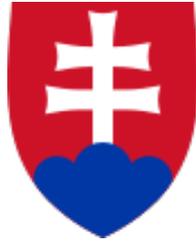
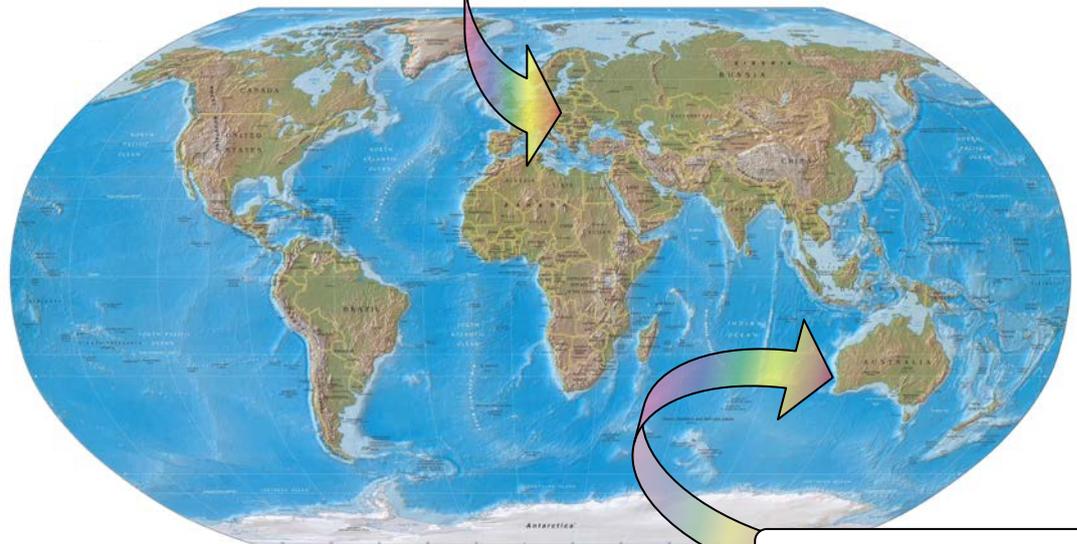


SLOVAKIA



We were there



Now we are here

FACTS:

- **Full name:** Slovak Republic
- **Population:** 5.4 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Bratislava
- **Area:** 49,033 sq km (18,932 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Slovak
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 70 years (men), 78 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 koruna = 100 haliers
- **Main exports:** Manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment
- **GNI per capita:** US \$7,950 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Internet domain:** .sk
- **International dialing code:** +421

Slovakian Community in WA

Slovak Association in Western Australia ph: 9474 5200

Czech and Slovak Association in WA

1205 Scarborough Civic Centre

ph: 9307 2053 or mob: 0421 116 160

Overview of cultural groups

The majority of the inhabitants of Slovakia are ethnically Slovak 85.8%. Hungarians are the largest ethnic minority 9.7%. Other ethnic groups, as of the 2001 census, include Roma with 1.7%, Ruthenians or Ukrainians with 1% and other or unspecified 1.8%.

The country has a population of approximately 5.4 million and an industrialized market economy.

In 2007 Slovakia was estimated to have a fertility rate of 1.33, which means that average woman will have 1.33 children in her lifetime. This is one of the lowest numbers among EU countries.

Language/dialects spoken

The official state language is Slovak, a member of the Slavic Language Family, but Hungarian is also widely spoken in the south of the country and enjoys a co-official status in some municipalities, and many people also speak Czech.

Dietary preferences

There is no real "Slovak cuisine", which would be known and used all around the world, like the Chinese or Italian. However, there are meals that you would encounter more often in Slovakia than elsewhere in the world.

Potatoes, wheat flour, cow and sheep cheese, cabbage, onions and garlic are the bases of the traditional food in Slovakia.

Traditional meals are **potato dumplings** with sheep's milk cheese and **cabbage soup** with sausage

Although rice does not belong to the crops grown in Slovakia, it is imported and widely used in the modern kitchen. You will often encounter beans, corn, lentils and other vegetables. Also a lot of fruit: apple, pear, peach, apricot, cherry, plum, grape, orange, kiwi, grapefruit and banana.

Pork, beef, chicken and fish are the most popular meats. Less frequently one will be offered lamb, goose, duck, turkey or venison.

Bread is very important in the nutrition. Most people in Slovakia eat it for the breakfast and also quite often with the dinner. The bread differs from region to region, town to town, baker to baker, just like elsewhere in Europe.

Bryndzove halusky - Slovak traditional meal, ("bryndzové halušky"), small dumplings made of potato dough with sheep cheese and topped with scrambled bacon ("Speck" in German).

Parenica, ostiepok, korbacik - ("oštiepok", "korbáčik") different sorts of cheese, either smoked or not.

Treska - a cold salad made of codfish, mayonnaise and some vegetables. Quite popular snack in the Bratislava region.

Religion/spirituality/observances

The Slovak constitution guarantees freedom of religion. The majority of Slovak citizens (68.9 %) identify themselves with Roman Catholicism (although church attendance is lower). The second largest group, about 13%, is people without religious affiliation. About 6.93% belong to Lutheranism, 4.1% are Greek Catholic, affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. Calvinism has 2%) other and non-registered churches 1.1% and some 0.9% are Eastern Orthodox. About 2,300 Jews remain of the large estimated pre-WWII population of 90,000.

Public Holidays:

Date	English Name	Local Name
January 1	New Year's Day Foundation of Slovak Republic	Deň vzniku Slovenskej republiky
May 8	Day of victory over fascism	Deň víťazstva nad fašizmom
July 5	St. Cyril and St. Methodius Day	Sviatok svätého Cyrila a Metoda
August 29	Slovak National Uprising Day	Výročie Slovenského národného povstania
September 1	Constitution Memorial Day	Deň Ústavy Slovenskej republiky
September 15	Day of Our Lady of Sorrows, patron saint of Slovakia	Sviatok Panny Márie Sedembolestnej, patrónky Slovenska
November 1	All Saint's Day	Sviatok všetkých svätých
November 17	Freedom and Democracy Day	Deň boja za slobodu a demokraciu

Customs/traditions

Slovakia has as strong and diverse folk traditions. Not surprising, considering that Slovakia in the past has been at the crossroads of both traders and invaders who were bringing goods and ideas from many other cultures and stimulating creativity in the making of everyday objects, entertainment and celebrations.

All Soul's Day - this day is dedicated to traditional visiting of cemeteries, decorating tombs, burning candles and to memories of the dead relatives and friends.

Burinig of Morena - held late in the winter and it expresses the peoples desire to do away with the cold weather and to call the warm rays of the sun.

The Carnival - is the merriest time of the year. Its origins go back to the pre-Christian era and it belongs among the customs connected with the break of the winter and the spring.

Easter Whipping or Bathing - this custom, spread all over the territory of Slovakia, is known in villages as well as in towns and is performed on Easter Monday.

Epiphany (6 January) - Marching of the Magi (or marching with a star) is known in many regions of Slovakia and can therefore be found in various variants and modifications.

Midsummer Night (23-24 June night) – it considered as a magic time which involved customs whose origins go back to the pre-Christian era. Some forms of this custom, especially making bonfires in the villages, have been preserved till nowadays.

Recreational activities

Slovakia is a mountainous country so in winter all ski resorts are usually full of skiing people. Beside of ski, some people are trying their snowboards.

In summer, many people spend the warmest days near water. There are quite many natural and artificial lakes that allow people to swim or sail a boat.

The tourist roads in the mountains are very well marked and hiking maps are available for each region. You can meet hikers in the woods of High Tatras ("Vysoké Tatry"), as well as around Bratislava in Small Carpathes ("Malé Karpaty"). Many of these roads are suitable for bikes too. Some roads are used by inline-skaters, but there is no real track network.

Sporting events occur non-stop in towns of all sizes throughout Slovakia. In general, Slovaks perform well enough in sports to hold the attention of interested spectators.

Many people in Slovakia like to watch ice-hockey as Slovaks are among the best ice hockey players on earth. Their finest are NHL stars, most of them come home to play with the national team in tournaments. Having won the world championships in 2002, Slovakia placed third in 2003 and fourth in 2004. It is a rare joy and pride for this small country to achieve such a powerful position in a major sport.

Soccer is the most popular game in Slovakia. Almost every town and village has its own playground and a team that is playing in the regional league. However it is considered as a "passive" sport. The reason that it is on the place two behind the ice-hockey is probably because the Slovak team does not perform on the international scene as well as the Ice-Hockey team.

Every year brings new additions to Slovaks traditional sports like: water parks, bungee jumping, mountain biking, white-water boating, cliff-climbing and paragliding to name just a few.

Environment

Slovakia is in the heart of central Europe, linked to its neighbours by the River Danube. The most famous natural resort is the High Tatra Mountains - popular for its spectacular views and skiing facilities. The lowlands of the Danube plain provide a fertile farming region producing wheat, barley, potatoes, sugar beet, fruit, tobacco and grapes.

The Slovak landscape is noted primarily for its mountainous nature, with the Carpathian Mountains extending across most of the northern half of the country. Amongst these mountain ranges are the high peaks of the Tatra Mountains. To the north, close to the Polish border, are the High Tatras which are a popular skiing destination and home of many scenic lakes and valleys as well as the highest point in Slovakia, the (Gerlachovský štít) at 2,655 meters.

Major Slovak Rivers are the Danube, the Váh and the Hron.

The Slovak climate lies between the temperate and continental climate zones with relatively warm summers and cold, cloudy and humid winters. The area of Slovakia can be divided into three kinds of climatic zones and the first zone can be divided into two sub-zones.

Your Notes and Comments: