

## **Vse je v naših bučah**

### **What the Pumpkin Gives Us**

Tradition, knowledge-sharing, handmade creations, mouth-watering delicacies, and culture – this is how one could sum up the full-day programme that awaited visitors on Saturday, 24 May 2025, in Csörötnek, at the major event titled „What the Pumpkin Gives Us – From Pumpkin Seeds Across Generations to Healthy, ‘PUMP-KINED’ Everyday Life”.

The first event of the small-scale project co-financed under the Slovenia–Hungary Interreg Programme brought a beautiful old tradition back to life in the morning: pumpkin seed oil pressing. The demonstration took place in the former oil mill with the cooperation of four teams whose oils were then judged by a panel. Friends, acquaintances, and family members worked together in a traditional spirit of communal work on this physically demanding yet highly community-building activity. First, the men ground the seeds with a hand-cranked mill into a large wooden trough. Then the women added warm water to the ground seeds and kneaded the moist mixture for a long time, until it no longer crumbled apart and reached the right fineness. The next stage was also in the hands of the women: the well-kneaded mixture was placed into a metal cauldron and roasted on a wood-fired stove, requiring constant and quick stirring to avoid burning. Once the mass had reached the ideal consistency, it was placed—still hot—into the press, where the men took over again. Four strong men worked the press by hand, moving quickly and in unison. From the 3 kilograms of pumpkin seeds provided to each team, they extracted around 1 litre of oil. The oil mill was filled to the brim with young and old alike, surrounded by the rich, intense aroma of freshly pressed oil and an atmosphere of cheerful camaraderie. After the pressing came the evaluation of the fresh oils based on taste, texture, and yield. A Slovenian team took the top prize, yet all participants were truly winners, enriched with new knowledge, skills, experiences, and friendships.

In the afternoon, local hostesses dazzled visitors at the Akácfa Camping with a competition-cum-tasting of pumpkin seed-based dishes. The beautifully laid tables featured sweet and savoury treats alike: cakes, scones, braided breads, strudels, salads, spreads—anything that could be made from pumpkin or its seeds.

Vendors also joined in the theme, offering artisanal products such as locally produced pumpkin seed oil, pumpkin seed ice cream, pumpkin-based delicacies, pumpkin seed bread, other sourdough baked goods, dill-flavoured pumpkin stew, and much more—everything to delight the eye and the palate. In the camping’s community area, a forum was held on the beneficial effects of pumpkin and pumpkin seed oil on health, where a doctor, pharmacist, herbalist, chef, and naturopath shared their expertise and practical advice with the large audience. The highly interactive discussion was followed by the announcement of the children’s art competition results. Nearly a hundred beautiful entries were submitted, created using mixed techniques (drawing, painting, collage, gluing) and incorporating natural

materials. The expert jury gave comprehensive evaluations, and the children proudly and joyfully received their certificates and prizes.

The late afternoon was dedicated to cultural performances: Beáta Jurina and Arnold Szilinyi entertained with retro hits, the Slovenian tamburitza orchestra and the folk song circle from Gasztony performed folk songs fitting the occasion, and the evening's highlight was the Somló Banda, whose refined musicianship brought traditional village rock 'n' roll and dance tunes to life on violin, viola, double bass, and with exceptional vocals.

Throughout the day, visitors could also enjoy engaging side programmes such as pasta-making and shaping workshops, handicraft activities, sound bowl therapy, herbal presentations, and gastronomic demonstrations.

With nearly 300 visitors on site, thousands of online views, and numerous written and verbal expressions of appreciation, it is clear that dedicating a day to the pumpkin in Csörötnek was well worth it—showcasing the possibilities it holds for science, gastronomy, art, and culture alike.

The project partners believe they have demonstrated that pumpkins, along with their traditions and gastronomy, are a shared treasure of the cross-border region—cherished by both Hungarian and Slovenian communities—not only for their exceptional taste and health benefits, but also because their cultivation, processing, and consumption are deeply rooted in the region's common past, and, judging by the success of this event, will likely remain an integral part of its future.