

All this is Slovenia!

Slovenia is a relatively small and young country, which only appeared on the map in 1991. It occupies an exceptional position at the meeting point of the Alps and Mediterranean, and includes the mysterious Karst and expansive Pannonian plains. Since the earliest times the diverse and rich natural and cultural traditions have fostered the creativity of writers and artists. Like heaven under Triglav, as Slovenia was described by Cankar, one of the giants of Slovenian literature. Out of such features emerged a country that has barely entered adulthood. Yet today it is a member of all the major international organisations, including the European Union and NATO. In the first half of 2008, it was also the first of the new Member States to hold the EU Presidency.

In Slovenia the natural world is dominated by green, while the country features diversity and contours in all regions. Slovenians are extremely proud of the achievements of their compatriots, and the historical, cultural and natural heritage is a true fount of inspiration. Where else could you admire hay racks, Lipizzaners, potica cake, beehive panels and the Carniolan bee, wrestle with the dual in Slovenian or learn so many dialects in such a small geographical area? Or admire great names in culture (such as the architect Jože Plečnik), major inventions (logarithms), numerous sports winners, national sports (mountaineering, running) and unspoilt natural beauty. Over the centuries this historical record has influenced the national culture and character of the young country.

A SOCIETY ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE ALPS

There are a little over two million Slovenians, and they could all fit into a suburb of some major city of the world. To round it up, there are around 100 people per km² living in Slovenia, and on the European scale that is about half the average. Alongside the majority population of Slovenian ethnic origin, in the border areas by Hungary and Italy there are also minority communities of those nationalities, and Slovenia's constitution provides all rights for them. Various other ethnic groups, mainly from the Western Balkans, also have permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia. Slovenians are patriotic, and value their quality of life. Slovenians would describe themselves as hard-working, diligent and active people, individualists who speak foreign languages well. They are proud of their culture and language, which they regard as a great asset and part of the national identity. One of the greatest national symbols is Triglav in the Julian Alps, the highest peak in Slovenia and a mountain that is now more than that – it is a symbol, and reverence for it has become legendary. Slovenians are open to difference. It is notable that many Slovenians

travel, but seldom change residence. Slovenians are well educated and enjoy a low unemployment rate. Like other modern European societies, however, they face an ageing population and low birth rate.

THE COUNTRY

Slovenia is a democratic republic in the generation of Europe's younger democracies. Slovenia declared its independence on 25 June 1991 on the basis of a plebiscite decision six months earlier. A full 88.2 percent of voters opted for independence, with voter participation at 90 percent. This was followed by international recognition and membership of the United Nations. In 2004, Slovenia became a Member State of the EU, in 2007 it adopted the euro, thereby joining the European Monetary Union and in 2008 it was the first of the new members to hold the EU Presidency. Even before it came of age, Slovenia was an important international player – a place where statesmen from the superpowers would meet, a member of international organisations, and a country enjoying friendly ties with other countries around the world. Although young, Slovenia is therefore mature and experienced, and is intensively involved in international currents.

Quick facts

Official name:
REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



Political system: Parliamentary democracy
Capital: Ljubljana
Surface area: 20,273 km²
Population: 2,062,874 (2015)
Currency: EUR (1 EUR = 100 cents)



Language: Slovenian; in ethnically mixed areas, also Italian and Hungarian

International calling code: +386
Time zone: GMT/UTC +1

I FEEL SLOVENIA

Important telephone numbers:

112 Ambulance
112 Firefighters
113 Police
1188 General information
1987 Roadside assistance

Useful websites:

Generally about Slovenia: www.slovenia.si, www.slovenia.info
Slovenian Government: www.vlada.si
Government Communication Office: www.ukom.gov.si
The Republic of Slovenia: www.gov.si
Slovenian Automobile Association: www.amzs.si
Weather: www.arso.gov.si



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angleški jezik

The Slovenian Constitution provides that Slovenia has a parliamentary system founded on the separation of legislative, executive and judicial power. The highest legislative body is the National Assembly with 90 members elected for four years. Of these one member represents the Italian and one the Hungarian minorities. The Government holds executive power. The President of Slovenia is the commander in chief of the armed forces and represents the country internationally. The President is elected for a five-year term.

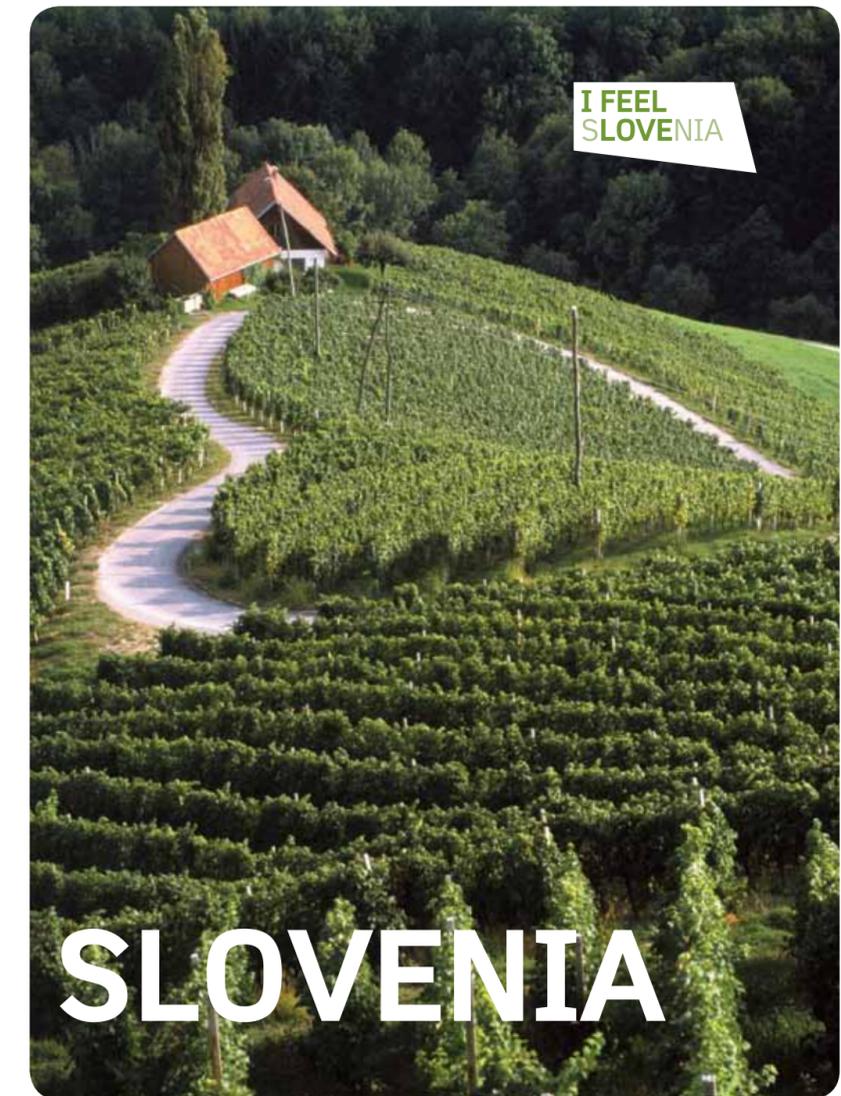
HISTORY

Slovenia experienced its first days of statehood more than a thousand years ago, when southern Slav ancestors settled in this area and founded the principality of Carantania. Historians claim that this was one of the most democratic and avant-garde states of its time. It was no surprise, then, that in Thomas Jefferson's times, the writers of the American Constitution drew from principles in the Carantanian state. Today the random traveller through Slovenia's plains or mountains can still admire the rich cultural tradition. Much also remains from the times of Hapsburg rule. For it was only in 1918 that the Slovenians joined the Croats and Serbs in a kingdom

that later became Yugoslavia. Following the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia in 1991, an entirely new period in Slovenian history began – independent Slovenia. Schoolchildren around the world would probably say that the history of Slovenia is a true fulfilment of the dreams of each one of them. Over the centuries, through language and culture Slovenians retained its national identity. Artistic creativity among the Slovenians during the awakening of nations was largely tied to the fact that they did not have their own state. The Slovenian language became the core of the national identity and its defence. Other forms of art followed this example and later added their own share to strengthening the national identity.

ECONOMY

The nineties were marked by economic progress typical of the more successful transition countries, and the transition to a market economy was relatively painless. Economic growth in recent years has been high, even higher than the European Union average. Employment of women is also among the highest. At home and abroad, Slovenian companies have celebrated numerous successful and highly



Špičnik. Photo: Vladimir Toš

innovative products. Ever heard of Elan skis, the ones used by skiing champions? Or Seaway sailing boats and Pipistrel ultralight aircraft? Or perhaps the superlative and brilliantly designed Gorenje household appliances? We cannot even list all the small, highly innovative companies. But their products are persistently breaking into (foreign) markets. Several factors contribute to the strong performance – from the proverbial Slovenian diligence and the geographical position at a trade crossroads, to concern for the environment, motivation and innovation. All of this lends a boutique-type quality to Slovenia's economy. The economy is geared towards services, and Slovenia can boast top-class services in the field of information technology. It also has developed pharmaceutical and automobile manufacturing. Other major economic sectors include the food industry, electrical devices, metal processing and chemicals. Meanwhile tourism is becoming an increasingly important sector.

SCIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Slovenian scientists of today are known to continue Slovenia's strong scientific tradition that has added

many inventions to the global body of knowledge. They stand on the shoulders of giants who worked in a time with no internet connections and studying by candlelight; these are scientists such as Janez Vajkard Valvasor (a member of the Royal Society in London, 17th c.), Jurij Vega (logarithmic tables, 18th c.), Jožef Stefan (law of radiation, 19th c.), Fritz Pregl (a Nobel prize winner in organic chemistry, early 20th c.) or Herman Potočnik Noordung, a rocket engineer. Modern Slovenia's R&D is following the footsteps of these pioneers. Today, R&D is exceptionally multi-faceted and, through adherence to high standards of quality, it is recognised worldwide. In some research fields such as computer science or nanotechnology, Slovenia ranks among the top countries of the world. Knowledge is treated as one of the key pillars of national development and Slovenia's research policy pursues the path of all modern developed nations. Since 1991, Slovenia has been an active participant in EU and other European research and development programmes and has so far participated in over a thousand projects within the European research framework programmes alone.

Tourism

Any season is the right season to visit Slovenia. This green part of Europe is indeed a special place – wherever you cross the border, you can expect an exceptional diversity of landscape that changes in spectacular fashion, while friendly people and fine cuisine, health resorts and spas, tourist farms and sports offer something for everyone. This is the place to spoil yourself.

A short drive of just over two hours brings you from the azure Mediterranean to Alpine peaks. From there it is not far to the Pannonian lowlands, or to the gently rounded Dolenjska hills. And along the way is the mysterious Karst with its subterranean world. Common to all of this is the colour green, and of course unspoilt nature. Not to mention the thermal springs! Everything is close by and accessible, so visiting Slovenia becomes an experience you will want to repeat!

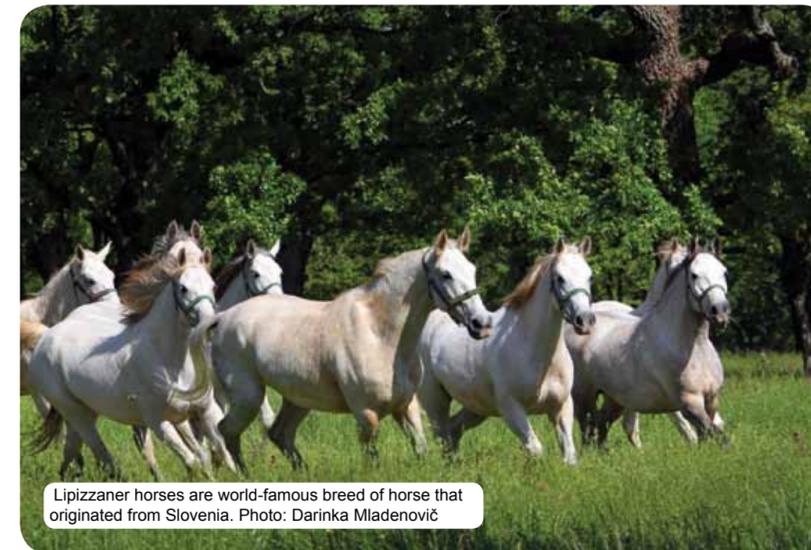
In Slovenia the sun shines more than 2,000 hours a year, so every season offers a pleasant break. There are many wonderful locations to charm even the most demanding guest.

The golf courses, ski slopes, various sports facilities, adrenaline and other sports pursuits will thrill even the most demanding sports enthusiasts. Cycling, hiking, extreme sports and various recreational events are all on offer.

And what do foreigners coming to Slovenia like most of all? First come expressions of enthusiasm. Then responses that Slovenia is a pleasant country that calms the spirit and refreshes the body, especially with its unspoilt nature, mild climate, hospitality, friendly people and numerous thermal springs. They like to add that Slovenia's greatness lies in its wealth of diversity, in values that have emerged over the centuries in a coexistence of man and nature, and that Slovenia is a clean, modern and safe country. There is no reason to doubt them.



Logarska dolina. Photo: Jakše-Jeršič



Lipizzaner horses are world-famous breed of horse that originated from Slovenia. Photo: Darinka Mladenovič

Slovenian Delights

The culinary image of modern-day Slovenia incorporates the influences of cultures and civilisations from the Alpine, Mediterranean and Pannonian regions. Centuries of social and historical development at this junction have created specific types of culture and lifestyle, not in the sense of assimilation, but in the sense of creating a unique and original variety, including the culinary.

Traditional Slovenian cuisine is based on cereals, fresh dairy products, meat, fish, vegetables, potatoes, olives and cured ham. Depending on the region, of course, it fuses influences of the countryside, cities and various monastic orders. Alongside the cuisine, the exceptional diversity of Slovenia's selection of wines ensures top gourmet pleasures. Total hedonists can look forward to thermal springs and health resorts, tourist farms and top-class restaurants.



Potica is typical Slovenian festive cake. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



The Škocjan Caves. Photo: Jakše-Jeršič

Culture and the arts

Art and culture hold a special place in Slovenian history, as they helped the Slovenians to compensate in many ways for the lack of national political and government institutions in the past. The attitude of the Slovenians towards national culture is quite intense and Slovenia boasts a fairly well developed network of cultural institutions, organisations and cultural associations comparable to the most advanced European countries. The rich cultural life is not only in the country's major towns, but in virtually every corner of Slovenia. Almost every Slovenian is by nature a writer, painter, cook, dancer, wine-maker, musician, director, actor, blogger or engraver. They know how

to create art out of everything they love. In addition to artists with various skills and crafts that have been handed down from generation to generation, Slovenians are also successful in many modern art forms accessible to all generations. Cultural events are unbelievably well attended – various festivals (especially in the summer months) thrill visitors who come from near and far. Theatre and concerts are popular, Slovenians love to read and are proud of their cultural tradition. We should mention France Prešeren, a poet who became the pride of Slovenian poetry and author of Slovenia's national Anthem, Zdravljica. The anthem appeals for the coexistence of nations and is a zdravljica, or toast, to all people of good heart.



Kurenti, the typical carnival figures. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



The Idrija Lace. Photo: Jaka Vinšek



Ballet performance. Photo: SNG Opera a balet

I feel Slovenia or "Slovenian green"

Slovenia is promoting itself with the brand "I feel Slovenia" - this expresses a balance between nature and the diligence of Slovenians; it speaks of unspoilt nature and the will for us to preserve it.

It is based on the colour green, since forests cover more than half the country – in Slovenia green is more than just a colour; it is "Slovenian green", reflecting the balance between the calmness of nature and the diligence of Slovenians. It speaks of unspoilt nature and our focus to preserve nature as such. It symbolises the balance of a lifestyle which combines the excitement with which Slovenians pursue personal motivations and a common vision to move ahead with nature. Slovenian green also shows our orientation to the elementary, to what Slovenians feel beneath their hands. And equally, it speaks of a harmony of all the senses with which to experience Slovenia. Slovenia is therefore not only memorable for its visual images. The memory of Slovenia combines the smell of a forest, a babbling brook, the surprising taste of water and the softness of wood. We can really feel Slovenia.



The medieval Piran is attractive Adriatic seaside resort. Foto: Jakše-Jeršič



A capella group Perpetuum Jazzile. Photo: Irena Herak/Minutainmanj



Ljubljana. Photo: Government Communication Office