

Σλοβακία

General Information

Slovakia is a country of central Europe and. The official language of the country is Slovak, while its population is estimated at 5 424 687 (2024). It is a member of the European Union since 1st January 2004 its official currency is Euro (€). Slovakia's capital city is Bratislava while it is located in central Europe and it borders Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria and Czech Republic.



History

Slovakia has a long history dating back to antiquity (Paleolithic era). In the past the Celts and Germanic tribes inhabited it. In the 9th century, it was part of Great Moravia, one of the first Slavic states. After its collapse, the region incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary for almost 1,000 years. After World War I, it merged with the Czech Republic to form Czechoslovakia. In World War II, it became a vassal state of Nazi Germany, but rejoined Czechoslovakia after 1945. From 1948 to 1989, it was under communist rule. After the Velvet Revolution, on January 1, 1993, it peacefully separated from the Czech Republic, forming modern Slovakia. Since 2004, it has been a member of the EU and NATO.

Important cultural traditions

Slovakia has a rich cultural heritage, with strong Slavic, Hungarian, and German influences. Folk music and dances, such as the fugarashi, are key elements of the tradition. On Easter holidays, "šibačka" is customary, where men sprinkle women with water for good luck. Traditional costumes are worn at festivals, while wooden villages such as Vlkolíneč belong to UNESCO. Folk myths and legends remain alive in the cultural identity of the country.

Famous monuments and sites

Bratislava Castle: The capital's most iconic monument, built in the 9th century, with a panoramic view of the Danube.

Dobsinska Cave: One of the largest glacial caves in Europe, a UNESCO protected monument.

Spis Castle: One of the largest castles in Europe built in the 12th century, also a UNESCO monument.



Famous Figures

Milan Rastislav Stefanik (1880-1919) – Slovak general, astronomer and diplomat, one of the founders of Czechoslovakia. He played a key role in the country's independence in 1918.

Andy Warhol (1928-1987) – Famous Pop Art artist, known for works such as Merlin Monroe's icons and Campbell's canned. Although he was born in the United States, his parents were Slovak.

Peter Sagan (1990-present) – One of the world's top road cyclists, three-time world champion (2015-2017) and winner of many major races, including the Tour de France.

Tradicional Cuisine

Bryndzové halušky is the national dish of Slovakia, consisting of potato pasta with Slovak sheep's cheese bryndza and bacon. Moreover, **Kapustnica** is a traditional soup with sauerkraut, mushrooms and sausage, especially consumed at Christmas. The most famous Slovak drink is **Slivovica**, a strong plum liqueur, similar to bream.



Festivals & Events

Firstly, the **Východná Folklore Festival** is the largest traditional music and dance festival in Slovakia, attracting artists from all over the world. Furthermore, the **Bratislava Music Festival** is a leading classical music festival, with international orchestras and soloists. Finally, **Pohoda Festival** is the country's most famous music festival, combining rock, electronic, and alternative music.

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