



Slovenia

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Why Go?

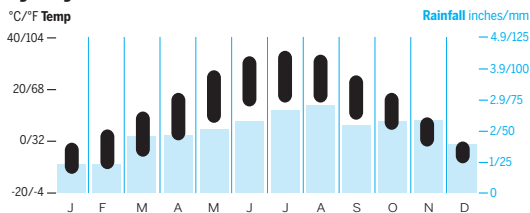
It's a pint-sized place, with a surface area of just more than 20,000 sq km and 2 million people. But 'good things come in small packages', and never was that old chestnut more appropriate than in describing Slovenia.

Slovenia has been dubbed a lot of different things by its PR machine – 'Europe in Miniature', 'The Sunny Side of the Alps', 'The Green Piece of Europe' – and they're all true. Slovenia has everything, from beaches, snowcapped mountains, hills awash in grape vines and wide plains blanketed in sunflowers to Gothic churches, baroque palaces and art nouveau public buildings. Its incredible mixture of climates brings warm Mediterranean breezes up to the foothills of the Alps, where it can snow in summer. And with more than half of its total area covered in forest, Slovenia really is one of the 'greenest' countries in the world. In recent years, it has taken on the role as Europe's activities playground.

Come for all these things but come too for the Slovenes themselves – generous, broad-minded and welcoming.

When To Go

Ljubljana



April–June Spring is a great time to be in the lowlands and the flower-carpeted valleys of Gorenjska.

September This is the month made for everything – still warm enough to swim and tailor-made for hiking.

December–March Everyone (and their grandma) dons their skis in this winter-sport mad country.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Euro
- » **Language** Slovene
- » **Money** ATMs are everywhere; banks open Mon-Fri & Sat morning
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, Australia, USA, Canada or New Zealand

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 20,273 sq km
- » **Capital** Ljubljana
- » **Telephone country code** 386
- » **Emergency** 112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.72
Canada	C\$1	€0.71
Japan	¥100	€0.82
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.54
UK	UK£1	€1.12
USA	US\$1	€0.69

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €40
- » **Two-course meal** €20
- » **Museum entrance** €3
- » **Beer in shop/bar** €1/3
- » **100km by train/bus** €6.03/9.20

Resources

- » **E-uprava** (<http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/en/portal.euprava>) Official portal with info on everything
- » **Slovenian Tourist Board** (www.slovenia.info) Ambitious tourist site

Connections

Border formalities with Slovenia's three European Union neighbours – Italy, Austria and Hungary – are nonexistent and all are accessible by train and (less frequently) bus. Venice can also be reached by boat from Izola and Piran. Expect a somewhat closer inspection of your documents when travelling to/from non-EU Croatia.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Spend a couple of days in Ljubljana, then head north to unwind in Bohinj or romantic Bled beside idyllic mountain lakes. Depending on the season, take a bus or drive over the hair-raising Vrščič Pass into the valley of the vivid blue Soča River and take part in some adventure sports in Bovec or Kobarid before returning to Ljubljana.

Two Weeks

Another week will allow you to see just about everything in this chapter: all of the above as well as the Karst caves at Škocjan and Postojna and the Venetian ports of Koper, Izola and Piran on the Adriatic.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Pršut** Air-dried, thinly sliced ham from the Karst region not unlike Italian prosciutto
- » **Žlikrofi** Ravioli-like parcels filled with cheese, bacon and chives
- » **Žganci** The Slovenian stodge of choice – groats made from barley or corn but usually *ajda* (buckwheat)
- » **Potica** A kind of nut roll eaten at teatime or as a dessert
- » **Wine** Distinctively Slovenian tipples include peppery red Teran from the Karst region and Malvazija, a straw-colour white wine from the coast