

Green directions for visiting Slovenia

FEEL SLOVENIA GREEN

Slovenia lies at the intersection of **four geographical and cultural areas**, which is reflected in its extraordinary biological and cultural diversity.

There are more than **22,000 animal and plant species** in Slovenia, making it one of the most biodiverse countries in Europe.

Some **65% of the country is covered in forest**, making it the third most wooded country in Europe. It is also one of the few areas where bears, lynx and wolves still roam the forests.

As much as **37% of its surface area** is included in **Natura 2000**, an EU network of nature protection areas.

Protected areas, including natural reserves and parks, account for a fifth of Slovenia's coastline.

The country has several protected parks: **the Triglav National Park, three regional parks and 46 natural parks**.

Slovenia has about **28,000 kilometres of watercourses** and some **300 lakes**.

Nearly 90% of Slovenia's residents have access to high quality drinking water.

Slovenia is dedicated to nature conservation. There is a pristine primeval forest only 60 kilometres from the capital. In terms of waste recycling, the country is ranked near the top of the EU, placing fourth after Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

Slovenia has the highest density of apiary enthusiasts in the EU: there are five beekeepers for every 1,000 residents.

The UNESCO World Heritage List includes five Slovenian natural and manmade wonders.

The risk of terrorism is very low. In fact this is **one of the safest countries in the world**, having received the highest possible safety mark from the World Economic Forum.

Tiny Slovenia encapsulates the culinary and winemaking heritage of Europe, boasting 24 culinary and 13 winemaking regions of the highest quality.

The life of local communities in Slovenia is built on purposeful cooperation. One of its biggest voluntary non-profit NGOs is the Alpine Association, which builds and regularly repairs the network of

mountain paths, among a number of other things. There are also more than 600 local tourism associations spread across the country, focusing on attracting guests to the countryside.

1.1 Feel Green Before You Come to Slovenia

1. To visit one of the greenest destinations on the planet is to travel responsibly. Slovenia is the first country to be comprehensively evaluated by the standards of Green Destinations, a non-profit promoting sustainable tourism. It has launched Slovenia Green, a national programme which includes a number of green destinations, lodgings, parks and tourism agencies. These have all been rated based on their sustainability efforts and have received their national Slovenia Green Certificates. There are green adventures waiting for you at every step in this country spanning the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Karst region and the Pannonian Lowlands. Try to find out as much as you can about your destinations and their local traditions. Get to know Slovenia even before you arrive.

2. Feel Slovenia Green Destinations even before your arrival. Be inspired by the locals' love of nature and cultural heritage.

3. Arrive by train or bus, or choose an airline dedicated to lowering its carbon footprint.

4. Choose accommodation with the international and national Slovenia Green Certificate. An increasing number of lodgings have the national certificate as well as one of the top global sustainability certificates, such as Green Globe, Travelife and European Eco Label, to name a few.

Accommodation providers strive for sustainability; they take responsible action in the management of waste and wastewater, and in energy consumption. Most providers are closely connected with their local communities, and hire locals who will be happy to share stories and interesting details about the destination with you.

5. There are certified tourism agencies specialising in green hiking and the outdoor experience. If you want to travel in a green and sustainable way, tourism agencies with the national Slovenia Green Certificate will be happy to help you plan your hiking routes and outdoor adventures.

1.2 Travel Green in Slovenia

Nature and Landscape

1. Visit Slovenia's green natural parks.

2. You can help preserve the delicate natural balance in the protected areas by keeping to the paths. Walking outside the marked paths can undermine the biotic balance.

3. Slovenia's vast forests are home to three large animals, which have become extinct in many other parts of the world. Slovenia is striving to preserve bears, lynx and wolves in its forests. When you enter their territories please be alert and follow signs along the paths. Do not attempt to feed the forest animals. To experience the Slovenian wild reserves in the most genuine way, we recommend that you hire a licensed local guide, who will take you to the heartland of the animal kingdom without causing any damage.

4. Park your car and hop on a train or bike to explore Slovenia.

5. The country is best explored on foot, along the 11,000 kilometres of marked paths. Stick to the paths because there is always something worth seeing at the end.

6. Be romantic without stomping on grass to pick flowers. Meadows bursting with wildflowers feed the indigenous bees, of which there are many in Slovenia, as many locals are dedicated beekeepers.

Environment and Climate

1. Feel Slovenia could be your refuge in unspoilt nature? Help us keep it as pristine as possible. Make sure you separate your waste and deposit it in designated places. When hiking in the mountains make sure you take your rubbish back to the valley with you.
2. In Slovenia you can drink tap water wherever you go and the country has stated the right to clean drinking water in the Constitution. We recommend you buy a reusable water bottle which you can refill anywhere, including at drinking fountains dotting the streets of any major city in the country.
3. Help us preserve Slovenia's rich water resources by opting for a quick shower instead of a bath, and by turning off the tap while brushing your teeth.
4. Help us conserve energy by using your towels and bed linen more than once.
5. Use environmentally-friendly soaps and cosmetic products that do not damage the delicate natural ecosystems. Use the entire product; do not throw away the packaging unless it is completely empty and take the empty bottles back home with you.
6. Carrying empty batteries or a broken device around? Dispose of them in the specially labelled bins available at many locations.
7. Do not interfere with natural frequencies – unplug your devices whenever possible.

Culture and Tradition

1. The Slovenian language has helped to preserve the country's culture and made the nation's sovereignty possible. Pick up a few words and you will be bringing out smiles among the locals all the time.
Hello = *dober dan*, thank you = *hvala*, how are you? = *kako ste?*, this is good = *to je zelo dobro*.
2. Buy local by visiting shops selling Slovenian produce and products.
3. Support local food producers; support farmers by ordering food made of local ingredients, and local craftsmen and artists by showing appreciation and buying their work.
4. Experience Slovenia's diverse cuisine. Eat at a restaurant participating in the Gostilna Slovenija (Slovenija Restaurant) initiative or order foods typical of Slovenia made from local ingredients and according to local recipes. Many restaurants make this easy for you by labelling traditional dishes in their menus.
5. The best way to get to know Slovenian culture is to hire a local guide who will know everything there is to know about the local environment and community.
6. Visit museums, galleries and other cultural sites to help preserve top artworks.
7. Attend heritage-focused events which will allow you to understand Slovenian customs and traditions.

1.3 Slovenia Makes You Green

1. The most beautiful gift you can take home with you is a handmade souvenir with a certificate. Find one you like in shops bearing the logo of Art & Craft Slovenia.
2. Share your experience with your friends and help us promote the green frame of mind.
3. Open your heart to green habits, and continue them even after you return from your holiday.