

www.slovakia.travel

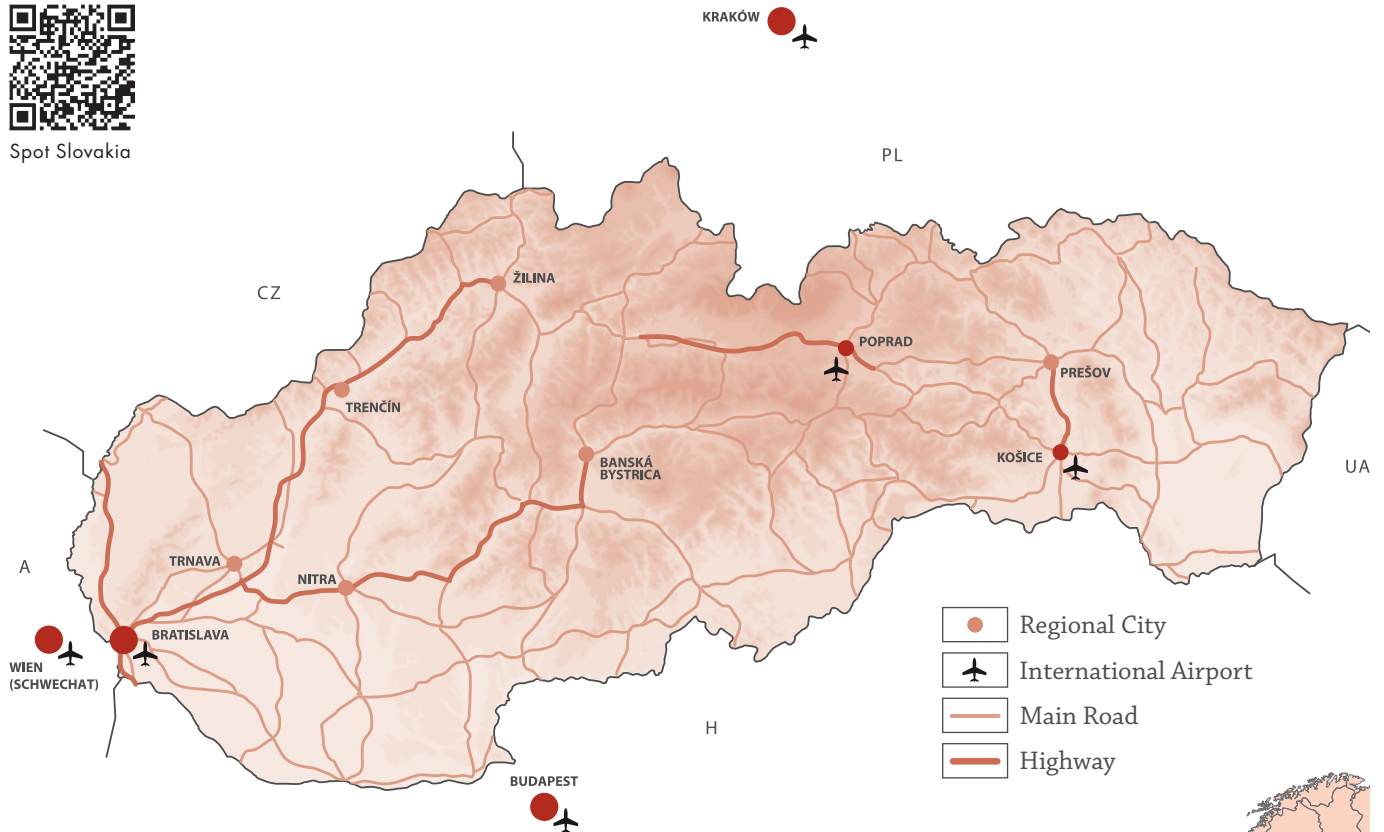


Slovakia





Spot Slovakia



Slovak Republic

Formation date: 1 January 1993

Land area: 49 035 km²

Population: 5 408 148
(as of 30.9.2012)

Capital: Bratislava

National language: Slovak

Currency: Euro (from the of 1st January 2009)

Bordering countries: Hungary (655 km), Poland (541 km), Czech Republic (252 km), Austria (107 km), Ukraine (98 km)

Time zone: Central European Time (GMT +1 hour), summer time (March-November: GMT + 2 hours)

Distances:

- Bratislava – Wien / Schwechat-Airport: 80 km / 60 km
- Budapest / Airport: 200 km / 218 km
- Banská Bystrica: 210 km
- Košice: 400 km
- Poprad: 332 km
- Žilina: 202 km
- Košice – Budapest-Airport: 268 km
- Poprad: 118 km
- Poprad – Kraków-Airport: 156 km

Cultural superlatives ...

The most extensive medieval fortress complex in Central Europe – **Spiš Castle**.

The easternmost western style of cathedral in Europe – the Gothic **St. Elizabeth's Cathedral in Košice**.

The tallest wooden Gothic altar in the world – **in the Church of St. Jacob in Levoča** (18.6 m).

The oldest mining university in Europe – **Banská akadémia (Mining Academy) in Banská Štiavnica (1763)**.

The oldest perpetual ongoing concern – **the Kremnica Mint** (since 1328).

Natural superlatives ...

One of the largest sinter formations in the world – the dripstone **Kvapel' rožňavských jaskyniarov** (Krásnohorská jaskyňa cave, 32.6 m tall, with a diameter of 12 m at base).

The largest river island in Europe – **Žitný ostrov** (132 612 ha) which is also the largest reservoir of drinking water.

The only aragonite cave in Europe – **Ochtinská aragonitová jaskyňa** (in the karst territory Slovenský kras).

The only coldwater geyser in Slovakia and a rarity in Europe – **the geyser in Herľany** (jetting water to a height of 15-20 m).



A Little Country of Big Experiences

Slovakia is a unique country, because in a relatively small territory you can find just about anything. From natural wonders, historic monuments, rich folk culture and folklore, through to fun and entertainment in the busy city streets. Let yourself become enchanted by its beauties, and enjoy the unforgettable atmosphere you will find here. You will discover the lure of natural scenery, combined with a rich history, culture and traditions. Discover Slovakia – The Little Big Country.

Come and see for yourself the rich natural diversity, still vibrant with unchained freedom, the elegance of deep valleys guarded by majestic mountain peaks with crystal clear mountain tributaries and streams. Revel in the special experience of getting to know scenic historical towns and impressive world heritage monuments. Sample the

distinct flavours of regional specialties and traditional national cuisine. These are just a few lines from the fascinating novel, the author of which is Slovak nature itself, and from the history, culture and tradition of the Slovak nation. So if you would like to discover other unique attractions and spend your free time enjoying many exciting memorable experiences, take these few lines as a personal invitation.

Let yourself be inspired and visit places that will satisfy your idea of a much desired holiday. All you have to do is choose from the rich choice of destinations on the national tourism portal at

www.slovakia.travel





The Little Big City

The beauty on the Dunaj river, just one of the titles given to the Slovak capital Bratislava. The city spreads out along the base of the Malé Karpaty (Small Carpathians mountain range) sitting astride the longest river in Europe, the Danube (Dunaj). Bratislava is one of the youngest capitals in the world, but its rich history was chronicled over two thousand years ago.

Visitors are attracted by the intimacy of this relatively small city, which pulses with life and culture despite or because of its size. The most attractive part of Bratislava is surely Staré mesto (Old



Town), where you can wander the narrow streets and admire impressive historical monuments. The most visited and popular sites in the city are also its most dominant monuments, namely Bratislava Castle, St. Martin's Cathedral, the Primate's Palace, St. Michael's Gate, the Old Town Hall, Grassalkovich and Mirbach palaces, and Slavin war memorial. The city centre is full of gorgeous hidden spots, countless cosy cafes, and excellent restaurants with a truly rich culinary experience. As a modern metropolis, Bratislava boasts a wide choice of accommodation options whatever





your need, even for the most demanding guests who are accustomed to the highest European standards. Throughout the year, the city is the venue for a diverse range of cultural, sporting and gastronomic events, which complement the memorable atmosphere of this picturesque city. The Coronation Celebrations, the Bratislava Music Festival, and the Christmas Market are just some examples worthy of mention.

The surroundings of the city also offer a wide array of ways to spend your free time. Enjoy a boat cruise along the Danube to the nearby ruins of Devín Castle,



sample some fine local wines and culinary specialities from the region of the Small Carpathians, cycle along any of the effortless bike paths along the River Danube, or take a tour of the enchanting castle Červený Kameň. This is just a snapshot of the many things visitors can look forward to in this region, so rich in history.

Tips

- Christmas Market
- Bratislava Marathon
- Slovak Food Festival
- Gurmán Fest Bratislava
- Cultural Summer and Castle Festival Bratislava
- Viva Musica!
- Summer Shakespeare Festival
- Festival of Historic Fencing, Music, Dance and Crafts, Devín Castle
- ÚLUV Craftsmen Days
- Vinobranie (Grape Harvest Fest)

www.visit.bratislava.sk



Cultural heritage

An ideal position at the heart of Europe, a history spanning millennia, and the influence of neighbouring nations, have all left Slovakia with a rich cultural heritage: the Celtic settlements, Roman fortresses, ancient Slavonic cult sites, chateaux and fortified castles of the Hungarian nobility, medieval mining sites, renaissance and baroque palaces, Greek-Catholic and Orthodox wooden churches, Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, the interwar functionalism and socialist realism of developing towns, also contemporary works reflecting the latest trends.

The traces of Slovak history lead to cities and towns where the entrance gateways, massive bulwarks, watchtowers and preserved medieval architecture bear historic references to their distant



past. The oldest royal free town, which for centuries was also the main clerical centre of the former Kingdom of Hungary, is the town of Trnava, referred to as “Little Rome” also thanks to its many beautiful churches. A rare historic wealth can be discovered in the 18 heritage conservation areas that produce an unforgettable atmosphere with their unique beauty, including Bratislava, the town of Trenčín, Žilina, Nitra, and the city of Central Slovakia – Banská Bystrica. In Košice is the most easterly western-style Gothic cathedral in Europe, St. Elisabeth Cathedral, which is also the largest church in Slovakia. Košice is also the European Capital of Culture 2013. A stunning view of the town of Spišská Nová Ves and its sur-

roundings awaits from the tower of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which is the tallest in Slovakia with the most clock faces.

A visit to a Slovak museum or gallery promises many rare treasures. From ancient archaeological excavation sites to Pop Art at the Andy Warhol Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce, which is the only museum of its kind in Europe, and the works of contemporary artists. The four Slovak royal towns of Kežmarok, Stará Ľubovňa, Bardejov and Levoča embody their shared past and glory of medieval revival. Each is home to countless cultural and historical monuments, and an ideal destination for a family holiday, while getting to know the history and atmosphere of the Middle Ages.







Treasures of the past

Majestic gems set impressively against stunning natural scenery concealing the secrets of an ancient past. Castles, chateaux and their ruins have comprised an integral part of Slovak history since time immemorial. These former strongholds of famous noble lords that would resist the onslaughts of enemies and witness key historic events, still have the atmosphere of glory, elegance and romance. The diverse architecture and artistic styles reflecting various historical epochs today guarantee visitors a memorable experience. Each has its own mystical stories to tell, and their own legends.

One of the most beautiful and best-preserved castles is just a few tens of kilometres from Bratislava – Červený Kameň Castle, which thanks to its inimitable charm is a popular filming location. The castle cellars are the most extensive underground areas in Central Europe. History lovers and incurable romantics will be in seventh heaven at the fairytale-like Bojnice Castle, which each year hosts the International Festival of Ghosts and Spirits, when the

castle is the meeting place for ghouls, witches and vampires from all over the world. Orava Castle, the most visited Slovak monument sitting atop a high rock face above the Orava river, was where the first Dracula film was filmed – Nosferatu. Stunning Betliar Manor House, representative hunting house in English-style grounds with artificial cave and waterfall, will charm visitors

with its imperial interior and extensive library.

You can also soak up the unique atmosphere of castles, chateaux and manor houses on a night tour and at any regularly organised events. Many of these enchanting places now also have accommodation, and a full service for wedding receptions and other private functions.







UNESCO heritage monuments

The uniqueness of the most precious treasures from Slovak history has ensured them a place in the UNESCO World Heritage List. By 1993, three localities in Slovakia were listed – Spišský hrad Castle and the surroundings, Banská Štiavnica and Vlkolíneec. They were joined in 2000 by the historic Town

of Bardejov in the Sariš region, and in 2008 by the wooden churches of the Carpathian arc, while the unique complex of monuments from the Spiš region was boosted with the inscription of the Town of Levoča to the list in 2009. The best preserved conservation reserve of folk architecture in Slovakia, with

distinctive original wooden buildings, Vlkolíneec, lies surrounded by the gorgeous nature of the Liptov region, and gives visitors the chance feel the magic of marvellous traditions and unrepeatable history. Banská Štiavnica, situated at the centre of an extinct volcano among the Štiavnické vrchy mountains, is a magical





and mystical place that by its intimate family-like atmosphere attracts visitors who have had enough of the noise of the city, for instance. The distinguishing rectangular town square with stunning Basilica minor of St. Egidius can be found in Slovakia's most Gothic town, Bardejov. The Spiš region is home to countless unique monuments, the most dominant historic feature undoubtedly being Spišský hrad Castle, the largest fortress ruin complex in Central Europe, together with its surroundings. The tallest wooden altar in the world, made from lime tree wood and standing 18.62 m tall, was the work of the most renowned

Slovak woodcarver and sculptor, Master Pavol from Levoča, and is housed in the Church of St. Jacob in Levoča. Some of the most interesting and important reflections of the past in Slovakia can also be seen in sacral architecture. In addition to fine examples in towns, visitors will be enchanted by the many picturesque wooden churches mostly in rural East Slovakia. The oldest is the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Hervartov, with its stunning Gothic icons and wall murals. The preserved condition and uniqueness of these monuments surrounded by astounding Slovak nature guarantees an unforgettable experience.



Monuments of folk architecture

The life of our ancestors, their creativity and art are presented in Slovakia primarily at open-air museums, with monument reserves of popular architecture. Thanks to these exceptional expositions, today you can see unique elements of traditional folk building methods and folk culture. They provide a picture of what the dwellings of Slovak people

looked like in the past. These architectonic treasures were made using simple tools, but with unbelievable technical precision, artistic inventiveness and functionality. Visitors will be captivated by the exceptional wooden log structures, wooden churches built without nails, houses carved into rocks, and extraordinary underground galleries.

A true rarity among monument reserves of popular architecture is the delightful village of Vlkolínec. The distinctive village of Čičmany will charm you with its fairytale wooden houses with distinctive white decorations, as will the historic town of Banská Štiavnica with its open-air Mining Museum. The Slovak Village Museum in Martin, which





gives an overall insight into traditional building culture and housing produced throughout Slovakia, is the largest outdoor ethnographic exposition of its kind. When touring Slovakia, be sure to visit the Orava Village Museum in Zuberec, the Liptov Village Museum in Pribylina, the Kysuce Village Museum in Vychylovka, the Šariš Museum in

Bardejov, and the Vihorlat Museum in Humenné. Just about every region in Slovakia can boast its own treasures of folk tradition. Sites with folk architecture are an ideal tip for an all-day excursion or as a way to enrich your holiday in Slovakia.



Tips

- Meeting of melodeon players or the National festival of Fújara players in Čičmany
- Turčianske folklórne slávnosti Fest, Slovak Village Museum in Martin
- Podroháčske folklórne slávnosti Fest, Orava Village Museum in Zuberec
- St. Hubert's Sunday, Liptov Village Museum in Pribylina
- Night at the Museum at the open-air exposition of Bardejov Spa



Exceptional folklore and folk tradition

Since time immemorial, people in Slovakia lived in harmony with nature, and with respect and humility for their predecessors, customs and traditions, from which the way of life, folk culture and folklore evolved. Many unique traditional customs have been preserved, whether as folk architecture, song or

dance, distinct customs, or traditional arts and crafts. Examples of the skills and artistic feel of the Slovak nation can best be experienced at folk architecture conservation reserves in Osturňa, Ždiar and Podbieľ, rock dwellings in Brhlovce, and typical wine-making buildings of Stará Hora in Sebechleby.

Folklore music full of the inimitable tones of the 'Fujara', cimbalom and melodeon will get everyone on their feet. The Fujara, a striking musical instrument that emits melancholic tones, had its unique sound inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list of oral and intangible cultural heritage.



Horehronie, Spiš and Šariš. Visitors can admire the unique log architecture at heritage conservation reserves in Osturňa, Ždiar and Podbieľ, rock dwellings in Brhlovce, and typical wine-making buildings of Stará Hora in Sebechleby.

A true and exceptional traditional atmosphere can be soaked up at any of the colourful folklore festivals and celebrations in Hrušov, Zuberec and Heľpa.





Folklore events are also a unique opportunity to see traditional arts and crafts such as wire-smithing, lace-making, basket weaving and pottery. Among the best events for seeing the works of masters of traditional crafts and witnessing first hand how they apply their trade, is the European Folk Crafts Fes-

tival held in the second week in July in Kežmarok. A unique place in the culture of Slovaks is attributed to local forms of traditional dress called “kroj”, which are still captivating today with their diversity, vibrant colours and artistic handwork. Many Slovak folk traditions and cus-

tombs have survived to the present day, and each year they burst back into life all over Slovakia. For the beginning of the year, we have the characteristic Shrovetide carnival called “fašiangy”, a time of joy and feasting, at which you can witness the vibrant carnival procession full of inventive masks. It would not be Easter time without the traditional “šibačka” whipping of girls and then splashing them with water. In the summer there are the bonfires of St. John’s Eve, while Christmas, of course, is one of the most magical and richest celebrations of tradition. Slovakia’s rich folk culture produces a special and rare treasure that can only be experienced in such a way in Slovakia.



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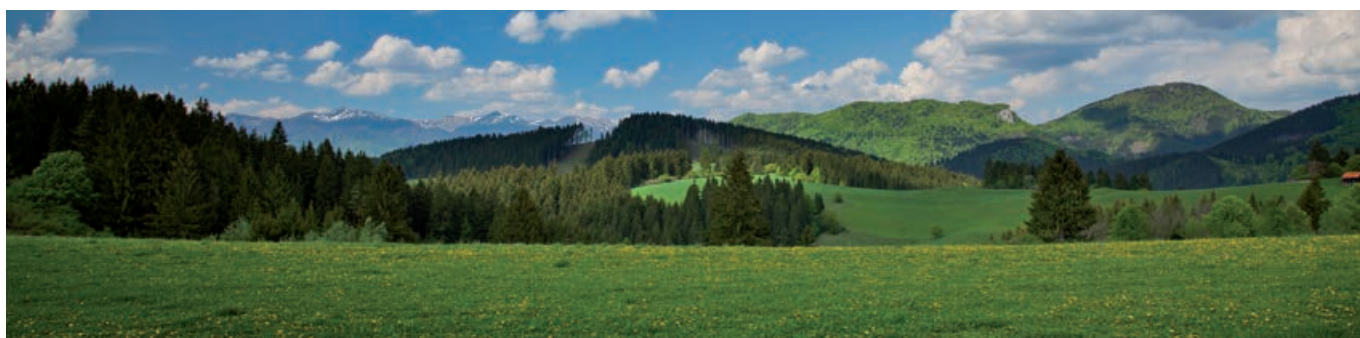


Fascinating nature

With its diversity, Slovak nature captivates every visitor who comes here and discovers its stunning and unique nooks and crannies. It not only boasts the smallest mountain range in the world, the most expansive karst territory in Central Europe, and primeval virgin forests, but also offers all kinds of fascinating and special experiences by a visit to any of the country's nine national parks. The symbols of the oldest, Tatranský národný park (Tatra National Park), which since 1993 has been classed as a UNESCO biosphere reserve, are the beautiful mountain flower, the Edelweiss and one of the rarest endemites,

the Tatra chamois. The attractive countryside of plateaux, gullies and waterfalls is protected by the Slovenský raj National Park. The wild mountain countryside of the Muránska planina National Park with rich range of protected species of flora and fauna can be seen from the back of a special breed of horse, the Hucul. The largest karst territory in Central Europe is in Slovenský kras National Park, with over 1000 caves and ravines, some UNESCO listed. Visitors can enjoy the stunning natural scenery of the smallest park while rafting along the river Dunajec, which marks the Polish-Slovak border. A typical feature

of this national park Poloniny in East Slovakia is the unique mountain ridge meadows called "poloniny", which is where it gets its name. Here we can also find exceptional UNESCO listed primeval Carpathian beech forests. An interesting feature is the "Poloniny dark sky park", which is the darkest place in Slovakia in terms of light pollution. The therapeutic serenity and enchanting atmosphere of romantic spots, undisturbed by the bustle of the city, still offer a true escape from the worries of everyday life, and give nature lovers the perfect getaway for relaxing and recuperating new strength.







Subterranean treasures

Few countries are blessed with such a large volume of diverse underground karst formations as Slovakia. There are over 6 200 known caves, eight of which can be visited. They include the most significant and most precious, the UNESCO listed caves of the Slovenský kras (Slovak Karst) and Dobšinská ľadová jaskyňa (Dobšina Ice Cave). Of special value is the Ochtinská aragonitová jaskyňa (Ochtiná Aragonite Cave), the only cave of its kind in Eu-

rope. Its subterranean chambers are adorned with crystals of aragonite, formed in some places into the shape of fragile corals and snow white shrublets. In Domica we find the largest known cave of the Slovak Karst, where you can experience a trip on little boats down the River Styx. Slovak caves give visitors the chance to experience something different and to discover the treasures of the mysterious karst underworld.



Caves open to the public

Belianska jaskyňa
Bystrianska jaskyňa
Demänovská jaskyňa slobody
Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa
Dobšinská ľadová jaskyňa
Jaskyňa Domica
Jaskyňa Driny
Gombasecká jaskyňa
Harmanecká jaskyňa
Jasovská jaskyňa
Ochtinská aragonitová jaskyňa
Važecká jaskyňa

Restricted access caves

Bojnická hradná jaskyňa
Jaskyňa mŕtvych netopierov (The Dead Bats' Cave)
Jaskyňa Zlá diera
Krásnohorská jaskyňa
Malá Stanišovská jaskyňa
Prepoštská jaskyňa – primeval museum



Relax and have fun in the water



Water can be referred to as Slovakia's greatest treasure. The country is home to some of the most substantial natural stocks of fresh drinking water in the world. This is mostly thanks to the largest river island in Europe – Žitný ostrov, in the south of Slovakia. In addition to giving life vitality, water in Slovakia also provides great fun and pleasant relaxation.

The beauty of the wild mountain tributaries and crystal clear icy tarns bless your stay in the mountains, while bathing in natural lakes, dams, rivers and pools will refresh you on a hot summer day. Some of the attractions include a raft trip down the river Dunajec, or on the rivers Váh or Orava on wooden rafts, often accompanied by a special programme and tasting of local culinary specialities. White water rafting is also a great thrill on the rivers Belá, Dunajec and Hron.

Modern thermal swimming baths and aqua parks provide an oasis of relaxation not just in the summer, but also in the winter, when bathing below the snow-capped mountain peaks offers

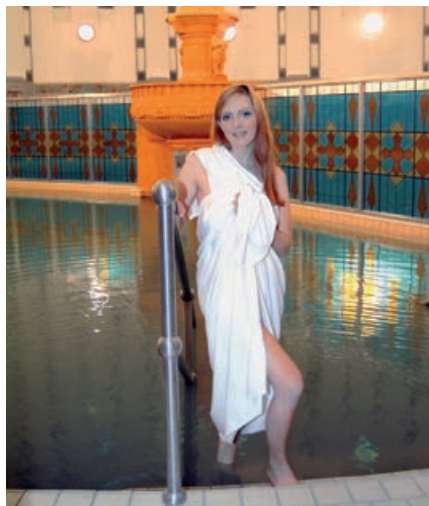


a truly exceptional experience. Water areas also have many opportunities for sports, and they host many cultural and sporting events throughout the summer.



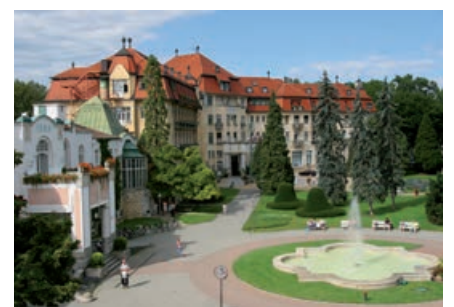
Health from nature

Slovakia is a country blessed with underground wealth, as the healing power and beneficial effects on the human organism bubble up to the surface from mineral springs. Thanks to their curative power to treat disease and revive health, they have been regarded as miraculous and remarkable since time immemorial. The therapeutic spas in Slovakia are among the oldest and best quality in Central Europe. Possibly the best known spa resort is Piešťany, which became renowned not only for its unique thermal mineral waters, but also for its therapeutic sulphuric mud. Rajecké Teplice enchants all its visitors with its exclusive antiquated atmosphere, while



Turčianske Teplice spa will spoil you with its unique procedure, the Golden cure. Two spas are unique in Europe. Firstly, in Sklené Teplice is the spelaean steam pool, appropriately named "Parenica", then in Trenčianske Teplice is the Hammam Turkish baths. The exceptionally clean mountain air of the Vysoké Tatry (High Tatra mountains), which are home to several climatic spas, help the treatment of respiratory diseases in adult and child patients alike.

The unique atmosphere of Slovak spa towns is complemented by their attractive surroundings and opportunities for active leisure time and cultural experiences.







Cycling through Slovakia



Set in the lap of Slovak nature, which offers a rich array of fascinating experiences, enthusiasts of active and healthy relaxation can enjoy the breathtaking rock massifs, canyons and ravines, magical mountain valleys, meandering streams and cascading waterfalls, rare fauna and flora and so much more, from the saddle of one of the most ecological means of transport, a bicycle.

In addition to astonishing natural beauties, cyclists in Slovakia will discover all kinds of unique cultural heritage as medieval towns, romantic castles, chateaux and ruins, glorious manor houses and exceptional archaeological findings.

One of the most attractive cycling routes is the long-distance cycling trail “Across Slovakia by bike”. Along the route, visitors will see many unique monuments and natural wonders. The route leads from the lowlands around the River Danube, along the vineyards of the Malé Karpaty mountains (Little Carpathians), through the scenic regions of Považie and Kysuce, the mountain regions of Orava and Liptov, then below the Nízke Tatry (Low Tatras) and Vysoké Tatry (High Tatras) mountain ranges to Poprad, or straight on to Slovenský raj National Park. The route around 750 km and is made up of long-distance marked cycling trails, which offer many opportunities for discovering those special spots in Slovakia from the comfort of your bike, and by using regional cycling trails.

Those who enjoy an adrenalin rush can try freeride or downhill courses at bike parks in the Nízke Tatry and Vysoké Tatry mountain ranges, Bachledova dolina valley, Malinô Brdo and Oščadnica.



Across Slovakia (bike trails)

Dunajská cyklistická cesta
Hornádska cyklomagistrála
Kysucká cyklomagistrála
Liptovská cyklomagistrála
Malokarpatská cyklomagistrála
Moravská cyklistická cesta
Oravská cyklomagistrála
Popradská cyklomagistrála
Vážska cyklomagistrála

www.vitajtecyklisti.sk



Active leisure



The natural environment of Slovakia offers those who enjoy active holidays many ways to enjoy free time or sport. Whether mountain hiking, rock climbing, adrenalin sports, exhilarating fun in the water or in the air, anyone who loves activity, adventure and active relaxation will be spoilt for choice.

Visitors can discover hidden gems of Slovak regions on over 14 000 km of marked hiking trails, or on over 10 000 km of marked bike trails. Admire impressive canyons, waterfalls, gullies and rock faces of Slovenský raj, the unique karst formations of the Muránska

planina and Slovenský kras, Jánošíkove diery in the Malá Fatra mountain range, virgin primeval forests in Poloniny, or conquer one of the peaks of Slovakia's highest mountain range, but the world's smallest, Vysoké Tatry, with 25 peaks over 2 500 m. Every passionate tourist will also appreciate the exciting experiences of Slovakia's most beautiful, second highest mountain range, Nízke Tatry, spanning almost 100 km, or from a tour in the great hiking environment of the Chočské vrchy, Strážovské vrchy or Súľovské vrchy highlands.

Adrenalin sport lovers will appreciate the captivating scenery of picturesque Slovakia from an air balloon, hang-glider or by parachute. Water sports enthusiasts can test their skills on the white waters of Čunovo or in Liptovský Mikuláš. Golfers can improve their swing, accuracy and patience at perfectly tended golf courses set in beautiful surroundings near towns and mountain resorts.

One thing is for sure, all fans of active leisure and a healthy lifestyle can satisfy their desires and dreams when spending a holiday in Slovakia.



Winter sports paradise

Ski runs for all ability levels, stunning runs for snowboarding enthusiasts, majestic mountain slopes for winter hiking, in combination with the scenery of the snow-capped mountain peaks, everything to be found in the Slovak mountains in the winter. Whether it is the Vysoké or Nízke Tatry, or Malá Fatra and Veľká Fatra mountain ranges, they have large modern tourist resorts, and smaller quaint areas with a charming atmosphere ideal for beginners, families with children or recreational

skiers. Ski-alpinists can test their limits on the demanding winter terrain, away from the crowded pistes surrounded by the mountain silence, where they can ski on virgin snow. In addition to organised ski runs, Slovak ski resorts also have cross-country trails, snowboard areas, ski schools for young and old, and ski equipment rental. If skiing is not for you, try one of the many adrenalin attractions, like snowtubing, kitewing, toboggan and sledge runs, or skating. Most resorts have artificial

snow equipment, with the option of evening skiing. The best resorts also have many restaurants, après ski bars and fun attractions, with regular interesting events. One of the most popular winter sports is dog sled races, as Slovakia provides perfect conditions for the sport. The mountain village of Turecká is the regular venue for the Krňáčkové preteky races, where visitors can ride in a traditional wooden sleigh, and so turn simple sledging into an exhilarating experience.



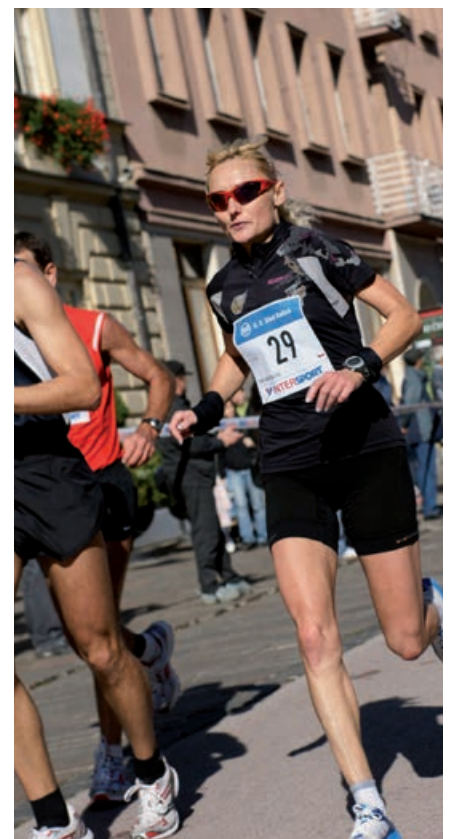


Interesting events

Visitors to Slovakia will be spoilt for choice with the many unique regular sporting, cultural and folklore events, for instance, which guarantee an unforgettable atmosphere.

Each year the Slovak capital – Bratislava is host to the Coronation Celebrations, which show life in medieval times with kings and queens, nobility, troubadours and thousands of onlookers. For a presentation of top musical composition from home and abroad, there is no better choice than the most prestigious international festival in Slovakia – Bratislava Music Festival (BHS). When it comes to open-air summer music festivals, the Bažant Pohoda festival in Trenčín is the largest in Slovakia. The Art Film Fest in Trenčianske Teplice is among the most significant film events in Central Europe. For a display of the folk music and customs of individual regions, go to any of the many folklore festivals. The largest of these festivals are held in Východná, Myjava, Terchová and Detva, where you will be immersed in traditional folk

art and folklore. A haunting atmosphere and good fun is guaranteed if you go to the International Festival of Ghosts and Spirits at Slovakia's most picturesque castle, Bojnice. If you would prefer good humour and satire from some of the top drama, cabaret and music acts from home and abroad, the unique Kremnické gagy festival is for you. The ÚLUV Craftsmen Days in Bratislava is one of the largest and most important events in Slovakia focusing on traditional arts and crafts. Top artisans demonstrate their traditional artistic skills directly on site, and visitors can buy their handcrafted wares. If you are an avid theatregoer, you will find the Zámocké hry zvolenské (Zvolen Castle Games), which take place in the unique atmosphere of the historical courtyard of the castle. When it comes to regular top sporting events in Slovakia, one of the most prominent is the International Peace Marathon, which has taken place in Košice since 1924, making it the oldest marathon in Europe.





Traditional taste of Slovakia

Apart from the rich choice of cultural attractions, historic monuments and wealth of sporting and social possibilities, Slovakia is well qualified to also satisfy the most demanding culinary connoisseur. Traditional Slovak cuisine will appeal especially to lovers of cheeses and dairy products. The most typical Slovak national dish is “bryndzové halušky so slaninou” (Bryndza gnocchi with diced bacon), which can be complemented with a carved wooden mug of thick “žinčica” (fermented sheep whey, like sour buttermilk). Many other Slovak foods are well worth trying, of course, like lard with onions on bread, homemade smoked and non-smoked cheeses, and so on. Visitors should try some typical bean or garlic soup

served in a bowl made from a large bread roll called a “bosniak”, or the ever popular sauerkraut soup with smoked meat, sausage and mushrooms. To end on a sweet note, try the first Slovak product with protected origin, the Skalica Trdelník. A great gastronomic experience awaits you at goose feast time, celebrated most strongly in the village of Slovenský Grob. Tasty Slovak specialities in the typical atmosphere of a wooden “koliba” or “salaš”, the ideal place to combine a culinary experience with enchanting surroundings. Quality food is not only served up at these traditional establishments, which offer excellent regional specialties, but also in modern first class restaurants of course. A culinary feast is

best topped off with a fine Slovak wine from any of the Slovak wine regions, from the Tokaj region in East Slovakia to the Small Carpathian winemaking region in the west.

Gastronomic tips

- Slovak food festival Bratislava
- Grilliada Banská Bystrica
- Gurmán Fest Bratislava
- Gurmán Fest Košice
- Trdlofest Skalica
- World championship in cooking and eating Bryndza halušky in Turecká and Terchová

Wine routes

- Malokarpatská vínná cesta
- Nitrianska kráľovská vínná cesta
- Tokajská vínná cesta
- Hontianska vínná cesta
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