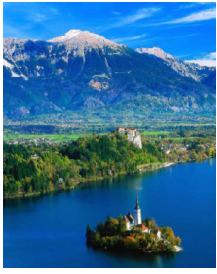


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By: Monica Gaza, Life & Style Editor



A spectacular view of the Julian Alps with the Adriatic Sea
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[A Traveler's Guide to Slovenia Part 1](#)

A rich blend of culture, history and dazzling modernity will turn your stay in Slovenia into an unforgettable experience

If I were to describe Slovenia in just two words, "hidden gem" would definitely be my best guess. This small Central European country is pretty much the geographical and cultural equivalent of the proverbial casket of wonders: relatively small as far as surface goes, Slovenia will make travelers feel they've gone down the rabbit hole and entered a land which boasts a spectacular variety of landscapes, from steep mountains to rich forests, thermal springs, wine growing hills, a luxurious, Mediterranean-style coastline and a breath-taking and mysterious subterranean world of caves and potholes, which some deem to be the most beautiful part of our planet's underground. Therefore, the key word when it comes to Slovenia is diversity - in fact, we could go as far as to call this land a "Europe in Miniature", tucked in as it is between the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Dinarides and the Pannonian plain. Slovenia is an ideal holiday destination, primarily because it can easily cater to a variety of tastes and needs, while due to its size, movement between various regions is extremely easy, allowing tourists to either focus on exploring one or two of its remarkable areas, or simply spend a few memorable days in each of its geographically and culturally varied regions. For first-time visitors, I'll focus on three of Slovenia's classic holiday destinations - its Capital city of Ljubljana (in this article), the coastline and the Karst area (in a separate article) and then, of course, it will be up to you whether you decide to go for one of these areas, or mix, match and fit all three of them into your visiting schedule. For a section dealing exclusively with travel advice and useful tips for making your stay in Slovenia a pleasant and memorable affair (including climate, temperatures, travel to and from Slovenia, hotels and restaurants, etc.) [GO HERE](#). **Ljubljana** Ljubljana is the capital city of Slovenia. It's ideally positioned in the very heart of the country, and can either serve as a destination in itself or as a starting point for discovering the rest of this fascinating country. As for its name, it is the subject of many disagreements between linguists - however, due to its close similarity to the Slovene word "ljubljen" (which means "beloved"), many of its inhabitants deliberately chose to take this linguistic coincidence for granted and speak with much pride of their "beloved" city. Ljubljana can be regarded as a small-scale embodiment of Slovenia itself, with a rich blend of classic and modern architecture that preserves elements of its Roman ancestry (the town of Emona), blended in with the Renaissance and Italian Baroque facades, picturesque bridges over the Ljubljanica River, ornamented portals and uneven roofs. Ljubljana boasts a great number of theaters, museums and art galleries, along with one of the oldest philharmonic academies in the world. Every year, an impressive 10,000 cultural events take place in the city, gathering together renowned musical, theater and fine arts performers from around the world for no less than 14 annual festivals. Ljubljana is an extremely young and vibrant city, with a vast variety of shops to cater to all tastes and pockets. For those of you who want to spend a few hours indulging in the city's atmosphere and splashing out indecent amounts of those hard-earned money, you can buy anything from fashion wear from most leading international brands, clothing made by local designers, crystalware, antiques, glassware, along with contemporary and traditional Slovenian arts and crafts items. There are also a few department stores and a wide variety of sales galleries offering a selection of the finest art prints. Outside the city center, in the northeastern district of Nove Jarše, is the BTC City, one of the largest shopping centers in Europe. One must-see destination for all those who wish to explore this wonderful city is the city's main open-air market, which provides locals and tourists with anything from fruits, vegetables, spices and herbs, to delicious local specialties. Another personal

recommendation would be the river-side seafood restaurants, where you can enjoy pretty much any kind of fish and seafood dishes along with a pint of cold beer, catered to you in a nice, friendly atmosphere. In the warmer summer months, the city's cafes and restaurants move outdoors, on the sidewalks and on the banks of the Ljubljanica river, as well as in the squares and the city center. Ljubljana boasts a huge number of restaurants, which serve traditional and international dishes. Many traditional Slovenian dishes are made with cream - such as for example the mushroom soup and pork sour soup. As a personal recommendation, you should definitely taste the mushroom soup served in bread bowls at any of the city's restaurants. For the most adventurous of you, a specialty of northeastern Slovenia is horseradish with cream, often served with beef dishes. Also a must is the chicken paprika, a creamy sauce made with spicy, red paprika served over noodles or dumplings, sausages and goulash. Ljubljana is one of those cities you simply cannot visit only once. Its rich history and many hidden faces reveal themselves gradually to the eager tourist, who takes to its streets with an open heart and a great deal of curiosity. Whether your passion is art, architecture, good food, shopping or simply breathing in a different climate and a city with a vibrant lifestyle, Ljubljana will not disappoint you. Whether you're planning to head there on business or with your family, the Slovenian capital will charm you so well, you'll be bound to return there with more friends or family members and savor its refined, friendly atmosphere and countless local attractions.