

Miroľa, Slovakia



This wooden church is set in some of the most beautiful hilly countryside in eastern Slovakia. It sits on a slope above the village in front of a small cemetery and is visible from throughout the forested valley that surrounds the settlement. The present church was constructed in 1770, but it is thought that an earlier wooden church had stood in the same location in the village since the end of the 17th century. Dedicated to the Protector the Mother of God, the church is a typical three-part Lemko structure with three cupolas rising in height with the highest above the front entrance. Western design influences are apparent in the baroque style of the separate rooftops.



Life has not been easy for the local Rusyn residents, and many of them were forced to emigrate at the end of the 19th century to escape the poverty and poor living conditions of the time. During World War II many homes in the village were destroyed in the fighting for control of the nearby Dukla pass and the church was also badly damaged.



The interior of the church contains side icons in the Russian-byzantine style, while the iconostasis features some unusual images of the lives of peasants dressed in traditional costume placed in among the usual New Testament scenes. The entire iconostasis was restored in the 1970's by local experts.



The key for the church is kept by the family who live across the road, they are happy to open the temple for visitors and can give a demonstration of ringing the bell. It is expected that visitors will leave a donation of one or two Euros in front of one of the icons. The village is serviced only infrequently by bus, so walking in from the main Svidnik-Dukla road is a good option, as blue-marked forest hiking trails connect the villages which contain wooden churches together in a circular route. Bodružal, Príkra, Miroľa and Krajné Čierne can all be visited on an enjoyable day hike.