



## CASTLES of UKRAINE. KAMIANETS - PODILSKYI



Ukrainian poetess Lesya Ukrainka called the majestic fortress of Kamianets-Podilskyi flower on stone. This "flower" of striking beauty amazes everyone, who has a chance to see it, for over six centuries. Harmonically inscribed in fabulous landscape and enclosed in the river loop, the medieval fortress is one of the most interesting and beautiful historical monuments that is included in the seven wonders of Ukraine.

The uniqueness of the powerful defensive complex, which is preserved till nowadays significantly better than other fortifications on the territory of the country, is in harmonic combination of natural defense and hand-made impregnable fortifications. The first fortress appeared here back in the times of the Kyivan Rus, when it was a central part of the town with dirt-wall and wooden wall. In the 14th century Lithuanian Princes Koryatowicz, who are considered to be the founders of Kamianets-Podilskyi, built on its place a stone castle that became the main out-post of the Lithuanian power at Podol. Afterwards the Kamianets-Podilskyi fort was a strategic defensive point of the Poles and later on the Turks owned it. For centuries the fortress served as a reliable defense for the town and its residents. Just in the early 19th century, soon after Kamianets-Podilskyi became part of Russia, the castle lost its defensive importance. First military quarters were located here, and then the fortress buildings were turned into prison facilities.

Despite uneasy history, the fortifications of the castle remained almost intact and today are the part of the National Historic and Architectural Reserve "Kamianets-Podilskyi" that is included in the List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. On the premises of the fortress - in towers and in dungeons - the unique thematic exhibitions that illustrate different pages of its history are created.

But the most important thing that Kamianets-Podilskyi Fortress has preserved is the authentic atmosphere of the Middle Ages, with which each stone is filled here. In order to feel this atmosphere in full, the guests are offered to change in the clothes of those times, shoot with ancient crossbows, forge a coin by themselves...

Knightly tournaments, festivals of historic reconstruction and music shows are constantly held on the territory of the fortress. The most spectacular, however, is the festival of balloons that gathers yearly thousands of spectators in Kamianets-Podilskyi.

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