



DIFFERENT TRAVEL – THE SLOVENIA WINTER SPORTS CHALLENGE

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SLOVENIA & LJUBLJANA

The central European nation of Slovenia is awash with a multitude of cultures. Influences range from Italy to the west, Austria and Germany to the north, Hungary to the northeast and the Balkans to the east. Slovenia is nestled between Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia with a population of around 2 million people, the majority of them with Slavic backgrounds. The country's political system is a parliamentary democracy, using the proportional representation format. Slovenia is a member state of the EU.

With around 275,000 inhabitants Ljubljana is considered a city which suits everyone from its inhabitants to its numerous visitors as well. Despite the fact that it ranks among the middle sized European cities, it maintains the friendliness of a small town and at the same time possesses all the characteristics of a metropolis. The capital is a meeting point of eastern and western cultures where the reminders of over five millennia of history are preserved, among them the remains of the Roman town of Emona and the Old Town with its medieval castle, Renaissance and Baroque facades, ornamented portals and uneven roofs. Ljubljana is a city of culture, with many theatres, museums and galleries and it also boasts one of the world's oldest philharmonic academies.

Itinerary

Day 1 - UK / Ljubljana

Fly to the glorious capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana, and enjoy a scenic one-hour transfer to the resort of Kransjka Gora, your base for the weekend, deep in the heart of the Julian Alps.

Day 2 - Ljubljana

Today will be a hectic day of winter sport activities. Choose between competing as a skier or a snowboarder and try for the best downhill times against equally rated members of other teams*. Each competitor gets to do the run twice, and the times are added together to produce a total team time. Interspersed with the downhill section will be the langlauf (cross country skiing) and snowshoeing challenges. Then after a hearty alpine lunch its back to the top of the mountain to try your hand at tobogganing, again, racing against the clock and other teams to produce the best time possible. In between competitions, there will be plenty of opportunity to get a few practice runs in, or enjoy the spa, sauna and pool facilities of the Hotel Aqua Larix, so you won't be bored or cold. The day's sporting activities will be finished off with a game of 'Commando Snowballing' where your team will be pitched in a head-to-head battle of nerve as you fight your way across a specially designed floodlit obstacle course to rescue an object, keenly defended by another team. Each team gets a chance to both defend and attack, with points awarded for each target hit, and points deducted for each hit taken. The winners – the team that hits the most targets, and dodges the most snowballs! Round off the day socializing with other participants over dinner and winter warmers.

(B,L,D)

Day 3 – Ljubljana

Another hectic day as the competition hots up, with the morning dedicated to dog-sledding around a specially-designed track, 5kms away, across the border in Italy! After yet another hearty

alpine lunch, it's back to the slopes for round two of the skiing and snowboard downhill challenge. The competition will end late afternoon, with relay ice-skating, after which the grand finale – the awards evening, where prizes will be given, and the Inter-charity Winter Sports Champions announced.

(B,L,D)

Day 4 Ljubljana / UK

Return flight to the UK.

(B)

THE CHALLENGE

A long weekend with a real difference! A chance to participate in teams in the first Inter-charity Winter Challenge Cup! Based in the spectacular Julian Alps of northern Slovenia, Kranjska Gora, home of the men's downhill world cup, is the perfect base to try out a range of winter activities – all of which can be enjoyed by either the experienced or the beginner – full training is provided!

BEFORE YOU GO: AN A - Z OF INFORMATION ON SLOVENIA

A is for Arrival. Holders of British passports do not require a visa to stay in Slovenia for up to 90 days.

C is for Communications. Slovenia's international dialing code is +386. City / area codes are used (for example (0)1 for Ljubljana). Public telephones are operated with magnetic cards, which are available from newsagents, post offices and tobacco kiosks. Two major mobile phone operators provide GSM coverage. Internet cafes are prolific in Ljubljana and the larger towns.

D is for Duty Free. The following goods may be brought in to Slovenia duty-free by travellers from non-EU countries: 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco or a proportional mix of these; 1 litre of spirits over 22% alcohol content or non-denaturated ethyl alcohol of 80% alcohol content and over, or 2 litres spirits, aperitifs or other alcoholic beverages with less than 22% alcohol content, or liqueur wines or sparkling wines, or a proportional mix of these and 2 litres of still wine; 250ml eau de toilette and 50g perfume.

E is for Electricity. Slovenia uses 220V or 50Hz.

F is for Food. Popular everyday dishes are made from cabbage, beans and potatoes. Every Slovenian region has its own various types of bread. There are also many flour-based dishes, among which those made from buckwheat – the cereal which gives grey flour, are a speciality. More than seventy variations of štruklji are widely spread across Slovenia. The most renowned is luxuriously filled prekmurska gibanica. Don't forget to try the potica, a cake roll filled with walnuts, poppy seeds, raisins, various herbs, cottage cheese, honey or crackling. In Primorska, they will delight you with original fish dishes and delicacies made from local plants, vegetables and fruit (asparagus, artichokes, truffles). Tap water is safe and drinkable throughout the country.

F is also for Fitness. This tour is classified as moderate and a good general level of fitness is required. You should start a programme of body conditioning before your departure including walking, cardiovascular workouts and work to improve both your stamina and your ability to walk up and down gradients.

H is also for Health. No vaccinations are required for Slovenia, although inoculation against Hepatitis is advisable. Make sure you bring anti-diarrhoea capsules such as Imodium and play safe by avoiding tap water. Typhoid vaccination is also recommended and diphtheria and tuberculosis occur. In forested areas hikers should guard against tick bites, as tick-borne encephalitis is present. Mains water is safe to drink, milk is pasteurised and local meat and produce safe to consume. Free emergency treatment is available from hospitals and private doctors contracted to the ZZZS (Slovenian Health Insurance Institute).

I is for Insurance. Different Travel will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, certain risks are involved and should be recognised by participants. Thus, we highly recommend the purchase of short-term travel insurance for our expeditions. Travel Insurance is a cost effective way to protect yourself and your equipment in the event of problems due to canceled trips, delays, medical problems, baggage loss or damage.

L is for Language. The official language is Slovenian, which is a member of the South Slavic language group. It uses the Latin alphabet, with the addition of a few extra letters, while there is no W or X. Hungarian and Italian enjoy the status of official languages in the ethnically mixed regions along the Hungarian and Italian border.

M is for Money. From January 1st 2007 Slovenia adopted the Euro as its national currency replacing the Tolar. American Express, Diners, EuroCard, MasterCard and Visa are accepted at upmarket establishments; elsewhere cash is preferred. Credit cards can be used to get cash advances from banks.

R is for Religion. Slovenians have traditionally been largely Roman Catholic. Before socialism, as much as 88% of Slovenians were Roman Catholic, while by 1991 this had already dropped to 71.6%, and the number of followers is still falling (57.8% in 2002).

S is for Safety. There are extremely few risks involved in travel to Slovenia. The threat of terrorism is low, as is the crime rate, however sensible precautions are advised with valuables.

T is for Tipping. A 10% tip is expected in restaurants, hotels and by taxi drivers.

W is for Weather. Slovenia boasts three distinct climates: Mediterranean, Continental and Alpine. However, seasons are largely predictable - summers averaging between 20C and 30C and winters between -20C to 10C. The mountainous areas get the most rainfall (which makes them very lush), but the summers are mostly dry. Inland and coastal areas can get very hot in the summer.