



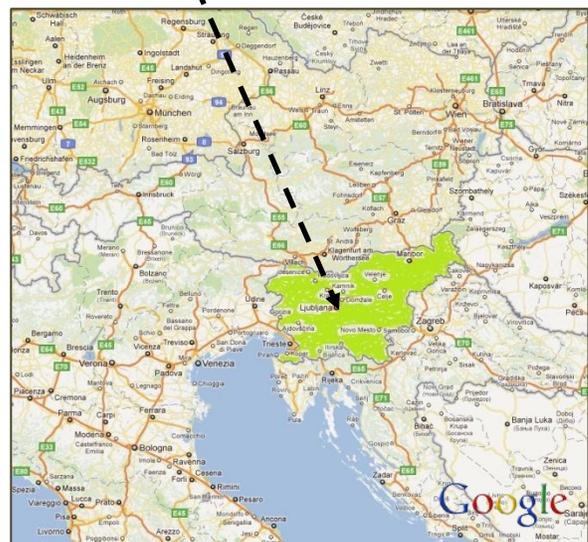
Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Ljubljana, Slovenia, located at 46° N and 14° E.
- We have traveled approximately 32,791 miles (52,772 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

- Slovenia was part of the Roman Empire in the first century B.C. and an element of the Holy Roman Empire. It belonged to the Habsburg Empire from the 14th century until the end of World War I in 1918.
- The Kingdom of the Serbs was formed with Slovenia, Montenegro, Serbia and Croatia in 1918. This name was changed to Yugoslavia in 1929. After World War II Slovenia was communist Yugoslavia's most prosperous republic. It declared its independence in 1991.
- About 10% of the country's two million population lives in the capital city of Ljubljana. A famous landmark is the "Zmajski Most" or Dragon Bridge. Legend says that the founder of Ljubljana killed a dragon, symbolized by one of the four statues on the bridge.
- The official language is Slovene. Slovenia's historical ties to Western Europe mean that Italian and Hungarian are also widely spoken. The primary religion is Roman Catholic, which differs from most other Balkan states.
- Slovenian food is influenced by many natural ingredients, including mushrooms, chestnuts, berries and wild lettuce. Soups are popular. Meat dishes are usually served only on Sundays and feast days.



Ljubljana's Dragon Bridge
(source: [Flickr.com/Alistair Young](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alistairyoung/))

Did you know?

Lace-making in the town of Idrija is a Slovenian tradition. Products made from lace include napkins, curtains, bed linens and clothes. The origins date back to the 17th century. Idrija opened a lace school in 1876 and holds a lace festival each year.



sources: Slovenia.sj,
Encajeras.wordpress.com

The Julian Alps

On the eastern edge of the Alps, this mountain range is located in northwestern Slovenia, near the Italian and Austrian borders. There are about 150 mountains in the range that are higher than 6,562 feet (2,000 meters) high. The range takes its name from Julius Caesar. It is popular with hikers and climbers.



Julian Alps view

(sources: Wikipedia.org, Julijske-alpe.com)



Lake Bled and Cavern in Škocjan Caves

(sources: Flickr.com/TrentStrohm,
Flickr.com/JamesSouthorn)

Nature and Environment

- Slightly smaller than the U.S. state of New Jersey, Slovenia is located on the edge of the Alps and borders the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Croatia, Italy, Austria and Hungary.
- Over half of Slovenia is covered by forest, making it one of the top three wooded countries in Europe. About a quarter of the land is used for agriculture.
- Triglav National Park is the only national park in Slovenia. It is named after the highest peak in Slovenia at 9,396 feet (2,864 meters).
- Lake Bled (*Blejsko Jezero*) is one of Slovenia's largest lakes. It is a glacial lake that is located in the Julian Alps. The lake is 6,955 feet (2,120 meters) long and 4,528 (1,380 meters) wide and has held the World Rowing Championships four times.
- The Škocjan Caves are located in southern Slovenia and added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1986. It consists of a series of eleven caves that forms one of the largest underground canyons in the world with 3.7 miles (6 kilometers) of underground passages and a total depth of up to 656 feet (200 meters).

Our Plans

- We will spend several days in Slovenia trekking in the Julian Alps and visiting Lake Bled and Ljubljana.
- We will next move east to the countries of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.
- Thanks for all the comments and questions so far. Send us your questions about Eastern Europe. We will try to include our answers in a further update.

Slovenia and Slovakia

In Europe, Slovenia and Slovakia are two countries with very similar names. They both became independent from larger countries (Slovenia from Yugoslavia and Slovakia from Czechoslovakia). They both have white, blue and red flags. They both use the Euro as their currency.

Their differences include that Slovakia is a much larger and more populated country than Slovenia and that Slovakia is landlocked, while Slovenia has coastline.



sources: Wikipedia.org, Wikitravel.org

More Information

- <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/390>
- <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107971.html>
- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-slovenia-2760.html>
- http://goeasteurope.about.com/od/bulgariaandthebalkans/ss/sloveniiculture_9.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovenian_cuisine
- <http://www.slovenia.si/en/culture/tradition/the-story-of-idrija-lace/>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovenia>
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3407.htm>
- <http://www.slovak-republic.org/slovenia/>
- <http://travel-island.com/interesting.places/slovenia.html>

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