



ŽILINA
TOURISM
REGION



**GOOD TO KNOW
BETTER TO SEE**





ŽILINA TOURISM REGION





Orava Castle

1

One of the most visited and most beautiful Slovak castles is located in Oravský Podzámok. It can be described as an eagle's nest built on a high rock towering over the surrounding countryside. It is also popular for its scary night-time guided tours and various theatre productions. It is a jewel in the crown of Slovak cultural heritage. Aerial pictures of this monumental castle complex rising above the high rock are used in most international presentations promoting our country.



Did
you know
that... ?

It has been featured as the backdrop in movies like *Král drozdia brada* (King Thrushbeard), *Princezná a žobrák* (Princess and the Pauper), *Sokoliar Tomáš* (Thomas and the Falcon King), *Láska na vlásku* (Love Hung by a Thread), *Dračie srdce 2* (Dragon Heart 2) and even the first movie about Count Dracula, *Nosferatu*.



Caves in Demänovská Dolina Valley

2

Enter the underground **Demänovská jaskyňa slobody** cave and marvel at the gorgeous colourful dripstones, which make it one of the most spectacular caves in Europe. You can get to the entrance of the cave along a 400-metre-long educational trail with an elevation difference of 67 metres. The guided tour of the cave is 1,800 metres long and covers 900 stairs. It is the most visited cave in Slovakia. The **Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa** ice cave is a popular tourist spot and was one of the first known caves in the world. It is the second largest cave of its kind in Slovakia. It is open to the public and located at the righthand side of the Demänovská dolina valley. The entrance to the cave is located 840 metres above sea level. The cave consists of four floors with a total length of almost 2.5 kilometres. Its icy interior probably emerged 400 to 500 years ago. After several warm winters, the Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa ice cave lost all the ice that once made it famous. We believe that cold conditions will return one day and ice will fill it again. For now, however, we can only remember the beauty of ice stalactites and stalagmites through archival photographs.

Did
you know
that... ?

The Demänovská jaskyňa slobody cave maintains a constant 7 °C temperature year-round. The Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa ice cave is known for being the discovery site of cave bear bones. In the 18th century, people thought them to be dragon remains, which is why it was also known as the Dragon Cave.



Vlkolínec

3

When visiting the Liptov region, do not miss the best-preserved reserve of folk architecture in Slovakia, which was listed as a UNESCO World cultural and natural heritage site in 1993. Most of the small wooden houses in pastel colours date back to the 19th century. It seems that the village of Vlkolínec has found a way to stop time, with everything preserved almost as it was in the middle of the last century. However, some permanent residents of all age groups – from small children to seniors – are still living in the wooden settlement, which makes it truly unique. All the houses are wooden with the exception of the brick church. Some of the most popular buildings and objects in Vlkolínec include a wooden two-storey belfry from the 18th century, which was constructed on a stone base, and a wooden well from the 19th century. You can enjoy the spirit that emanates from the wooden settlement of Vlkolínec, while exploring the exhibitions made for visitors.

Did
you know
that... ?

"Vlk" means "wolf" in Slovak, and legend has it that the settlement was named Vlkolínec because its inhabitants used to protect the town of Ružomberok from wolves, which they captured in wolf holes.



Čičmany

4

A fairy tale village full of gingerbread houses – wooden buildings with richly decorated exterior walls adorned by white geometrical shapes. These ornaments are unique in the whole of Central Europe. There are more than 130 houses in the settlement. In 1977, a part of the village was declared a folk architecture heritage site to protect and preserve its culture for future generations. Folk traditions are still alive here. Locals use the geometrical ornamental technique to make embroidered pictures and tablecloths as well as spectacular folk dresses.



Did
you know
that... ?

Originally, these types of ornaments were probably created by coincidence, when local housewives decided to make use of the leftover mixture for insulating the gaps between wooden beams to decorate their houses, drawing inspiration from patterns found on traditional folk dresses.



5

A photograph showing two hikers from behind as they cross a narrow, rocky stream bed. The hiker on the left is wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark shorts, while the hiker on the right is wearing a green tank top and grey shorts. Both are carrying large backpacks and using trekking poles for stability. The stream is shallow with white water rapids, and the surrounding forest is dense with mossy rocks and trees.

If you are an experienced hiker, you can combine the trail through the gorges with a hike to the peak of the Malý Rozsutec Mountain. The hiking trail is popular for its spectacular views from the peak.



6

Wire craft was first mentioned in texts dating back to the 18th century. It originated in the regions around Trenčín and Kysuce. Men from these poor regions of Slovakia used to travel for work to Silesia, where they learnt various wire craft techniques. Wire craftsmen used wire to fix clay containers, create small objects, and later even for decor.



Roháčske Plesá Tarns

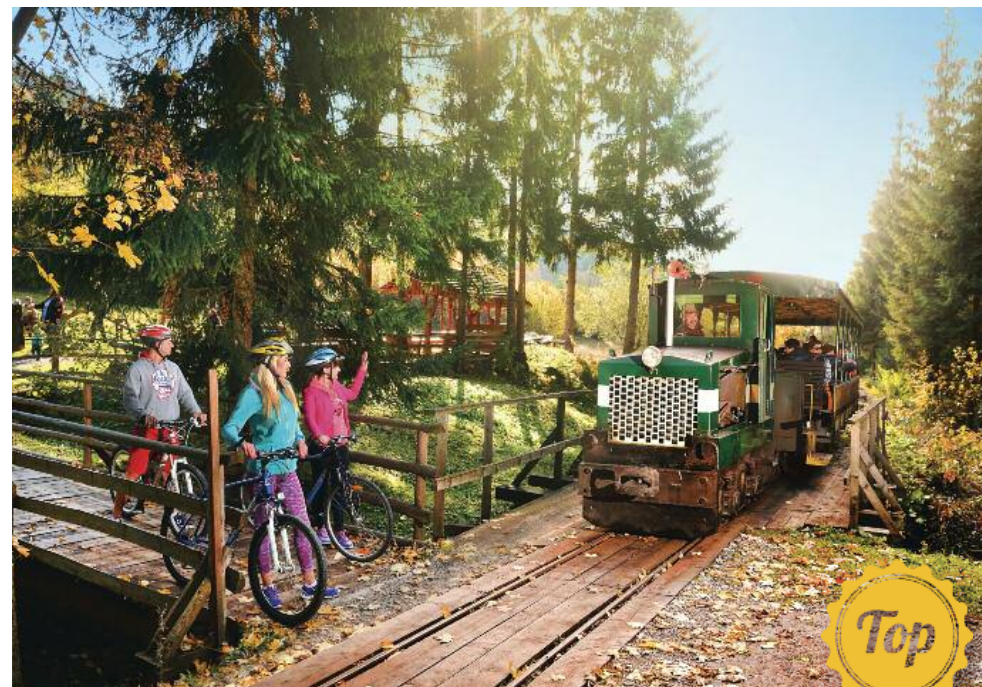
7

Roháčske plesá consist of six glacial tarns. They are located in the Roháčska dolina valley and are found in considerably lower altitudes than the tarns of the High Tatras Mountains, which makes them unique. The biggest tarn is 7 metres deep and covers an area of 2.22 hectares. You can reach them along the Roháčske plesá educational trail. This medium difficulty hike is popular for families with children and continues towards the Roháčsky vodopád waterfall. When you get there, you will be rewarded with beautiful natural panoramas and captivating sceneries.



Did you know that...?

The Roháčsky vodopád waterfall is comparable in size to other glacial waterfalls in the High Tatras mountains. It is located 1,340 metres above sea level.



Historic Forest Switchback Railway

8

Experience a unique ride in a forest switchback railway that was used to overcome big elevation differences over short distances. In the past, the railway was used to transport wood logged in the surrounding forests. Currently, a reconstructed section of the former Kysuce – Orava forest railway located between the Kubátkovia station and the Sedlo Beskyd station (approximately 8 km) is presented as a part of the Museum of the Kysuce Village as the Historic Forest Switchback Railway.



Did you know that...?

The slopes of the Beskyd Mountain were too narrow for serpentine as there was no space for meandering curves. Switchback railways were based on the so-called switchback system, which consisted of points with railroad switches that enabled the train to change direction. The system enabled the train engine to pull carts forward and then backward after switching, with the whole process repeating until the train reached its destination.



Via Ferrata HZS Martinské Hole

9

In 2013, Martinské hole joined the list of mountains that boast a protected climbing route to the top. The via ferrata was built by the mountain rescue service and is one of the most interesting attractions of the Turiec region. It offers a choice of two difficulty levels. It is recommended to use a via ferrata kit. On the trail you can marvel at the Pivovarský potok gorge and water cascades. You can get to Via Ferrata HZS Martinské hole from Martin. Start at the final bus stop at Stráne and follow the Pivovarský potok brook towards the Martinské hole. The educational trail and the via ferrata are not open year-round. They are accessible from 1 June to 14 September and from 1 November to 14 April.



Did you know that... ?

There are two rope bridges over the brook. You can use them to cross the gorge there and back and experience an unforgettable extreme adventure.



Rafts on the Orava and Váh Rivers

10

In the past, traditional rafting was an important source of income for the inhabitants of poor regions like Orava and Liptov. At the beginning, raftsmen usually transported wood to areas in need. It was abundant in Slovakia but was often lacking in the southern regions. The vessel itself constituted the transported goods. As centuries went by, the rafts became more sophisticated and were able to hold additional loads of wooden products, shingles, ceramics, canvas, foodstuff, produce from Slovak sheep farms, and also carry people. You can experience a ride on this uncommon vessel in the attractive surroundings of the Váh river, which flows under Strečno castle or on the Orava river with its beautiful view of the Orava castle.



Did you know that... ?

The raftsmen faced the most dangerous sections of the Váh river at the Margita and Besná rocks. Between 1937 and 1938, the rocks were blasted away during the construction of the railway tunnel for the second railway track crossing the Strečniansky priesmyk pass. However, this section of the river remains known for its cascades.



Strečno Castle

11

Take a break on your way from Žilina to Martin and visit the medieval Strečno castle that towers on a rock over the Váh river. Its history goes all the way back to the 14th century. To get to the castle, take a pleasant walk through the medieval wooden village of Paseka, which is modelled after medieval buildings. The castle will mesmerize you with its spectacular panoramic views of the Strečnianska tiesňava gorge.

Did you know that... ?

Strečno castle was home to noblewoman Žofia Bosniaková, who was known for helping the sick and poor. After her death, her remains were found in a preserved condition even though she had not been mummified or embalmed. This is one of the reasons why people considered her a saint.



Lietava Castle Ruins

12

It is considered the second biggest Slovak castle. The origins of the castle date back to the 13th century. The last significant owner of Lietava – Juraj Thurzo, the Palatine of Hungary – lived at the beginning of the 17th century. Nowadays, volunteers from the Association for the Protection of Lietava Castle are working towards saving, reconstructing and preserving the castle. You can get to the Lietava castle ruins from the village of Lietava-Majer following the blue waymarked hiking trail (30 min.). You can also take a steeper path that starts in the village of Lietavská Svinná (at the bus stop) and follows the green waymarked trail (40 min.).



Cycle Route from Castle to Castle

13

The cycle route connecting two castles, namely Budatín and Strečno, is immensely popular among Žilina locals. The route leads by the Žilina dam and mostly copies the tarmac embankment along the dam. The route is 33 km long. There are also bicycle stands, shelters, benches, rest points and buffets with refreshments along the route. The whole area surrounding the Váh river is pleasant and easy to walk or bike. The most beautiful section of the route can be found around the wildlife corridor, which was created during the construction of the Žilina dam on the right side of the Váh river. **TIP: Cyclists will also enjoy the cycle route leading from the Žilina dam to Terchová.** The route is about 23 km long and mostly runs along an asphalt cycle path. Along the way, it offers beautiful scenery, greenery, peaceful corners and views of the Malá Fatra Mountains – an ideal trip for families and recreational cyclists.

Did you know that... ?

The Žilina region boasts more than 3 300 km of marked cycle routes.



Wedding Palace in Bytča

14

The Wedding Palace was built at the beginning of the 17th century by Juraj Thurzo – Palatine of Hungary. He had it built mainly to host the wedding feasts of his seven daughters. The palace and the surrounding grounds are one of the most significant Renaissance landmarks in Central Europe.

Did you know that... ?

The famous Juraj Jánošík served as a soldier in the Bytča Chateau guard. Here he met the imprisoned outlaw Tomáš Uhorčík from Kysuce, who persuaded him to become an outlaw as well.



Žilina Historic Centre

15

The historic centre of Žilina is known for its historic buildings, plenty of cosy cafes and restaurants and tiny shops along one of the longest urban pedestrian zones in Slovakia. When strolling through the town, do not forget to visit Námestie Andreja Hlinku square and Mariánske námestie square. Between the squares lies the town landmark – the Holy Trinity Church and the separate belfry known as Burian's tower. It offers a spectacular view of the town centre.

Did you know that...?

Mariánske námestie square is known for its open arcade hallways or arcades locally known as "laubne". In the past, the homeowners set up their goods underneath during markets. These were some of the richest traders and buyers from town.



Catacombs Under the Church of Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle in Žilina

16

If you are interested in history and mysteries, come and uncover the secrets of the underground spaces of the so-called "catacombs" under the Church of Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle at Mariánske námestie square. Local tour guides will share many interesting facts and you will even find out whether Jewish children were actually sheltered here to avoid deportation to concentration camps. If you are interested in a guided tour, you need to register at the Žilina Tourist Information Office. The dates are set a month in advance.



Staromestské slávnosti (Old Town Festivities in Žilina)

17

Experience the magic of the past in Žilina! Every year, the Old Town Festivities fill the historic city centre with music, laughter, the scent of crafts and an unmistakable atmosphere. This tradition dates back to 1995 and has been one of the most popular events in the region ever since. The festivities take place in May and offer a varied program – traditional folk and art craft markets, performances by local and foreign musicians, and a wealth of cultural experiences for all generations.



Straník Hill

18

Just a few minutes from the centre of Žilina stands Straník – a popular place for lovers of nature, beautiful views and relaxation in the fresh air. Thanks to its easy ascent, it is perfect for families with children, recreational hikers and cyclists. The walk from Zástranie to Straník takes about 1 hour. The summit offers breathtaking panoramic views of the Žilina Basin (Žilinská kotlina), the Malá Fatra Mountains and the surrounding villages. There is a shelter and a footbridge here which won the 2016 'Building of the Year' award in the Best Exterior Architecture category. Straník is also known as a **paragliding paradise**. In good weather, you can admire the colourful wings gliding above the landscape.

Did you know that...?

Straník is a centre for non-motorised flying. This activity has been practised here since 1917, making it one of the top locations in Slovakia. Almost all military pilots and Czech Airlines pilots in Slovakia were trained in Straník.



Belské skaly Rocks

19

The Belské skaly rocks are sought-after by rock climbers and are located above the village of Belá in the Malá Fatra Mountains. When visiting the village of Belá, take a turn from the main road towards the ridge of the Malá Fatra Mountains and the Belianska dolina valley and follow the Beliansky potok brook to the end of the village. Just a few hundred metres later, join the yellow waymarked hiking trail that leads to the Belské skaly rocks. The hike to the rocks is short but steep. The steepest sections at the highest outlook point are equipped with rungs and chains. The waymarked trail will lead you to three secured outlook points with spectacular views of the surroundings. The trail is 1-1.5 hours long and starts in the Belianska dolina valley near the village of Belá.



Velký Rozsutec Mountain (1,610 m)

20

Velký Rozsutec Mountain is one of the most beautiful mountains in Slovakia. It is considered the symbol of the Krivánska Malá Fatra Mountains. It is a popular sought-after hiking destination, but the hike to the peak is not one of the easiest. Hikers usually start in Terchová – Biely Potok along a trail that leads through the Jánošíkove diery gorges, or in Terchová – Štefanová along a shorter and steeper trail. This side of the mountain offers hikers more spectacular views during the whole ascent. The peak itself offers charming panoramic views.



Ski Resort Vrátna Malá Fatra

21

The ski resort is located in the heart of the Malá Fatra National Park only 3 km from Terchová and it is an ideal place for freeriding, ski mountaineering, winter hiking or snowboarding. In summertime, Vrátna has a lot to offer to anybody who enjoys hiking, extreme sports, trips or seeking rest in nature. The mountain resort in Paseky offers several sports and entertainment facilities that make up the ActivityPark. Take the 4-seater Paseky chairlift to the upper station at 1,000 m above sea level, where beautiful views, a giant bench, swings, and other photo spots await you. From there, it is only a 10-minute walk to the Chata na Grúni cottage.

Did you know that...?

The slopes on the Chleb hill are accessible via a gondola lift, which operates in summer as well. Hikers can start trekking the ridge of the Malá Fatra mountains directly at an elevation of 1,524 metres above sea level.



Velký Kriváň Mountain (1,709 m above sea level)

22

Velký Kriváň Mountain is the highest peak of the Malá Fatra Mountains with an altitude of 1,709 m above sea level. It offers a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding hills and mountains. The hike to the top is not an easy one, but the route can be simplified by taking the cable car to Snilovské Saddle (Snilovské sedlo). From there, it takes about 45 minutes to reach the summit. If you are looking for refreshments, you can either take the cable car to the top station or walk to the local tourist cottage. It will take you about 30 minutes from Snilovské Saddle (Snilovské sedlo). It is the highest mountain cottage in the Malá Fatra Mountains, open all year round. You can return to Vrátna dolina Valley by cable car or on foot. If you choose the latter, you can either walk beneath the cable car or take a longer, more interesting route with beautiful views. The longer route leads along the ridge to Poludňový Grúň. The descent from Poludňový Grúň to Chata na Grúni (literally "Cottage on Grúň") is steep. From the cottage, a pleasant walk through the forest will take you back to the bottom station of the cable car.



Jánošík Days – a Folklore Festival in Terchová

23

The village of Terchová has been known for its unique musical tradition for almost 120 years, with a regular reminder in the form of its "local bank holiday" known as Jánošík Days. At the beginning of every August, the village of Terchová becomes the home of an international folklore festival. It features predominantly folklore, but also presents other music genres, exhibition opening events, presentations of folk crafts, coining and fireworks. The final day of the festival has become known for the horse-drawn carriage procession, which has been popular among visitors since 1968.



Wooden Bethlehem in Rajecká Lesná

24

It is one of the largest woodcarvings in Slovakia. Master Jozef Pekara from Rajecké Teplice began working on it in 1980, completing it 15 years later. Along with the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and scenes from his life, the exhibit also presents the history of the Slovak people. The Bethlehem measures 8.5 m in length, 2.5 m in width, and 3 m in height.

Did you know that...?

The Bethlehem contains a total of 300 figures, more than half of which are movable.



Geyser in Rajecká Lesná

25

Enjoy nature on a hot summer day and cool down in the artificial geyser in Rajecká Lesná, which blasts its spout up to 10 metres high and creates a colourful rainbow. In winter, it freezes into an icy cone with water blasting from the centre. Looking at it, your children will feel as if they've stepped into the world of Frozen. It is located approximately 4 km above the village of Rajecká Lesná and is accessible via a tarmac road.



Calvary with Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes in Rajecká Lesná

26

The Calvary (Way of the Cross) at the Marian pilgrimage site in Rajecká Lesná (Frivalde) consists of 14 chapels or stations of the last sorrow of Jesus Christ and the Ascension of Lord Church with a single steeple. The Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel is located below the Calvary near a spring rich in magnesium and calcium, which is believed to have healing properties.

Did you know that...?

The Calvary in Rajecká Lesná was built between 1920 and 1921 from charitable gifts from Frivald natives living in America.



Museum of Transport in Rajecké Teplice

27

The museum is located on the premises of the train stop in Rajecké Teplice. It features an exhibition titled From the History of Transport in Slovakia, which consists of three parts. The first part of the exhibitions displays panels and items related to road and water transport from ancient history to the 20th century. The railway section of the exhibition features models of various trains and includes two train station offices equipped with signalling, traffic control, and train detection technologies used by commercial services during the interwar period (1918–1945) and the socialist era. The third section presents the development of road transport, motoring, road construction and public transport. The museum includes a collection of historic motorcycles.



Stratený Budzogán Rocks

28

Stratený budzogán is a rock formation moulded by the erosive forces of frost and water into its uncommon shape of a clenched fist. It is approximately 12 metres high. You can reach it on foot along an educational trail that starts directly in Rajecké Teplice in approximately 2 hours. The information boards along the way offer details on the surrounding environment but also tell the story of a giant, which will captivate children and adults alike. Other routes to the rock formation lead along a waymarked hiking trail from the village of Zbyňov or from the other direction from the village of Súľov.



Slovenské liečebné kúpele Rajec Teplice – Slovak Health Spa 29

Relax in the thermal healing waters, which are beneficial for treating musculoskeletal disorders, inflammatory diseases of the central nervous system, neuromuscular degenerative diseases and occupational diseases affecting the bones, joints, muscles and tendons. The waters are used in a wide range of therapeutic procedures. You can also enjoy drinking cures, mud wraps, a large selection of therapeutic and relaxation stays, as well as the water and sauna worlds.



CykloRAJ (Cycling in Rajec dolina Valley) 30

Rajec dolina Valley is not only a place where you can relax and improve your health in thermal water but has also become an interesting cycling destination. Sporty cyclists could try, for example, the MTB route Ďurčiná – Hepnár – Vajnár – Rybná dolina – Rajec Lesná (No. 5496, green, 18 km), which offers the most beautiful views of Rajec dolina Valley and the surroundings. However, there are more cycling routes to choose from. More information here: www.rajecadolina.sk/sk/cykloraj/



Klak Mountain (1,351 m) 31

Klak Mountain is unmistakably the symbol of the Rajec dolina Valley. The distinct un-forested rocky peak of the southern section of the Lúčanská Malá Fatra Mountains is an excellent outlook point. It offers a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains and its distinct appearance draws large numbers of hikers. There is a Slovak double cross installed at the top and also a panoramic direction board with information about mountains that you can see from Klak. You can access it from the Fačkovské sedlo pass along the yellow way-marked trail (approximately 2 hours) or from the village of Fačkov along the blue way-marked trail (approximately 2.5 hours).

Did you know that... ?

The Malá Fatra Mountains can be divided into distinct sections: Krivánska Malá Fatra and Lúčanská Malá Fatra, which are separated by the valley of the Váh river. These parts are named after their respective highest peaks – Kriváň and Veľká Lúka.



Súľovské Skaly Rocks 32

The Súľovské skaly national nature reserve, which is a part of the Strážovské vrchy Mountains protected landscape area, is one of the best-known rocky areas in Slovakia and it is located approximately 10 km from Bytča. The rocky relief and uncommon formations make the territory unique. Many visitors cannot believe their eyes when they see the shapes that nature has created out of rocks. There are a few possible routes to the Súľovské skaly rocks with starting points in the villages of Súľov-Hradná, Hričovské Podhradie, Hlboké nad Váhom, Hrabovce and Jablonovce.



Aquapark Tatralandia

33

Discover a place full of adventure and fun with a year-round water park, including the Tropical Paradise and the children's zone Caribbean Kid's Island. In the summer season, children and adults alike will enjoy 14 pools with sea water, thermal water and clear water (10 pools in winter), along with 28 slides and water slides (6 slides in winter). In the area, you will also find accommodation and ZOOKONTAKT Tatralandia, where, in addition to seeing the animals, you can explore distant places through miniatures of world landmarks or have fun on the attractions. And don't miss the unique Hurricane Factory Tatralandia wind tunnel, where you can experience the feeling of free fall just as if you were jumping from an aeroplane.



Vodný park Bešeňová (Bešeňová Aquapark)

34

Bešeňová is a great place to rest, find some entertainment and draw positive energy. The brownish thermal water with hints of red contains high amounts of minerals with various benefits. Seniors can find relief from joint pain in the geothermal pools. If you have small children, you can relax in the big hall with a large relaxation pool with water spouts and other water attractions. Let your kids enjoy the kids' pool and the flumes to experience a small piece of paradise on Earth. You can also enjoy some well-deserved rest partaking in sauna rituals at the exclusive Sauna World in the Aquapark Bešeňová Wellness & SPA, which offers a wide selection of massages and other services.

Did you know that... ?

The aquapark utilizes hot geothermal springs that are 1,987 metres deep and rise up at a temperature of 60.5°C.



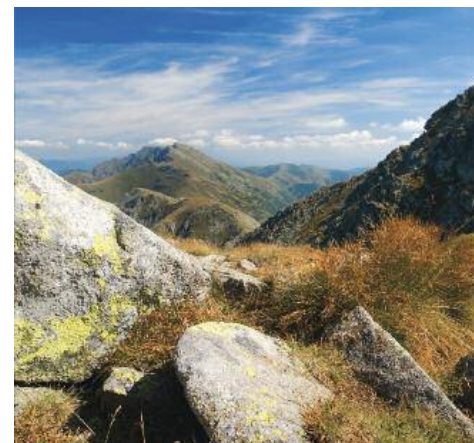
Jasná in the Low Tatras - Ski resort

35

Every skier should at least once try skiing on well-groomed slopes in the largest and most modern ski arena in Slovakia. The Jasná resort is located in the Low Tatras (Nízke Tatry) and offers excellent conditions for winter sports, as well as endless possibilities for activities and entertainment. More than 20 cable cars and lifts with a transport capacity of more than 28,000 people per hour connect the northern and southern sides of Chopok Mountain. The resort offers more than 50 km of perfectly groomed slopes of various difficulty levels suitable for beginners, families with children, advanced skiers, and even for hosting world-class competitions. The Rotunda panoramic restaurant welcomes you with endless views and the possibility of accommodation on Chopok Peak at an altitude of 2,024 m above sea level. Rich APRÈS SKI, world events, luxurious wellness & spa facilities, bars and great music clubs, SKI-IN SKI-OUT accommodation right on the slopes – all this is offered by the TOP resort Jasná.

Did you know that... ?

At the final stop of the Funitel, visitors will discover the highest located Rum Bar in Slovakia and also the Rotunda hotel – the highest located hotel in Central Europe.



Ďumbier Mountain (2,043 m) 36

Ďumbier is the highest peak of the Low Tatras (Nízke Tatry). However, the climb to the summit is not among the most difficult. The route is smooth, complemented by amazing views of both sides of the Low Tatras (Nízke Tatry). We recommend the route along the green trail from Demänová Valley (Demänovská dolina) – Lúčky section, then continuing through Široká Valley and Krúpove sedlo to Ďumbier. Return along the red trail leading along the ridge through Demänová Saddle (Demänovské sedlo) to Chopok Peak. Then take the blue trail down through Luková to Demänová Valley (Demänovská dolina) towards Vrbica Tarn (Vrbické pleso). The descent from Chopok can be shortened by taking the cable car.



Havránok Archaeological Open-Air Museum

37

The unique Havránok Archaeological Open-Air Museum is one of the most important archaeological sites in Slovakia. Archaeologists have documented that the Celts inhabited the Liptov region from the 4th to 1st century BC as they discovered and uncovered the remains of a settlement from the Late Iron Age, also known as the La Tène Period. In addition to large amounts of ceramics, jewellery, iron and bronze products, they found the remains of a fortress, a cult site of ancient druids and Celtic dwellings. Visitors can marvel at the reconstructed residential buildings, kiln for firing ceramics, sacrificial site, and fortification with a gate.



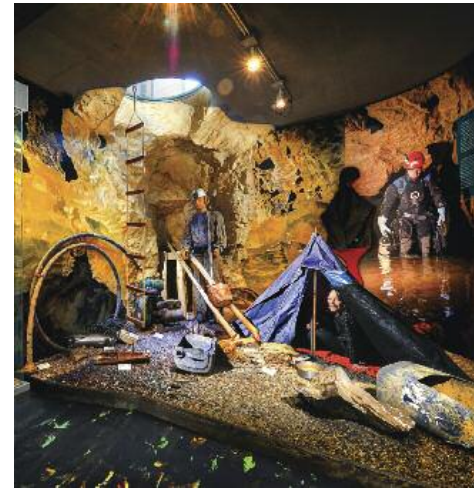
Liptovská Mara Reservoir

38

Explore the biggest Slovak reservoir. It was built by the inhabitants of the Liptov region to protect their region from flooding. The reservoir spans an area of 22 km² and reaches a maximum depth of 43 metres. It has been deservedly nicknamed the Slovak Sea or the Liptov Sea for its size and the amount of water it holds. In the summer, the reservoir is a perfect site for a wide range of water sport activities like swimming, rowing, yachting, windsurfing, and riding water scooters or pedal boating, along with an unforgettable boat tour and fishing.

Did
you know
that... ?

The Liptov Sea engulfed 13 villages.



Did
you know
that... ?

Even the simplest chemical elements can make sounds. Come to the museum, pick silicon, sulphur or aluminium from the panel and hear a short melody that is typical for these elements.

Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology

39

A state-of-the-art museum and the only specialized museum of its kind in Slovakia. You can see and experience the world of nature gradually from underground all the way up to the high mountains. The museum is also interactive, as visitors can visit a bear den or try crawling in a cave. The showcased exhibits also come with light and sound effects to make you feel as if you were walking through a real forest. You can hear bird songs, marmot whistles and wolf howls. The museum's lookout tower will show you the Liptov region from a bird's eye view.

Oblazy Water Mills, Kvačianska Dolina Valley

40

Two of the most spectacular valleys in Slovakia. The Kvačianska dolina valley, namely its upper section called Oblazy, is home to two water mills. They are some of the last preserved landmarks of its sort. The mills are included on the educational trail that leads through the valleys. They were built in the first half of the 19th century near a road that used to connect the Liptov region with Orava and Poland. In 1936, one of them was altered into a sawmill. After their owners gradually abandoned them, enthusiasts from the Slovak Union for Nature and Landscape Conservation have restored the buildings since 1980, later the members of the Strom života movement, and then the Oblazy Water Mills Civic Association. In August 2023, torrential rains destroyed the dam and bridge at the mills, temporarily halting their operation. Members of the civic association continue to work on restoring them. You can start the easy hike to the magical place at Kvačany. You will



reach the mills after about an hour of walking along the red waymarked trail. Take a break from walking through the gorgeous mountain scenery at the Jánošík's Head rock formation and lookout points, or take a detour to the Ráztocký vodopád waterfall. A shorter alternative route starts in the village of Veľké Borové and takes approximately 30 minutes.



Spa Lúčky

41

The spa is located in a quite mountainous environment. All pools and individual spas are filled with 36 to 38 °C thermal water with healing properties. Water from Lúčky heals locomotive and digestive problems as well as occupational diseases, women's health issues, and infertility. In addition to a number of pool attractions it also offers wellness facilities, saunas and a salt cave. The spa includes the AQUA-VITAL PARK with exterior and interior pools and a sauna world, which is open year-round.

Did you know that... ?

The mineral spring water that is used in all the pools and respective spas is suitable for drinking as well.



Lúčanský Vodopád Waterfall

42

The spa village of Lúčky located near Ružomberok also harbours a real gem. The village is known for a national natural landmark – the Lúčanský vodopád waterfall. Among other things, the waterfall is unique for being located in the middle of the village. It is 12 metres high, cascading down with water falling from the ledge of a travertine terrace into a small pond. The Lúčanka brook, also known as Teplianka, is not special in any way, but it is fed by springs rich in gypsum soil, which enriched the decor of the waterfall by flowing over the already mentioned travertine terraces that the waterfall falls from.



Museum of the Liptov Village in Pribylina

43

At the base of the southern slopes of the Western Tatras you can find a museum that documents Liptov folk architecture. The museum was built when a vast area was about to be submerged due to the construction of the Liptovská Mara dam. Significant cultural landmarks were transported here from 11 submerged villages and nowadays they form the core of the museum's exhibit. The original buildings were taken apart at their former location and these precious parts were transported and assembled as precise copies of the original objects. This led to the creation of the youngest open-air museum in Slovakia. In the summer tourist season visitors can admire demonstrations of different craft techniques.

Did you know that... ?

The museum also contains a static exhibit of the historic Považie Forest Railway.



Važecká Jaskyňa Cave

44

The rich dripstone decoration, remarkable finds of cave bear bones, and the precious cave animals make it one of the best-known caves in Slovakia. It is located in Važec, 35 km from Liptovský Mikuláš. The temperature in the cave is around 7 °C and you can tour it in approximately 25 minutes. The cave features a rich snow-white calcareous sinter decor, contains small lakes, and was an important site for the discovery of cave bear remains, which once inhabited the caves year-round.



Malinô Brdo Ski & Bike Family Park

45

The Ski resort is located only 2 km from the centre of Ružomberok. Visitors can enjoy 12 km of skiing slopes, and it is suitable for snowboarding and freestyle skiing as well. You can try the winter park with modern obstacles, the cross-country ski trails, or ski mountaineering trails. You can enter the resort from Hrabovo, a part of Ružomberok, using a comfortable state of the art 8-seater cable car. The resort is a great starting point for a few nice trips. You can walk to the Vlkolínec village (UNESCO), walk around the Sidorovo hill, or use the ski mountaineering or cross-country skiing trail to the Smrekovica mountain. The resort is open in summer, too. Visitors can enjoy off-road scooters and carts and fans of down-hill cycling can make great use of the top-notch Slovak Bike Park. **The Hrabovo Waterfalls** (Hrabovské vodopády) are located in the area and are accessible via an easy adventure trail suitable for children and adults alike, which is reminiscent of the famous Slovak gorges.



Via Ferrata Dve Veže (Two Towers)

46

Do you prefer rock climbing, and heights don't make your head spin? Give the Dve veže via ferrata a try. It is the first via ferrata in the Liptov region and only the fourth secured route in Slovakia. It is located in Liptovské Revúce. There are marked routes of various difficulties starting with the easier B and C trails and even some more technically demanding C/D routes. Each via ferrata contains metal rungs which are 40 cm apart. Each route has a security steel rope, which you attach yourself to with a carabiner. From the highest point of the via ferrata, you can enjoy breathtaking views of the Low Tatras and Veľká Fatra Mountain, the via ferrata is open every year from 15 June to 31 January. Access to the open terrain is only allowed within the period between an hour past sunrise and an hour before sunset.



Čutkovská Dolina Valley

47

The 6.1 km long Čutkovská Dolina Známa – Neznáma (Čutkovská dolina Known Unknown) Educational Trail crosses the valley and shows it in a new perspective, which even the locals did not know before. There are 10 information boards along the trail, which uncover the secrets of local plants and animals. Three of the boards are located in forest terrain which is harder to access. They are harboured in the middle of wilderness. They introduce hikers to special gems like magical waterfalls, gorges and deep woods, which are reminiscent of old-growth forests. Hikers will pass over six footbridges and there are three benches for resting. The biggest lures are the 24-metre-high waterfall and a 64-metre-long gorge, which is also the highest point of the educational trail located 850 metres above sea level.



Did you know that... ?

Three hundred metres of iron rods for stabilization and 7 cubic metres of roundwood were used in the making of the stairs and footbridges.



Wooden Articular Church in Svätý Kríž 48

The church is one of the biggest wooden buildings in Central Europe and was moved here between 1974 and 1982 from the village of Paludza. The ground plan of the church is in the shape of a 43-metre-long cross. The church can accommodate almost 6,000 visitors. Light hitting the wooden Baroque furnishings creates an emotional atmosphere. The interior also contains an interesting wooden Baroque altar dating back to 1693 with a painting of the Transfiguration of Christ. The pulpit was built on a wooden base and is seemingly supported by a Baroque angel in the front, which makes it unique, too. The altar and pulpit were both made by woodcarver J. Lerch from Kežmarok. The two-storey choir triforium is decorated with biblical paintings, which together with a large chandelier made out of Venetian glass complete the magical interior of the church. The church stands in harmony with a later addition – a separate wooden steeple, which serves as a belfry.



Baranec Mountain (2,184 m) 49

The mountain towering over Liptovský Mikuláš is called Baranec. Together with Kriváň they are an integral part of the cityscape, and Baranec is definitely one of the most visited peaks of the Western Tatras and the whole Liptov region. You can plan a circuit route starting at the opening of the Žiarska dolina valley to the Baranec mountain with a stop at the Žiarska chata mountain hut, where you can enjoy refreshments or stay overnight throughout the year. You can descend either via a tarmac road, use the hiking trail that got you there or even rent off-road scooters and ride down the Žiarska dolina valley back to the parking lot.



Park Mini Slovensko 50

Slovakia is a country with a rich culture. It has more than 30,000 historic landmarks and Park Mini Slovensko wants to spark new interest in the wealth it has to offer. The open-air exhibition site with more than 25 miniatures of Slovak cultural heritage sites is located in Liptovský Ján. The models are built on a 1 : 25 scale with strong attention to detail. The site is continuously growing with additions of new models.



Stanišovská Jaskyňa Cave 51

The only Liptov cave that is accessible year-round and open every day. It is located in the village of Liptovský Ján. The Stanišovská jaskyňa cave is one of the longest-known caves in the Liptov region and Slovakia. Explore the magical underground with speleologist guides and experience a perfect adventure. You will walk along walls that water and mother nature modelled into shapes that escape description. Each visitor will get a head lamp before entering. You will not need any special attire or shoes. It is a perfect place for the whole family.

Did you know that... ?

The cave is a popular bat overwintering site. Seven species of bats come here.



Východná Folk Festival 52

Východná Festival is the oldest and biggest folklore festival in Slovakia. It features local and foreign folklore music, dance and traditional folk culture. The festival programme has a rich offer of performances, exhibitions and side events like various dance, music, and singing workshops, craft workshops, or events for kids. The feast will fully immerse all visitors in its atmosphere.



Museum of the Orava Village in Zuberec

53

If you want to learn about life in the Orava region in the past, visit the Museum of the Orava Village located close to Zuberec. The museum first opened to the public in 1975. Originally, there were no houses at the museum site. Most of the buildings were bought from their original owners, taken apart, transported and reassembled at the museum. Additional buildings were modelled after the original buildings. More than 50 folk architecture buildings and technical constructions showcase the art of old engineering masters.



Ski Resort Roháče – Spálená

54

Roháče – Spálená Ski Resort is located only 10 km from Zuberec. It has suitable conditions for all types of skiers and snowboarders. The convenient location enables the resort to maintain a cover of snow all winter long, making it one of the first to open and one of the last to close.



Brestovská Jaskyňa Cave

55

Brestovská jaskyňa cave is the first cave open to the public in the Orava region and Západné Tatry mountains. It is the underground part of a vast hydrologic system. There is a riverbed on the bottom with an active watercourse with seven sumps. The guided tour is 434 m long and covers 240 steps. The steep staircases are demanding to manoeuvre and therefore only visitors over the age of 6 can enter. Wearing a helmet with a headlamp is mandatory – personnel at the cave provide them. Temperatures in the cave reach 4-6 °C. The cave is located opposite to the Museum of the Orava Village in Zuberec near the amphitheatre.

Did
you know
that... ?

The Brestovská jaskyňa cave opened to visitors in September 2016.



Trstená-Nowy Targ Cycle Route

56

The cycle route leads from the town of Trstená through the villages of Liesek, Hladovka, and Suchá Hora all the way to the border and then continues through the villages of Podczzerwone and Czarny Dunajec to the town of Nowy Targ. It is a recreational 35-km-long route with a tarmac surface. One of its advantages is that it is a dedicated cycle route, separate from car traffic. This section of the cycle route was built on the railway embankment which was constructed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The route offers spectacular panoramic views of the easily visible Tatra Mountains and more. There is a lookout point near the village of Liesek (Liesek Háj) with a map of the view with a panorama of the Tatra Mountains, which are also labelled. There are several resting places along the route along with information boards in two languages about some interesting facts related to the former railway, its operations and the liberation of Liesek during World War II. Visitors can leave their bikes at a cycle box in Trstená and stroll through the town.



Orava Forest Railway

57

The Orava Museum has an interesting exhibition near Oravská Lesná. Forest railway was a cheaper alternative to conventional trains and it could also handle the difficult rugged terrain. It was used to transport wood logged in the surrounding forests. Nowadays it is used for sight-seeing rides. The train travels the 3-km-long track in about 15-20 minutes. When it stops, you can climb up the lookout tower near the station and enjoy the spectacular panoramic view of the Orava nature. The whole ride including the stop over at the Sedlo Beskyd station takes approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes.



Slanický ostrov Umenia Island

58

Slanický ostrov umenia, or the Island of Art, located in the middle of the Orava Reservoir and reachable by boat will fascinate all art lovers. The work of folk painters, woodcarvers and masons, who created beautiful art without any prior official training based only on their observations of common life, belong in the collection of the Orava Gallery.

Did you know that... ?

Of the five settlements that disappeared forever under the dam in 1953, only the hill with the baroque church and calvary has survived as an island.



Hviezdoslav's Forester's House

59

The introductory verses of the important Slovak poet Pavol O. Hviezdoslav's epic composition saluting the forest and mountains is known by all Slovaks. Did you know that this place inspired his work *Hájnikova žena* (The Forester's Wife)? The forester's house under the Babia Hora Mountain in Oravská Polhora was built over an old burnt out forester's house, which the poet frequented. The building is maintained by the Orava Museum of P. O. Hviezdoslav, which prepared a unique exhibition dedicated to Hviezdoslav's famous epic composition *Hájnikova žena* (The Forester's Wife). Hviezdoslav's Forester's House is the first truly literary museum in Slovakia dedicated to a specific work of literature.



Slovak North Pole – Oravská Polhora Village and Babia Hora Mountain

60

At the border with Poland lies the most northern point in Slovakia – the village of Oravská Polhora. It is located at the base of the Babia hora Mountain (1,725 m), which is the highest point of the Oravské Beskydy mountains. Babia hora Mountain is a popular hiking spot. The hike to the peak is time consuming and poses a more difficult elevation difference, but the views are well worth it. The base of the Babia hora Mountains is known for unique peat moors, which are considered to be some of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. The moors started appearing at the end of the Ice Age. The village of Oravská Polhora also has some mineral springs. One of them is a unique salty mineral spring with water rich in iodine and bromine located in a part of the village called *Slaná voda* (Salty Water), where you can fill your bottle.

Did you know that... ?

There is a small inhalatorium directly in the heart of Oravská Polhora, where you can breathe in some salty "sea" air.



Did you know that... ?

The statue is the third copy of the Brazilian Christ in the world, the 23-m-tall Christ the Saviour in Lisbon, Portugal being the second.

Village of Klin

61

If you want to experience spiritual peace and enjoy a spectacular view of the Orava region countryside, visit the unique statue of Christ in the village of Klin. Its hands embrace the whole region of Orava under its protection. The monument is an imitation of the famous Brazilian statue in Rio de Janeiro and it is 9.5 m high and weighs 23 tonnes. The statue was created by a local folk master and it is the tallest statue of the Saviour in Slovakia. Its surroundings are beautifully maintained, featuring benches, a gazebo, and a variety of flowers.



Church of All Saints in Tvrdošín

62

The Roman Catholic late Gothic Church of All Saints listed as a UNESCO heritage site dates back to the second half of the 15th century. It was built using large trunks of red spruce, which allegedly used to grow at the location where it was built. Inside you can marvel at the pulpit with figures of the Evangelists, images of the Apostles and the Baroque altar with a central image of the Solemnity of All Saints.

Did you know that... ?

The expert reconstruction and restoration of the church received the Europa Nostra award in 1994.



Wooden Articular Church of Leštiny

63

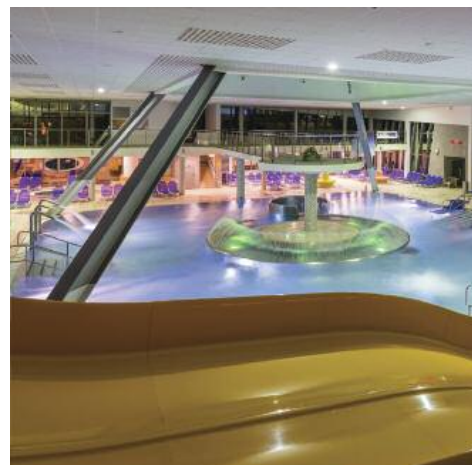
In 2008, the wooden articular church located in Leštiny in Orava was listed as a UNESCO heritage site. The church was built between 1688 and 1689 and the original building lacked a steeple and bells. It is located at a steep slope that needed to be levelled with a stone foundation. It was built using spruce wood from the surrounding forests featuring a prominent shingle roof. The interior is adorned by a Baroque altar with a woodcut, flowery murals from the 17th century and a richly decorated pulpit from the beginning of the 18th century. The poet Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav was christened here. It is still open for service.



Kubínska Hoľa SKI PARK

64

Kubínska Hoľa SKI PARK, one of the biggest ski resorts in Slovakia, is located in the Oravská Magura Mountains 720 to 1,390 metres above sea level. You can enjoy a perfect skiing trip on slopes offering different difficulty levels in the total length of 14 km. It has two chair lifts and eight drag lifts. The ridge of the Kubínska hoľa unforested hill will enchant you with its views of the whole Orava region, Chočské vrchy Mountains, and Western and Low Tatras Mountains. But it is not boring in summer either. In addition to mountain trolleys, the Srdiečkovo children's park, and the Tarzánia rope park, you will surely be amazed by the longest and most modern ZIPLINE in Central and Eastern Europe, with a length of 1234 m.



Did you know that... ?

AquaRelax is also unique for its water disinfection system, which is supplemented with a new ozonation system that provides a quick and efficient way of tackling viruses and bacteria. Swimming here is suitable for people suffering from allergies and asthma.

AquaRelax Dolný Kubín

65

If you want to combine relaxation with entertainment, visit the modern water park with pyramidal architecture in Dolný Kubín. Its dominant feature is the Water World (Vodný svet), where you will find a swimming and relaxation pool, water slides and other water attractions for children and adults. The complex also includes a sauna world. The temperature of the relaxation pools ranges from 32 to 36 °C, while the temperature of the swimming pool is 27 °C. During the summer, visitors to the water park also have access to the outdoor area. The Aquapark is located 5 km from the ski resort Kubínska hoľa SKI PARK, allowing skiers to relax after a day of skiing in winter.



Velký Choč Mountain (1,611 m)

66

The unique limestone pyramid of the Velký Choč Mountain is well recognizable not only from the Western Tatras and the Orava region, but you can see it from the Low Tatras, from the Liptov region and also from the Velká Fatra and Malá Fatra Mountains. It is considered one of the most beautiful mountains in Slovakia, offering panoramic views in all directions. The Velký Choč Mountain – dominating the Chočské vrchy Mountains and Dolná Orava region – offers some of the most spectacular views. The hike to Velký Choč offers several interesting options with multiple possible starting points from both the Liptov or Orava sides as the border of the Dolný Kubín and Ružomberok districts passes just below its peak. One of the most beautiful trails is a medium difficulty route from Vyšný Kubín, which takes 4 hours.

Sivý Vrch Mountain (1,805 m)

67

A national nature reserve with a developed high-mountain karst, distinctive rock town, rock formations and chasm. It is the home to an extraordinary variety of calcium-loving flora. Some sections of the trail are secured with chains. There is an interesting trail through the Radové skaly rocks, which offer many rock towers and various rock formations. The Sivý vrch Mountain is a part of the Western Tatras, but it is also accessible from the Liptov region. It is a difficult hike, but on the other hand one of the most spectacular ones. Especially for its views of the Liptov and Orava regions. The trail starting in the village of Hutý, which is located at the border of Liptov and Orava regions, takes approximately 3 hours.



Juráňova Dolina and Bobrovecká dolina Valley

68

An easy walk with gorgeous views. The Juráňova Dolina valley is considered one of the most spectacular gorges in Slovakia. Here, the Biela voda brook created a narrow canyon with smaller waterfalls. The trail in the Tiesňavy gorges section of Juráňova dolina valley is especially attractive because of the ladders, footbridges and chains and it is safe for children, too. The Bobrovecká dolina valley is wheelchair accessible and is also convenient for families with children. It is even accessible in winter all the way to the Pod Suchou dolinou crossroads, but the gorges are closed. In winter, it is possible to plan a circuit hike by taking the yellow waymarked trail that leads around the gorges in Juráňova dolina valley. Bobrovecká dolina offers a spectacular view of some peaks of the Western Tatras Mountains. The valley is unique mainly for its hot springs, which feed the thermal pools at Oravice.



Podroháčske Folklórne Slávnosti Folklore Festival

69

The Orava international folklore festival is the biggest and oldest regular folklore event in the Orava region. Since 1975, the festival has been held at the beginning of August in the natural amphitheatre above Zuberec and the Museum of the Orava Village. This three-day event focuses on presenting traditional folk culture. The festival also features a traditional market.

Did you know that...?

The Gorals are an ethnographic group living at the borderland of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia known for their specific dialect. They are linked by similarities in language, folk dress, songs and dances.



Museum of the Kysuce Village in Vychylovka

70

The Kysuce region has its own open-air museum. The precious folk architecture objects were moved here from their original location, which was flooded during the construction of the Nová Bystrica dam. The open-air museum features residential and agricultural buildings as well as technical and religious buildings from several villages in the Kysuce region. The traditional pub is tended by staff dressed in Kysuce region folk costumes and offers traditional local meals.

Did
you know
that... ?

The railway and open-air museum served as the backdrop to several famous movies like *Želary*, *Lietajúci Cyprán* (Flying Cyprán), *Jaškov sen* (Jaško's Dream), *Živá voda* (The Water of Life), and *Ako divé husi* (As Wild Geese). In addition to movies, it was also the filming location of the children's series *Teta* (Aunt), known in its edited cinema version as *Pehavý Max a strašidlá* (Freckled Max and the Ghosts) by Juraj Jakubisko, as well as the fairytale *Plavčík a Vratko* (The Shipboy and Vratko).



Did
you know
that... ?

The petroleum spring was already known in the 17th century, and locals had their own explanations of its existence. A written mention dating back to 1624 confirms that there is a "black water" spring past "the town of Turzovka", which was used as a drinking hole by devils from the surrounding deep forests at night.

Korňa Petroleum Spring

71

If you believe that our region has no surprises, you are sorely mistaken. The green field in the village of Korňa is home to a one of its kind European phenomenon – a natural surface petroleum spring. In the past, the locals used the spouting petroleum, which is flammable, for lighting and heating. Nowadays, it is a protected natural landmark. The spring is located just 100 metres away from the parking lot via a dust path.



Did
you know
that... ?

In 2015, a majestic cathedral was finished and consecrated at Živčáková – the Cathedral of St Mary Mother of the Church. It is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in Slovakia.

Živčáková Marian Pilgrimage Site

72

The Živčáková Marian pilgrimage site is known for the apparition of the Virgin Mary to a forest worker in 1958. Even today, thousands of pilgrims come to this location to draw new strength, spiritual experience and fill their bottles with the healing spring water. Spring and autumn pilgrimages are held at the hill.



Kamenné Gule Rock Formations

73

The Kamenné gule rock formations are a unique world phenomenon. Nobody knows exactly how they were created, and they fascinate fans of anomalous phenomena from all over the world. Our Slovak stone spheres are some of the biggest and you will find them along a 15-km-long section between Klokočov and Milošová. The Klokočovské skálie nature reserve has an 850-metre-long educational trail. The rock formations vary from perfect spheres to more egg-like shapes. The biggest sphere discovered is 2.6 m in diameter and you can see it in the quarry located in the Milošová cadastral area in the Megoňky settlement near Čadca. The stone quarry is easy to find if you take the local road to the right from the Čadca – Megoňky bus terminal (the stone quarry is visible, just look around) and turn right after the bridge with the yellow railing towards the information board featuring a concrete ball. After that, follow the marked trail. The second well-known location in Kysuce with stone balls is the village of Klokočov.



Snowparadise Velká Rača Oščadnica – Ski resort

74

The biggest Kysuce ski resort has splendid natural conditions for skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing and ski mountaineering. In addition to its great location it also conveniently interconnects three locations: Dedovka, Marguška and Lalíky (14 km of slopes). You can enjoy a spectacular holiday at Velká Rača both in winter (on skis) and summer. In summer, the ski resort turns into a **summer amusement centre**. The 4-seater chair lift will take you 974 metres above sea level to the summer amusement centre, which provides attractions for all age groups. You can try the longest **bobsleigh track** in Slovakia, ride off-road scooters downhill, or jump on X-jump trampolines. Little ones will enjoy the trampolines for children, the children's high rope park, and a historic merry-go-round. The Snowparadise resort has its own Bike Park with 5 marked trails for downhill mountain biking with a total length of 10.6 km and various difficulty levels. There is something for both families with kids and experienced riders. All visitors can enjoy the **lookout tower** that is located at the top station of the Dedovka chairlift. It is 16 metres high and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding valleys and mountains. If you feel like a hike or a stroll in nature, you can make use of the popular hiking trail towards the peak of Velká Rača. After spending the day out in the fresh air, reward yourself with some refreshments in the buffets located at the bottom and top stations of the chairlift.



E. A. Cernan Memorial Room in Vysoká nad Kysucou

75

Do you know who the Apollo of Kysuce is? It is the American astronaut of Slovak origins E. A. Cernan, whose grandparents left the village of Vysoká nad Kysucou to seek work in America. He was on three space flights and was known as the last person to stand on the Moon. The memorial room is located in the Municipal Office directly in the centre of the village and is adorned with period photographs of the Kysuce region and documents about the life of E. A. Cernan. You will also find some remnants of the Apollo 17 spacecraft.

Did you know that...?

As the village is known for its link with spaceflights and outer space, you can also admire the unique sun dial at the square. It is special and unique as it shows the time using the shadow of a person.



Slovak Astronomical Clock

76

The only astronomical clock in Slovakia is also the largest wooden statue in the country. It features the seated Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, the patron of Slovakia, and shows the exact astronomical time. The heart of the astronomical clock is represented by the astrolabe – a dial with astronomical data. The astronomical clock strikes every hour from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. with seven Slovak saints appearing in succession.

Did you know that...?

There is a wooden figure standing discretely high up in the astronomical clock's steeple, which represents an historic portrayal of a night guard. It was an important job in Slovak villages and every municipality had one, if they could afford it.



Bystrická Dolina Valley Cycle Route

77

The popular cycle route was converted from an unused switchback railway track. It starts in town of Krásno nad Kysucou and passes under one of the biggest preserved bridges from the end of the 19th century in Central Europe. The cycle route is mostly level, leads by a forest, and will take you to the Slovak astronomical clock in the village of Stará Bystrica which is the biggest wooden statue in Slovakia. From there you can continue along the educational trail to the Bobovec lookout tower. Advanced bikers can ride all the way to the village of Nová Bystrica to the open-air Museum of the Kysuce Village in Vychylovka. The Bystrica main cycle route is sought-after both in summer and winter (it is converted into a cross-country skiing track in winter). The route is lined with benches, gazebos, information boards and parking lots. It is also suitable for families with children.



Kysuce Settlements

78

Kysuce is a region of settlements and village estates. The gorgeous nature of Kysuce harbours corners that breathe history and emanate a traditional way of life and peace. Each settlement has its story, unique history and many places of interest. Tens of settlements scattered around the hills and valleys of Kysuce make for amazing hiking destinations. Among the places worth visiting are the Krásno settlement of U Lastovicov, the Korňa settlement of Slezákovci, the mountain settlement of Greguš, and many more.



Velký Javorník Mountain (1,072 m)

79

The Javorníky Mountains are located near the border of Slovakia and the Czech Republic.. You can reach their highest peak, Velký Javorník, by following one of several waymarked hiking trails. Directly under the top of the Velký Javorník Mountain is the Makov Kasárne Ski and Mountain resort, which offers its visitors winter sports activities, relaxation in nature and unforgettable experiences. The educational trail from Makov Kasárne runs along the ridge and takes about 45 minutes to the top. If you continue along the trail, it takes another 45 minutes to reach the Stratenec lookout tower. From Makov Kasárne, you can also take the yellow waymarked trail to the lookout tower, which covers a smaller elevation difference. The ridge of the Javorníky Mountains captivates hikers with charming corners, beautiful nature and easy hiking trails.

Did you know that... ?

The highest situated lookout tower in the Javorníky Mountains is located at the Stratenec Mountain, which was built in 2008. Even though it belongs within the cadastral area of the village of Papradno, many consider it a part of the Kysuce region as it is conveniently accessible from the Makov-Kasárne recreational area. The Kasárne ski resort was named after the military barracks built in 1833 ("kasárne" means barracks in Slovak). The garrison stationed here were supposed to prevent the spread of cholera from Hungary to Moravia. There is a memorial dedicated to the victims of World War 2 with three concrete crosses at the top of Stratenec. From the lookout tower you can continue to the Malý Javorník Mountain or descend along other waymarked trails.



Beskydy – Javorníky Main Cross-Country Skiing Trail

80

The Beskydy – Javorníky main cross-country skiing trail offers a converted track, fairy-tale views, and peaceful mountain settlements. The 50 km converted track leads from the Husárik hotel near Čadca all the way to the borderland of Slovakia and the Czech Republic to Makov-Kasárne, where the trail continues along the ridge of the Javorníky Mountains all the way to Kohútka ski resort. The main track is best accessible from Čadca, the Husárik area, the Semeteš hiking area in Vysoká nad Kysucou, Melocík, which is located between the villages of Kolárovice and Makov, and also from Makov-Kasárne. There are several interesting sites along the track, including lookout towers and art objects which are a part of a gallery in nature.



Gaderská Dolina Valley

81

Visit one of the longest valleys in the Veľká Fatra Mountains. A well-paved asphalt road leads through the valley and makes it suitable for cycling and even inline skating. The trail starts in the village of Blatnica, where you can rent bikes and e-scooters. Along the way you will pass Mlynčekovo (Land of Mills), which is a gorgeous rest zone with small water wheels propelled by the water from a nearby brook. You can also hike up to the **Blatnica castle** ruin located nearby. You can finish your hike with a walk to the Čertova brána rock portal known for its typical narrow overhanging rocks and cliffs, which was the location for some of the scenes from the first Slovak movie – Jánošík. Gaderská dolina valley is one of the starting point to the mountains of Tlstá, Ostrá and the main ridge of the Veľká Fatra Mountains. The hiking trails towards the Tlstá Mountain will take you to the **Mažarná cave**. This freely accessible rift cave is one of the biggest caves in the Veľká Fatra Mountains. It is 130 metres long with an impressive entrance portal, which is reminiscent



of the open mouth of a huge animal. The cave is an interesting archaeological site where remains of a cave bear were found, and it is proof of the eldest Turiec settlement dating back to the 3rd millennium BC.



Museum of the Slovak Village in Martin

82

If you want to see and compare traditional folk architecture and the lifestyles of people from different regions all in one place, visit the biggest homeland open-air museum in Slovakia. The exhibition presents traditional folk architecture, housing, and the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the north-western regions of Slovakia in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It houses objects from the Orava, Liptov, Kysuce, and Turiec regions.

Did you know that...?

The exhibition space of the museum covers 15.5 hectares and contains 150 objects, of which 24 are accessible.



National Cemetery in Martin

83

More than three hundred artists, writers and important historical figures have found their last resting place in Martin. The location of the National Cemetery is not coincidental, as in the 19th century Martin was the centre of Slovak culture. At the cemetery you will find unusual tombstones that remind us of the lives of the deceased, for example the grave and statue of painter Martin Benka with a palette in his hand or Andrej Kmeť's tombstone with an open book.



Slovenské liečebné kúpele Turčianske Teplice – Slovak Medical Spa

84

The Spa in Turčianske Teplice with its thermal water and healing properties is sought after by people seeking kidney stone and urinary tract treatment and people who suffer from diseases of the locomotor system and neurological or gynaecological issues. Families with children and other visitors can enjoy the local aquapark with flume slides, whirlpools and thermal pools.

Did you know that...?

Legend has it that King Sigismund of Luxembourg used to bathe in the waters with his golden crown on his head. Supposedly, it was the combination of gold and mineral water that helped him overcome gout and live a long life.



Ski Resort Winter Park Martinky 85

The Martinky Winter Park ski resort is located in Martinské hole, directly above the town of Martin. In the beautiful surroundings of the Malá Fatra Mountains, at an altitude of 1,456 m above sea level, you can enjoy winter skiing on well-groomed slopes as well as summer hiking and cycling, as if you were in paradise. If you have children, you can walk along the educational trail dedicated to animals in the Malá Fatra and Veľká Fatra Mountains. The trail is 1 km long and begins at the house of Marta the Squirrel near the Nová Ponorka restaurant. Various interesting events are regularly held at Martinské Hole. The way to the resort is one-way, so you walk up or down only at specified times. At the same time, vehicles need to be equipped with snow chains in winter.

Did you know that...?

Martinské hole is an ideal place for snowkiting. You can race across untouched plains or ride up and down the mountainside using a kit.



Šútovský Vodopád Waterfall 86

Boasting a height of 38 metres, it is the fourth highest waterfall in Slovakia. It is located in the Krivánska Malá Fatra Mountains in the Šútovská dolina valley. It is fed by the waters of the Šútovský potok brook, which springs from the rock formation called Moses' Springs (Mojžišove pramene). The hike to the waterfall is easy, the trail starts on a tarmac road along Šútovský potok and then continues as a rocky path with only a gentle climb. The water falling to the ground creates a pleasant shower around, and in winter, it turns into ice decorations. Don't miss the submerged Kralovany quarry also known as the Šútovské jazero lake. The lake will mesmerise you with its clear turquoise water. The surrounding terrace slopes are reminiscent of western movies.



Borišov Mountain (1,510 m) and Ploská Mountain (1,532 m) 87

The distinct Borišov Mountain is located in the Veľká Fatra Mountains near the well-known Ploská mountain, which is popular among hikers. Its peak offers a spectacular panoramic view of the long Fatra valleys and surrounding mountains. Not far from the top on the western slopes you can find the Chata pod Borišovom mountain hut, which offers accommodation and refreshments. You can start a hike to the Borišov Mountain in one of the Turiec villages of Belá – Dulice or Necpaly, but first you will have to cross through the 8-km-long valleys. The valley trails are flat with a tarmac surface, which makes them suitable for cycling. If you venture from the Liptov side, start at the village of Liptovské Revúce, from where you will reach the Ploská Mountain in 3.5 hours. From there you will get to Borišov in a little over an hour. A part of the trail will take you along the Veľká Fatra Mountains ridge.

Did you know that...?

If you decide to bike the Belianska dolina valley, you can leave your bike at the Chata Havranovo mountain hut and then hike the slopes of Borišov. Ploská is the sixth tallest mountain in the Veľká Fatra Mountains. It's known for its flat top with no distinct edge, yet it offers panoramic views in all directions.



Katova Skala Rock 88

An interesting rock formation can be found near the Sklabinia castle ruin towering over the village of Sklabinský Podzámok. It is called Katova skala (Executioner's Rock). The rock was named after the function it fulfilled for the nearby castle. It was the place of executions, where burdensome people were thrown off the cliff. The hike to the top takes approximately an hour and offers a spectacular semi-circle view of the Veľká Fatra Mountains, a part of the Turčianska kotlina basin, and the Lúčanská Malá Fatra Mountains.



Sklabiňa Castle Ruin

89

The castle ruin is located above the village of Sklabinský Podzámok. It was built over a former fortification in the first half of the 13th century and the first written mention dates back to 1309. It was built by Knight Donč. From 1328 the Sklabiňa castle was the seat of Turiec County. It was burnt down in the first half of the 15th century during the Hussite wars. From 1527, the castle was owned by František Révai, who gradually modified and extended it. At the beginning of the 17th century a comfortable Renaissance chateau was built in the settlement around the castle. As the abandoned castle was slowly falling into ruin, the chateau remained inhabitable until 1944 when it was burnt down by Hitler's army. The castle has been a ruin ever since but nowadays is open to public. It is a beautiful walk and the surroundings offer spectacular views of the forests and meadows. Nowadays, the DON-JON civic association is working to save the



ruin. There is the private Sklabiňa Castle Ruin Museum and a buffet selling refreshments and mementos, including goat cheese from the goats grazing on the vegetation surrounding the castle ruin.



Valčianska Dolina Valley

90

The ski resort is aimed at family skiing and offers high-quality supplementary services. It offers eight slopes with the total length of 5.6 km, a modern 4-seater chair lift and six drag lifts. The smallest visitors and beginner skiers can use the mini drag lift and there is a ski and snowboarding school. There is also the newly-opened YETI PARK with entertaining attractions. Fans of cross-country skiing can look forward to a cross-country ski trail located close to the ski resort with a total length of 12 km. The resort focuses mainly on family skiing but has a lot to offer to all age groups during other seasons, too. Children will enjoy the playground with a pirate ship and fairytale characters, trampolines, and many attractions. The resort operates a bike and off-road scooter rental, which also carries inline skates that you can use on the inline tracks in the resort and on the nearby cycle routes. There are several ponds and hiking paths located nearby, and the blue waymarked trail from Valča to the Majbíková Mountain pass covers the whole length of the valley and continues towards the village of Kunerad.



Good to See, Better to Taste



In the past, the typical Slovak menu in the Žilina Region revolved around basic ingredients like potatoes, cabbage, flour, milk and legumes. The herding style of sheep farming significantly enriched the menu of local families by adding dairy products like cheese and bryndza (local soft cheese). Combining these ingredients led to the creation of traditional specialties and unique recipes, which are unknown in other world cuisines. Which meals are considered traditional dishes and culinary specialties of the Žilina Region that you should try when visiting?

Bryndzové halušky

The famous bryndzové halušky is considered to be the national dish. Proper halušky (similar to gnocchi) are made out of potato dough and served with sheep bryndza (soft cheese) and fried bacon. They taste best in a traditional shepherd's hut or at a sheep farm. This dish is popular among Slovaks but it is rumoured to be an acquired taste, which foreigners might not immediately take to. Give it a try when you find it on a menu!

Strapačky

Slovaks love sour cabbage. If you do not like bryndza but like halušky, strapačky are a perfect alternative for you. This dish resembles halušky but instead of bryndza it is served with cabbage and fried bacon.

Pirohy

Traditional pirohy are made out of dough that is prepared with mashed boiled potatoes, flour, eggs and salt. They come in a semi-circle or triangle shape and are filled with a salty bryndza filling or sweet jam, quark or poppy filling. They are served sprinkled with poppy seeds or sweet breadcrumbs and topped with melted butter. The salty version is served with fried bacon and diced onions.

Did you know that... ?

In many countries it is forbidden to grow poppy due to opium, which can be found in unripe poppy heads, but it is commonly grown here. The effects of poppy were well-known by our grandmothers, who used poppy decoctions as natural sleeping potions for unruly children.

Šúlance

Pirohy are a meal prepared salty or sweet but šúlance are traditionally a sweet dish. The potato dough is formed into little rolls, which are then boiled in salty water. They are served with nuts or poppy with melted butter on top. This simple dish will surprise you with its distinct taste.

Polesníky

Polesníky or haruľa are the local version of potato pancakes that were popular in the past. The recipe varies based on the region, as some people add more garlic and others more marjoram to the dough. The pancakes are fried in oil, can be filled with meat and topped with cheese or eaten plain.

Soup used to be the core dish in our ancestors' diets. They tended to make thick and filling soups, which were even eaten for breakfast. It was all tied in with the lifestyle of previous generations: their daily activities required a lot of energy, so they needed to eat highly energizing food.

Kapustnica

Kapustnica is the most popular traditional soup made with cabbage, mushrooms, ham and sausage. It is not hard to make and you can try it in every region, always with a slight local spin.

Did you know that... ?

In the first half of the 20th century, cabbage was still an important trade article. Inhabitants of the Orava region were known for eating it in high amounts, on average 50 kg per person annually.

Fazuľovica

Not only cabbage but also legumes were popular among homemakers in the Žilina Region. A tasty bean soup was prepared with beans soaked in advance, sausage, onions, and garlic. It tastes best when served in Trstená pottery, accompanied by homemade bread.

To get a complete experience, you definitely cannot leave before tasting some traditional drinks from the Žilina Region.

Hafirovica

Hafirovica is a unique liqueur, known especially in the Orava region, made from blueberries, rum, and sugar. The exact proportions of the ingredients, however, remain a closely guarded secret.

Hriatô

Hriatô is a homemade drink with caramel, caraway seed decoction, spirit and fat. It is drunk warm or even hot and one does not sip but rather shoots it down so that the spirit goes down faster and the layer of fat moisturizes the throat.

Demänovka

Our Czech neighbours have Becherovka and we have Demänovka. The Slovak bitter liqueur was created in the 60s and it is produced in Liptovský Mikuláš. It contains 14 types of herbs, spices, bee honey, smooth spirit and spring water from under the Tatra Mountains.

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