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HUMANITA

THE BÜKK REGION GEOPARK

BUCKET LIST

The Zsidó Meadow karst plateau reaches elevations of 800–850 m above sea level, bordered by ridges and mountain crests rising to 875–950 m. From these features, or emanating from between them, the valleys of former watercourses form sinuous depression formations descending into the karst plateau. Along their base, sinkholes and sinkhole clusters are densely indented. The largest sinkhole in the entire mountain range, the Mohos sinkhole, deepens into the southwestern extremity of the Zsidó Meadow. The sinkholes and sinkhole clusters indented into the valley floors function as veritable cold air traps; consequently, frost can occur in them even during the summer months at dawn. Should early winter exhibit rigorous and prolonged freezing conditions that precede snowfall, and the snow cover blanket the frozen ground, the meltwater during the spring thaw cannot percolate into the soil, and water runoff from the surrounding slopes flows into the Mohos sinkhole, where it accumulates as a temporary lake for several days before gradually being absorbed. During these rare occasions, the Mohos sinkhole temporarily functions as a natural sink.

1. MOHOS SINKHOLE

Három-kő peak rises on the southern periphery of the Nagy plateau, forming a multisegmented rock crest extending 180 m in length. The westernmost pinnacle reaches 25 m in height with a spectacular 20 m tower between its fissures, while the remaining segments feature 9–10 m towers. A concave, southward-ruptured chasm measuring 2–4 m wide and 6–7 m high is evident within one segment. Composed of coralline reef limestone, the peak's characteristic surface formations include karren fields – solution furrows – on steeply inclined bedding planes.

2. HÁROM-KŐ PEAK

The most beautiful karts meadow of the Bükk Plateau. The Zsidó Meadow is a wide, flat valley basin formed on limestone terrain. In the basin, numerous sinkholes and karst depressions are not only one after the other, but also side by side.
The Mohos sinkhole. located in the SW quarter of the Zsidó Meadow, is the largest sinkhole in the Bükk Mts, deepened and widened by dissolution. The Zsidó Meadow is home to many rare plant species, such as *Aconitum variegatum*, *Carlina acaulis*, *Gladiolus imbricatus*, *Traunsteinera globosa*, the Ice Age relic *Ribes alpinum* and the remains of Nardus grassland patches. The Zsidó Meadow is a strictly protected area and part of the Olaszkapu Educational Trail. It is accessible to the public on the designated trail.

3. BÜKK PLATEAU, ZSIDÓ MEADOW

In Szilvásvárad, the Fátyol Watefall cascades down on the travertine steps of the Szalajka stream, supplied by nearby karst springs. Other attractions of the valley include Szikla Spring, Open-Air Forest Museum, Aladár Zilahy Forestry Museum, and the BNPD Szalajka Valley Information Center. The Istállós-kő Cave, known as the dwelling place of prehistoric humans, can be reached in about 30 minutes on foot from the terminus of the narrow-gauge railway. The Szalajka Valley is a strictly protected area of the Bükk National Park. It can be visited on foot, by bicycle or by the narrow-gauge railway.

4. SZALAJKA VALLEY, FÁTYOL WATERFALL

The Uppony Mts. are in the northern part of the Bükk Region, clearly separated from the Bükk Mts. The southwestern part of the mountain range consists of ancient rocks that have been lifted along fault lines.

Between Uppony and Dédestapolcsány, the Csernely stream, which has cut into the fault lines, has created one of the most spectacular gorges in the country. The light gray limestone walls of the Uppony Gorge reach a height of 50 m. There are 25 caves in the karst-prone limestone.

The peak offers a beautiful view of the Lázbéri Lake, created by damming the Csernely and Bán streams in the southern part of the gorge. The area is part of the Lázbérc Landscape Protection Area. It can be visited freely via the tourist trail.

5. UPPONY GORGE, LÁZBÉRC LAKE

The intermittent karst springs on the southern edge of the Bükk Plateau are only active for a few weeks or maybe months each year. Their operation is linked to the rapid melting of snow and sudden rises in karst water levels during heavy rainfall.

The most spectacular intermittent spring in Bükk is the Vöröskői-alsó Spring. Its surface outlet was closed in the 1970s, so during the spring's active period, the water bursts to the surface like a fountain through a hole in the limestone, reaching a height of up to 2.5 meters.

The spring, located in the strictly protected area of the Bükk National Park, is open to visitors. It can be reached from Felsőtárkány on the blue-marked hiking trail.

6. VÖRÖSKŐ LOWER SPRING

The Esztázkő Cave, modest in size yet all the more spectacular for its abundance of stalactites, opens in the Gyetra Valley 3.5 km from Felsőtárkány. The cave is a fossil water-sink cavern which, during the incision of the valley floor, engulfed the watercourse flowing from the non-karstic terrain through the original natural entrance. In the older upper chambers, stalactite formation has already commenced and continues presently, whilst the clay in the lower sections and the absence of stalactites therein indicate water-sinking activity that persists to the present day.
The cave serves as a habitat for protected fauna – for instance, various bat species. The cave is equipped neither with electrical lighting nor concrete pathways; in one location, a ladder facilitates passage. The cave temperature ranges between 9–10 degrees Celsius, with both water-logged and muddy sections as well as dry areas occurring equally. The Bükki National Park Directorate organises guided tours of both easy and moderate difficulty through the cave. Helmets are provided by the tour guides for visits. Further details: www.bnpi.hu

7. ESZTÁZKŐ CAVE

The Suba-lyuk cave, located on the Hór Valley slope near Cserépfalu, is significant for its hominin remains of different ages and a nearly complete stratigraphic sequence from the final Ice Age phase. Within its 6 m-thick cave fill, skeletal remains of two Neanderthals – a woman aged 25–35 and a child aged approximately 3 – were found alongside animal bones, flaked stone tools, and charcoal fragments indicating fire use.

The recovered animal bones reveal hunting in both forests and grassy steppes: cave bears, wild horses, rock goats, roe deer, hares, red deer, and mammoths predominate. Stone implements were predominantly gathered locally, though quartz porphyry from Bükkszentkereszt and obsidian from Zemplén were also discovered.

8. CSERÉPFALU, SUBA-LYUK CAVE

Lillafüred is home to two showcaves in the Bükk National Park that are open to tourists.

The Anna Cave was formed 150-200 thousand years ago from travertine deposits from the Szinva karst spring. The cavities of the cave were created by the vaulting of niches under the dense vegetation sloping down to the waterfalls, which were further shaped by the water seeking its way out of the springs.

The St. Stephen Cave formed in approximately 240 million years old, well-karstified limestone formed during the Triassic period. Most of its large chambers end in high crevices and chimneys. The passages are decorated with stalactites, stalagmites of various shapes, and stalagmite columns.
For information on visiting the caves, please visit www.bnpi.hu.

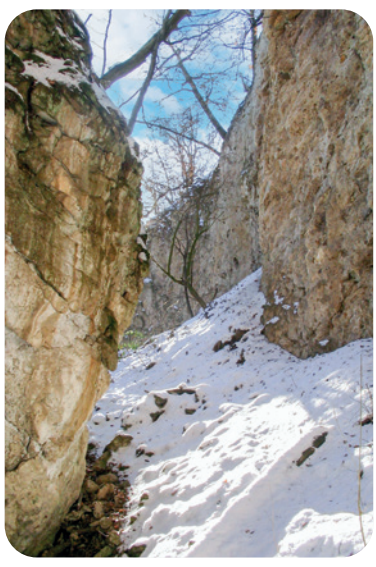
9. LILLAFÜRED, ANNA AND ST. STEPHEN CAVES

The formations of Castle Hill and the gorge in Szarvaskő are basalt lava flows and pillow lava clusters that flowed down the slopes of submarine volcanic cones. Looking down from Akasztó Hill, we can see that the lava "pillows" formed clusters and slid down the former slope in different directions.

The spectacular gorge of the Eger Stream, 5–20 m high and lined with basalt bodies, may have formed at the end of the late Pliocene, about 2–3 million years ago.

The ruins of the former castle stand on the top of Castle Hill.
The Castle Hill in Szarvaskő and its surroundings are a highly protected area.
The nature trail presenting the surroundings of Szarvaskő is open to the public.

10. SZARVASKŐ, CASTLE HILL



The valley, accessible from Cserépváralja via a red-marked hiking trail and then a red cross-marked trail, reveals heavily compacted ignimbrite (fire rock). The volcanic sediment, compacted at high temperatures, cooled slowly and developed shrinkage cracks. During subsequent weathering, the cracks widened, and the rock body broke into steep, vertically standing pieces and columns.

The valley is 1.1 km long, 50–55 m deep, 100–300 m wide at the top, and 30–80 m wide at the bottom. Its sides are lined with beautiful rectangular fire-cut blocks. The largest ones are 8–10 m high and 2–3 m wide.

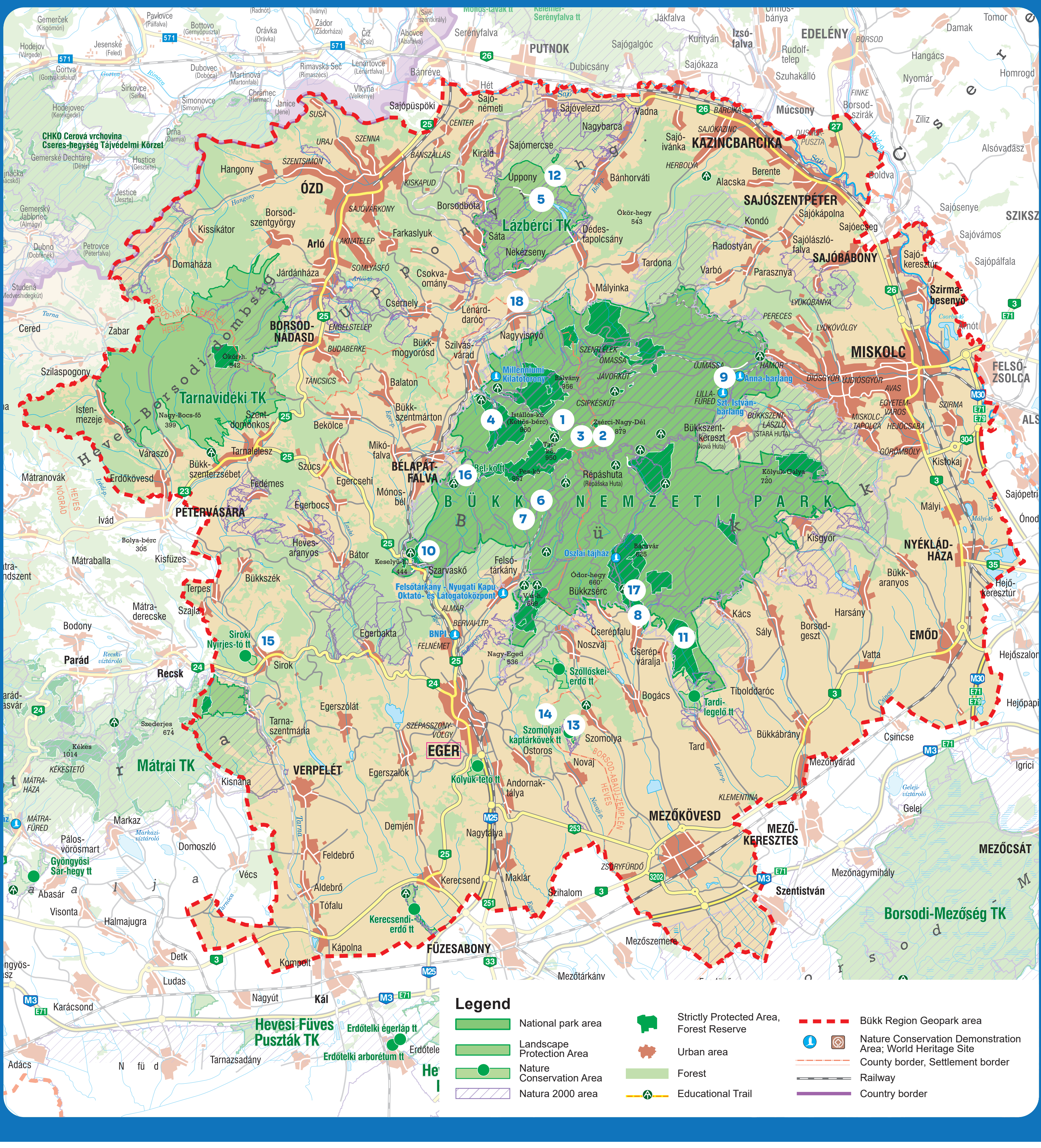
The valley is part of the Bükk National Park. It can be visited freely on the tourist trail.

11. CSERÉPVÁRALJA, KŐ VALLEY

The Damasa Gorge cuts into the Egeres valley stream near the village of Bánhorváti.
The Egeres Valley runs along a rock boundary, with andesite on the left and loose, clayey-sandy marine sediments on the right, on which the cracked edges of the andesite cover easily slip after melting or heavy rainfall.
Earthquakes in the 18th and 19th centuries played a major role in the formation of the gorge.

A winding system of passages has developed between the fallen rock blocks. The last few meters of the Damasa Gorge are enclosed by supporting blocks, forming a real false cave. Adjacent to its debris-blocked end, there is a gorge that branches off and then rejoins, divided by rocks.
The Damasa Gorge is a highly protected natural area. It can be visited freely from Sajóvelezd via an educational trail and from Bánhorváti via a tourist trail.

12. BÁNHORVÁTI, DAMASA GORGE



13. BEEHIVE ROCKS OF SZOMOLYA

The most characteristic surface formations associated with volcanism in the Bükk Foothills are the beehive rocks. People in ancient times carved chambers into these cone-shaped stone towers. The largest group of beehive rocks in the Bükk Foothills, containing the most chambers, is located on the southwestern slope of Vén Hill in Szomolya.

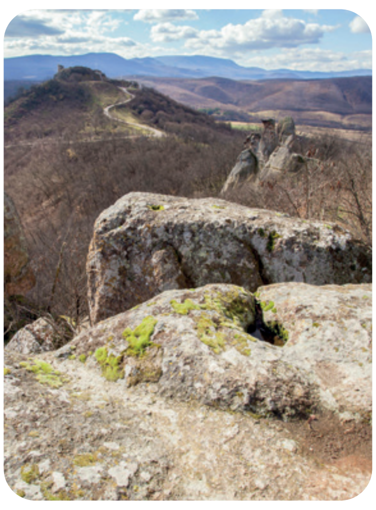
There are 117 chambers in the eight larger rock groups of the rhyolite tuff range stretching above Kaptár Meadow. The most beautiful is the IV rock range, also known as Királyszéke, which is divided into a larger cone resembling a beehive oven and several smaller cones, with 48 caves visible on it. The Beehive Rocks of Somolya Nature Reserve is managed by the Bükki National Park Directorate. Its educational trail is open to the public.

14. SZOMOLYA, KIRÁLY-KÚT SHELTER

The inhabitants of the Bükk Foothills once fashioned their dwellings and agricultural structures from easily carved yet durable rhyolite tuff. Alongside cave dwellings, modest agricultural buildings (byres and storage facilities), and larger wine cellars, expansive stone enclosures with substantial floor areas, often capable of accommodating entire flocks of sheep or herds of cattle emerged.

At Király-kút, situated between Eger and Szomolya, an extensively hewn stone enclosure is visible. The enclosure may formerly have served as a manorial or tithe storehouse, whose function may have undergone multiple transformations across the centuries. Presently, it functions as a winter shelter for a grey cattle herd.

15. IDOL STONES AND SIROK CASTLE



Volcanic activity some 17 million years ago created the rocks that form Sirok Castle Hill.

Over millions of years, external forces shaped the volcanic tuffs into whimsical rock formations. The spectacular tuff towers were formed from the more erosion-resistant consolidated rocks.

The so-called Idol Stones, the steep towers of the Priest, the Monk and the Nun, line the ridge of Castle Hill and rise 5–6 meters above the saddle.

Sirok Castle, built on volcanic tuff and towering above the village, is a historical monument with a rich program of events.

16. BÉL-KŐ PEAK

The prominent rock crest of Bél-kő is composed of Bükk-fennsík Limestone, deposited during the Triassic period. The sediment formed in the sea was thrust upward by orogeny and elevated, eventually being levelled to a peneplain surface by the end of the Late Eocene. The summit of the mountain was mutilated by nearly a century of limestone quarrying, with only the western slope remaining intact. The limestone constituting Bél-kő is highly susceptible to karstification, with jagged depressions and karren fields having formed upon its surface. The caverns of Bél-kő were largely obliterated by quarrying; only a ruined shaft remains on the southern slope of the ridge, representing the remnant of the upper section of a substantial water-sink cavern. At the northern foot of the mountain is visible the remains of a slate quarry opened for cement production, whose lithology consists of deep-marine claystone deposited during the Jurassic period. The Jurassic claystone and the Triassic limestone formed tens of millions of years earlier were repositioned to their present location through tectonic movements; the striations resulting from the sliding of adjacent rock bodies are clearly discernible upon the precipitous limestone faces.

17. HÓR VALLEY LIMESTONE QUARRY

The limestone quarry situated on the eastern side of the Hór Valley, which opens near Cserépfalu, was formed during the Triassic period of geological time, approximately 240–220 million years ago, under oceanic conditions. The calcareous material, accumulated primarily upon a reef and composed of the limestone skeletons of defunct reef-building organisms, is abundantly recognisable to the naked eye: calcareous sponges, brachiopods, bivalves, gastropods, corals, calcareous algae, crinoids, and foraminifers (unicellular organisms with perforated shells).

From one of the cavities exposed during quarrying operations, vertebrate fauna dating from 180,000 years ago was recovered. In addition to remains of rodents favouring open grassy steppe environments, the remains of extinct large predators (cave wolves, cave hyenas, cave bears) and their prey species (Pleistocene wild horses, giant deer, and large-bodied fallow deer) were also discovered within the cavern.

18. NAGYVISNYÓ, MIHALOVITS QUARRY

The Mihalovits quarry located at the end of József Attila St. in the villages of Nagyvisnyó reveals the black, bituminous Nagyvisnyó Limestone Formation, which formed 260–252 million years ago during the Late Permian period.

The formation consists of thin-bedded black limestone, with marl and calcareous marl between the limestone beds. Based on the dip of the layers, the quarry was established in the core of a downward-sloping layer sequence.

The rock is extremely rich in fossils. The remains of extinct animals accumulated in a highly oxygen-deficient environment and have been preserved in almost perfect condition. Typical fossils include calcareous algae, foraminifera, shells, ostracods, and bivalves.

The quarry is a protected geological key section. It is open to the public.

Hello! I am Lina, the fairy of the Bükk Plateau. I derived my name from the stemless carline thistle (Carlina acaulis), which features upon the emblem of the Bükki National Park. Flowers are the smile of the forest, and trees are its lungs—come, I shall reveal to you the verdant wonders, and do promise me that you shall safeguard them!

Greetings! My name is Litho, the scholar of stone. I am acquainted with every fold of the mountain, the depths of caverns, and the secrets locked within rock—my name derives from these very features, for the lithosphere constitutes the Earth's outermost, solid crust. Accompany me, and together we shall give voice to the silent stones!

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