



Slovenia

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Antiq Palace Hotel & Spa (p400)
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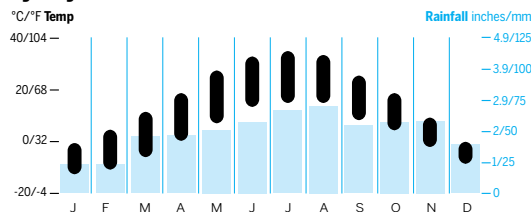
Why Go?

It's a pint-sized place, with a surface area of just over 20,000 sq km, and two million people. But 'good things come in small packages', and never was that old chestnut more appropriate than in describing Slovenia. The country 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 buildings. Its incredible mixture of climates brings warm Mediterranean breezes up to the foothills of the Alps, where it can snow in summer.

The capital, Ljubljana, is a culturally rich city that values liveability and sustainability over unfettered growth. This sensitivity toward the environment also extends to rural and lesser-developed parts of the country. With more than half of its total area covered in forest, Slovenia really is one of the 'greenest' countries in the world.

When to Go

Ljubljana



Apr–Jun Spring is a great time to be in the lowlands and the flower-carpeted valleys of the Julian Alps.

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

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



Slovenia Highlights

- 1 Enjoy a 'flight' on the funicular up to **Ljubljana Castle**.
- 2 Consider the genius of architect Jože Plečnik at Ljubljana's **National & University Library** (p397).
- 3 Gaze on the natural perfection that is **Lake Bled** (p403).
- 4 Gawk in awe at the 100m-high walls of the incredible **Škocjan Caves** (p406).
- 5 Climb to the top of the country's tallest mountain, **Mt Triglav** (p402).
- 6 Get lost wandering the narrow Venetian-style alleyways of **Piran** (p407).

LJUBLJANA

01 / POP 283,000

Slovenia's capital and largest city also happens to be one of Europe's greenest and most liveable capitals. Car traffic is restricted in the centre, leaving the leafy banks of the emerald-green Ljubljanica River, flowing through the city's heart, free for pedestrians and cyclists. In summer, cafes set up terrace seating along the river, lending the feel of a perpetual street party. Slovenia's master of early-modern, minimalist design, Jože Plečnik,

graced Ljubljana with beautiful bridges and buildings. The museums, hotels and restaurants are among the best in the country.

Sights

The easiest way to see Ljubljana is on foot. The oldest part of town, with the most important historical buildings and sights (including Ljubljana Castle), lies on the right (east) bank of the Ljubljanica River. Center, which has the lion's share of the city's museums and galleries, is on the left (west) side of the river.