

Tavankut-the place where the Sun hugs Bačka

I come from a town called Tavankut, or more specifically Donji Tavankut. What is most often referred to as "Tavankut" is actually two towns right next to each other-Donji Tavankut (Lower Tavankut) and Gornji Tavankut (Upper Tavankut). Ljutovo, a town close to these two, is sometimes also lumped into the "Tavankut" name. The name comes from the words "Tavan", which means attic and "Kut", which means corner, so the literal translation would be "corner of the attic". The name makes sense because it is located in the northernmost part of Serbia, a few kilometers away from the Hungarian border (in the "attic" of Serbia).

My hometown is located in the North Bačka district of the Vojvodina province, situated in the municipality of Subotica. It has an area of 93.7 square kilometers and a population of 1969 (as of the 2022 census). The most common languages and ethnicities are Bunjevački, Croatian and Serbian. In regards to religion, most townspeople are Catholic, with Orthodox Christians coming in second.

The two most popular buildings are the straw marquetry gallery ("Galerija Prve kolonije naive u tehnici slame") and Orluškov salaš, a protected monument of culture. The gallery hosts many cultural events and displays old and new artworks made using straw. Straw marquetry is a very popular art form and even has an optional school subject in the "Matija Gubec" primary school. Orluškov salaš was built in the year 1900 and became a protected cultural monument in 2001. It is still owned by descendants of the family that built it over a century ago, who want to conserve its heritage.

There are not many historical records about Tavankut, we only know it was mentioned in maps and documents all the way in 1435. In 1849 there was a big battle of the Hungarian revolution in the town. There were also plenty of anti-fascist movements during World War 2. There is even a monument to the victims of WW2.

One of the most well known people from Tavankut is the late Stipan Šabić (1928-2003) a well renowned artist. A lot of his work depicts people doing everyday activities like reaping wheat. There is even an art colony in Subotica named after him. The second person was not from Tavankut, but many things are named after him, like the cultural society and the primary school, which even has a bust of him in the courtyard. He was the leader of a peasant revolution in Croatia and Slovenia. After the revolution was broken he was publicly executed by having a crown made of red-hot iron placed on his head and was proclaimed as "the king of peasants".

My favorite location has to be the park located in the town center. Its very beautiful and peaceful just sitting on a bench and eating ice cream in the summer or just taking in the view in winter. A yearly festival is held in the park called "Fankijada" in which doughnuts are prepared and sold, it is much more family friendly than the famous "Rakijada" in Ljutovo. The second place I would like point out is the Tavankut forest, another quiet place perfect for walks. There are not very many places for young people to hang out, that are not pubs, so most opt to go to Subotica instead. I hope that in the future there will be more hangout spots.

In conclusion Donji Tavankut is a small, yet extremely compelling town. It has deep cultural roots and the people work hard to keep those cultures alive through art, music, dance and festivals. I am proud to be from there and don't plan on moving out any time soon.

Vocabulary of unknown words

Lumped into - To group or classify things together, often without making fine distinctions between them.

Northernmost - It indicates the furthest point in the northward direction within a defined geographical boundary.

District - A defined area or region, often within a city or larger administrative division, characterized by specific boundaries or features.

Province - An administrative division or territorial unit within a country, typically smaller than a state or region but larger than a city or municipality .

Municipality - A specific type of administrative division or local government unit within a country. It usually refers to an urban or populated area, such as a city, town, or village, and the surrounding territory governed by it.

Ethnicities - The categorization of people based on shared cultural, linguistic, or ancestral traits.

Marquetry - The craft of decorating a surface, typically wood, with intricate patterns or pictures formed by inlaying pieces of different colored woods, metals, or other materials .

Monument of culture - A building, structure, site, or object that holds significant cultural, historical, or artistic value within a society or community. These monuments are often recognized and protected by governmental or cultural authorities for their importance in preserving and representing the cultural heritage of a particular region or civilization.

Heritage - The cultural, historical, natural, and tangible or intangible aspects that are inherited from past generations and preserved for future generations.

Well renowned - A phrase used to describe someone or something that is highly esteemed, widely respected, or famous for their achievements, qualities, or contributions.

Reaping - The act of cutting or gathering crops, such as grains or fruits, from the fields during harvest time.

Art colony - A community or settlement where artists live and work together, often in a rural or remote area, with the shared goal of creating and producing art.

Proclaimed - Publicly or officially declared. It implies that something has been announced or asserted with authority and clarity, often to make it widely known or to establish its legitimacy.

Opt - A verb that means to choose or decide to do something. It suggests making a decision or selecting a course of action from among various alternatives.

Compelling - An adjective that describes something that evokes interest, attention, or admiration in a powerful or irresistible way.