Prekmurje is Slovenia’s ‘forgotten’ corner – mostly a broad farmed plain that extends for kilometres ‘beyond the Mura River’ (as its name suggests). Its isolation is rooted in history; until 1924 not a single bridge spanned the sluggish Mura River and crossings were made by ferry. As a result, Prekmurje has preserved some traditional music, folklore, architecture and a dialect unintelligible to other Slovenians.

Until the end of WWI, almost all of Prekmurje belonged to the Austro-Hungarian crown and a small Magyar minority still lives around the spa town of Lendava (Hungarian: Lendva), Slovenia’s easternmost city, and Murska Sobota (Muraszombat). In many ways Prekmurje looks and feels more like Hungary than Slovenia, with its abundance of white storks (p278), large thatched farmhouses, a substantial Roma population and the occasional Hungarian-style čarda (inn) serving golaž (goulash) cooked with paprika.

For most Slovenes, Prekmurje brings to mind a rich pastry called gibanica and a people who are generally more volatile and quick-tempered than most others in the nation. For travellers the province is a springboard into Austria or Hungary and a place to relax and enjoy taking the waters at the thermal spas of Radenci, Moravske Toplice and Banovci.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Satisfy that sweet tooth with a helping of calorific prekmurska gibanica, pastry with poppy seeds, walnuts, fruit, cheese and cream
- Take the waters au naturel at the spa resort at Banovci (p276)
- Visit Prekmurje’s last remaining floating mill (p279) on the Mura River near Veržej
- Admire the wonderful 14th-century frescoes (p276) at the Church of St Martin in Martjanci
- Marvel at the arrival of the storks (p278), those big white birds with long skinny legs so responsible for the population explosion
ITINERARY

GOING Potty

One Day / Prekmurje

From Murska Sobota (1; opposite), head north along route 232 and from Martjanci (2; p276), with its important Gothic church, head east along route 442 to the thermal spa of Moravske Toplice (3; p279). Tešanovci (4), a couple of kilometres east, is noted for its lončarstvo (pottery).

About 2.5km further east is the village of Bogojina (5) and its Parish Church of the Ascension, which was redesigned by Jože Plečnik around 1926. To the original Romanesque and baroque structure, Plečnik added two asymmetrical aisles and a round tower reminiscent of a crow’s nest on a ship. The interior is an odd mixture of black marble, brass, wood and terracotta; the oak-beamed ceiling is fitted with Prekmurje ceramic plates and jugs, as is the altar.

Filovci (6), 2km past Bogojina, is famed for its črna keramika (black pottery). Keramika Bojnec (041 330 987; www.bojnec.com; Filovci 20; admission €2.50), 200m southwest of the main road, asks visitors to watch them work here at the ancient kiln in the skanzen (open-air museum displaying village architecture) over the road, where there’s a Pannonian homestead with two thatched buildings and a small shop.

Carry on southeast to Dobrovnik (7), which has a couple of decent roadside gostilne (p280) and, in one of those ‘only-when-travelling’ moments, a large nursery called Ocean Orchids (02-573 73 05; www.oceanorchids.si; admission free; 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) at house No 297 with a tropski vrt (tropical garden) worth a detour.

From here route 439 leads southwest to Beltinci (8), known to philatelists as the place where one of the 1918 provisional stamps was overprinted on Hungarian stamps by the Serbian occupation forces in WWI. Southwest at Ižakovci (9) is one of the last floating mills (p279) on the Mura, the Island of Love Mill (Otok Ljubezni Mlin; 02-541 35 80; www.beltinci.si; Mladinska ulica 2; admission €2.50; 9am-6pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, to 8pm Jul & Aug), including a small museum and a raft ride across the Mura. Murska Sobota and its 16th-century castle are just 8km to the northwest of Beltinci.