



# Eastern Slovenia

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restavracija Mak (p210)
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## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ DomKulture MuziKafe (p204)
- ➔ Hotel Mitra (p204)
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- ➔ MCC Hostel (p191)
- ➔ Herbal Glamping Resort Ljubno (p188)

## Why Go?

Eastern Slovenia, embracing three provinces, rises from flat agricultural lands to snow-capped peaks. Its mountains, rivers and thermal waters provide a natural playground, while many of its historic towns date back to Roman times.

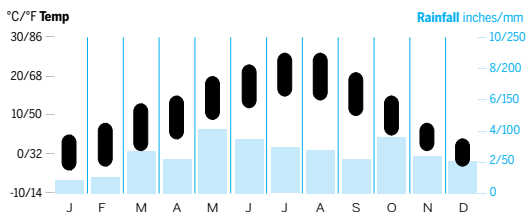
Sizable Štajerska (Styria) has swathes of farmland, much of it rich with vineyards, obligingly linked by cyclable wine routes. It also claims the Savinja Alps and the Pohorje Masif, an adventure-land of outdoor activities, and historical centres with castles, medieval alleys and ancient churches.

Tiny Koroška (Carinthia) is a region of forests, mountains and highland meadows and is tailor-made for outdoor activities, including skiing, mountain biking and hiking.

In the far northeast, Prekmurje is Slovenia's 'forgotten' corner, mostly a broad, farmed plain 'beyond the Mura River', which has preserved its culture of traditional music, folklore, architecture and food. It's a great place to relax and enjoy taking the waters at its many thermal spas.

## When to Go

### Maribor



**Dec–Mar** Skiers head to Maribor Pohorje, Slovenia's biggest downhill skiing centre.

**Feb/Mar** Crowds flock to Ptuj for the masked Kurentovanje carnival parade; storks arrive in Prekmurje.

**Aug–Oct** Ideal for walking and climbing in Logarska Dolina; grape harvest begins.

## ŠTAJERSKA

Štajerska has long been the crossroads of Slovenia and virtually everyone has 'slept here' – Celts, Romans, early Slavs, Habsburgs and Nazi occupiers. In the 14th century, the German-speaking Counts of Celje were among the richest and most powerful feudal dynasties in Central Europe, and they challenged the Austrian monarchy's rule for a century. Štajerska suffered more than most of the rest of Slovenia during WWII, when many of its inhabitants were murdered, deported or sent to Nazi labour camps.

### Upper Savinja Valley

The beautiful Upper Savinja Valley (Zgornja Savinjska Dolina) is bound by forests, ancient churches, traditional farmhouses and high Alpine peaks. There are activities here to suit every taste and inclination – from hiking, mountain biking and rock climbing to fishing, kayaking and swimming in the Savinja.

The valley has been exploited for its timber since the Middle Ages. Rafters transported the timber from Ljubno to Mozirje and Celje and some of the logs travelled as far as Romania. The trade brought wealth to the valley, evident from the many fine buildings still standing here.

The best place to get active is around Logarska Dolina. The free English-language brochures entitled *The Savinjska and Šaleška Valleys* and the *Solčava Panoramic Road* are helpful for exploring the area. Hikers should pick up a copy of the map *Hiking in the Lap of the Alps* (€1) from the TIC or buy the more detailed *Zgornja Savinjska Dolina* GZS map or the *Kamniško Savinjske Alpe* one (both 1:50,000, €8.10) by PZS. Cyclists will want the *Kolesarska Karta Zgornja Savinjska Dolina* (*Upper Savinja Valley Cycling Map*; €3).

### Logarska Dolina

📍 03 / POP 110 / ELEV UP TO 1250M

Most of the glacial 'Forester Valley', which is 7.5km long and no more than 500m wide, has been a country park of just under 24 sq km since 1987. This 'pearl of the Alpine region', with more than 40 natural attractions – caves, springs, peaks, rock towers and waterfalls – as well as endemic flora (golden slipper orchid) and rare fauna (mountain

eagles, peregrine falcons), is a wonderful place to explore for a few days.

### 👁 Sights & Activities

The tourist office (p188) can organise any number of activities – from guided mountaineering and rock climbing (per hour €25) to paragliding (€75) and canyoning (€110). It also rents mountain bikes (per hour/day €3/12), as does Hotel Plesnik (p188). The valley has the very basic **Logarska Dolina ski grounds** (📞 03-838 90 04; www.logarska-dolina.si; day pass adult/child €10/7), a 1km-long slope and 13km of cross-country ski trails served by two tows.

### Logarska Dolina Country Park PARK

(Krajinski Park Logarska Dolina; Apr-Sep & weekends in Oct admission per car/motorcycle €7/5, pedestrians & cyclists free; 🕒 year-round) Logarska Dolina Country Park is one of the most beautiful 'hidden' spots of Slovenia and a paradise for those seeking adventure and outdoor activities. A road goes past a chapel and through the woods to the 90m-high **Rinka Waterfall** (Slap Rinka) at 1100m, but there are plenty of trails to explore and up to 20 other waterfalls in the area.

The bottom of the Rinka Waterfall is a 10-minute walk from the end of the valley road. The climb to the top takes about 20 minutes; it's not very difficult, but it can get slippery. From the top to the west you can see three peaks reaching higher than 2250m: Kranjska Rinka, Koroška Rinka and Štajerska Rinka. Until 1918 they formed the triple border of Carniola (Kranjska), Carinthia (Koroška) and Styria (Štajerska). Ask the tourist office for the *Trail through the Logar Valley* brochure, a 14km hike which will take you through the valley in about five hours.

Opposite Dom Planincev is a trail leading to Sušica Waterfall and Klemenča Cave, both at about 1200m.

### Matkov Kot

VALLEY

Much less explored than neighbouring Logarska Dolina, this magnificent 6km-long valley runs parallel to Logarska Dolina and the border with Austria. Reach here by road by turning west as you leave Logarska Dolina.

### 🛏 Sleeping & Eating

#### Dom Planincev

CABIN €

(📞 03-584 70 06, 070 847 639; www.domplanincev.si; Logarska Dolina 15a; per person without/with breakfast €18/23; 🕒 late-Apr–Oct; 📍) This