



Košice Region



Little **Big** Country





Košice self-governing region is located at the south-east of Slovakia. It consists of four historic regions named Gemer, Abov, Spiš and Zemplín. The whole region is being very multicultural and multi-linguistic. The Slovaks, the Hungarians, the Czechs, the Gypsies, the Jews as well as descendants of the German colonists have lived here next to each other for long years. Each region has its specific charm, traditions, customs, habits and folk style of living.

The largest mountains located at the west of the country are the Slovak Ore Mountains (literally Slovenské rudohorie), which were named according to their rich mineral repositories. The hearth of the region is the Košice hollow basin and vast lowland areas with suitable conditions for growing grapes. The National Park Slovak Paradise (Slovenský raj) is typical for deep gulleys, waterfalls and skin carst effects; the National Park Slovak Carst (Slovenský kras) is the largest carst area in Slovakia with wealth hidden in the depths of the ground. Besides unusual natural beauties this country offers its visitors also large number of valuable historical sightseeing.



Košice



Horse Railway

Košice city, the second largest city of the country is located in the eastern part of Slovakia, not far from the state border with Hungary (20 km), the Ukraine (80 km) and Poland (90 km). Its favorable location made Košice an important point of trade routes in the past; today it serves as a key economic agglomeration but also as a crossroads of transport routes; railway crossroads and international airport contribute to this fact as well.



Beginning of early settlements can be traced back to later Stone Age. The first written mention about the southern suburb dates back to 1230. Hungarian King Béla IV. invited German colonists to settle this territory in order to replenish the population which number has been decreased after the Tatar invasion in 1241. Documents from 1249 and 1261 mention privileges of "guests", who came to build a new colonization town. The former Slovak village Nižne Košice was included into a newly-established urban unit, which was fortified in 1290. Royal privileges and those of the craftsmanship of Košice craftsmen and mainly prosperous trade predestinated Košice to be of key importance among all East Slovakian regions. Strategic, economic, cultural and social importance of Košice of the 14th and 15th century brought the town a leading position

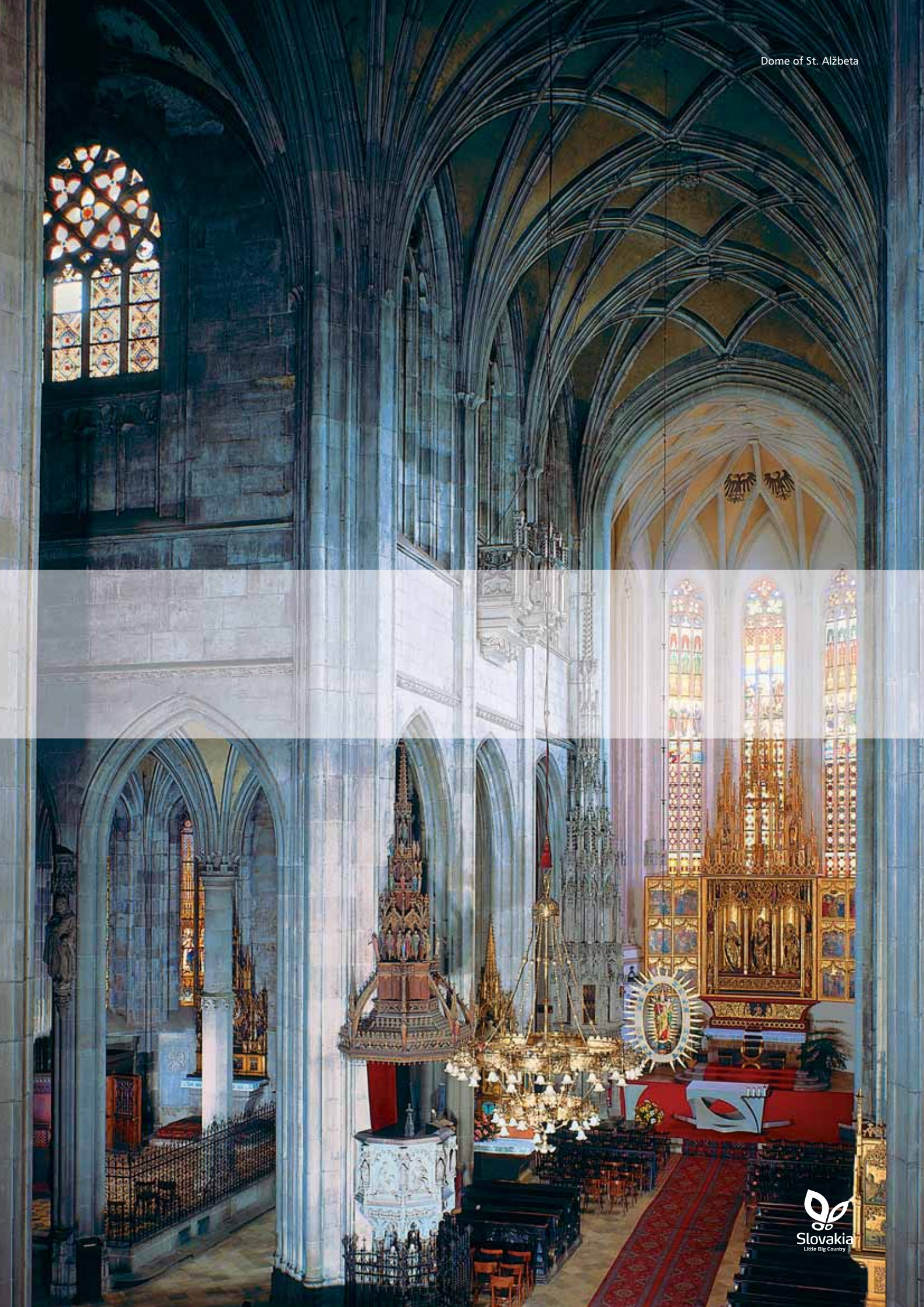


Municipal Coat of Arms



Dome of St. Alžbeta and Church of St. Michal

in whole Hungary. In 1480 the number of Košice citizens was about 10,000; taking into account situation of that time, it used to be one of the largest Central European cities. The city was of course multi-linguistic; for whole centuries the Germans, the Hungarians and the Slovaks naturally existed there next to each other without any problems. The most dominant historical landmark is Dome of St. Alžbeta (Dóm sv. Alžbety) which was built in the culminating Gothic style. Its construction started in 1378, later it continued in several phases. Formerly it should have been built as a building of basilica type with five naves, polygonal apses and two towers in western part of the church. Several natural disasters as well as war conflicts damaged the statics and subsequent repairs changed also the former layout of the church.





Today's appearance of Dome of St. Alžbeta keeps its five naves disposition with the cross of the main and lateral nave and polygonal presbytery. There is a small metal tower located in the referred cross. The southern part contains entrance hall, above which there is located royal oratory at the sides of the chapel. The southern tower – so-called Matej's Tower (Matejova veža) – dating back to 1461 and the Northern one with Rococo style helm roof built in 1775 are just molding the western front side. The western portal contains reliefs with following scenes: Christ in Getseman Garden, Pieta and Shawl of St. Verona. Košice is an important economic and cultural centre of Slovakia today. Several superlatives attract many



East Slovakian Museum

Tower of St. Urban



visitors. Košice is the first European city, which was granted its own Armorial Charta – in 1369 King Ľudovít the Great granted it to a legal entity for the first time in the history. In 1924 the first International Peace Marathon was held which makes it the oldest European and the second oldest world marathon. Dome of St. Alžbeta is a gothic cathedral which is located in the most eastern part of Europe; historic downtown of Košice is the largest dominant reservation of the Slovak Republic. In the territory of the city there is located a zoological garden, which is being the largest one in the Central Europe from the point of its size (288 hectares) and the largest Slovak botanical garden with the widest collection of cactuses. Child railway in Čermeľ Valley (Čermeľské údolie) is the oldest and the only one of its kind in whole Slovakia.



State Theatre of Košice

Church of St. Michal

State Theatre of Košice



Kostol Sv. Michala



Gothic Road



Spiš Castle



Žehra

The Gothic Road enables visitors of Eastern Slovakia to get to know the history of the region. The total length of the Gothic Road is 267 km. In one integrated circle it presents the most interesting and the most precious valuables of regions of Spiš and Gemer such as castle monuments, preserved historical centers of towns, museum and cathedrals but also smaller valuables – village churches, bourgeois and craftsmen manor-houses and romantic stone bridges.



Spiš Castle



Together with Spišské Podhradie and Spišská Kapitula, the Spiš Castle (Spišský hrad) creates one integrated historic and settlement unit – named Spišské Podhradie. It integrates three various types of settlements; each of them being typical for its kind: Large middle-age castle built as a representative of king, it means state power; under the castle there was located a town and on the opposite hill there was a priory with a canonry, which used to be a centre of church power of Spiš. The Spiš Castle was one of very few castles which were able to resist

the destructive Tatars invasion of 1241; despite this fact its fortification was strengthened later. However, at the beginning of the 18th century the owners left the castle. It was no longer able to meet the demands brought about with bourgeois way of living. In 1780 the castle was struck by the fire and it quit fulfilling its function.

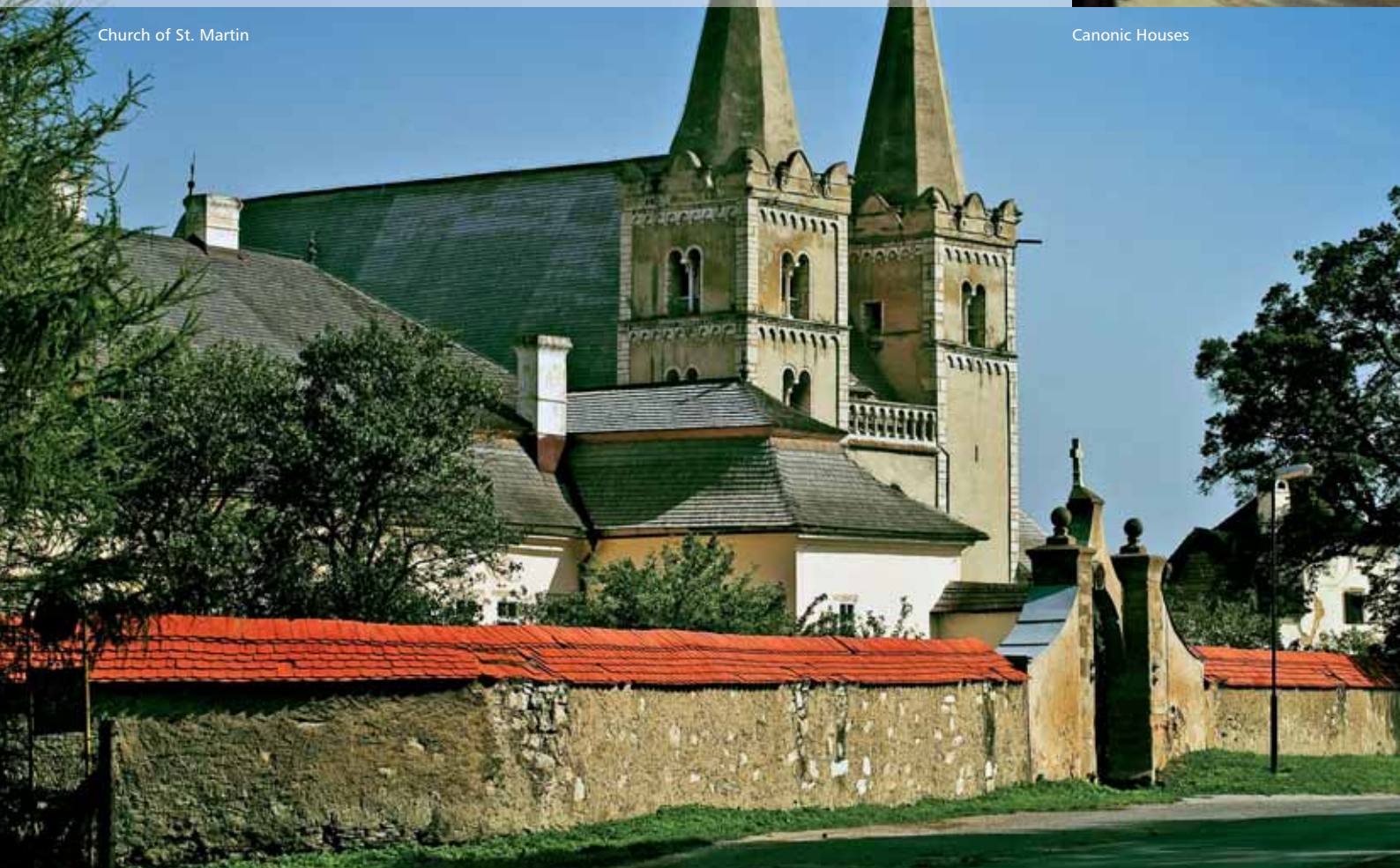
Late Romanesque two-tower cathedral of St. Martin dates back to 1245-1273. Its interior contains gothic altars, worldly wall-painting with the topic of coronation of King Karol Róbert from 1317 and mainly the oldest stone Romanesque sculpture in Slovakia – Leo Albus dating back to the 13th century. Very interesting is also Gothic building of the seminar, which was re-built in Renaissance and Baroque style later.



Spišská kapitula

Church of St. Martin

Canonic Houses





Krásna Hôrka Castle



Krásna Hôrka is one of very few well-preserved castles. The first written mention about the castle dates back to 1333. It was gradually owned by three important families: Mariášiovci, Bebekovci and Andrášiovci. The castle was built with the aim to protect the ancient road, which led through mining areas of Slovenské rudohorie. At the top of the knoll hill there is located a palace with defensive tower; under the palace there are located also other fortified palaces, chapels and other living and farm building testifying the gradual enlargement of the castle area. The whole object was fortified by a large wall with gate.



Betliar



Betliar, being a part of vast county of Krásna Hôrka served mainly to family of Andrášiovci. The manor-house acquired its present appearance after the last large re-building in 1881-1886. During this Romanesque historic re-building the former classicist object was super-structured for one whole storey and in the western part there was build a huge tower containing Neo-gothic staircase.



In the eastern part there was built a small tower according to the model of tower of famous Transylvania castle named Vajdahunyad. In museum, which is located in the premises of the manor-house today, there is a large collection of paintings, ceramics and also large contemporary library containing more than 15,000 books. A garden with English park arrangement and Romanesque buildings also belongs to the castle.



Tokay Wine



At the border with Hungary there is situated a vineyard area where one can taste Tokay wines labeled as King of Wines or Wine of Kings. Tokaj belongs to one of the five regions in the world where one can grow grapes for production of naturally sweet wines. The wine is added its irredeemable character and unique taste thanks to wizen berries of grapes mildewed by rare mould.

www.tokaj-vino.sk

The Slovak Paradise represents broken carst territory with numerous dingles, gulleys and canyons with preserved plains which are rich in carst forms. For its exceptional natural and esthetic values this territory of the Slovak Paradise was declared to be a protected territory area and later also a national park. Today the Slovak Paradise represents one of the most important areas of the Slovak Republic from the point of haleness and concentration of natural wealth. The Slovak Paradise is being visited by tourists all year round and on its territory there are 300 km of marked nature trails. Passing through the gulleys is enabled thanks to in-built technical equipment such as ladders,

bridges, benches, footsteps, chains and others. Dingles and canyons represent the most attractive part of the territory of the Slovak paradise. Almost every water flow in the Slovak Paradise eroded an interesting canyon or dingle into its own bed. In the Glacká Plain (Glacká planina) the water created a lot of dingles with steep stone walls which are deep even 300 meters in several parts just in order to overcome stone sills – waterfalls. The highest one is the Veil Waterfall (Závojevý vodopád) with the height of 70 meters. The break of the Hornád River has very special position among other natural values of the Slovak Paradise. The Hornád Rives with its flow

Slovak Paradise



Tomášov View

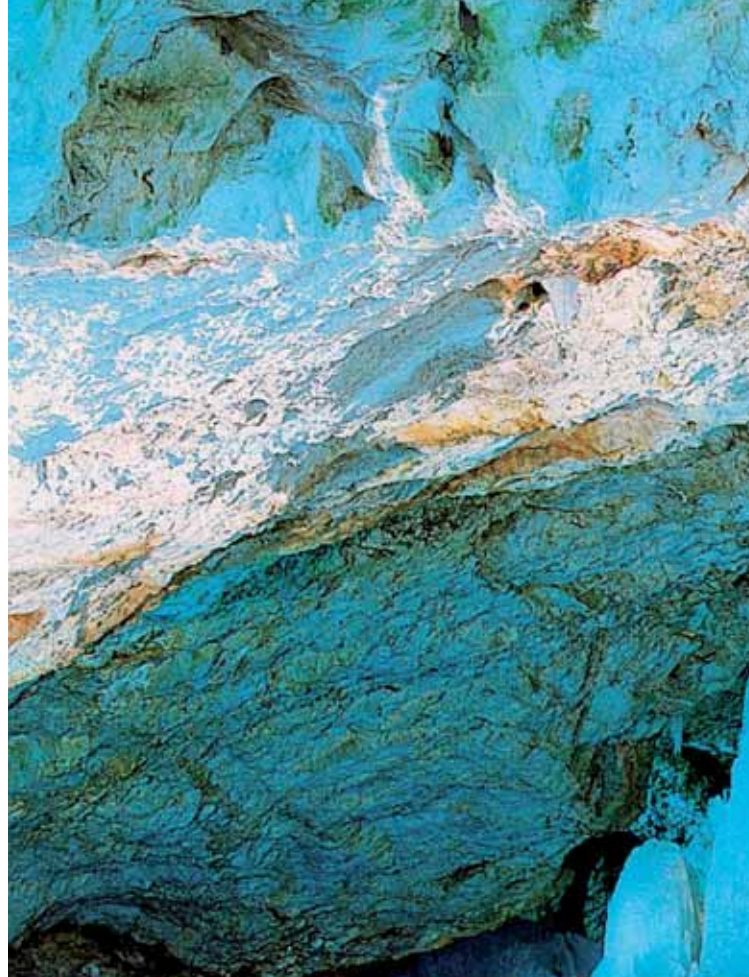


The Hornád River



and numerous waterfalls and cascades created very impressive stone formations here. Due to very steep bluffs most of that part used to be accessible only in winter in the past – when the river froze. Since 1974 the trail contains 7 in-built metal bridges and footbridges, 320 m of chains in exposed stone walls, 140 footsteps and about 70 m of wooden foot-bridges. Thanks to these measures one of the most attractive tourist trails in Slovakia could be open to the public.

To the north-west of Košice region, at the border of the Slovak Paradise, Dobšina Ice Cave (Dobšinská ľadová jaskyňa) attracts a lot of tourists. Its total length is 1,483 m and vertical span is 112 m. The favorable conditions for glaciation were probably created in middle Post-Tertiary after the collapse of ceilings and cutting off the hall connecting the Dobšina Ice Cave and the Lost Cave (Stratená jaskyňa). That created a sloping bagged space

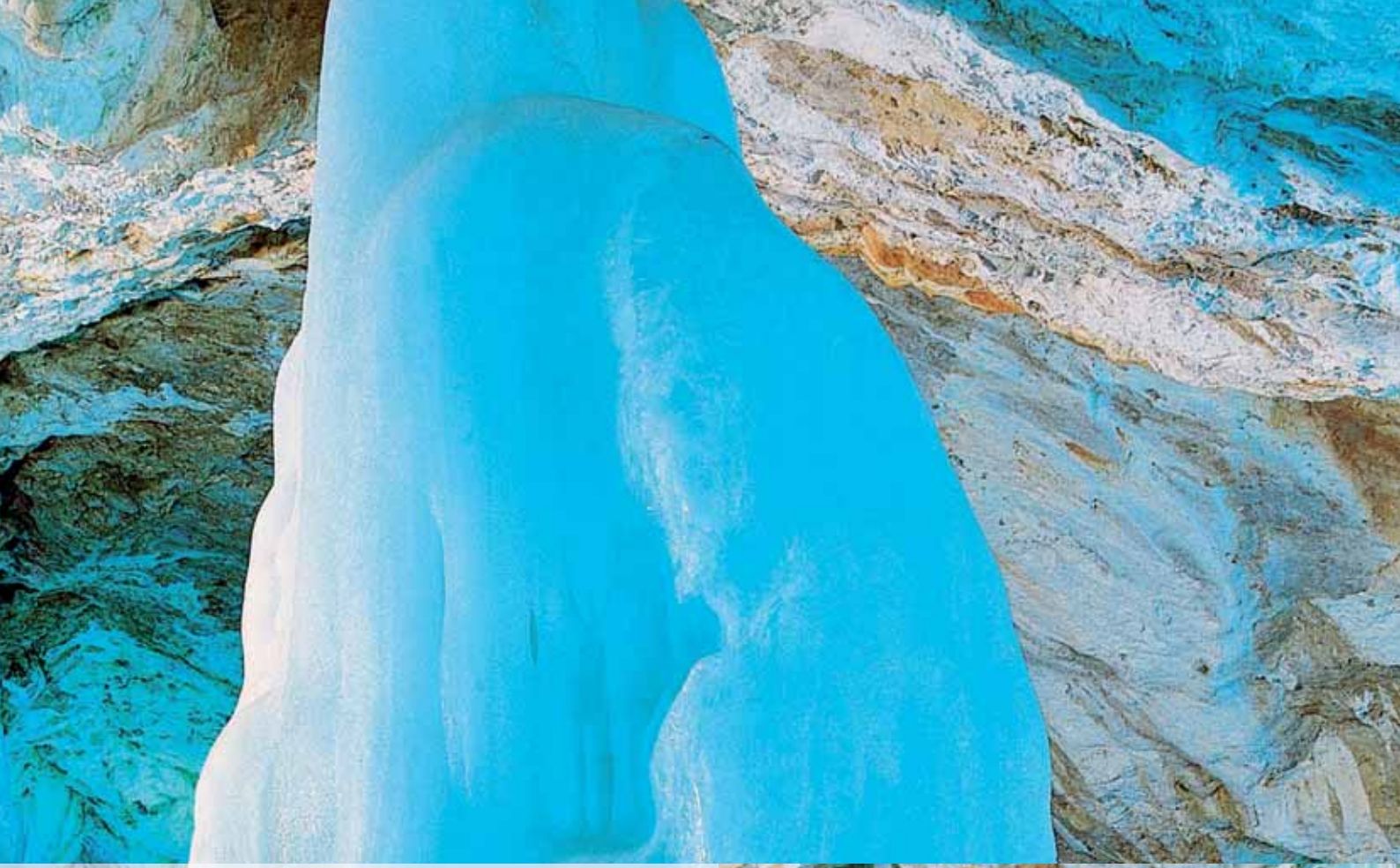


Dobšina Ice Cave

with stagnation of cool air which leaked into the underground space through the upper opening created by the collapse of part of the ceiling in the place of current entrance into the cave. By freezing of leaking underground waters the underground space got glaciated. The temperature of air in very bottom parts of the ice cave stays below the freezing-point all year round.

www.slovensky-raj.sk







Slovak Carst



Silická Iadnica Cave (Silická Iadnica)

The territory of the National Park Slovak Carst is located in the south-western part of Košice region. In 1977 it has been enlisted in the international network of biosphere reserves within the UNESCO program named Man and the Biosphere as the first one in Slovakia. The Slovak Carst contains more than 700 known caves and chasms. Together with neighboring Aggtelekský Carst (Aggtelekský kras) in Hungary it creates a unique cave system of the world.

The location of the cave is near Plešivec, close to the state border with the Hungarian Republic as a part of the National Natural Reservation Domické škrapy. The entrance is situated in the height of 339 m above the sea level. The cave was created by corrosion and erosion of underground flows in mid-Trias light Wetterstein limestone in three development phases. The length of the cave is 5,080 m. It is dominated by horizontal oval tunnels with ceiling channels. The rich sinter filling are typical for its

pikes and cylinders, cascade lakes, onion-shape stalactites and pagoda-like stalagmites. In the cave also traces of primeval settlement were found dating back to Neolith (4,000 B.C.); very unique is also find of tip of lance from later Stone Age from 35,000 years ago. The cave was made open in 1932; tourists are offered the possibility of underground boating as well.

Domica Cave



A unique natural phenomenon of underground carst which attracts attention by the richness and variability of aragonite filling as well as peculiar genesis of cave spaces is located between Jelšava and Štítnik. The cave is created in the lens of Paleozoic crystal limestone; part of it was hydrothermally changed into anchorites and siderites by the end of Mesozoic era. Leaking atmospheric waters along the tectonic defects caused their efflorescence and creation of ochre. The rich aragonite filling was created under specific hydro chemical and climatic conditions in closed underground spaces. One can find it in kidney-like, acicular and spiral forms. Aragonite is being created also at present. The length of the cave is 300 m.

www.ssj.sk

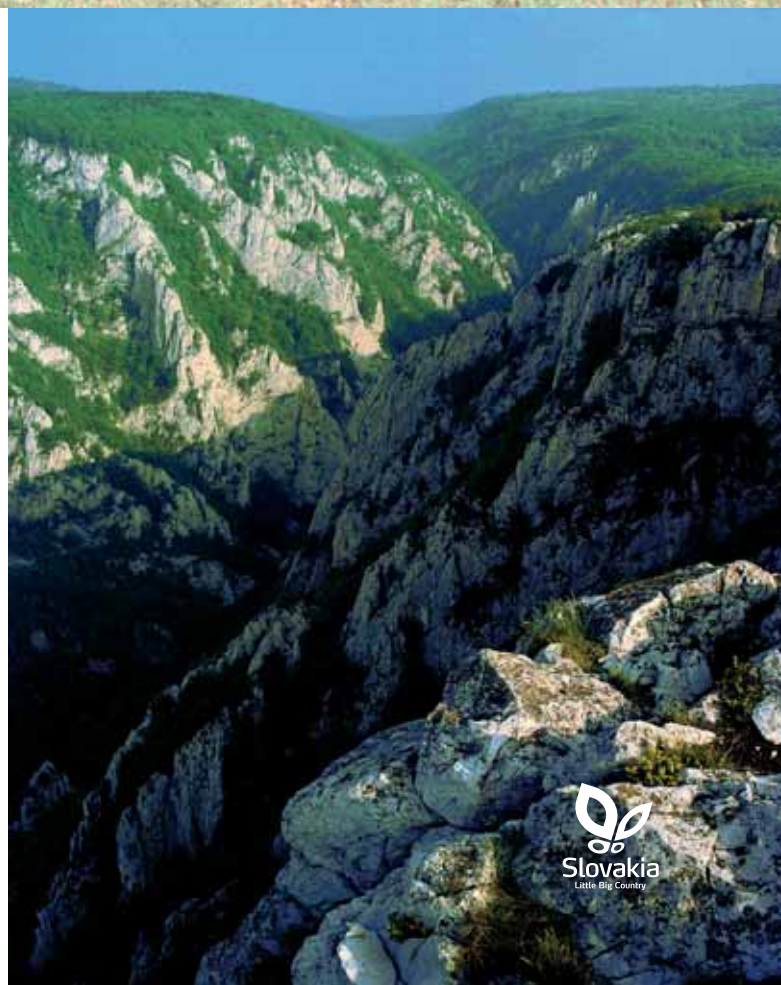
Ochtinská Aragonite Cave





Zádielska Valley

Extremely attractive and interesting 3 km long carst gulley is located in the eastern part of protected territory area of the Slovak Carst. In some parts the gulley is wide only 10 m with stone cliffs reaching the relative height of more than 300 m. The attention of tourists is attracted also by interesting carst formations – grike fields and carst hollows. In Zádielska Valley (Zádielska dolina) one can observe also protected and rare plant and animal species.





Zemplínska šírava Dam

To the east of Košice and under Vihorlat Mountains (Vihorlatské vrchy) there is located the second largest lake of Slovakia named Zemplínska šírava Dam. It provides suitable conditions mainly for yachting, jet ski driving, boating or water skiing. In the summer this area represents a favorite destination of fans of hiking and active way of relaxing.



There are available numerous hiking trails leading through picturesque hollow basis as well as mountain terrain. During your stay you can also collect healing herbs, meadow and forest fruits but also different types of mushrooms. Local hunting associations offer the possibility of hunting for deer, rain deer, boars and small animals in their hunting-grounds. Tourists interested in fishing can also buy a fishing ticket and fish in the waters of Zemplínska šírava Dam or other lakes identified by the Slovak Fishermen´s Association.

www.sirava.net



Štós Spa



Climate Therapy

Climate of Štós Spa is very unique saturated with ozone flush and smell of resin from surrounding mixed forests. The air in this area is ideal for therapy of patients with respiratory diseases. The main healing procedure of spa therapy in Štós Spa is climate therapy. The effect of this therapy is even multiplied by speleotherapy – the unique therapy which is made in Jasovská Cave (Jasovská jaskyňa).

www.kupele-stos.sk

To the east of Košice in Herľany village there is a cold geyser which is a rarity on the European continent. Similar natural phenomenon can be observed only in Island. The geyser was created in 1870 during the boring works with the aim to find sources of mineral water. The tourists are attracted by water stream splashing the water up to the height of 30 m in irregular intervals of 32 or 34 hours. The eruption of geyser takes about half an hour.

Herľany



Geyser



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Little **Big** Country



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