to Košice. There we will get our luggage and load into our bus and take the short ride to Prešov. We will check-in to our hotel and get settled. Since we arrive early in the morning and if time permits, we will take a ride to Litmanova, site of where it is believed that the Virgin Mary appeared to local women, as well as to Stará Ľubovňa. Later in the afternoon we will have dinner at the hotel and be entertained by local Rusyn musicians.

**THURSDAY JUNE 25 (DAY 3) – PREŠOV**

After breakfast, we will tour Prešov, the “capital” for the Rusyns in Slovakia. It is here where the Rusyn organizations are based. We will take a walking tour of Prešov and learn about its history. We will also visit some Rusyn sights in Prešov including: Rusinska Obroda – The Rusyn Renaissance organization in Slovakia, the newspapers Rusyn and Narodny Novynky, the new Rusyn museum, St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Cathedral and the tomb of Alexander Duchnovič, and St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral. Free time for shopping will be available in the afternoon. We will return to the hotel for dinner and entertainment by local Rusyn dancers.



Wooden Church of St. Michael the Archangel, built in 1700 in this village of Topola, birthplace of Alexander Duchnovic, Rusyn National Awakener.

#### **FRIDAY JUNE 26 (DAY 4) – KOŠICE – MICHALOVCE – HUMENNÉ**

After breakfast, we will board the bus and spend the afternoon in Košice, Slovakia's second-largest city. In Košice, you can shop and take in the sights of this beautiful city. If time permits, we will take a drive through Michalovce. We will then make our way to Humenné, where we will check-in to our hotel, have dinner, and relax for the evening.

#### **SATURDAY JUNE 27 (DAY 5) – HUMENNÉ – MEDZILABORCE**

After breakfast, we will begin a day of sightseeing that will begin in Humenné at their museum and outdoor exhibition (skanzeň). Then we will make our way to the heart of the Zemplyn County and visit some Rusyn wooden churches. We will visit Ruský Potok, and Topoľa. Topoľa is the birthplace of Alexander Duchnovič, our Rusyn National Awakener. Afterwards, we will make our way to Medzilaborce to the original Warhol Museum. If time permits, we will visit the largest and best Rusyn folk festival in Slovakia, the annual Festival of Sport and Culture in Medzilaborce.

#### **SUNDAY JUNE 28 (DAY 6) – MEDZILABORCE – Rokytov pri Humennom**

We will have breakfast early and then head back to Medzilaborce where we will attend Divine Liturgy. You can either attend Divine Liturgy at St. Basil's Greek Catholic Church or at Holy Spirit Orthodox Church. After Divine Liturgy, we will spend a few hours at the Festival of Sports and Culture in Medzilaborce. For those of you that have relatives that live in/around Medzilaborce, this is a perfect chance to spend some time with them. At the festival, you can watch local Rusyn folk ensembles, catch a soccer game, or just relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. On our way from Medzilaborce, we will visit Krasný Brod – site of an historic Rusyn monastery and a holy site to the Rusyns from pagan times. Then it's on to the village of Rokytov pri Humennom, ancestral village of your tour directors Jack and Dean Poloka (Polovka). There we will have refreshments and be entertained by local Rusyn musicians.



Maria Mačoškova – One of the most famous Rusyn singers. She will perform for us on the tour.

## **MONDAY JUNE 29 (DAY 7) – PREŠOV**

After breakfast, we will make our way back to Prešov, where we will enjoy the day without any specific plans. This time will be yours to explore the city; maybe even take a trip to your ancestral village. We will all gather for dinner, and then we will go to the theater and enjoy a performance by PULS – the premiere Rusyn dance group in Slovakia.

## **TUESDAY JUNE 30 (DAY 8) – BARDEJOV & SVIDNÍK**

After breakfast we will head to Bardejov and Svidník. Bardejov is a medieval town that dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. We will visit the Šariš Icon Museum. For those that would rather get some exercise, we will climb the steps of St. Edigus Church tower that rises over 300 ft. After this, we will head to Svidník, the site of the Battle of Dukla in fall 1944. If time permits, we will visit the military museum dedicated to the Rusyn, Russian, Ukrainian, and Czech soldiers that fought and died in World War II. We will then return to the hotel and have a light dinner. In the evening, we will have a traditional vatra bonfire with a Rusyn sing-a-long. Vatra parties are well known for lots of good food, drink and camaraderie.

## **WEDNESDAY JULY 1 (DAY 9) – KOŠICE**

We will go to Košice one last time after breakfast for those who want to do last-minute shopping. After we return, we'll begin packing for the trip home. After dinner, we will be entertained one last time by one of the most famous Rusyn singers Maria Mačošková.

## **THURSDAY JULY 2 (DAY 10) – KOŠICE – PRAGUE – NEW YORK – PITTSBURGH**

We will arise early to catch the flight from Košice to Prague, then on to New York and finally, Pittsburgh.



Prešov – Hlavná Ulica (Main Street). St. John's Cathedral is in the background

## 2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia – Reservation Form

*Please print clearly*

**Reservation for:**

Name As On Passport	Birth Date	Passport Number	Expiration Date
Occupation		Employer	

Name As On Passport	Birth Date	Passport Number	Expiration Date
Occupation		Employer	

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestral Village (& county if known)	I'd like to visit: (yes or no)	Family Surnames

**Hotel Accommodations**

\_\_\_\_\_ Double occupancy  
\_\_\_\_\_ Single occupancy  
\_\_\_\_\_ I will be sharing a room with: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment**

A deposit of \$ 350 per person must be paid with each reservation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check (enclosed) payable to: Rahway Travel:  
Check no. \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card: No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am also paying for the reservation of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make a copy of this registration form for your records and mail the original (with \$350 deposit made payable to Rahway Travel) to:

Dean Poloka  
2201 Forest Grove Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108-3355

**BALANCE DUE: MAY 15, 2009**

Please send all subsequent payments including final balance payments to:

Rahway Travel  
35 East Milton Avenue  
Rahway, NJ 07065 USA  
1-800-526-2786

**Flight Itineraries for  
Pittsburgh Chapter  
2009 C-RS Rusyn Tour of Slovakia**

<b>DELTA AIR LINES, DL 6694 Tue, Jun 23</b>	
<b>From:</b>	PITTSBURGH, PA (PIT)
<b>Departs:</b>	11:15 AM
<b>To:</b>	NEW YORK JFK, NY (JFK)
<b>Arrives:</b>	12:45 PM
<b>Flight Time:</b>	01 hours and 30 minutes

<b>CZECH AIRLINES, OK 0051 Tue, Jun 23</b>	
<b>From:</b>	NEW YORK JFK, NY (JFK)
<b>Departs:</b>	4:10 PM – Tuesday June 23
<b>To:</b>	PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (PRG)
<b>Arrives:</b>	6:15 AM – Wednesday June 24
<b>Flight Time:</b>	08 hours and 05 minutes

<b>CZECH AIRLINES, OK 0976 Wed, Jun 24</b>	
<b>From:</b>	PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (PRG)
<b>Departs:</b>	7:10 AM
<b>To:</b>	KOSICE, SLOVAKIA (KSC)
<b>Arrives:</b>	8:15 AM
<b>Flight Time:</b>	01 hours and 05 minutes



<b>CZECH AIRLINES, OK 0977</b> <b>Thu, Jul 2</b>	
<b>From:</b>	KOSICE, SLOVAKIA (KSC)
<b>Departs:</b>	9:00 AM
<b>To:</b>	PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (PRG)
<b>Arrives:</b>	10:10 AM
<b>Flight Time:</b>	01 hours and 10 minutes

<b>CZECH AIRLINES, OK 0050</b> <b>Thu, Jul 2</b>	
<b>From:</b>	PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (PRG)
<b>Departs:</b>	11:00 AM
<b>To:</b>	NEW YORK JFK, NY (JFK)
<b>Arrives:</b>	2:15 PM
<b>Flight Time:</b>	09 hours and 15 minutes

<b>DELTA AIR LINES, DL 6809</b> <b>Thu, Jul 2</b>	
<b>From:</b>	NEW YORK JFK, NY (JFK)
<b>Departs:</b>	10:00 PM – Thursday July 2
<b>To:</b>	PITTSBURGH, PA (PIT)
<b>Arrives:</b>	12:19 AM – Friday July 3
<b>Flight Time:</b>	02 hours and 19 minutes



Rusyn-inhabited areas of Eastern Slovakia are shaded in blue.