

All of this is Slovenia!

Slovenia is one of the youngest countries in the world. It has been an independent state since 1991. Slovenia is located in central Europe covering an area of 20,000 square kilometres. Its character and culture are determined in large measure by its location – namely the country lies at the point where the Alps and the Mediterranean meet the mysterious Karst area and vast Pannonian plains. Its geographic diversity and rich natural and cultural heritage have always been a source of inspiration for Slovenians and encouraged their creativity.

Where else in the world could one marvel at noble Lipizzaner horses, the practical hay rack (*kozolec*), beehive paintings and the Carniolan honeybee, taste the delicious walnut roll (*potica*), and admire the special grammatical form, the dual verbal form which can be used in Slovenian to express when two people perform an action, for instance love one another? Or where could one encounter great names in culture (such as the architect Jože Plečnik), important inventions (logarithms), numerous successful athletes (Anže Kopitar, Tina Maze and many others) and people who enjoy unspoilt nature so much, that their favourite pastime is mountaineering?

This is why Cankar, a giant in Slovenian literature, described Slovenia as heaven under Mount Triglav. Mount Triglav is the highest Slovenian peak, a mountain in the Julian Alps, which is one of the greatest national symbols.

Quick facts



Official name:
REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



Political system: Parliamentary democracy
Capital: Ljubljana
Surface area: 20,273 km²
Population: 2,064,632 (2015)
Currency: EUR (1 EUR = 100 cents)

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

I FEEL SLOVENIA

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

Important telephone numbers:

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

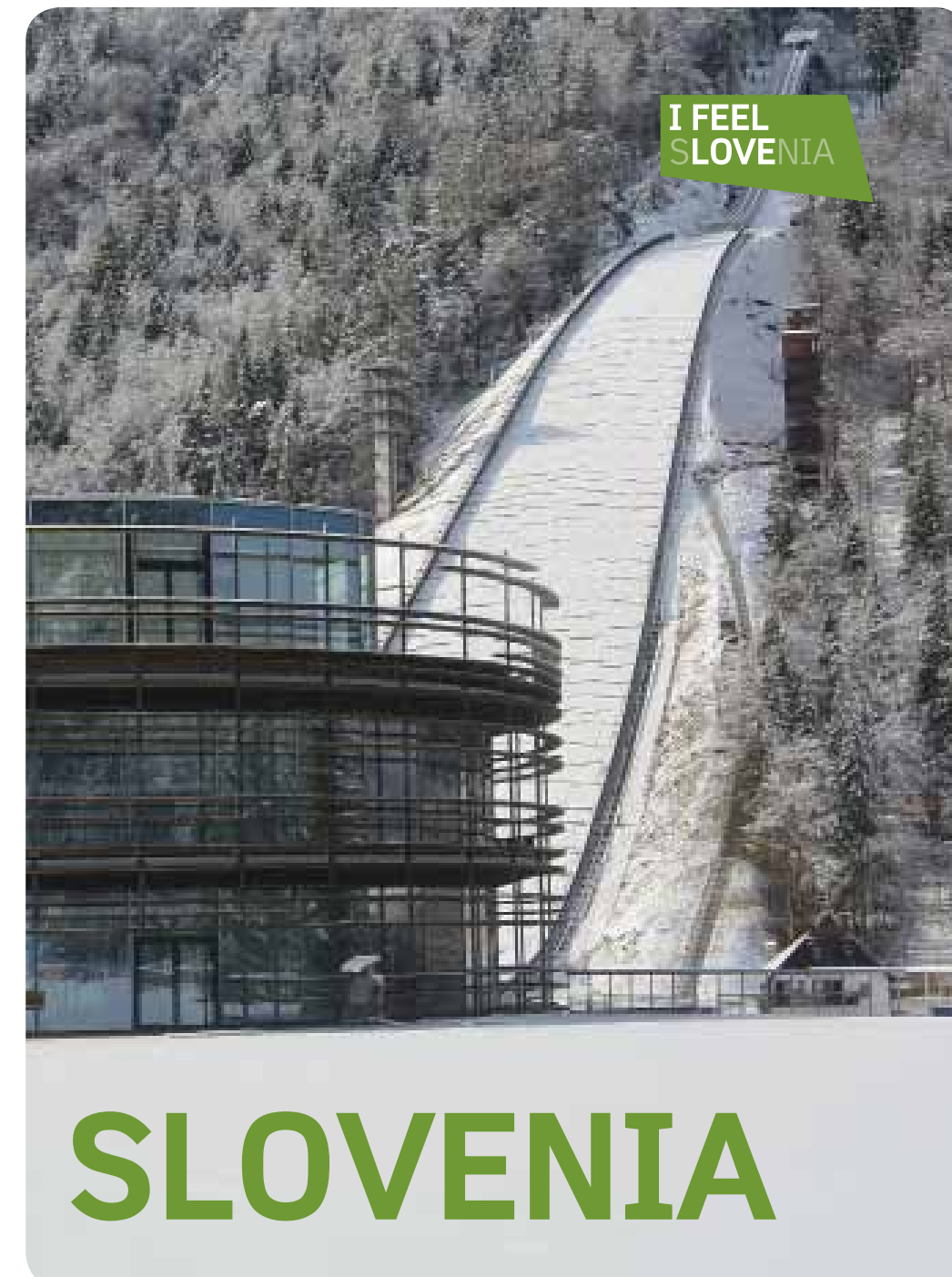
Useful websites:

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



Publisher: Government Communication Office, Ljubljana, 2016

angleški jezik



Planica. Photo: Planica Nordic Centre archive



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

HISTORY

Slovenia experienced statehood for the first time over one thousand years ago when our southern Slavic ancestors populated this area and founded the Duchy of Carantania in the 7th century. Historians believe that this was one of the most democratic and avant-garde countries of its time. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that, during the era of Thomas Jefferson's, the authors of the American constitution also followed the example of the principles of Carantania. Then, over the centuries, Slovenian national identity developed through language and culture. Slovenian language became the core and bastion of this identity. This character and national sense of community developed mainly through the publication of our first books; these came to form the rudiments of a national programme in the 16th century. Up until the 20th century, the Slovenian nation was ruled by foreigners, by the Habsburgs for the most part and later by the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. After World War I, Slovenia became a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and after World War II it became a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. After being a constituent part of Yugoslavia for more than seventy years, there was a consensus among Slovenians that they should embark on an independent path. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, a new era in Slovenian history began – that of an independent Slovenia.

COUNTRY

Slovenia is a democratic republic that belongs to the group of younger democracies in Europe. Slovenia declared its independence and autonomy on 25 June 1991 on the basis of a plebiscite which was held six months earlier. A massive 88.2% of voters voted for independence; the turnout was 90%. Slovenia

was then internationally recognised and accepted as a United Nations member. In 2004, Slovenia became a member of NATO and the EU, and with the introduction of the Euro in 2007, it entered into the European Monetary Union. In 2008 it became the first among the new Member States to preside over the EU Council. During the first two decades of its independence, Slovenia has already established itself as an important player on the world stage and as a place where high-ranking statesmen from world superpowers meet. For example, in 2001, Slovenia hosted the first meeting between Russia's President Putin and the American President George W. Bush. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates that Slovenia has a parliamentary system based on the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. The highest legislative body is the National Assembly with ninety members elected for a four-year term. Of these members, the Italian and Hungarian minority each have a representative. The executive branch is the Government. The president of the country is the supreme commander of the armed forces and he represents the country to the outside world. He or she is elected for a five-year term.

SOCIETY

There are just over two million Slovenians and they could easily all live in a suburb of a large metropolis. If we round up, approximately 100 people live on one square kilometre in Slovenia, which is about half of the European average. In a similar manner to other European countries, our society is facing the ageing of the population and low birth-rate. In addition to the majority population of Slovenian origin, the Hungarian and Italian ethnic minorities also live along the borders with Hungary and Italy. Other ethnic groups

also live in Slovenia, predominantly from the Western Balkans. So, what are the main features of the people living on the sunny side of the Alps? Slovenians are patriots who value their quality of life. They are proud of their culture and language which they recognise as being of great value and a part of their national identity. Slovenians are open to different cultures and ideas. It is interesting that they travel a great deal, yet move very seldom. They would describe themselves as hard-working, conscientious and active people, an independent-minded people who speak foreign languages well.

CULTURE

Art and culture hold a special place in Slovenian history. In previous centuries they helped Slovenians to compensate in different ways for their lack of national political and governmental institutions. The attitude of Slovenians towards national culture is truly passionate and Slovenia has a well-developed network of cultural institutions, organisations, and cultural associations, comparable with those in most of the

developed European countries. Such a rich cultural life does not only take place in the largest cities in Slovenia, but practically in every small corner of the country. Inside, almost every Slovenian considers himself a poet, painter, chef, dancer, wine maker, musician, actor, director, blogger, carver. Slovenians know how to create art from anything that they love. In addition to artists dealing with the range of arts and crafts that have been handed down from generation to generation over the centuries, Slovenians have also enjoyed success in many modern forms of art, ones accessible to all generations. Cultural events are extremely popular and well visited – various festivals (especially in summer months) delight visitors who come from near and far. Theatrical events and concerts are popular, and Slovenians love to read and are proud of their cultural tradition. Especially noteworthy is France Prešeren, a poet who is the pride of Slovenian poetry and who is the author of *Zdravljica* (a Toast), the Slovenian national anthem. The anthem calls for peace among nations and is a toast to all people with a good heart.



Kurenti, the typical carnival figures. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik



The Idrija Lace. Photo: Jaka Vinšek

SLOVENIAN DELIGHTS

The culinary landscape of modern Slovenia reflects the influences of the cultures and civilisations of the Alpine, Mediterranean, and Pannonian regions. Centuries of social and historical development at this crossroads of cultures created a special kind of lifestyle - not in the sense of assimilation, but in the sense of creating unique and original diversity. This diversity is also reflected in the culinary delights Slovenia has to offer.

Traditional Slovenian food is based on cereals, fresh dairy products, meat, fish, vegetables, potatoes, olives, and prosciutto. Much depends on the region: it may combine the influences of the countryside, bourgeoisie, and various monastic orders. In addition to the culinary delights on offer, the exceptional diversity of Slovenian wines provides world-class epicurean delights.



Potica is typical Slovenian festive cake. Photo: Ukom archive



Špičnik. Photo: Darinka Mladenovič



The Škocjan Caves. Photo: Jakše-Jeršič

TOURISM

Every season is ideal for visiting Slovenia. Slovenia is made for exploring and adventures. One may characterise its special values as a sense of homeliness and well-being, unspoilt nature and rich cultural heritage. Guests may choose to either spend an active or a more relaxed holiday.

Active holidays can be spent doing anything from mountaineering, cycling, hiking, rafting, golfing, kayaking, hunting, swimming, sailing, or fishing to skiing and water-skiing and much more. Ultimate pleasure seekers may enjoy a wide range of thermal springs and health resorts. What sets Slovenia apart are its small size and diversity. In the same day, one may enjoy a spectrum of

delights - mountains, the Pannonian Plain and the sea.

And what do foreigners who visit Slovenia like best? First, they express their enthusiasm for the country. Then, they answer that Slovenia is a pleasant land that calms one's spirit and invigorates the body; they especially cite its unspoilt, untouched nature, mild climate, hospitality, friendly people and numerous thermal springs. They like to add that Slovenia's greatness is in the wealth of its diversity, in the values that developed through centuries as man worked with nature, and that Slovenia is an orderly, modern, and safe country. There is no reason not to believe them.

I FEEL SLOVENIA is a slogan that reflects the essence of Slovenia: it is a country with which all visitors fall in love.



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

ECONOMY

The 1990's were marked by the transition to a market economy. In this period, economic growth was high, even higher than the EU average.

Even prior to this the Slovenian economy had developed and established important global brands all over the world. Have you heard of Elan skis used by our victorious skiing legends? Or of ultralight Pipistrel aircraft that receive awards from NASA every year? Or Akrapovič exhaust systems that are indispensable in motorsports? Or perhaps of world-class Gorenje household appliances with their impeccable design?

Globally successful Slovenian companies also operate in the service sector, such as in the information technology sector. Slovenian companies strive for innovation and excellence of their products, thus maintaining the trust of consumers in the quality of Slovenian brands.

Timber has an increasingly important role in Slovenian economy. It is one of the most important natural riches in Slovenia because over two thirds of Slovenia's territory is covered by forests.

Slovenians are also proud of gender equality, as the percentage of female employees in Slovenia is one of the highest in the world.



Highest Slovenian peak, Mount Triglav. Photo: Jože Mihelič

SCIENCE

Current Slovenian researchers are continuing the tradition of scientists and inventors who have contributed numerous achievements to the global treasure chest of knowledge. They stand on the shoulders of giants who were active at a time when there was no internet connection and when people studied by candlelight. These include scientists such as Janez Vajkard Valvasor (a member of the Royal Society in London, 17th century), Jurij Vega (Logarithm tables, 18th century), Jožef Stefan (Law on radiation, 19th century), Fritz Pregl (Nobel Prize winner in organic chemistry, early 20th century) or Herman Potočnik Noordung, rocket engineer. The work of such pioneers continues today

in the area of research and development activities in modern Slovenia. Research and development activities are wide ranging and encompass many spheres. They are known throughout the world because here in Slovenia high-quality standards are maintained. In a few research areas, such as computer science or nano technology, Slovenia ranks as one of the top countries in the world. Knowledge is one of the main pillars of national development. Since 1991, Slovenia has been actively participating in EU research and development programmes and in other European programmes in this field. Hitherto it has participated in over one thousand projects within European research framework programmes.



Free climbing. Photo: Tomo Jeseničnik

SPORT

It seems inconceivable that a nation of two million might achieve such successes in sports. We are the only small nation that has participated in the largest team sport competitions (football, hockey, basketball, volleyball) and whose individual sportsmen and women achieve such exceptional results. Slovenian athletes are ranked among the best in the world according to medals won at the Olympic Games per capita of population.

This can also be accredited to the incredible sports infrastructure present in Slovenia. Especially noteworthy is Planica, where a jumping facility for the crazy sport of ski jumping, invented by Slovenians, was set up as early as 1930. Today, there is a modern sports facility in Planica, dominated by the jumping or flying hill, where ski jumpers can jump past the 250 metre mark. Other athletes and lovers of recreational sports may also enjoy the running stadium, cableways, athletic and football stadium, biking and walking trails, cultural heritage park, information centre with a bar, zip-line, and high-quality tourist and sports services. Planica reflects the knowledge and excellence of Slovenian designers, engineers and other specialists. It is a symbol of a daring approach, natural beauty and of world-renowned heritage. Planica is one of the national symbols of Slovenia.



Soča river. Photo: Aleš Fevžer

THE GREEN THREAD

Slovenia presents its identity with the national **I FEEL SLOVENIA** brand that is based on the colour green deriving from the fact that more than half of the country is covered by forests. It symbolises a lifestyle balance that combines the pleasure and excitement with which Slovenians pursue their individual desires, and the common vision of moving forward with nature. The Slovenian colour green speaks of the harmony of all senses, a harmony which one can experience here in Slovenia. Therefore, Slovenia is never remembered in terms of images alone. The memory of Slovenia combines the fragrance of the forests, the murmur of the stream and the fascinating taste of water as well as the softness of wood. We feel Slovenia.



Ljubljana, European Green Capital 2016. Photo: Mostphotos