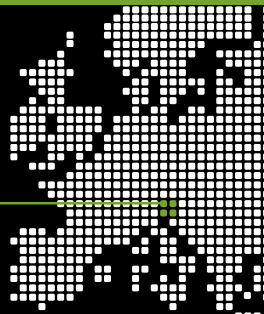


The monumental central staircase at the National and University library in Ljubljana was built between 1896 and 1941 and was designed by Slovenian architect Jozef Plečnik.

I FEEL  
SLOVENIA

# HISTORY & CULTURE

ANCIENT GOES DIGITAL



# SETTING

## THE TIMES OF A PLACE

10 BC

Noricum, a kingdom of Celtic tribes in this region, was annexed by the Roman Empire.

02/03

### HAVE YOU HEARD?

Vrhnika, a small town near the capital city of Ljubljana, is said to be where the mighty mythical figures Jason and the Argonauts dismantled their ship and carried it overland to the Adriatic.

Although the Slavic ancestors of the modern Slovenians settled this region in the 6th century, the influences of the previous inhabitants cannot be overlooked. Recently evidence has shown that they contributed significantly to cultural developments in this region.

In the 6th millennium BC, what is now Slovenia was settled mainly by hunter-gatherers, and a millennium later agriculturalists started living in pile-dwelling settlements in the marshland south of Ljubljana.

Early Iron Age, or Hallstatt, culture was introduced by the Illyrians. Hill forts were established in the Early Iron Age, and researchers have found monumental burial mounds in Lower Carniola measuring up to 50 meters across and several meters high. The grave goods point

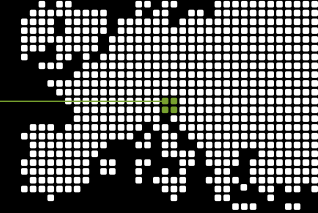
to a highly developed culture – especially the situla art, which was embossed or chased into artistically decorated bronze vessels, or situlae, and other metal items.

Around 300 BC, the Celts, who created the Kingdom of Noricum, were one of the few peoples from the west to settle Slovenia in the Late Iron Age. This was when money appeared here for the first time.

The appearance of the Roman Empire marks the birth of new towns in Slovenia – monumental stone bridges rose across the Drava, Sava, and Soča rivers. The Romans conquered this territory mainly for strategic, military, and economic purposes and they divided it among several provinces.

### GROOVY NEANDERTHALS

In 1995 an extraordinary find turned Divje Babe Cave into one of the most important Stone Age archeological sites in the world. A bone flute discovered there was declared the oldest instrument in the world, and it has led to a radical reassessment of our knowledge of Neanderthal man.





# ::: NATION ::: GOING HOME

## ::: 17<sup>th</sup> century

The protestants were expelled from the Slovenian lands, except for Prekmurje, the only region where they maintained a continuous presence.

04/05

### HAVE YOU HEARD?

The Habsburgs controlled Slovenian territory from the 14th century until the First World War, with only a brief challenge from the Counts of Celje, a large dynasty that died out in 1456.

The Slavs advanced after the Lombards moved west in the 6th century. Together with the Avars, they competed against the Bavarians, a conflict that eventually consolidated the Slavic presence in the Upper Sava and Upper Drava region.

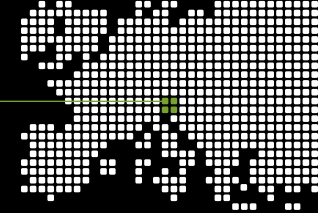
In the second half of the 7th century, a Slavic principality called Carantania emerged. It lasted more than one and a half centuries and was later recognized as one of the first Slavic states. This was also the time when the Slavs living in this area converted to Christianity. During this period the well-known enthronement ceremony at the Prince's Stone in Zollfeld (Sln. Gosposvet-sko Polje) continued to take place in Slovenian, a custom that even the Frankish rulers were not prepared to renounce.

In 828, after an episode known as the Rebellion of Ljudevit Posavski, Carantania came under German-influenced rule and started to accept the feudal social order. In various forms, this rule lasted until the territory fell under Habsburg dominance, which lasted almost uninterrupted from 1335 to 1918.

A more visible ethnic identity started to take shape in the 16th century when the protestant Reformation spread through the land. The protestant preacher Primož Trubar wrote the first books in Slovenian and established a basis for the development of modern Slovenian.

### SLOVENIAN LIBRARY UNDER THE TREETOPS

A diverse mix of book-promotion projects has primed Ljubljana to become UNESCO's 2010 "World Book Capital," an honor that acknowledges a very emotional dedication to the written word. This noble and important Slovenian feature goes back to the Freising Manuscripts (the earliest Slovenian text, from the 10th century).





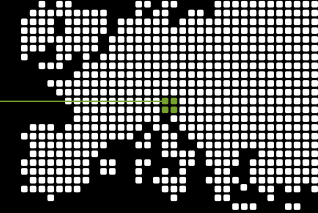
# THE STATE

## A TASTE FOR LIBERTY

06/07

### HAVE YOU HEARD?

Frequent changes of empires and states resulted in situations in which a single generation of Slovenians lived in several different states during their lifetimes.



The idea of a common political entity emerged in the middle of the 19th century. In 1848 the March Revolution occurred and the people of Slovenia started to demand the unification of the Slovenian lands into Zedinjena Slovenija (United Slovenia). The First World War turned Slovenian territory into a battlefield. Certain liberal Slovenian politicians at that time tried to take advantage of the war to resolve the South Slav issue.

When the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, the Slovenians initially joined the State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, which soon merged into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This was later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

When Yugoslavia was invaded in April 1941 by the Axis powers, Slovenia was again divided

among Italy, Germany, and Hungary, and some villages were even given to the Independent State of Croatia. Soon resistance spread across the country and developed into the militarily extremely successful National Liberation Movement. After the Second World War, Slovenia became part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, within which Slovenia enjoyed relative autonomy.

The year 1990 saw the first free and democratic elections in postwar Slovenia, and the DEMOS coalition defeated the ruling Communist Party. Slovenians voted for independence in December 1990, and this was declared on 25 June 1991, followed by a ten-day war of resistance against Yugoslav military interference.

Slovenia joined NATO in March 2004 and became a member of the European Union in May 2004.

# 1 January 2008

Slovenia became first former communist country to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

### PEACE, BROTHERS!

One of the first attributes of the independent state emerged in 1989, when "Zdravljica" (A Toast), a poem by the Slovenian poet France Prešeren (1800–1849), became the national anthem.

# THE CULTURE

## LAND OF CREATIVITY

08/09

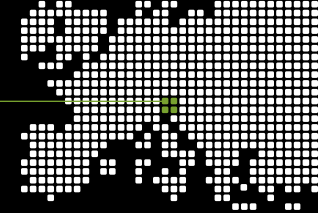
### HAVE YOU HEARD?

Slovenian contemporary dance performances are extremely successful and have large audiences; several well-attended festivals take place in various cities through the year.

More than anything, today's state was shaped by Slovenians' headstrong persistence in their national language. Because Slovenia did not have its own royalty, and was generally subjugated to non-Slovenian feudal overlords, language served as the basis for developing national awareness.

European Romanticism provided the external framework for addressing the issues of national languages, and France Prešeren (1800–1849) laid the spiritual foundations of modern Slovenian identity with his liberal world view. This poetic genius was the most prominent Slovenian writer, who not only created the first example of a highly developed Slovenian standard language, but also established Slovenian within high European culture. Even fifty years after his death, Slovenian culture was almost exclusively literary.

More than a dozen great Slovenian painters worked in the late 19th and early 20th century, at a time that also included some of most renowned sculptors and architects. Among architects, Jože Plečnik gave modern Ljubljana its present appearance. Musical achievements started to emerge with the Renaissance composer Jacobus Gallus in the 16th century, and several world-renowned choirs are considered part of his legacy. Today both the classical and jazz traditions of musical expression are well cultivated, and among new and popular projects the ethno element is increasingly present. Slovenian cinema was born in 1905 and given some additional impetus in 1994, when the government started co-financing film projects. Slovenian theater dates back to 1789, when Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756–1795) premiered the first ever Slovenian play in Ljubljana.



11

major theaters staged 3,639 performances (73 premieres), and hosted 742,268 spectators in 2007.

### HEARTBREAKER

Only a few insiders knew who Marko Naberšnik was until his debut with the film *Rooster's Breakfast* in 2007, which was seen by one-tenth of the population and became the biggest hit movie in independent Slovenia.

# :: NAVIGATOR

## ::: BIG, BOLD, AND CURIOUS



### LJUBLJANA JAZZ FESTIVAL (June, July)

Enjoy the atmosphere of jazz music and the company of first-class musical personalities – both those that have reached the top, and those that are on their way.

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

### DRUGA GODBA FESTIVAL (May)

Musical worlds collide in a passionate celebration that takes place every year in the unforgettable setting of the innovatively remodeled medieval Krizanke monastery.

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



### LJUBLJANA SUMMER FESTIVAL (July, August)

The capital's finest festival annually presents various genres ranging from opera, ballet, and dance performances to symphonic, chamber, vocal, ethno, and jazz concerts and exhibitions.

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



### MLADI LEVI (August)

This festival features groups and artists with distinctive and original ideas and disciplines in theater and dance.

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

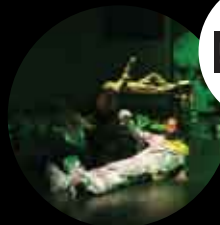


### EX PONTO

#### INTERNATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL (September)

This festival reflects on modern society and politics and is well recognized in European stage arts, with projects that include performing and fine arts.

[www.exponto.net](http://www.exponto.net)



### CITY OF WOMEN

#### INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS (October)

This event features high-quality and innovative female artists behind every great artistic and cultural product in the performing arts, music, visual arts, film and video, literature, and theory.

[www.cityofwomen.org](http://www.cityofwomen.org)



### LJUBLJANA INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF GRAPHIC ARTS (every other year, autumn)

Respected by artists, experts, and the general public alike, the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Art is one of the world's largest and most renowned events of its kind.

[www.mglc-lj.si](http://www.mglc-lj.si)



### LJUBLJANA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (November)

Over the years this specialized and competitive festival has become the season's main event for all true film enthusiasts.

[en.liffe.si](http://en.liffe.si)



Ljubljana



### JAZZ CERKNO (May)

Three evenings of programs present various musicians and artists on Cerklno's charming old town square, known as *star plac*, sheltered by a large awning for this special occasion.

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



### IDRIJA LACE FESTIVAL (June)

Lace, one of most unique products of Slovenian applied art, is celebrated through numerous events, exhibitions, and lectures – all dedicated to Idrija lace.

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

### MEDANA POETRY AND WINE DAYS (August)

Not only does poetry excel in this enchanting winegrowing setting, but art exhibits, concerts, and films are also offered.

[www.medana.org](http://www.medana.org)



### VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL (September)

Every year the climax of this event has been the presentation of the Vilenica International Literary Prize, which usually tops a list of first-class literary and cultural events.

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



### KURETOVANJE CARNIVAL (February)

This mystical carnival, the best if you want to encounter the well-known Kurent or Korant, is ranked as one of the most important traditional events in Slovenia and central Europe.

[www.kurentovanje.net](http://www.kurentovanje.net)



### LENT MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL (June, July)

With 30 locations, 400 events, 3,500 artists, and half a million visitors, this is the largest music and theater festival in Slovenia.

[lent.slovenija.net](http://lent.slovenija.net)



### FESTIVAL MARIBOR (September)

Festival Maribor is an exploration of the new world colliding with the old, bringing together jewels of classical music and musical heritage.

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



### ROCK OTOČEC (June)

The largest summer music festival in Slovenia serves up rock and other popular genres at an idyllic spot next to Otočec Castle, by a swimming area on the Krka River.

[www.rock-otocec.com](http://www.rock-otocec.com)



### HIGH END

Opera and ballet productions (around 15 premieres a year) can be enjoyed in Slovenia's two largest cities, Ljubljana and Maribor. The Slovenian Philharmonic is the leading national institution for classical music, and the program of the Slovenian Symphony Orchestra features some of the biggest international names in music. The Ave Chamber Choir is almost as well known elsewhere in Europe as it is in Slovenia, and Carmina Slovenica has become an internationally renowned youth choir. Plays can be enjoyed at 42 theaters that stage more than 200 new productions a year.

### BLACK ON WHITE

Primož Trubar, Anton Tomaž Linhart, and France Prešeren are the writers that placed Slovenian on the map of European culture. However, it was later authors, such as the expressionist Srečko Kosovel, the poet and narrator Edvard Kocbek, the poet Dane Zajc, the writer Lojze Kovačič, and the playwright, writer, and essayist Drago Jančar, that set the milestones – each in his own time and direction. Among modern authors, the poet Aleš Šteger and the writer Feri Lanšček are Slovenia's bestsellers.



### MUSIC FOR YOUR EAR

Your musical time travel should definitely include Bele Vrane or Mladi Levi (1960s rock bands), Marjana Deržaj or Elda Viler (Slovenian golden oldies), and Marko Brečelj or Tomaž Domicelj (Slovenia's first singer-songwriters). More alternative directions include Frane Milčinski Ježek (a singing comedian), Pankrti and Niet (punk legends), Videosex (electro pop), Laibach (avant-garde), and Lačni Franz (poetic rock). Polka fans should look for Slavko Avsenik or his rival Lojze Slak. Those interested in urban sounds should go for Siddharta or Dan D (rock), DJ Umek or Valentino Kanzyani (techno), Trkaj or Klemen Klemen (rap), Neisha or Gušti&Polona (pop), Silence or Melodrom (downtempo), and Mia Žnidarič or Primož Grašič (jazz). Vlado Kreslin (folk rock) probably has the widest appeal, and Slovenia's large worldmusic repertoire also includes Terrafolk, Jararaja, Katalena, Vasko Atanasovski and others. Another rewarding choice is Chris Eckman of The Walkabouts, with an album based on the poetry of Dane Zajc.



# :: PLACES

## :: TO COME AND TO SEE

“ Slovenia is a small country, but it has a lot of cultural and natural attractions. Although the Slovenians are a small nation, they’ve managed to preserve their history and culture – which hasn’t been easy. ”

**Elena**

*Russia, living in Jesenice since 1997*

“ Slovenians are very kind and generous. At first they’re a bit reserved and don’t say much, but after a while they loosen up. They’re very creative, especially in music; they like to sing and they sing very well, which is especially welcome in my line of work (I’m a musician). ”

**Fernando**

*Argentina, living in Ljubljana since 1997*

“ Slovenia is a country of polite and educated people. No matter how old they are or what region they come from, you’ll always have an interesting conversation with them. Maybe this is one of the reasons that the range of cultural activities is so rich. In Slovenia, culture isn’t reserved only for a few people; it’s accessible to everyone. ”

**Joaquín**

*Spain, living in Novo mesto since 2004*

“ Coming from a multicultural country, I find that much of our heritage is being forgotten over time, especially by younger generations. So it’s refreshing to find the opposite in Slovenia, where culture is still an essential part of daily life. ”

**Chris**

*England, living in Vučja Gomila since 2006*

“ I enjoy going to fairs and events in small villages, especially in the coastal region and the Karst. Slovenians are very proud of their culture and history, and they pass it on to the younger generations so that they’ll never forget the roots of this small nation. ”

**Eddy**

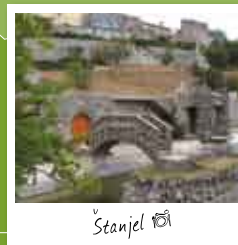
*Philippines, living in Postojna since 2003*

Five highlights recommended by Elena:

1. Bled and Bled Castle
2. The Liznjek House in Kranjska Gora and the Russian chapel
3. **The beekeeping museum in Radovljica**
4. The iron-forging museum in Kropa
5. The alpine dairy museum in Stara Fužina near Bohinj



Radovljica 🐝



Štanjel 🏰

Five highlights recommended by Eddy:

1. The “Zmaj’ma mlade” cultural festival in Postojna
2. Swimming in Idrijska Bela Creek, just a few kilometers from Idrija
3. **The fair in Štanjel, every third Sunday of the month**
4. The Bruno and Bojana Francinovi-Ukmar wine cellar in Avber (in the Karst region)
5. Just taking a walk near Lipica

Five highlights recommended by Fernando:

1. **Ljubljana Castle**
2. Prešeren Square and the Franciscan Church
3. Town Square (Mestni trg) and Old Square (Stari trg)
4. Ljubljana Cathedral
5. Križanke Summer Theatre



Ljubljana 🏰



Novo mesto 🏞️

Five highlights recommended by Chris:

1. The Rotunda Restaurant in Selo
2. Grad Castle
3. Lake Bukovnica
4. **The church in Bogojina**
5. The pottery museum in Filovci.



Bogojina 🏰

Five highlights recommended by Joaquín:

1. Hiking to Trdina Peak (Trdinov vrh)
2. Hiking in the woods and mushroom hunting around Novo mesto
3. Enjoying the spa and wellness facilities at Dolenjske Toplice and Šmarješke Toplice
4. Enjoying ice cream at Loka and **rafting on the Krka River**
5. The “Rock Otočec” summer festival

# FOCUS ON CULTURE

## FIGURING OUT THE SCENE

Public libraries	<b>61</b>
Professional theaters	<b>34</b>
Professional orchestras	<b>10</b>
Museums and exhibition grounds	<b>164</b>
National budget for culture as % of GDP	<b>0.80</b>
Number of media entities	<b>1,329</b>
Number of print media	<b>971</b>
Number of daily newspapers	<b>9</b>
Number of TV channels	<b>85</b>
Number of radio stations	<b>117</b>
Online media	<b>217</b>
Percentage of households connected to the Internet	<b>62.3%</b>
Regular Internet users	<b>824,000</b>

I FEEL  
SLOVENIA

::: [www.slovenia.si](http://www.slovenia.si) ::: [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info) :::

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