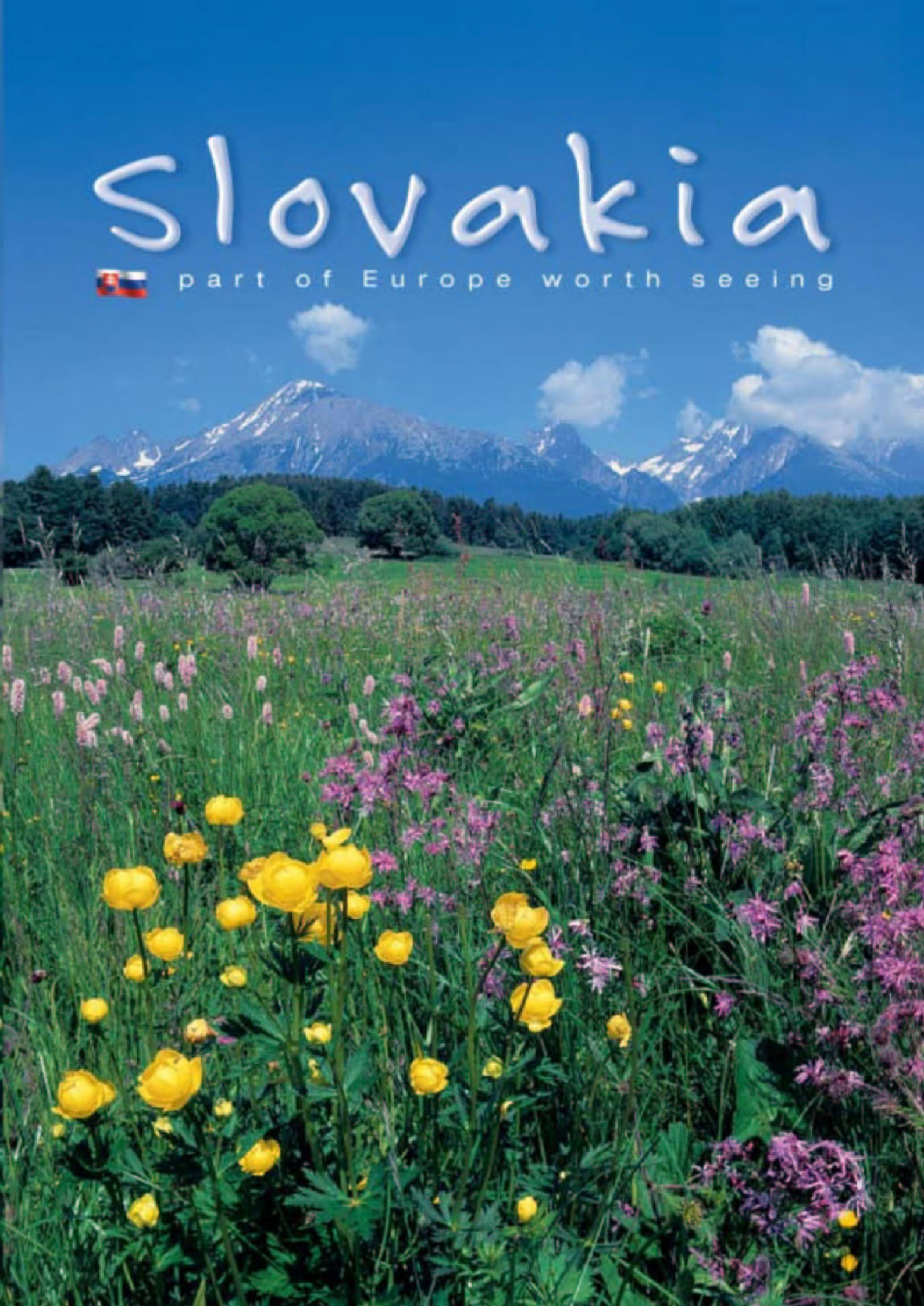




Slovakia

 part of Europe worth seeing



Slovakia

Welcome to Slovakia



Diamond crystal has six sides, six secrets. The seventh secret is the diamond itself. Seven, as the symbol of fortune or as the Seven Wonders of the World.

Slovakia, the country of tourism, has also its seven wonders. The whole year long it offers tourists its attractions, historical sights, untouched natural nooks, comfortable touristic centres, various ways of cultural entertainment and especially hospitality of its inhabitants. The experts say that sea is the only internationally recognized attraction Slovakia lacks. Slovakia is a modern country but it can also remember the ancient history - the northernmost border of the Roman Empire crossed the middle of its territory. At the beginning of our ages the nations wandered through the Slovak valleys between the mountains searching for their place on the continent. Each of them has left its trace here. And these traces gradually grew together with what was typically Slovak. Slovakia matured slowly, as a diamond in the depths of the earth. Join us in looking inside this precious stone.



Mountains and Lowlands



Water and Caves



Walking through the Centuries



Seven Days a Week



Folk Culture



See, hear, experience

INFORMATION

- The first state formation - Great Moravia, 9th-10th century
- The independent state - January 1st, 1993
- The capital - Bratislava
- The population - 5.5 million
- The administrative division - 8 regions, 79 districts
- The official language - Slovak
- The most numerous ethnic minority - Hungarians



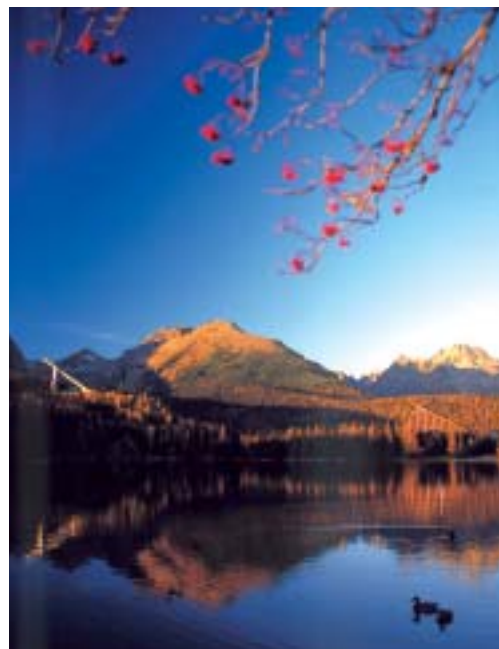
Špania Valley



Watermill - Malý Dunaj (the Small Danube)



Vine on the slopes of the Small Carpathians



Štrbské Mountain Lake - Area of Dreams



Mengusovská Valley

View of the High Tatras from Štrba ►



Mountains and Lowlands

Slovakia is cradled in the Carpathians, the mountain range which arose at the same time as the Alps and forms the European mountain frame. Mountains are a part of Slovak history, culture and everyday life.

Long before the pride of industrial age sprang up, a man lived here in harmony with nature and his neighbours. It was reflected in the national symbol, which later became the state emblem: three mountains as a mountain chain and the Christian double cross as a symbol of faith, love and understanding. The Slovak mountains give a chance to forget the overindustrialized and overpopulated world. They embrace unbelievably long valleys through which one can walk for hours and listen to the sounds of nature. You will find ideal terrains for hiking or mountaineering here, you can test your abilities in floating down the mountain rivers or skiing down the mountain slopes in winter. At the foot of Slovak mountains there are vast lowlands offering the opportunity of romantic floating down the huge Danube or lazy rivers and camping on banks of the lakes. A bustard, the only European remainder of this steppe bird related to ostrich, is among rare species of animals and plants living in the country.



Vysoké Tatry - Prostredný hrot



THE BEST . . .

The most remarkable national parks:

- The National Park Vysoké Tatry
- The National Park Nízke Tatry
- The National Park Pieniny
- The National Park Slovenský raj
- The National Park Malá Fatra
- The National Park Muránska planina
- The National Park Poloniny
- The National Park Veľká Fatra
- The National Park Slovenský kras
- The highest mountain range - Vysoké Tatry
- The highest mountain - Gerlachovský štít (Vysoké Tatry - 2 655 m)
- The most precious fauna and flora: the State Natural Reservation Devínska Kobyla
- The longest valley - Ľubochnianska (Veľká Fatra - 25 km)



On tour



Ochtinská Aragonite Cave



Zemplínska šírava



Piešťany - Thermia Palace Spa House



The Dunajec River - floating

Dobšinská Ice Cave ►



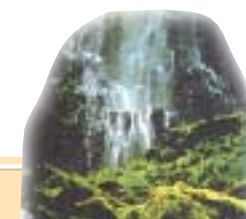
Water and Caves

One cannot simply say that Slovakia lacks sea. The sea begins and ends on top of the mountains, in the clouds, which come out of steam from the seas.

The seas were given their waters from rivers and the rivers grew out of mountain springs. Thus Slovakia has two seas, the North Sea and the Black Sea, both of them emanating from the springs of our mountain slopes. Slovakia is rich in rivers and stretches of water, which provide opportunities for all kinds of recreation and water sports. Slovakia has also enough ground water. People in karstic areas have taken care of mineral springs for ages so that every passer-by can have a drink. Many mineral springs have been seized and curing spas have been built there. In some of them the ground water cures by healing mud, in others by its temperature or by minerals brought out of the earth depths. There are also other waters and other secrets hidden in these depths. There are only three aragonite caves in the world and one of them is in Slovakia. You will also find several dropstone caves in which beautiful decorations can be admired and also diseases of modern age such as asthma and allergies are cured. Mysterious ice caves, where decorations increase every summer, will surprise you with a new face each winter.



Trenčianske Teplice - spa



THE BEST . . .

- Piešťany - diseases of motion system, curing baths, mud wraps
- Sliac - climatic and thermal baths, cardiac diseases and diseases of cardiovascular system
- Bardejov - climatic and mineral baths, especially diseases of digestive system, general recovery
- Natural thermal swimming pools - Dunajská Streda, Veľký Meder, Patince, Kováčová
- Stretches of water - Zemplínska šírava, Domaša, Liptovská Mara, Senec, Oravská priehrada (dam)
- The longest stretch of river for floating - the Hron from the Heľpa to the estuary into the Danube - 272 km

The most remarkable caves opened to the public

- Bystrá (curing allergies and asthma)
- Demänovská (ice and karst cave)
- Dobšinská (ice cave)
- Ochtinská Aragonite Cave (there are only 3 aragonite caves in the world)



Spišský Castle



Oravský Castle



Saint Elizabeth's Dome in Košice

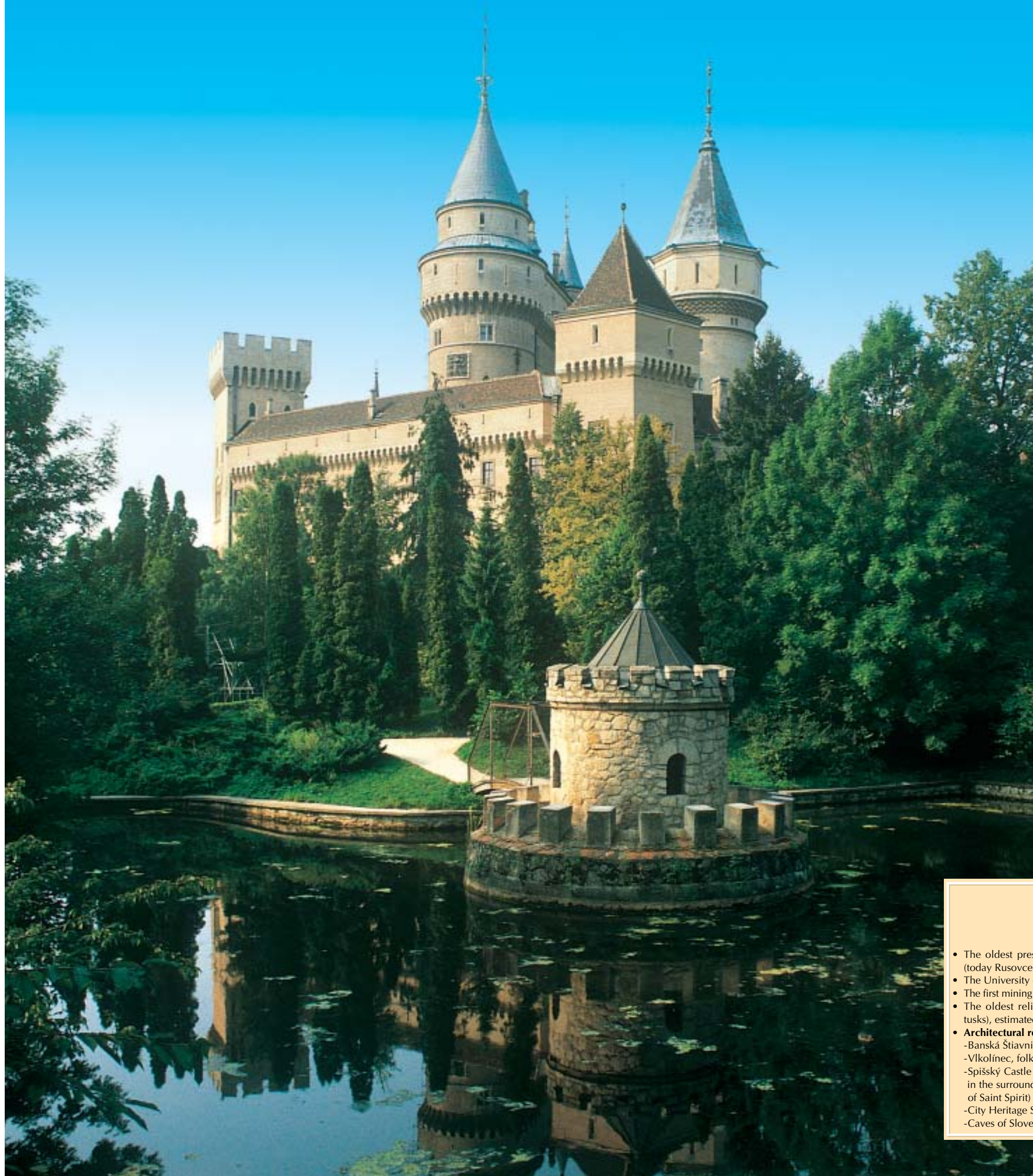


Žehra - the Church of Saint Spirit



Bardejov - city memorial reservation

Bojnice - the Castle ►



Walking through the Centuries

The historians are still trying to find out when the ancient nations laid the foundation stones of huge castles. However, we know for sure that the castle hill in Bratislava, which is now the capital of Slovakia, was the place of permanent settlement as soon as four thousand years ago.

On the territory of almost two hundred Slovak villages and towns there are medieval fortresses and castles protecting trade roads in ancient times. History has left remarkable traces in Slovakia and, therefore, you can find all architectural styles here. Remains of the Roman fortification from Caesarean times were preserved near Bratislava. In many early gothic churches we can still find evident signs of Roman architecture which gradually developed into a newer architectural style. Saint Elizabeth's Dome built in gothic style in Košice is a real jewel of European value. The architecture of German colonists has been preserved in towns of Pohorie, Spiš, or in Vysoké Tatry. The late baroque style found its reflection in Grasalkovič Palace in Bratislava, seat of the president of the Slovak Republic. And the folk architecture protected by a huge mountain range developed and grew more and more beautiful. A picture of all these times will be preserved for human kind for five sights, each having its origin in different epoch, were put on the list of the world cultural heritage by UNESCO.



Interior of Oravský Castle



THE BEST . . .

- The oldest preserved building in Slovakia - Roman fortification Gerulata (today Rusovce, a part of Bratislava)
- The University of Trnava, founded in 1635
- The first mining university in central Europe - Banská Štiavnica, founded in 1762
- The oldest relic of decorative art: Moravian Venus (made of mammoth tusks), estimated age 22 800 years
- **Architectural relics of the UNESCO world heritage list:**
 - Banská Štiavnica and technical relics in the surroundings
 - Vlkolínec, folk architecture reservation
 - Spišský Castle (the largest fortification system in central Europe) and relics in the surroundings - Spišské Podhradie, Kostol Svätého Ducha (the Church of Saint Spirit) in Žehra, Spišská Kapitula
 - City Heritage Site Bardejov
 - Caves of Slovenský kras and Aggtelek



Západné Tatry - mountain cycling



Donovaly - paragliding



The Strážovské Mountains - Maninská gorge



Vysoké Tatry - skialpinism



Vysoké Tatry - Litorova Valley

Nízke Tatry - Chopok ▶



Seven Days a Week

If you long for a quiet loneliness in the middle of forests, come to Slovakia! If you want to experience romantics of floating down rivers, come to Slovakia! Do you like skiing? Or flying off the top of a mountain on a hang glider or parachute? Or having a rest in a comfortable hotel with your own swimming pool? Or do you long for an intimate night at the camp fire? Or do you want to furrow water level on a sailing-ship? The answer remains the same: come to Slovakia.

This is the advantage of a small country where you do not have to travel hundreds of miles to reach your destination. However, there are many places in Slovakia where you experience different adventures each day a week. There are different places to be visited within seven days without wasting your time on travelling. We have already mentioned the neverending valleys and untouched places. Let us say now how everybody can have a good time and get pleasure from things he or she likes, like chasing a bear in foggy forests or party in dinner jackets beginning in the theatre and ending at the roulette. You can take traditional opportunities - hunting animals that do not live in every country. In Slovakia you can play golf, rent saddle horses for rides with or without a guide. With a mountain guide you can climb up the mountains inaccessible for a common hiker. Just come.



Hunter trophy



THE BEST ...

The most important touristic centres

- Vysoké Tatry - skiing, hiking (Štrbské Pleso, Smokovce, Tatranská Lomnica, Tatranská Polianka), riding a horse
- Nízke Tatry - skiing, hiking (Chopok Jasná and Kosodrevina, Tále, Donovaly)
- Malá Fatra - Vrátna
- Veľká Fatra - skiing, hiking, hang gliding - Donovaly, Krížna, Ružomberok
- Zemplínska šírava - yachting, camping, windsurfing
- Liptovský Mikuláš - artificial canal for water slalom on the river Váh
- Čunovo - artificial canal for water slalom and rafting
- The well-known area for picking up mushrooms - meadows between Vysoké Tatry and Nízke Tatry, Važec area
- Forest fruits - picking up allowed in all areas except the national parks



Wooden Church in Vyšný Komárnik



Folk Festival



Ceramics from Modra



Čičmany



Holiday costume from Rejdová

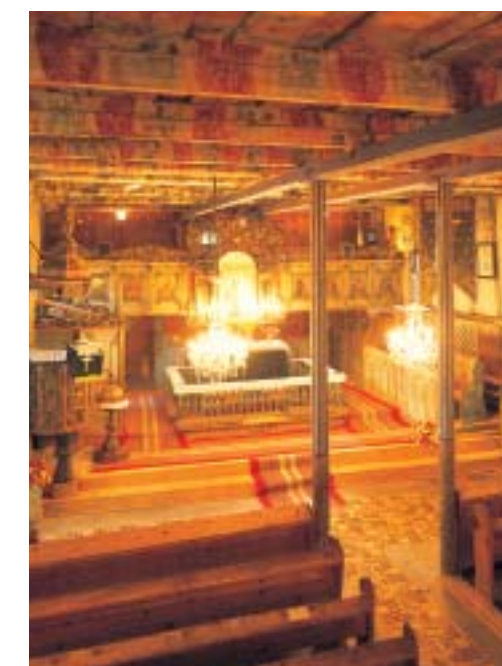
Vlkolínec - folk architecture reservation ▶



Folk Culture

Since long ago a man lived in harmony with nature. He built houses in forests from spruce logs and decorated them with shingles. He let the sun burn the bricks from clay loam and straw and made roof of cane.

Among various kinds of trees that grew in mixed forests in the country, the man appreciated lime, spruce and maple most of all. He built his houses of spruce, made dippers, small dishes and statues of lime and violins came out of lime, spruce and mainly maple wood. Their strings could lure out the most melancholic tones but also exhilarate dancers. Folk architecture, fine arts and music were developing in an incredible harmony. The harmony between vital and cultural needs was emanating for centuries and ages. If you want to get closer to this harmony, come to see out-door museums of folk architecture spread over the whole country. Several folk festivals taking place in Slovakia every year keep to verbal, musical and other artistic tradition.



Interior of wooden church



THE BEST ...

- Museum of folk architecture in Zverovka, Vychylovka, Pribylina, and Martin
- Wooden church Saint Cross (Liptovský Mikuláš)
- Painted houses - Čičmany, Ždiar
- Wooden Greek Catholic church Nová Sedlica (transferred to the Outdoor Museum of Folk Architecture in Humenné)
- Natural Museum of Slovak Village in Martin
- Museum of Ukrainian and Russniak Culture in Svidník
- Folk Festival Východná



Slovak National Theatre



Ballet of Slovak National Theatre



Salamander celebrations - Banská Štiavnica



Slovak National Gallery



Saint Barbara - patron of Banská Štiavnica, 14th c.

Slovak Philharmony ►



See, hear, experience

Wise division of day-time into duties and relax requires artistic abilities. And art in its individual forms is the way of making human spirit more beautiful.

We have already mentioned what Slovakia can offer to its visitors. Art, the last thing that makes a man more gentle and noble-minded, has settled in our country long ago. In Slovakia you can witness Salamander celebrations, the old parade of miners, you can also take part in concerts of highly recognized musical ensembles or enjoy the performances of top opera singers, ballet dancers and pantomime artists. Slovakia is rich in museums, galleries and architectonic relics which represent the national cultural heritage. It is right here, in the country of musicians and painters, where Andy Warhol has his origins.



Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce - Andy Warhol (serigraphy)



THE BEST ...

- International Ghost Festival in Bojnice (May)
- Bratislava Musical Festival (October)
- Folk Festival in Východná (July)
- Biennial Exhibition of Illustrations Bratislava (even years)
- Theatre Festival in Nitra (September)
- Jazz Festival in Bratislava (October)
- Cultural Summer (July, August)
- Slovak National Museum has in its evidence over 200 museums, galleries and expositions on the whole territory