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Slovenia in Brief



The Republic of Slovenia lies at the heart of Europe where the Alps and the Mediterranean meet the Pannonian plains and the mysterious Karst. Slovenia has a population of 2 million and its capital city is Ljubljana. The official language is Slovene, one of the South Slavonic languages.



In Slovenia, the sun shines approximately 2000 hours per year. And yes, there is plenty of snow in winter.

As a small, beautiful and picturesque country, Slovenia makes a great tourist destination. Mountains, lakes, waterfalls, forests, caves, hills, plains, rivers and the sea - you name it, you can find it all within a modest 20.273 km² (half the size of Switzerland), as well as many natural and landscape parks. You can ski in the morning and surrender yourself to the luxury of the Adriatic Sea in the afternoon.

Slovenia has 46.6 km of sea coast - an inch per inhabitant.

The highest mountain is called Triglav - the name meaning "three-heads" - and it is 2864m high. The mountain is a true national symbol, featured on the national [coat of arms and the flag](#).

Slovenia is also known for its great wines and delicious traditional food.

The currency is called the [Slovenian Tolar \(SIT\)](#).

It is very easy to get here as the country is connected with the rest of the world by a modern [highway network](#), [railway system](#), [international airport](#) and [ports](#).

Arts and Culture



In modern times the earliest signs of the Slovenian spirit have surfaced in the field of culture. Ever since the poetry of France Prešeren, culture has formed the heart of our national being.

Urban culture has developed in Slovenia over the last two centuries, which has also seen the gradual evolvement of fundamental institutions such as [National Museum](#), and the [Slovenian Philharmonics](#).

Nowadays Slovenia has a myriad of theatres, cinemas, libraries and educational facilities and is well known abroad by its current cultural export.

The band [Laibach](#) is absolutely pivotal in the field of **music**. Their early industrial sound from the 1980s still has a cult following around the world. Young composer Mitja Vrhovnik Smrekar is establishing himself as a very reputable writer of theatre music.

Slovene **literature and poetry** is mostly very traditional, but international translations of the literary works of [Drago Jančar](#), [Tomaž Šalamun](#) and [Aleš Debeljak](#) prove that even the smallest cultures can create work of high quality and also contribute to the most current global literary tendencies.

The history of our country's **visual arts** is rich with important artists. Recently the painters of the group [Irwin](#) have gained an international reputation. Their work is presented in all relevant overviews of world-wide contemporary art.

The Slovenian **architect and sculptor** [Marjetica Potrč](#) has succeeded in making a breakthrough into international artistic circles. As a winner of the significant Hugo Boss Prize 2000, she had a solo exhibition in the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2001. She is very active on the international scene (in 2003 she exhibited in Valencia, Salzburg, Bern). In 2003 she received Jakopič's award, the highest national award in fine arts.

The emerging field of **digital media** arts has its own eco-system and the development of this particular field of art on a global scale was partly enabled through the work of [Marko Peljhan](#) and [Vuk Ćosić](#).

Dance theatre has a disproportionately active centre in Ljubljana and its most notable representative in Slovenia is [Iztok Kovač](#) whose performances are constantly admired on international festivals.

Video art has been around in our country for thirty years, its most notable practitioners in the last two decades are [Marina Gržinić & Aina Šmid](#).

Economy



Slovenia is among the most successful of the countries in transition from socialism to a market economy. It boasts a stable growth in GDP and ranks among the countries with the lowest degree of risk. The already completed privatisation process and many other measures are increasing the competitiveness of its economy directed towards the EU.

Currency: [Slovenian Tolar \(SIT\)](#), made up of 100 stotins

GDP per capita EUR: 9,383 (1998); 10,088 (1999); 10,425 (2000); 11,007 (2001); 11,775 (2002); 12,273 (2003);

Growth in gross domestic product (GDP): 3.9% (2000); 2.7% (2001); 3,4% (2002); 2.3% (2003)

Standardised rate of unemployment (ILO): 7.6% (1999); 7.0% (2000); 6.4% (2001); 6.4% (2002); 6.7% (2003)

Inflation rate (%): 9.1 (1997); 7.9 (1998); 6.1 (1999); 8.9 (2000); 8.4 (2001); 7.5 (2002); 5.6 (2003)

External Trade:

Exports (in mio USD): 9,051 (1998); 8,546 (1999); 8,732 (2000); 9,252 (2001); 10,357 (2002); 12,767 (2003, provisional data)

Imports (in mio USD): 10,111 (1998); 10,083 (1999); 10,116 (2000); 10,144 (2001); 10,929 (2002); 13,851 (2003, provisional data)

Export/import ratio (%): 86.3 (2000); 91.2 (2001); 94.7 (2002); 92.2 (2003, provisional data)

Major external trade partner countries (2002):

Exports: Germany, Italy, Croatia, Austria, France

Imports: Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Croatia

Important state institutions

- [Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

Provides various consulting and other business services and various information resources (such as Business Opportunities Exchange System).

- [TIPO](#)

Investment-related information; includes sections devoted to the legal aspect, the tax rate, etc.

- [Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development](#)

Provides you with information on upcoming conferences, projects, annual spring and autumn reports and analysis (Acrobat PDF) on the international environment, current economic trends, economic development forecasts etc.

On-line periodicals covering business, economy, finance, politics

- [Economic Mirror /IMAD](#)

Provides standardized macroeconomic analyses, estimates and forecasts.

- [Slovenia Business Week](#)

An electronic business weekly with current news on a variety of topics concerning Slovenian economy and business.

- [Slovenia News](#)

A weekly newsletter covering politics, environment, culture, business, science, sports, etc. First issued on 7 September 2004. (**Note:** On-line versions of previous weekly publication "Slovenia News", last issued on 31 March 2004, is still available. (see the [archive](#)).

Food and Drink



Recipes

Slovenian food is a feast for the gourmet. Many restaurants offer a wide range of traditional national dishes, as well as international dishes like pizza, pasta and oriental dishes. Try some of the traditional recipes and enjoy the Slovenian taste.

Wines

Slovenia lies on the southern slopes of the Alps and touches the Mediterranean, so it enjoys the best of both worlds, as well as climatic uncertainties from both north and south. The country has also always been at the crossroads of north and south, east and west, and travellers have brought viticultural knowledge from all the prominent viticultural nations.

However, the tradition of wine production is very long, going back at least to the time of the Roman Empire. Nowadays, 38 vine varieties are grown in 14 wine districts. This, together with the natural conditions mentioned above, provides a very rich diversity of taste, smell and colour in the different wines.

Geography



Slovenia is situated in Central Europe and covers an area of 20,273 km² (that's half the size of Switzerland). It has borders with Italy (280 km), Austria (330 km), Croatia (670 km) and Hungary (102 km).

Relief

Four major European geographic regions meet in Slovenia: the Alps, the Dinaric area, the Pannonian plain and the Mediterranean.

The coastline is only 46.6 km long, but there is 26,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, some 7,500 springs of drinking water, including several hundred of first class therapeutic mineral springs.

The highest peak: Mt Triglav (2864 m)

Average height above sea level: 556.8 m

Landscape

Forests cover half the territory, as much as 10,124 km²; Slovenia is the third most forested country in Europe, right after Finland and Sweden. Remnants of primeval forests are still to be found, the largest in the Kočevje area. Bears, which can no longer be found north of this region, still live in these forests and it also is possible to encounter a wolf or a lynx.

Grassland covers 5593 km² of the country and fields and gardens 2471 km². There are also 363 km² of orchards and 216 km² of vineyards.

Climate

Most of Slovenia has a continental climate with cold winters and warm summers. The average temperatures are -2°C in January and 21°C in July. The average rainfall is 1000 mm for the coast, up to 3500 mm for the Alps, 800mm for south east and 1400 mm for central Slovenia.

Biodiversity

Slovenia is home to more than 50,000 animal species and 3,000 plant species.

Environmental protection

Approximately 8% of the Slovenia's territory is specially protected; the largest area with such a regime is the Triglav National Park with a surface area of 848 km². The Škocjan caves were entered on the world heritage List at UNESCO in 1986 and the Sečovlje saltpans are included on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.

History



Some Important Milestones:

- 6th century AD** The Slavic ancestors of present day Slovenia first settle in the area in the 6th century AD.
- 7th century** The Slavic Duchy of Carantania, the first Slovenian state.
- 745** Carantania becomes part of the Frankish empire; the Slavs convert to Christianity and gradually lose their independence.
- around 1000** [The Freising manuscripts](#), the first known writings in the Slovenian and Slavic dialect in Latin script.
- 14th century to 1918** All the Slovenian regions pass into the possession of the Habsburgs, later the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.
- 1550 and 1584** The Reformation brings literacy, the [first printed book](#) in 1550 and in 1584 the [first Slovenian translation of the Bible](#).
- 1918** Formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.
- 1945** Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia (officially declared on 29 November 1945).
- April 1990** First democratic elections.
- 23 December 1990** 88.5% of voters at the [referendum](#) vote in favour of an independent Slovenia.
- 25 June 1991** Slovenia officially declares its [independence](#).
- 15 January 1992** The EU officially recognises Slovenia's independence.
- 22 May 1992** Slovenia becomes a member of the UNO.
- 1 February 1999** Association Agreement with the EU comes into effect.
- 26 April 2003** Slovenia signed EU Accession Treaty in Athenes.
- 1 May 2004** Slovenia became an EU member.

Holidays



1 st and 2 nd January	New Year
8 th February	Prešeren Day, Slovenian Cultural Holiday
	Easter Sunday and Monday
27 th April	Day of Uprising Against Occupation
1 st and 2 nd May	Labour Day
	Whit Sunday
25 th June	National Day
15 th August	Assumption Day
31 st October	Reformation Day
1 st November	All Souls' Day
25 th December	Christmas
26 th December	Independence Day

Language



The Slovenian language has played a special role throughout Slovenian history. It is still considered one of the foundations of national identity. In spite of various influences, it has preserved its special features - the most notable being the archaic dual form. This is the grammatical number used for two people or things in all inflected parts of speech.

Even a limited proficiency in Slovenian will make your trip both easier and more rewarding. It will save you time finding what you want, whether that is a hotel room, a special dish on the menu or an item you want to buy.

Conversational phrases given here anticipate situations you are likely to encounter, with comments on customs and lifestyle providing the necessary background information.

People



Slovenia has a population of 1,964,036, of which 83.06 % are Slovenes ([2002 census](#)).

In Slovenia there are also two national minority communities of Italians (2,258 - 2002 census) and Hungarians (6,243 - 2002 census). They are considered indigenous minorities and their rights are protected under the Constitution.

Other ethnic groups include Croats, Serbs, Bosnians (Muslims), Yugoslavs, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Albanians. The statutes and special rights of Gypsy communities living in Slovenia are determined by statute.

Basic statistics

Population by age groups, 31 December 2003:

0-14 years	14.6%
15-64 years	70.4%
65 and over	15.0%

Life expectancy:

<i>year</i>	<i>years for men</i>	<i>years for women</i>
1995	70.27	77.76
1997	71.01	78.62
1998	71.05	78.68
1999	71.34	78.75
2000	71.94	79.10
2001	71.13	79.57
2002	72.33	79.87

Distribution of population

Approximately 50% urban and 50% rural.

Population density

98 inhabitants per km² in 2002, which is much lower than in the majority of other European states (460/km² in the Netherlands, 195/km² in Italy).

Language

The official language of Slovenia is Slovenian. Apart from singular and plural it employs dual number, a very rare phenomenon in linguistics.

In nationally mixed regions Italian and Hungarian are also spoken.

Religion

The majority of Slovenes (almost 60%) are Roman Catholics, although there are around 30 other religious communities, spiritual groups, societies and associations registered in Slovenia.

Slovenes abroad

There are indigenous Slovenian minorities in Italy, Austria and in Hungary. Between 250,000 and 400,000 Slovenes (depending on whether second and subsequent generations are counted) live outside the country, in other continents and in EU countries.

Source: [*Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia*](#)

Sport



The first great achievements accomplished by Slovenian sportsmen and women in the history of world sports were mainly in **gymnastics**. Particularly famous was [Leon Štukelj](#) (1898-1999) who, between 1922 and 1936, won eight gold, four silver and five bronze medals in three Olympic games and three world championships.

The dreams of many Slovenes became reality when the **Slovene national football team** with its coach [Srečko Katanec](#) (Head Coach of the Slovenian National Team since 1st July 1998 until 12 June 2002) qualified for the first time for the European Championship in 2000 and for the 2002 Football World Cup. Many fans have sold their cars and other valuable objects just to be able to fly to Korea and Japan to support their heroes. That's how popular football has become in the last years. Today 40% of the population is actively engaged in all fields of sports.

Over the last twenty years it is the **skiers** who have achieved the best results and stood on the winning podiums at major world competitions. Slovene ski jumpers are also very successful. The annual final competition of the **ski-jumping** World Cup each year takes place at [Planica](#), at the largest natural ski-jump in the world.

Alpinists occupy a special place in Slovene sport. **Mountaineering and alpinism** have a very long tradition in Slovenia. In mid-November 1999 [Tomaž Humar](#) completed a solo ascent of the south face of Daulaghiri, described as a challenge for the third millennium. And on 7 October 2000 [Davo Karničar](#) became the first person to ski non-stop down from the 8,848- metre summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain.

State



Slovenia proclaimed its constitution in December 1991 and its constitutional system is parliamentary democracy.

Conventional long/short form: Republic of Slovenia, Slovenia

Local long/short form: Republika Slovenija, Slovenija

Head of state

The **President of the Republic** (elected for a maximum two five-year terms by direct elections). The current President is **Dr Janez Drnovšek** (elected in December 2002).

Legislative authority

The **National Assembly** (90 deputies). The present chairman is **France Cukjati**.

Political parties represented in Parliament (National Assembly), **elections of 3 October 2004:**

- Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) - 29 deputies
- Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) - 23 deputies
- United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD) - 10 deputies
- New Slovenia-Christian People's Party (NSi) - 9 deputies
- Slovenian People's Party (SLS) - 7 deputies
- Slovene National Party (SNS) - 6 deputies
- Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DESUS) - 4 deputies
- 1 representative of the Hungarian minority
- 1 representative of the Italian minority

The **National Council**, which performs an advisory role. Members elected for a five-year term (40 members). The president is **Janez Sušnik**.

Executive authority

The Government consists of the Prime Minister and other ministers. The Government and the ministers are independent within the framework of their jurisdiction, and responsible to the National Assembly.

The current coalition government is headed by *Prime Minister Janez Janša*.

The government consists of a **coalition** between the Slovenian Democratic Party, New Slovenia - Christian People's Party, Slovenian People's Party and the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia.

Judiciary

Judicial power in Slovenia is implemented by courts with general responsibilities and specialised courts.

State Prosecutor

There are 11 regional public prosecution offices, 4 higher public prosecution offices and the Office of the State Prosecutor General of the Republic of Slovenia.

Ombudsman for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The first Slovenian Ombudsman was elected in September 1994. The Ombudsman reports to the National Assembly on his work.

Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court decides on the conformity of laws with the Constitution. The Constitutional Court is composed of nine judges - legal experts. They are elected for a term of nine years.

Capital

Capital: Ljubljana (330,000)

Other major towns: Maribor, Celje, Kranj, Velenje, Ptuj, Koper, Novo mesto, Jesenice, Trbovlje, Nova Gorica, Murska Sobota

Municipalities

193 (11 of them have the urban municipality status: Celje, Koper, Kranj, Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Nova Gorica, Novo Mesto, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec, Velenje)

Tourism



Tourism is one of the most promising sectors of the economy in Slovenia.

Every year 1.2 million foreign tourists visit Slovenia. The largest number of tourists comes from Germany, Italy, Austria, Croatia, Great Britain, the Netherlands and other European countries. In addition, the number of tourists from the United States is steadily growing.

Visiting Slovenia could provide an interesting mixture of leisure, recreation and exciting excursions.

Slovenia is especially attractive to those who enjoy mountains and lakes, or spending time on the ski slopes. There are more than seven thousand kilometres of marked mountain trails for hiking and climbing. You can also try high-adrenaline sports or spend time on the Mediterranean coast. Last but not least, Slovenia has 15 natural spas, where you can take care of your health with help of thermal mineral waters.

But you could also choose to "travel back through time" in museums, castles, churches and galleries and then go on to enjoy yourself in the evening at one of our casinos as well.

We invite you to come and get to know the country yourself!