



ŽILINA
TOURISM
REGION

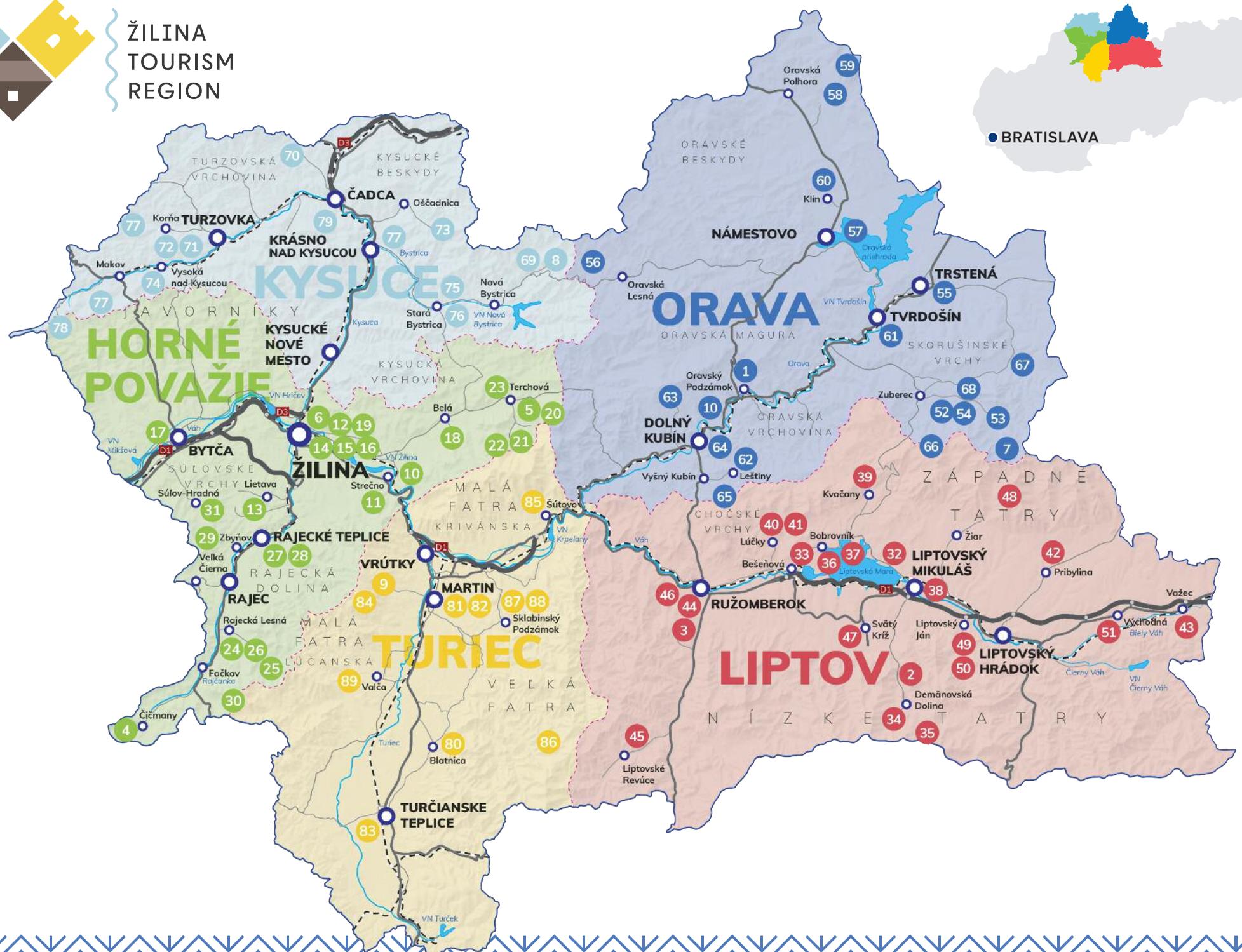


**GOOD TO KNOW
BETTER TO SEE**





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. The guided tour covers up to 850 metres of cave tunnels (the tour lasts 45 minutes). Its icy interior probably emerged 400 to 500 years ago. The bottom part of the cave with its ice dripstones and waterfalls is especially charming.

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. The cave is home to 10 species of bats.



Vlkolínec

3

When in 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.



Jánošíkove Diery Gorges

5

A network of canyons and gorges with 20 spectacular waterfalls, particular rock formations and paths with footbridges, ladders and chains – a fitting description of one of the most beautiful hiking trails in the Malá Fatra National Park and one of the most amazing trips Slovakia has to offer. The Jánošíkove diery gorges are located in the Rozsutec national nature reserve and consist of three sections: the Dolné diery, Nové diery and Horné diery gorges. Its small elevation difference makes the short trail through Jánošíkove diery suitable for seniors and small children. But if you want to see the most spectacular locations, discover the gorges along the long trail. The starting points that lead to Jánošíkove diery are located in Štefanová or Biely Potok.



Did you know that... ?

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.



Budatín Castle and Wire Craft Exhibition

6

You can't leave Žilina without seeing one of the oldest medieval castles. The first text referring to the castle dates back to the 14th century, around the time when its owner, Matúš Čák Trenčiansky, died. The water castle was designed to protect the Kysuca and Váh rivers. Nowadays, it houses the Považie Museum in Žilina and visitors can explore its wire craft exhibition, which is the only exhibition of its kind in the world. The castle is surrounded by a historic park, the perfect spot for a stroll or a picnic.



Did you know that... ?

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.



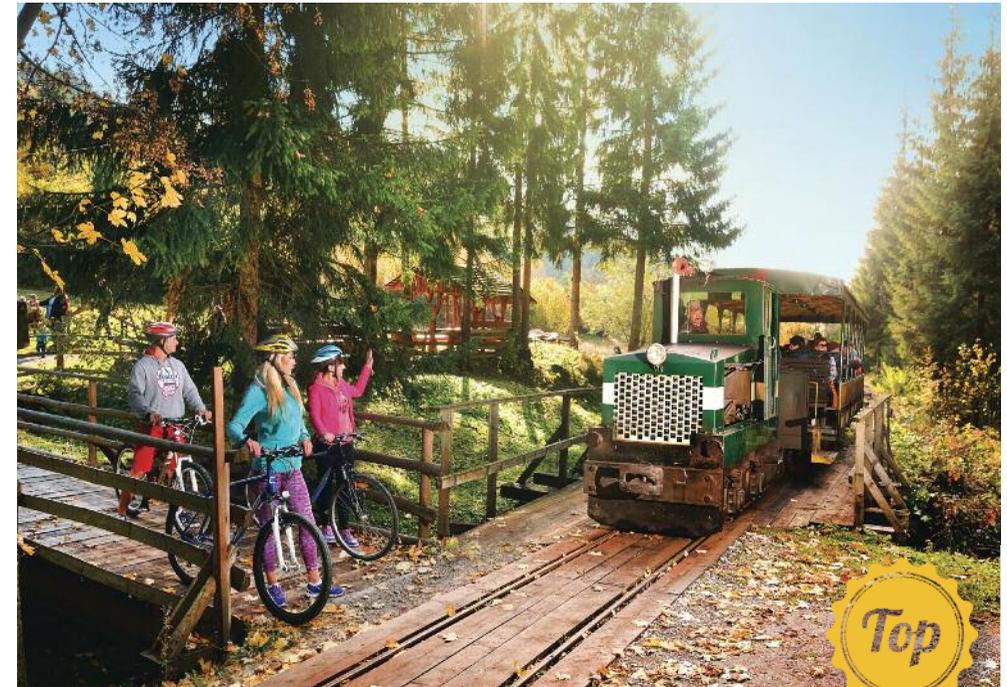
Roháčske Plesá Tarns

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 Vysoké Tatry 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 Vysoké Tatry mountains. It is located 1,340 metres above sea level.



Historic Forest Switchback Railway

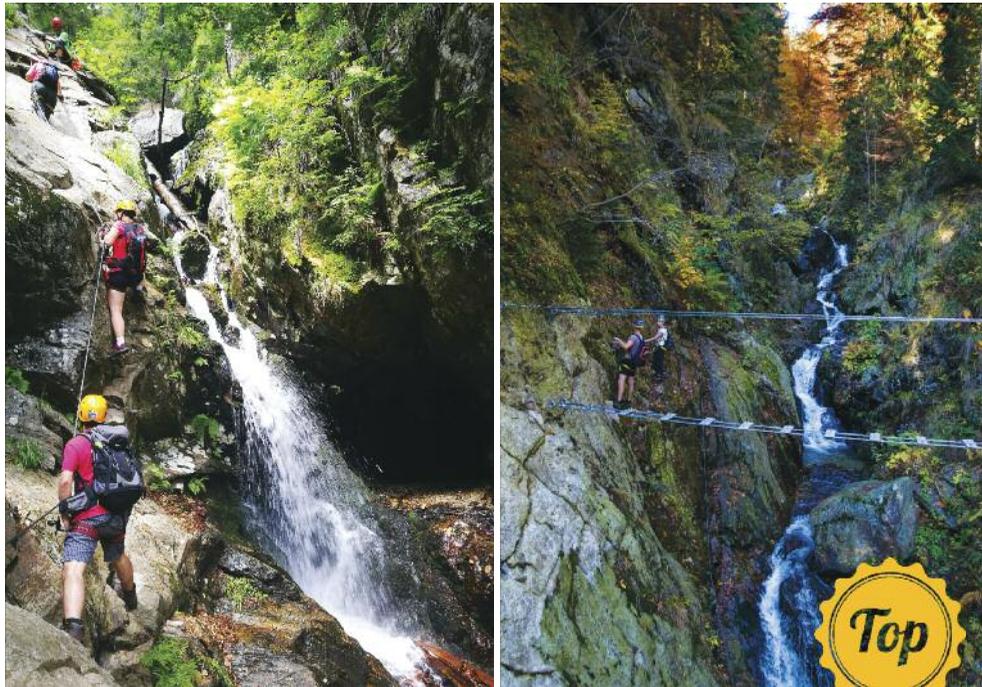
8

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 serpentines 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 rescuer service and is one of the most interesting sites of the Turiec region. It offers two difficulty levels to choose from. 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.



Cycle Route from Castle to Castle

12

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.

Did you know that... ?

The Žilina region boasts more than 2,800 km of marked cycle routes.



Lietava Castle Ruins

13

It is considered the second biggest Slovak castle with origins that 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 castle ruins from the village of Lietava-Majer following the blue waymarked hiking trail (30 min.) or take a steeper path that starts in the village of Lietavská Svinná (at the bus stop) and follows the green waymarked trail (40 min.).



Žilina Historic Centre 14

The historic centre of Žilina is known for its historic buildings, plethora of cosy cafes and restaurants and tiny shops along of one 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 lays 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 Conversion of St. Paul Church in Žilina 15

If you are interested in history and mysteries, come and uncover the secrets of the underground spaces of the so-called "catacombs" under the Conversion of St. Paul Church at Mariánske námestie. Local tour guides will share many interesting facts and you will even find out whether Jewish children were actually sheltered here to avoid being deported 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.



Fest Anča 16

If you are into animated movies, do not miss the international multimedia animation festival Fest Anča in Žilina, which is the only annual Slovak film festival that presents short and feature animated films aimed mostly at adult viewers. It is an opportunity to meet filmmakers, musicians and artists from the very best of the creative world. The annual festival is based in Žilina at the Stanica Žilina-Záriečie cultural centre, the New Synagogue and other local cultural spaces. It makes good use of the unique informal environment, which helps create an unforgettable atmosphere.



Wedding Palace in Bytča 17

The Wedding Palace was built at the beginning of the 17. 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. Do not miss the exhibition of Slovak construction heritage sites listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Did you know that... ?

The famous Juraj Jánošík served as one of the soldiers in the Bytča chateau guard. Here he met the imprisoned outlaw Tomáš Uhorčík from Kysuce, who talked him into becoming an outlaw, too.



Belské Skaly Rocks 18

The Belské skaly rocks are sought-after by rock climbers and are located above the village of Belá in the Malá Fatra mountains. When in Belá, take a turn from the main road towards the ridge of the Malá Fatra 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.



Straník Hill 19

"The hill of all hills" for glider, parachute and Rogallo wing enthusiasts with a gorgeous view of Žilina. Long forefields, easy access, amazing thermal physical conditions, plenty of safe landing spots around – these features have turned it into a centre of motorless flying, which it has been since 1917. Most army pilots and pilots of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces located in Slovakia trained at the Straník hill.

Did you know that... ?

The hill also boasts a shelter and a raised walkway, which were awarded the Construction of the Year award for 2016 in the exterior architecture category.



Velký Rozsutec Mountain (1,610 m)

20

Velký Rozsutec is one of the most beautiful mountains in Slovakia. It is considered the symbol of the Krivánska Malá Fatra mountains. It is a 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.

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)

22

The highest peak of the Malá Fatra mountains. It offers a spectacular panoramic view of the surroundings mountains and ridges. The ascent is not the easiest, but you can make it easier by taking the gondola lift all the way to the Snilovské sedlo mountain pass. From this point, the hike to the peak is approximately 45 minutes. You can stop for refreshments directly at the lift station at the top or walk to the Chata pod Chlebom mountain hut. From the Snilovské sedlo mountain pass it will take approximately 30 minutes. It is the highest situated mountain hut in the Malá Fatra open year-round. You can get back to the Vrátna dolina valley using the gondola lift, walk under the lift or pick a longer and more interesting route with spectacular views. The trail leads over the ridge towards the Poludňový Grúň mountain. The descent from Poludňový grúň to the Chata na Grúni mountain hut is steep. From the hut, take a nice stroll through the forest that leads back to the bottom station of the lift.



Jánošík Days – a Folklore Festival in Terchová

23

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, 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, popular among visitors since 1968.



Wooden Bethlehem in Rajecská Lesná

24

It is one of the largest woodcarvings in Slovakia. Master Jozef Pekara from Rajecské Teplice began working on it in 1980 and it took him 15 years to finish. Along with the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and scenes from his life, the exhibit also showcases the history of the Slovak people. The Bethlehem is 8.5 m long, 2.5 m wide and 3 m high.

Did you know that... ?

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



Geyser in Rajecská Lesná

25

Visit nature on a hot summer day and cool down in the artificial geyser in Rajecská 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. When your children see it, they will think that they are in Arendelle. It is located approximately 4 km above Rajecská Lesná and is accessible via a tarmac road.



Calvary with Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Rajecská Lesná

26

The Calvary (Way of the Cross) at the Marian pilgrimage site in Rajecská Lesná (Fivalde) 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 Rajecská Lesná was built between 1920 and 1921 from charitable gifts from Fivalde natives living in America.



Museum of Transport in Rajecské Teplice

27

The museum is located on the premises of the train stop in Rajecské 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 part of the exhibition related to railways presents models of different trains and showcases two train station offices furnished with signalling, traffic control and train detection technologies and equipment used by commercial services during the interwar period (1918–1945) and the “socialist” era. The third section will teach you about the development of road transport, motoring, road construction and public transport. The museum also showcases historic motorcycles.



Slovak Health Spa Rajecské Teplice

28

Relax in thermal water with beneficial effects on the locomotor system, inflammations of the central nervous system, neuromuscular degenerative diseases and occupational diseases – bone, joint, muscle and tendon problems, which is used in a complex range of treatments. The spa also offers drinking cures, balneotherapy, a wide selection of treatments and wellness stays, and a water and sauna world.



Stratný Budzogáň Rocks

29

Stratný budzogáň 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 Rajecské 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.



Kľak Mountain (1,351 m)

30

Kľak mountain is unmistakably the symbol of the Rajecská dolina valley. The distinct unfor-
rested 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 Kľak. You can access it from the Fačkovské sedlo mountain pass along the yellow waymarked trail (approximately 2 hours) or from the village of Fačkov along the blue waymarked 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

31

The Súľovské skaly national nature reserve, which is a part of the Strážovské vrchy 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, Hrabové and Jablonové.



Aquapark Tatralandia

32

Discover a place full of adventure and fun with a year-round Tropical Paradise, a unique surfing complex, miniature world, holiday resort and the Zookontakt Tatralandia petting zoo. In summer, young and old alike will have some fun in the 14 sea water, thermal water, or clear water pools (10 pools in winter) and 28 flume slides and slides (6 flume slides in winter). The Tatralandia Liptov Arena near the aquapark houses the Bricklandia Lego exhibition. You can admire mobile trains and merry-go-rounds, watch different characters' stories, or pretend to be investigators.



Bešeňová Aquapark

33

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.



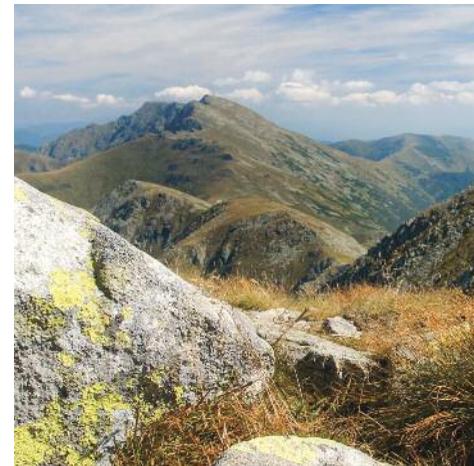
Jasná Nízke Tatry Ski Resort

34

The biggest ski resort in Slovakia with 50 km of well-tended slopes. Twenty-three chair lifts and drag lifts able to transport more than 28,439 people per hour connect the northern and southern sides of the Chopok mountain. The panoramic restaurant Rotunda will welcome you with its infinite views. At 2,004 metres above sea level, it offers accommodation at the Chopok mountain. The TOP-NOTCH Jasná Nízke Tatry resort offers APRÈS SKI, first class events, luxury wellness and spas, bars, amazing music clubs, SKI-IN SKI-OUT accommodation directly at the slopes, and much more.

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) 35

The highest peak of the Nízke Tatry mountains. However, a climb to its top is not too demanding. The trail is continuous with some amazing views of both sides of the Nízke Tatry mountains. We recommend the green waymarked trail from the Demänovská dolina valley – the Lúčky area, and a return route along the red waymarked trail to the Chopok mountain where you join the blue waymarked trail all the way down through the Luková mountain to the Mikulášska chata hotel. You can shorten the descent from the peak of Chopok by taking the gondola lift at the Jasná resort.



Havránok Archeological Open-Air Museum

36

The unique Havránok Archeological Open-Air Museum is one of the most important archeological sites in Slovakia. Archeologists 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 Dam

37

Explore the biggest Slovak dam. It was built by the inhabitants of the Liptov region to protect their region from flooding. The dam spans an area of 22 km² and its deepest point measures 43 metres deep. 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 dam is a perfect site for a wide range of water sport activities like swimming, rowing, yachting, windsurfing, and riding water scooters or pedalos, along with an unforgettable boat tour and fishing.

Did you know that... ?

The Liptov Sea engulfed 13 villages.



Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology

38

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. 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.

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.



Oblazy Water Mills, Kvačianska Dolina Valley

39

Kvačianska dolina and Prosiecka dolina are 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 Prosiecka dolina and Kvačianska dolina 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 the former owners gradually left, enthusiasts from the Slovak Association of Nature and Landscape Conservationists, later members of the Tree of Life movement, started reconstruction works in 1980. 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 Jánošíkova hlava rock formation (Jánošík's Head) and lookout points, or take a detour to the Ráztocký vodopád waterfall. A shorter alternative route starts at Velké Borové and takes approximately 30 minutes.



Spa Lúčky

40

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

41

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

42

At the base of the southern slopes of Západné Tatry mountains you can find a museum that documents Liptov folk architecture. It 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 and a zoo.



Važecká Jaskyňa Cave

43

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 has a rich snow-white calcareous sinter decor, contains small lakes, and was an important discovery site of cave bear remains, which used to inhabit the caves year-round.



Malinô Brdo Ski & Bike Family Park

44

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 out 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 gondola lift. In the heart of the resort you will find a 4-seater gondola lift, two platter lifts, and four drag lifts dedicated to beginners and children. The resort is a great starting point for a few nice trips. You can walk to the Vikolínec 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.



Via Ferrata Dve Veže

45

Do you prefer rock climbing, and heights don't make your head spin? Give the Dve veže (Two Towers) via ferrata a try, the first in the Liptov region and only the fourth secured route in Slovakia. It is located in Liptovské Revúce approximately 4 km from the Gothar resort. 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. The highest point of the via ferrata offers spectacular views of the surrounding Nízke Tatry and Veľká Fatra mountains. 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

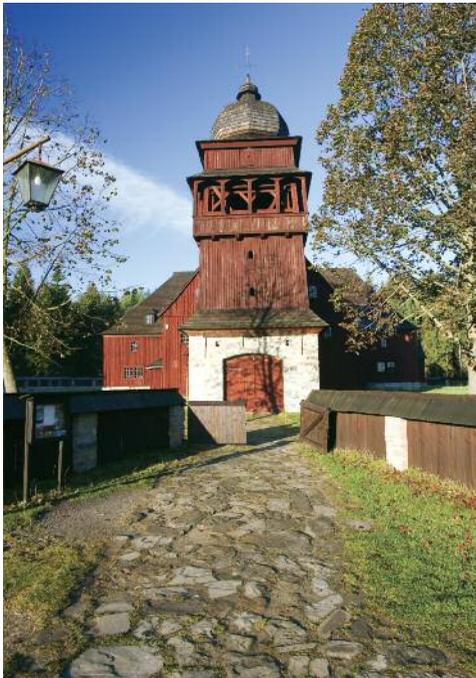
46

The 6.1 km long 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. 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. The starting point is at the parking lot at the Koliba u dobrého pastiera shepherd's hut.



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 of Svätý Kríž 47

One of the biggest wooden buildings in Central Europe. It was moved here between 1974 and 1982 from 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 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) 48

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 Západné Tatry mountains 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 stop by for some refreshments or to sleep over year-round. 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 49

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 20 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.

Did you know that... ?

It took 11 years to create the miniature buildings.



Stanišovská Jaskyňa Cave 50

The only Liptov cave that is accessible year-round and open every day is located in Liptovský Ján. It 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 51

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

52

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.



Roháče – Spálená Ski Resort

53

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

54

The first cave that was 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 – they are provided by personnel. 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 for visitors in September 2016.



Trstená-Nowy Targ Cycle Route

55

The cycle route leads from Trstená through Liesek, Hladovka, and Suchá Hora all the way to the border and then continues through Podczzerwone and Czarny Dunajec to Nowy Targ. It is a recreational 35-km-long route with a tarmac surface. One of its benefits is that it is a separate cycle route that avoids 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 Háje) 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 2. Visitors can leave their bikes at a cycle box in Trstená and stroll through the town.



Orava Forest Railway

56

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 sightseeing 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.



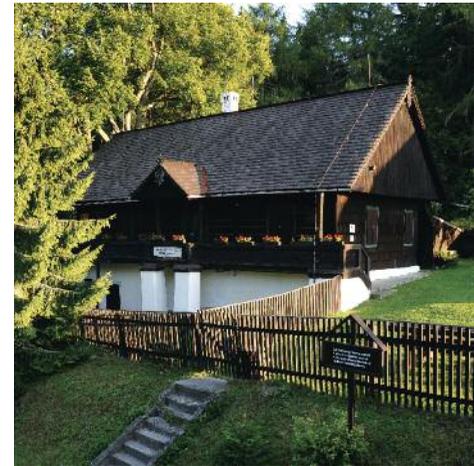
Slanický Ostrov Umenia Island

57

Slanický ostrov umenia, or the Island of Art, located in the middle of the Orava dam 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

58

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 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

59

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 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 mountain 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.



Village of Klin

60

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. 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. The environment surrounding it is beautifully maintained with benches, a gazebo and many flowers.

Did you know that... ?

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



Church of All Saints in Tvrdosín

61

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 1993.

Wooden Articular Church of Leštiny

62

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

63

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 Západné and Nízke Tatry mountains. But it is not boring in summer either. In addition to off-road scooters and the Tarzánia high rope park, it also has the longest and most modern ZIPLINE rope track in Central and Eastern Europe, whose 1,234-metre course will take your breath away.



AquaRelax Dolný Kubín

64

If you want to mix fun with relaxation, visit the modern aquapark with pyramid-like architectural elements in Dolný Kubín. The water world contains various water attractions and has a 25-metre-long swimming pool. The temperature in the relaxation pools reaches 32-36 °C, while the water in the swimming pool is 27 °C. The aquapark is located 5 km from the SKI PARK Kubínska Hoľa ski resort and skiers can conveniently relax after a full day of skiing.

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.



Velký Choč Mountain (1,611 m)

65

The unique limestone pyramid of the Velký Choč mountain is well recognizable not only from the Západné Tatry mountains and the Orava region, but you can see it from the Nízke Tatry mountains, from the Liptov region and also from the Veľká Fatra and Malá Fatra mountains. It is considered one of the most beautiful mountains in Slovakia, allowing you to marvel at the panoramic views that cover all cardinal 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 interesting options with a few possible starting points from both the Liptov or Orava sides as the border of the Dolný Kubín and Ružomberok districts crosses under 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)

66

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 Západné Tatry mountains, 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.



Juráňová Dolina Valley

67

An easy walk with gorgeous views. The valley is considered 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 Západné Tatry mountains. The valley is unique mainly for its hot springs, which feed the pools at the Oravice thermal park.



Podroháčske Folklorne Slávnosti Folklore Festival

68

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.



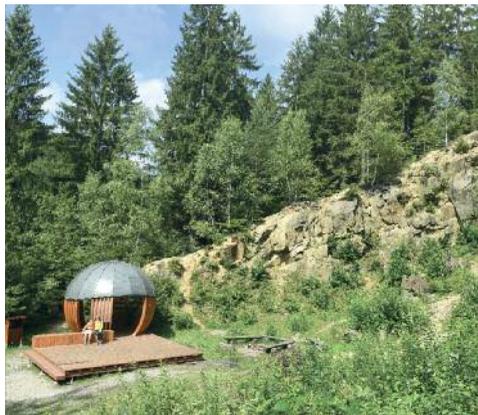
Museum of the Kysuce Village in Vychylovka

69

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 houses residential houses and agricultural buildings as well as technical and religious buildings from several Kysuce region villages. 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 Cyprján*, *Jaškov sen*, *Živá voda*, and *Ako divé husi*. In addition to movies, it was also the filming location of the children's series *Teta*, known in its edited cinema version as *Pehavý Max a strašidlá* by Juraj Jakubisko, as well as the fairytale *Plavčík a Vratko*.



Kamenné Gule Rock Formations

70

The Kamenné gule rock formations are a unique world phenomenon. Our Slovak stone spheres are some of the biggest and you will find them along a 15-km-long section between Klokočovo and Čadca-Milošová. The Klokočovské skálie nature reserve has an 850-metre-long educational trail. The biggest sphere discovered is 2.6 m in diameter and you can see it in the quarry located in the Megoňky settlement near Čadca.



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... ?

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.



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.

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.



Snowparadise Velká Rača Oščadnica

73

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 new 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

74

Do you know who the Apollo of Kysuce is? The American astronaut of Slovak origins E. A. Cernan, whose grandparents left 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.



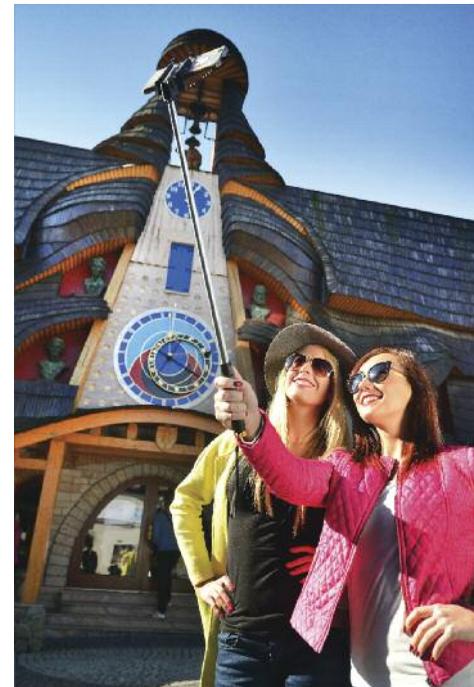
Did you know that...?

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

75

The only astronomical clock in Slovakia is simultaneously the biggest Slovak wooden statue. It features a seated Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, who is the patron of Slovakia, and also 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 a 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

76

The popular cycle route was converted from an unused switchback railway track. It starts in 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 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 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

77

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. A visit to the Krásňanská osada u Lastovicov and Korňanská osada Slezákovci settlements, the mountain settlement of Gregušovce, and many others is well worth it.



Velký Javorník Mountain (1,072 m)

78

The Javorníky mountains are located near the border of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. You can get to the highest peak of the Velký Javorník mountain by selecting one of several waymarked hiking trails. Under the top of the Velký Javorník mountain is the Makov Kasárne Ski and Mountain resort, which offers its visitors winter and summer sports activities, relaxation in nature and unforgettable experiences. The educational trail to the top from the Makov Kasárne resort takes 45 minutes and another 45 minutes to reach the Strateneč lookout tower. You can also take the yellow waymarked trail from the Kasárne resort 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 Strateneč mountain above Makovo (1,055 m), 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 Strateneč. 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

79

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

80

Visit one of the longest valleys in the Veľká Fatra mountains. A good tarmac road crosses 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 trails leading to the mountains of Tlstá, Ostrá, Ostredok, Krížna, and other peaks of the main ridge. However, these trails are more challenging. 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 archeological 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

81

If you want to see 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 143 objects, of which 22 are accessible.



National Cemetery in Martin

82

More than three hundred artists, writers and important historical figures have found their last resting place in Martin, 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 Kmet's tombstone with an open book.



Slovak Medical Spa Turčianske Teplice

83

The spa 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.



Winter Park Martinky

84

The ski resort is located in the Malá Fatra mountains above the town of Martin 1,150-1,456 metres above sea level. It is one of the few “urban” ski resorts. It offers skiers 12 well-tended slopes maintained daily with a cover of natural snow all winter long. The road allows only one-way traffic with set times for driving to and from the resort. Vehicles must be equipped with snow chains.

Did you know that... ?

The area of Martinské hole is ideal for snowkiting. You can use the kite to romp around the untouched plains or ride up and down the mountains.



Šútovský Vodopád Waterfall

85

Boasting a height of 38 m, 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 Mojžišove pramene rock formation. The hike to the waterfall is easy, the trail starts on a tarmac road along Šútovský potok. 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, 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)

86

The distinct Borišov mountain is located in the Malá 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 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, but it offers a panoramic view in all cardinal directions.



Katova Skala Rock

87

Katova skala (Executioner's Rock) rock formation can be found near the Sklabiňa castle ruin towering over the village of Sklabinský Podzámok. 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 Tučianska kotlina basin, and the Lúčanská Malá Fatra mountains.



Sklabiňa Castle Ruin

88

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 DONJON 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.



SNOWLAND Valčianska dolina

89

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 Maríková 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 Slovak diet typical for the Žilina Region revolved around basic ingredients like potatoes, cabbage, flour, milk and legumes. The herding style of sheep farming significantly enriched the diet 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 some of the traditional dishes and culinary specialties of the Žilina Region to 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 bryndzové 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.

Šúľance

Šúľance 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 previous 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 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

Homemakers from the Žilina Region favoured cabbage and legumes. They used to make a tasty bean soup with beans, which they soaked in water, sausage, onions and garlic. It tastes best in bowls from Trstená with 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 notable for the Orava region and made out of blueberries, rum and sugar. However, the exact ratio remains a 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.



Implemented with the financial support
of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic



Issued by: Žilina Tourism Region, 2022

Translation: Translata Slovakia, spol. s r.o.

Photographs: Marek Hajkovský, Pavol Staník, Jaroslav Velička, Radovan Jakuš, Richard Köhler, Jaroslav Moravčík, archive of Žilina Tourism Region and its members

Graphic design and printing: Mária Ščuryová – MAGMA

www.zilinskyturistickykraj.sk **www.northslovakia.com**

www.zilinskazupa.sk www.regionmalafatra.sk www.visitliptov.sk

www.regionkysuce.sk www.visitorava.sk www.rajeckadolina.sk www.turiec.org