

## Slovenia makes you green

**The land of healthy waters and green cities inspires the world with its unique model of sustainability**

**Slovenia is the green heart of Europe.** The love of healthy waters and a clean environment, the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, cities and towns surrounded by nature, and **the Slovenia Green model of sustainable tourism all serve as an example to the world.**

*“As the first country with an overall assessment of sustainability, Slovenia achieved a 96% compliance with international criteria – Green Destinations Standard.”*

**Slovenia makes you green and energised between the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Karst region and the Pannonian Plain.** Those four geographical and cultural entities have shaped the character of the country. One of the greatest advantages of Slovenia, which serves as a foundation for sustainable development, is its incredible biodiversity, but there is more to it than that. **Slovenians actively strive to preserve their natural and cultural heritage.** More than 50% of the land is protected and more than 30% is Natura 2000-designated, which is the highest percentage of the European Union member countries.

Slovenian tourism, representing 12% of national GDP, has gone through a remarkable metamorphosis in recent years. As one of the leading green countries in the world, Slovenia is proud of its unique national programme, Slovenia Green, for evaluating and improving the sustainability of its destinations and providers.

This recently launched, internationally-comparable and effective tool works as an engine of the sustainable efforts of all the stakeholders in the country. The Slovenian Tourist Board has defined the focus on green tourism as a development opportunity for Slovenia and its range of tourism products. **Maja Pak MSc, the Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board:** *“Our transformation from a nice country in the heart of Europe to the world’s first green destination did not happen overnight. It was the consequence of a strategic set of decisions and systematic work, recognised also by the National Geographic Legacy Awards 2017. The holistic process, which connected all the stakeholders in tourism and took into account all the four dimensions of sustainability, took us less than a decade. Today our vision of 100% green Slovenia is*



*supported by a unique model of sustainability practice.”* **Green, active and healthy Slovenia is one of the most densely forested and water-rich countries in Europe.** Healthy thermal and mineral waters are the spine of tourism. Some of the best-quality drinking water in the world recently led the Slovenian Parliament to include citizens’ right to clean drinking water in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. Natural resources improve the quality of life of the entire population, as well as of every individual visitor enjoying a vacation in one of the green cities, in the thermal health resorts, at the footsteps of the mountains, by the sea, or in the capital Ljubljana, European Green Capital 2016 and until now the only Slovenian destination bearing the gold label Slovenia Green.

## sLOVEnia Green destinations and providers

**The destinations and service providers featured in this newspaper are all members of the Slovenia Green family.** In order to achieve this national status, they have undergone assessment within the framework of the national programme the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (GSST), and are members of the national consortium Slovenia Green. Today the consortium has 30 members, and the Slovenian Tourist Board is a strategic partner. The consortium members face similar challenges and opportunities concerning the development and marketing of green tourism.

### What is the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism?

**The GSST is a tool and a certification programme that brings together all the efforts directed towards the sustainable development** of tourism in Slovenia, evaluates and improves the sustainability endeavours of destinations and providers, and finally promotes green achievements through the Slovenia Green brand.

**The GSST is managed by the Slovenian Tourist Board and runs in cooperation with a national accredited partner, the Factory of Sustainable Tourism GoodPlace, and an international partner, Green Destinations.**

**The GSST covers two fundamental levels: destinations and tourism services providers.** In the process of obtaining the Slovenia Green label, destinations are assessed according to the international standards of the Green Destinations Standard (GDS) and the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS), while service providers must obtain or present one of the six internationally-recognised labels that are verified by Slovenia Green: Biohotels, EMAS, EU Ecolabel, Green Globe, Green Key and/or Travelife.

### 5 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREEN SCHEME OF SLOVENIAN TOURISM

- 1 \ Comprehensive and developmental approach
- 2 \ National programme
- 3 \ Internationally comparable
- 4 \ Based on global criteria
- 5 \ Tool for positioning and promotion

**SLOVENIA  
GREEN**  
Green. Active. Healthy.



## Slovenia as a Convention & Culture Partner of ITB Berlin 2017

**Slovenia is the Convention & Culture Partner of ITB Berlin 2017, the world’s leading think tank** of the global travel industry. At the event, Slovenia will inspire its partners and visitors with its unique model of sustainability, presented at the Slovenian Forum (the Green Panel). Healthy waters, historical towns surrounded by greenery, the architecture of Ljubljana, and other green destinations are in the spotlight in halls 17, 4.1. and in the Culture Lounge.

# Ljubljana, the European Green Capital 2016, and its rooftop honey

[www.visitljubljana.com](http://www.visitljubljana.com) / [www.hotelpark.si](http://www.hotelpark.si)

Ljubljana, one of the loveliest European capitals, has become a model for urban sustainability, allowing a healthy and pleasant life for locals and visitors – a consequence of some major green transformation in the past few years. This includes a city centre closed to motorised traffic, electric public transport in the pedestrian zone, free access to clean drinking water in public fountains, the protection of natural biodiversity, the organisation of vast public green areas and other projects. All these green efforts were recognised by the European Commission when they awarded Ljubljana with the prestigious title of European Green Capital 2016.

Being a city with a green soul and a high level of environmental awareness, it has managed to preserve its green character to the present day. Ljubljana is a cosy capital made to the measure of people, one that has preserved the friendliness and romance of European cities. **The greatest Slovenian architect, Jože Plečnik, left his major mark on Ljubljana in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.** He completely reshaped the city according to the ideals of antiquity, connecting all the amenities for a healthy lifestyle within walking distance. The city centre, which is closed to motorised traffic, is a mosaic of picturesque red-roofed buildings from which views stretch out to green hills. While strolling around Ljubljana, you can quench your thirst at public drinking fountains dispensing clean natural water. This is a luxury rarely found in capital



cities. Did you know that Ljubljana has more than 560 square metres of green space per inhabitant? When you need some time for yourself, sit down in one of the city centre parks or experience the huge Tivoli Park, the green lungs of Ljubljana.

## A hotel with a beehive on the roof

**2016 was a very successful year for Hotel Park Ljubljana, one of the most prominent sustainability-oriented hotels in the capital.** It was the first hotel in Slovenia to

receive an environmental Travelife certificate, and they have started producing their own honey on the rooftop of the hotel. Plans for the future are green and include an enlargement of the bee family and setting up their own herb garden.

During the season, the beehives hold about 60,000 bees. Two beehives produced around 25 kg of honey last year. The honey is very clean and healthy since the parks and forests in Ljubljana are not sprayed with pesticides. The plan for 2017 includes two additional beehives, and the hotel management expect more than 50 kg of honey, which they will serve at breakfast or include in their culinary range.

# Ptuj’s Kurentovanje ranked one of the most interesting carnivals in the world

[www.ptuj.info](http://www.ptuj.info)

**Ptuj’s Carnival – Kurentovanje – is the largest cultural and ethnographic carnival in Slovenia, and one of the most significant traditional events in Central Europe.** The renowned travel guide Lonely Planet has ranked the carnival among the ten most interesting carnivals in the world. This puts the oldest Slovenian town in the prestigious company of carnival cities such as Venice and Rio de Janeiro.

Kurentovanje is named after the Kurent, the most popular carnival figure in Slovenia. They have a sheepskin coat, a chain belt with cowbells hanging from it, a long tongue and horns. Kurents are believed to awaken new life and the springtime. The uniqueness of the Kurentovanje festival has also been recognised by UNESCO. Every year Ptuj welcomes over 120,000 visitors and 10,000 costumed characters from more than 10 different countries. Following the ancient tradition, Slovenians believe that carnival masks bring luck, joy and a good harvest after chasing away the winter.



# Hand in hand with nature for more than two centuries

[www.dobrova-polhovgradec.si](http://www.dobrova-polhovgradec.si)

**Taste traditional Slovenian goats’ cheese and honey! Experience the culinary delights of the town of Polhov Gradec in the green hinterland of Slovenia’s capital, Ljubljana.** The locals have been living with nature since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and are proud of the heritage of the noble Count Rihard U. Blagaj. He strove for progress in the local economy and encouraged the local producers to cooperate with their providers. The practice and the Count’s name live on today, under the brand Delights of Count Blagaj’s land.

Walking around the hills and forests of Polhov Gradec is most memorable if accompanied by a food tour. At Restaurant Grič, the renowned chef Luka Košir prepares dishes from fresh ingredients from the garden, the surrounding forests and neighbouring farms. Among them is the Orešnik family, who is known for their cheese-making tradition. Part of the culinary trail also visits the family-run Božnar House of Honey, which has a tradition of top quality Slovenian honey. After treating yourself to the local delicacies, have tea with Count Blagaj in his baroque-style mansion!

# Maribor’s Old Vine yielded a 1315-g bunch of grapes

[www.visitmaribor.si](http://www.visitmaribor.si)

**Maribor, the second biggest city of Slovenia, is home to the worlds oldest vine, which flourishes on the banks of the river Drava. Her name is the Old Vine, as she is over 400 years old and features in the Guinness Book of Records. This year, the Old Vine House is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

Each year the Old Vine bears around 100 bunches of grapes (96 in 2016 and 119 in 2015). Last year, the *lady*, as the locals call her, served up a record; one of the bunches of grapes weighed 1315 g, which is the heaviest of the last five years. The wine that is produced from the Old Vine is put in special bottles and used as a protocol gift from the city of Maribor. Its reputation is known around the world, since scions of the Old Vine grow on almost every continent and in several places around Slovenia. The city of Maribor hosts a number of events to celebrate the Old Vine, such as the Pruning of the Old Vine, St. Martin’s Day and the Old Vine Festival.



# Slovenia’s handball team: from Rogla to the top of the world

[www.destinacija-rogla.si](http://www.destinacija-rogla.si)

The Rogla Sport Resort in the Pohorje Hills is one of the most important sports centres for preparation and training in Slovenia, known for the beneficial effects of the highland climate. The Slovenia national handball team also trained here before heading to the World Handball Championship 2017 in France. In Paris, Slovenian sports history was written in golden letters by winning a Bronze medal, the first-ever medal at the Men’s World Handball Championships, after an incredible comeback in the last 10 minutes of the match.

Rogla Sport Resort offers many training and recreational facilities, among them a football pitch and an asphalt rollerblade track. There are also an Olympic Centre, Terme Zreče Spa and the Rogla Climatic Resort, which is one of the best-equipped subalpine tourist centres. These centres have hosted numerous European, World, and Olympic champions.



# Velenje: from black gold to green city

[www.velenje-tourism.si](http://www.velenje-tourism.si)

Velenje is Slovenia’s youngest town, still holding on to the values of solidarity and comradeship between the different people of all the countries of ex-Yugoslavia. The town developed rapidly through its coal mine at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the sustainable development of recent decades has focused on its green hinterlands and the shores of the beautiful lakes which formed naturally after intensive underground mining activity.

You can still travel back to the nostalgic time of Socialism in Velenje by joining the interactive performance of the last meeting of the Socialist “pioneers” in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade of the school in the memorial room at Velenje Castle. The exhibition awakes the spirit of subversive action and working people’s zeal at the time of construction of the town. In the company of a guide on roller skates, you can experience the daily life of a few decades ago. Don’t miss the recreational area by the lakes, suitable for swimming, surfing or paddling, while the shore has a network of hiking and cycling paths.

# Culinary adventures in Nova Gorica

[www.novagorica-turizem.com](http://www.novagorica-turizem.com)

Nova Gorica is in a festive mood, all perfumed with the Mediterranean and Alpine scents of Slovenia as well as of nearby Italy. 2017 is dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this young town, full of energy and roses. What better way to celebrate than with exquisite local culinary masterpieces, complemented by wines from the Vipava Valley. The local restaurants have united under a common culinary brand Gogourmet, which serves as a platform for promotion of typical local ingredients, recipes and menus.

The local restaurants are known for cherishing their tradition, striving for the philosophy of *Zero kilometres*, which focuses on local farming. Among the first ingredients of Gogourmet is the traditional Chicory. This winter flower looks like a rose, but it has no scent. It is not just a vegetable, but has become a true masterpiece in the hands of top chefs in Nova Gorica and the green countryside of the Vipava Valley. You can enjoy it in a salad, in combination with sea food, or dip it in chocolate for a unique desert. The culinary combinations are limitless.



# The first beer fountain in the world in Žalec

[www.turizem-zalec.si](http://www.turizem-zalec.si)

Žalec, the centre of hop growing in the Savinja valley, has been in the spotlight of media all over Europe. The first beer fountain in the world has become one of the star attractions of Slovenia. The fountain is the climax in the story of ‘Green Gold’, as the locals call their hops, which have more than 150 years of plant breeding tradition.

The valley of the Green Gold is famous for pioneering beer brewing in Slovenia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today you can try five different Slovenian craft beers at the famous beer fountain, which instantly became the most popular gathering point for locals. For an even more memorable Green Gold experience, taste some traditional culinary delights and visit the Eco Museum of Hop Growing and the Brewing Industry. Active travellers can opt for cycling and hiking around the hop fields.

“Try five different Slovenian craft beers at the famous beer fountain.”



# Celje, one of the fittest cities in Europe

[www.celje.si](http://www.celje.si)

Celje is known as the City of the Counts; the most influential late medieval noble dynasty of Slovenia, the Counts of Celje, left their mark on the history and the character of the town by the river Savinja. Old tales say that the famous Counts were very active and always in shape. This spirit has never left Celje, which is one of the fittest towns in Europe. The third biggest city in Slovenia is the birthplace of many world champions in judo, handball and athletics.

Love of sports seems to be natural in the city, which has been designed as a green playground. Walking, jogging and hiking trails encircle the picturesque old town, leading to the urban forest, Lake Šmartinsko, or into the hills, such as the well-known Celjska Koča hill with its spectacular views over the city and the adventurous Adrenaline Park on its summit. The recreational centre of Celje welcomes visitors all year round. The urban environment, surrounded by nature, offers a never-ending inspiration to active travellers, which is one of the biggest advantages of green, active and healthy Slovenia.

# Wellness with beer and honey

[www.thermana.si](http://www.thermana.si)

Thermana Park Laško is proud of its 160-year tradition of medical treatments, thermal water and unique wellness programmes with local beer and honey.

Have you ever wanted to swim in your favourite drink? Treat yourself to a beer bath, adapted to all skin types to provide the perfect relaxation. Thermana Park Laško uses the beneficial effects of beer to prevent the formation of kidney stones, while the hops calm the body. Your skin will be grateful for a massage with beer-butter or hops oil, which are natural sources of omega-3, -6 and -9 fatty acids.

Honey is one of the gifts of nature that never goes out of fashion. Thermana Park Laško was one of the first in Slovenia to develop Honey Spa Pampering programmes. Honey has a healing effect both within the body and when used on the skin. It is a real treasure trove of health and is used in honey massages and wraps, is added to baths and has its own prepared honey sauna programme.

“Treat yourself to a beer bath or honey massage.”



# Slovenj Gradec resonates its medieval heritage

[www.turizem-slovenjgradec.si](http://www.turizem-slovenjgradec.si)

In 2017, Slovenj Gradec celebrates the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first officially documented announcement of the medieval town. It has always been and still remains rooted in its historical and cultural tradition. Throughout the year, the town organises themed events, tours and special gatherings. Numerous exhibitions in the art gallery and events in the past have brought the inhabitants closer together and, since 1989, the town has held the prestigious title of Peace Messenger City.

The cultural and historical background of the town is complemented by the green and rural hinterland of Slovenj Gradec. Here you can enjoy the variety of the local traditional food and numerous possibilities for an active retreat, such as hiking, road cycling or mountain biking, or simple relaxation in the pristine nature.



# UNESCO Heritage and wealth for the future

[www.visit-idrija.si](http://www.visit-idrija.si)

**The oldest mining town in Slovenia, Idrija, is proud of its priceless technical, industrial and cultural heritage, marked by what was once the second largest mercury mine in the world.** A restored Hg Smelter is now also inscribed on the UNESCO list together with the mine heritage, offering a fresh insight into the world of mercury.

The story and memory of more than 500 years of descending into the mercury mine through Anthony’s Main Road, one of the oldest preserved mine entrances in the world, continues. The watchword *May luck be with you* still accompanies visitors to the underground tunnels. The restored Hg Smelter is dedicated to all the workers and miners of the Idrija Mercury Mine. Embark on the journey *From ore to drops of mercury*. There are over 700 kilometres of mining tunnels under Idrija, where more than 147,000 tons of mercury were extracted over the years – enough material for two Cheops pyramids.

# Slovenian alpine tradition with a modern touch

[www.prgavedarjo.si](http://www.prgavedarjo.si)

Travelife certified Design Rooms Pr’Gavedarjo near Kranjska Gora, one of the most popular all-year-round sports resorts in Slovenia, nestled below the highest peaks of Julian Alps, has been in the family for over 100 years. From its very beginnings, the vision and purpose of the accommodation has been focused on preserving the local cultural heritage, on sustainable development and on caring for the healthy lifestyle of holiday makers. All the furniture has an environmentally-friendly aspect. Each room has its own story to tell, linked to the visual depiction of the living space and Slovenian traditions. Mornings in Podkoren at Pr’Gavedarjo have always had a unique charm, since the day starts with a delicious breakfast and a magnificent view of the highest Slovenian alpine peaks. The village is known all over the world for the traditional FIS Alpine Ski World Cup competitions and its wonderful ski slopes as well as for hiking, cycling and climbing.



# Slovenian cheese of love from the Kamnik-Savinja Alps

[www.kamnik-tourism.si](http://www.kamnik-tourism.si) / [www.termesnovik.si](http://www.termesnovik.si)

**The Velika Planina high plateau in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps is like something out of a fairytale, with its wooden huts and freely grazing cattle. Every summer, the herders move their animals to the largest Slovenian mountain pasture; at a height of 1450 m, it is one of the few remaining herders’ settlements in Europe.** Following the old tradition, the herdsman still know how to make decorated *love cheese*.

In the old times, shepherds from Velika Planina gave trnič, the cheese of love, to the girls who stole their hearts. Today this cheese, shaped like a woman’s breasts, is a beautiful souvenir and the most recognisable culinary product of the medieval town of Kamnik below the plateau. Everything here tastes truly delicious, including the drinking water.

Once upon a time a local smith even found a spring of thermal water by chance. Today, the eco-friendly health and spa resort Terme Snovik in the Tuhinjska Valley is a great starting point for relaxing and discovering the local area.

## Authentic experiences at Thermal resort Snovik

Terme Snovik is at the heart of sustainable activities and an ambassador of self-sufficient living and small scale farming in the local environment. The first eco-awarded accommodation in Slovenia, bearing the EU Ecolabel, recently opened a new vegetable garden for educational and eating purposes. The home-grown veggies



are used in the kitchen or offered to guests in a basket of local delicacies. Instead of flowers, herbs, spices, fruit and berries are grown at Terme Snovik to refresh the taste buds before or after an active day. Spice up your experience and awaken your creativity by attending a pottery workshop. At the end, you can take your products home as a souvenir.

## A recipe for sLOVEnia ice cream

- 1 \ Whip the milk, egg yolks, cream and sugar. Add the grated love cheese and the cream cheese. Freeze for 12 hours.
- 2 \ Mix together the ingredients for the biscuit bed. Wrap in foil, let it rest in the fridge for 3 hours, then bake in the oven.
- 3 \ For the decoration, first boil the walnuts, then fry them.

ICE CREAM OF LOVE	BISCUIT BED
150 g milk	200 g grated hazelnuts
150 g cream	200 g sugar
2 egg yolks	200 g butter
100 g sugar	
100 g cream cheese	DECORATION
30 g grated love cheese	8 walnuts
	50 ml water
	50 g sugar
	150 ml oil
	200 g dried apricots

# Healthy life with apples and relaxation

[www.turizem-podcetrtek.si](http://www.turizem-podcetrtek.si) / [www.ortenia.com](http://www.ortenia.com)

Nobody knows how many apples the orchards of Kozjansko have produced, how many hikers have walked the paths over the green meadows, or how many homemade jams and juices visitors have taken home. But everybody leaves Podčetrtek and its surroundings re-energised, with less stress and in a better mood.

Podčetrtek in eastern Slovenia is home to healthy waters, wellness and selfness. The area is known for Olimia, one of the best natural health resorts in Slovenia, with its award-winning spa centre Orhidelia. A distinctive attraction of the landscape are its orchards with old fruit varieties, such as the Kozjansko apple. Take a bite of this sweet fruit which is a symbol of Kozjansko Park. The Kozjansko Apple has its own holiday which brings the local producers together – don't

*“Take a bite of the sweet apple which symbolises the protection of nature and the continuation of the ancestral tradition.”*

miss it in the second week of October in Podsreda! Have you ever tasted apple juice straight from the barrel? Visit the nearby homesteads, producing apple juice or fruit brandy.



## Ortenia Apartments in nature

**The heart of the thermal region of Slovenia offers a special experience to all lovers of nature, local cuisine and outdoor activities.** Just over four decades ago, an estate was founded at an idyllic location near the forest, at the foot of the castle's hill.

**Ortenia apartments in nature are multiple award winners.** They are among the first eco certified apartments in Slovenia and carry a Green Globe Certificate.

The apartments were designed according to the principles of innovative sustainable construction. With carefully-selected solid wood furniture, clay plasters, and decorative accessories from natural materials, visitors are in constant touch with nature even indoors. A morning basket of local delicacies will pamper your taste buds with flavours from the surrounding organic farms.

Visit Podčetrtek and stay in Ortenia, where peace, the freshness of the forest, the murmur of the streams and the warmth of the people will stay in your memory.

# 25 years of green tourism by the Soča River

[www.kamp-koren.si](http://www.kamp-koren.si)

The Soča Valley is known for the emerald colour of one of the most beautiful alpine rivers in the world. Last year the valley celebrated the 25th anniversary of the first green-oriented and eco-labelled camp in Slovenia, Camp Koren. Everything there is organised for protecting and taking care of nature. Many describe the camp as a classroom in nature, where preservation of the natural and cultural heritage is placed before achieving short-term economic benefits.

**Camp Koren in Kobarid, with its campsite and eco-chalets** is a hub for those who love outdoor activities in the north-western part of alpine Slovenia. The Soča Valley is a natural paradise for all kinds of sports – hiking and climbing to the highest Slovenian peaks, cycling numerous mountain and forest trails, white-water canoeing or kayaking, rafting the rapids, paragliding with unforgettable panoramic views, or flying above the canyons by zipline. Not far from Camp Koren you can find the restaurant of the famous chef, Ana Roš, the Best Female Chef in the World 2017.



# Jurjevanje – the greenest event in Slovenia

[www.belakrajina.si](http://www.belakrajina.si)

**Bela Krajina is a land on the sunny side of the Gorjanci hills, a land of white birches and pogača bread in the south of Slovenia.** It is the place where the warmest Slovenian river, the Kolpa, meanders, and is a destination with one of the greenest, largest and oldest Slovenian folklore festivals, Jurjevanje – named after the famous ethnographic character, the Green Jurij, who awakens the spring with his costume made of branches and leaves.

Every year folklore groups from Bela Krajina, elsewhere in Slovenia and abroad perform at the Jurjevanje festival, which brings several thousand visitors to the region. According to the Bela Krajina Development and Information Centre, Jurjevanje 2017 will follow a *zero waste* philosophy: *“At the festival we will carry out a pilot experiment of reducing our waste and environment impact. Later, we want to share our experience with organisers of other events and to maximize the number of events in Bela Krajine with “zero waste” organisation – especially those which are financed by public funds.”*

# Unique soil in Brda provides sweet fruit and fine wine

[www.brda.si](http://www.brda.si)

**Brda, the land of invigorating moments and world-class wineries, is unique from top to bottom. The sun and the local soil, opoka,** are a crucial help to the local producers who cultivate the grapes, cherries and other fruit. Opoka is not only rich in organic components, but abounds in minerals that are transferred to the fruit, giving it a distinctive taste and sweetness.

Feel Brda's soil between your toes on a barefoot hike around Brda, or try its specific taste on the tip of your tongue. Some of the most famous winemakers, who produce top-notch wines, use it at presentations in their cellars or abroad, while the local chefs benefit from the soil's treasures in creating their culinary masterpieces. World-famous wines, excellent olive oil, delicious cherries, apricots and persimmons, renowned restaurants and culinary adventures should be scooped up with a large spoon in Brda, half way between the Alps and the Mediterranean. This gastronomic region is one of the European Destinations of Excellence, where the locals cherish and preserve their culinary and cultural heritage.



# Bear watching in the virgin forests of Kočevsko

[www.kocevsko.com](http://www.kocevsko.com) / [www.visit-goodplace.com](http://www.visit-goodplace.com)

Have you ever seen a bear in its natural environment? In Slovenia, this is a common question. More than half of the country is covered in forest and the density of the brown bear population is one of the highest in Europe. More and more travellers are visiting the unique Kočevska region with its preserved virgin forests to catch a premium wildlife-watching experience off the beaten track. The mysterious woods of Slovenia are also the home of lynx, wolves and other wild animals.

*“I learn while observing carefully. The touch of wilderness and the smell of wild animals arouses the primal human nature and evokes the time of hunter-gatherer societies. Unknown fears and desires awake, and we get in touch with our inner feelings and perceptions, increase our awareness of the importance of protecting nature, and broaden our horizons,”* claims Petra Draškovič Pelc, a researcher and photographer.

Explore Slovenian green destinations with Visit Goodplace travel agency

Vast areas of unspoilt nature are boosted by incredible biodiversity, which is one of the greatest treasures of Slovenia. Visit GoodPlace travel agency, a specialist for outdoor adventures in Slovenia, has developed tours in cooperation with Slovenia Green destinations and suppliers, focusing on authentic green experiences. Visit GoodPlace developed from the Institute Factory of Sustainable Tourism GoodPlace, an accredited partner of the Green scheme of Slovenian tourism. *More Slovenia Green adventures at [www.visit-goodplace.com](http://www.visit-goodplace.com)*



## Meet the Slovenian Brown bear

BEAR WATCHING IN KOČEVJE, 3 DAYS

A specialised tour guide takes you to the heart of the brown bear’s kingdom, where you will learn how to behave in relationship with the forest animals. Slovenia is one of the rare countries in Europe with a stable population of brown bears, which are even growing in number and expanding their habitat. There are 500-700 brown bears meandering the green forests of Slovenia. Visit Goodplace works closely with the Biotechnical Faculty on the Life Dinalp Bear project promoting responsible observation of the mysterious wildlife.

- DAY 1**  
*Kočevje – Roška trail – Kočevje*

An adventure along the **Roška Trail**, connecting **Kočevje Lake**, the virgin forest of Rajhenavski Rog, the iconic tree the Queen of Rog, and other places of interest. Hidden corners of the forest offer ideal spots for a photo-safari, followed by a guided observation of bears in the evening, accompanied by a hunter.
- DAY 2**  
*Kočevje – Lake Cerknica – Kočevje*

A visit to **Lake Cerknica** and the museum offers many surprises. First, we discover the phenomenon of the karstic intermittent lake, then we embark on a guided bird photo-safari. More than 90 species of birds nest by the lake, while over 270 species have been recorded in the area.
- DAY 3**  
*Kočevje – Kolpa River*

We head to the **Kolpa River**, which is one of the warmest in Slovenia. Rafting is the most popular, as well as the easiest, way to explore the river. The highlight is passing through the dams by boat. The experience, including swimming and a fish picnic, is suitable for complete beginners.

# Outdoor heaven between the Alps and the Mediterranean

HIKING AND CYCLING IN GREEN SLOVENIA, 3 DAYS



The pristine nature of Slovenia invites you to an active retreat. This outdoor heaven between the Alps and the Mediterranean is best experienced on foot or by bike. One of the most popular activities accompanying the tour is discovering the cultural heritage while strolling through the picturesque historical towns.

- DAY 1**  
*Ljubljana*

“**Sightrunning**” of **Ljubljana** – this guided sightseeing tour while jogging is a warm-up. We continue with a food tour, tasting 5 typical Ljubljana dishes at 5 different restaurants. Free evening and overnight.
- DAY 2**  
*Ljubljana – Kamnik – Velika Planina – Kranjska Gora*

We head to **Kamnik** and the **Velika Planina** plateau in the heart of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps. A hiking tour to the wooden cottages of a traditional herder’s settlement, one of the few still preserved in Europe. Overnight in **Kranjska Gora** sports resort.
- DAY 3**  
*Kranjska Gora – Idrija\**

A trekking and cycling tour around **Kranjska Gora** off the beaten track. This all-year-round outdoor sports hub is a great starting point for exploring the **Julian Alps**.

*\* If the time allows we complement the trip with a visit to Idrija, an UNESCO-listed city, famous for its Mercury mine that is now turned into an underground museum.*

For more information and booking of our Slovenia Green tours: [info@slovenia-green.si](mailto:info@slovenia-green.si)



# Urban history in nature's embrace

## CITY BREAK IN SLOVENIA, 4 DAYS

Green, active, and healthy Slovenia invites you to enjoy authentic experiences. The lively towns are always close to unspoilt nature. Age-old love stories are hidden in the hearts of Slovenian cities, adding romance and charm to their characters. Travel back to medieval times and feel its pulse intertwined with the modern age.

### DAY 1 Ljubljana

Leisurely stroll and **Tastes of Ljubljana**. The history of the capital of Slovenia is dramatic and diverse, beginning with the prehistoric pile-dwellers who used the oldest discovered wheel in the world, and continuing with the Roman city of Emona. Ljubljana's medieval, baroque and modern architecture is still one of the city's greatest charms.

### DAY 2 Ljubljana – Žalec – Laško – Velenje – Laško

The **first beer fountain in the world** in **Žalec** awaits us! We continue to **Thermana Laško** natural health resort for a wellness retreat. Our next stop is **Velenje** with its Socialist urban design and heritage. We return to Laško for an overnight stay.

### DAY 3 Celje – Podčetrtek – Laško

A visit to the historical town of **Celje**, marked by the story of the Counts of Celje, the most powerful medieval noble dynasty of Slovenia. We continue to the **Kozjansko region**, full of orchards and meadows, with **Olimia**, one of the most famous spa centres in Slovenia, and **Olimje**, a village with a 350-year-old monastery pharmacy.

### DAY 4 Maribor – Ptuj

We head to **Ptuj**, the oldest town in Slovenia, also known for the oldest wine cellar in the country and the **Kurentovanje** carnival. Our next stop is **Maribor**, the second largest city in Slovenia and home to the oldest vine in the world. After sightseeing, we return to Ljubljana.

# Fusion of active and culinary retreats

## CYCLING TOUR IN THE EMERALD SOČA VALLEY, 4 DAYS

The Soča Valley, one of the most popular European outdoor destinations, is perfect for exploring by bike. Soča river adventures are just as emerald as the water, while the local culinary surprises are even more colourful. The Valley is the homeland of Ana Roš, the World's Best Female Chef of 2017. Cycling trails in the Vipava Valley and Brda's vineyards, with a don't-miss visit to one of the world's top winemakers, Aleš Kristančič, complete the experience.

### DAY 1 Nova Gorica – Brda

From **Nova Gorica**, "the city of bikes and roses", we head to the romantic region of **Brda**. Breathtaking views of vineyards and villages accompany our 20 km trail. We visit the **Movia Estate** for a tour led by **Aleš Kristančič**, notorious "wine genius". Overnight in Brda.

### DAY 2 Brda – Cividale (ITA) – Kobarid

Cycling to Italy and the **UNESCO-listed city of Cividale**. Here, we take a break for a proper Italian espresso and later return to Slovenia, to **Kobarid** in the Soča Valley, for an overnight stay.

### DAY 3 Kobarid

An adventurous day of **rafting, kayaking or canyoning** in the Soča Valley, the ultimate sports hub. You can hike part of the **Walk of Peace** from the Alps to the Adriatic. Dinner at **the restaurant of the World's Best Female Chef, Ana Roš**, in Casa Franko is a real treat. Overnight in Kobarid.

### DAY 4 Kobarid – Nova Gorica

A relaxed cycling day from **Kobarid** to **Nova Gorica** following the emerald Soča River downstream.

# Slovenia Green Facts



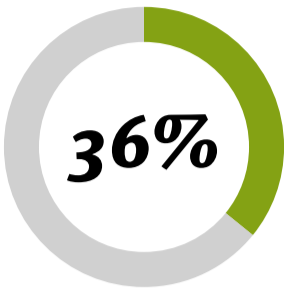
65% of land covered by forest



The highest-quality drinking water

17 destinations and 10 accommodations currently bear the Slovenia Green label.

[www.slovenia.info/en/business/green-scheme-of-slovenian-tourism](http://www.slovenia.info/en/business/green-scheme-of-slovenian-tourism)



of land protected by **Natura 2000**

More than  
**20,000**  
plant and animal species  
and  
**30,000**  
watercourses

## Travel Green To Slovenia

Don't board the next plane, and leave your car at home - come to Slovenia by train, by bike or even on foot!

Check the numerous Slovenian Railways daily passenger services linking south-east and north-west Europe on [www.slo-zeleznice.si](http://www.slo-zeleznice.si).

Use your bike and choose one of the three EuroVelo routes that take you to Slovenia ([www.eurovelo.com](http://www.eurovelo.com)) or opt for a TranSlovenia bike experience from the magnificent Alps to the Mediterranean ([www.trans-slovenia.eu](http://www.trans-slovenia.eu)).

Similarly, you can take a stroll along the Alpe-Adria Trail that takes you from the Grossglockner glacier in Austria via the Julian Alps and the famous Vršič Pass to Trieste on the coast of the Adriatic ([www.alpe-adria-trail.com](http://www.alpe-adria-trail.com)), or embark on one of the two European long-distance paths that cross Slovenia, E6 and E7. ([www.era-ewv-ferp.com/walking-in-europe/e-paths/](http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/walking-in-europe/e-paths/))

### I FEEL SLOVENIA

## GREEN SCHEME OF SLOVENIAN TOURISM

A map of Slovenia showing various locations marked with green icons and numbers. The map includes labels for neighboring countries: ITA (Italy) to the west, CRO (Croatia) to the east, and H (Hungary) to the northeast. Numbered locations include: 1. Soča Valley (Bovec, Tolmin, Kobarid), 2. Novo Mesto, 3. Kočevsko Region (Kočevje, Kostel, Osilnica), 4. Litija and Šmartno pri Litiji, 5. Šentjur, 6. Ljutomer, 7. Vipava Valley (Ajdovščina, Vipava), 8. Logarska Valley and the Solčavsko Region, 9. Podčetrtek, 10. Polhov Gradec, 11. Bohinj. Specific locations marked include: Kranjska Gora, Design rooms Pr' Gavedarjo, Kamp Koren Kobarid, BRDA, NOVA GORICA, CERKNO, IDRIJA, Hotel Jožef, Ljubljana, Country Estate Trnulja, Hotel Park, Hostel Celica, KAMNIK, Terme Snovik, Velenje, Žalec, Laško, Thermana park Laško, CELJE, Ortenia - Apartments in Nature Podčetrtek, Ptuj, Farmstay Urška Stranice, RADLJE OB DRAVI, SLOVENJ GRADEC, MARIBOR, and Bela Krajina Region.

#### DESTINATIONS:

Ljubljana

Idrija, Kamnik, Radlje ob Dravi, Rogla-Zreče, Cerčno, Nova Gorica, Brda, Kranjska Gora, Maribor, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec, Bela Krajina Region (Črnomelj, Metlika, Semič)

Laško, Žalec, Celje, Velenje

#### TOURISM PROVIDERS:

Ortenia, Apartments in nature (Green Globe), Urška Tourist Farm (EU Ecolabel), Trnulja Estate (Bio Hotels), Terme Snovik (EU Ecolabel), Thermana Park Laško (EU Ecolabel), Koren Camp, Kobarid (EU Ecolabel), Hotel Park Ljubljana (Travelife), Celica Hostel (Travelife), Pr' Gavedarjo - rooms with a story (Travelife), Hotel Jožef Idrija (EU Ecolabel)

#### IN THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT:

1. Soča Valley (Bovec, Tolmin, Kobarid), 2. Novo Mesto, 3. Kočevsko Region (Kočevje, Kostel, Osilnica), 4. Litija and Šmartno pri Litiji, 5. Šentjur, 6. Ljutomer, 7. Vipava Valley (Ajdovščina, Vipava), 8. Logarska Valley and the Solčavsko Region, 9. Podčetrtek, 10. Polhov Gradec, 11. Bohinj

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SloveniaInfo | [www.slovenia.info/twitter](http://www.slovenia.info/twitter)

Slovenian Tourist Board | [www.slovenia.info/linkedin](http://www.slovenia.info/linkedin)

Slovenia | [www.slovenia.info/youtube](http://www.slovenia.info/youtube)

Feel Slovenia | [www.slovenia.info/googleplus](http://www.slovenia.info/googleplus)

SloveniaInfo | [www.slovenia.info/foursquare](http://www.slovenia.info/foursquare)

FeelSlovenia | [www.slovenia.info/instagram](http://www.slovenia.info/instagram)

FeelSlovenia | [www.slovenia.info/pinterest](http://www.slovenia.info/pinterest)

Slovenia | [www.slovenia.info/tripadvisor](http://www.slovenia.info/tripadvisor)