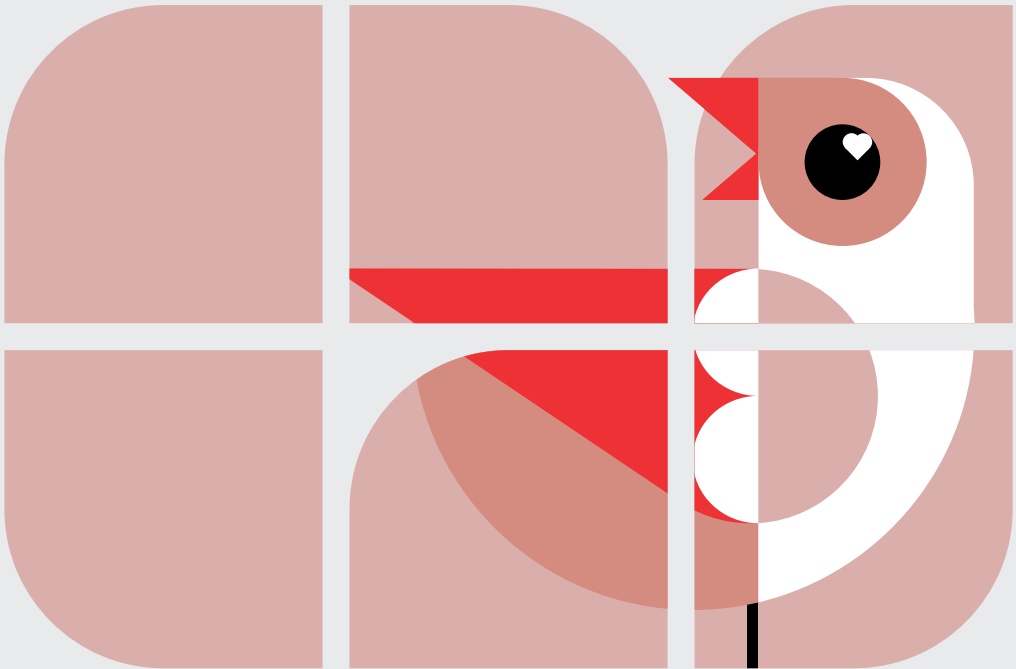


Best Practices  
of Ljubljana  
Tourism



# LUV FEST



Ljubljana Tourism

# LUV FEST

In early 2023, Ljubljana introduced a new festival of love, LUV Fest, which Ljubljana Tourism is developing into a key incentive for visiting the city in February and March. The festival's content is based on the concept of love in an urban context, which can be romantic love, devotion to culture and art, or a passion for travel, cuisine, and new experiences. The festival takes place during the transition from winter to spring – it starts on 8 February, Slovenia cultural holiday, and ends on 12 March, the pre-Christian festival of love, light, and spring on St. Gregory's Day.



We have created the Ana Srčna light experience, which invites you to take an evening stroll in a magical atmosphere with hundreds of fire and light elements.



We have added a fresh twist to the traditional Saint Gregory's Spring Celebration. It recalls an old folk tradition of craftsmen symbolically bidding farewell to winter by floating wooden boats bearing candles down the river, and is particularly popular with families.



We have developed unique city decorations and an art gallery in a public space, which takes the visitor off the beaten track to explore hidden corners of the city.



## Challenges and objectives:

Ljubljana is an all-year-round destination but still, some periods are busier for tourism than others. In 2023, almost half of all overnight stays occurred during the four months from June to September (48.5% of all overnight stays; 49.4% of foreign overnight stays). Therefore, February and March have the greatest potential for future development.

With the development of LUV Fest, Ljubljana Tourism aims to bring together stakeholders from Ljubljana's unique cultural scene and other sectors, such as gastronomy and tourism, under the common umbrella theme of love and its many interpretations, and to offer residents and visitors a rounded and innovative experience of Ljubljana and of its culture and art, its good food, its interesting encounters, and its local traditions. At the same time, we aim to strengthen the local economy by increasing visitor arrivals, the average length of stay, and average off-peak spending. Communication under the common brand 'LUV Fest' aims to bring together the diverse producers in the city and to improve the international visibility of Ljubljana as a city of culture and art, and as a capital for city breaks. The communication of the festival mainly addresses couples, singles, and families, and according to the results of the annual LUV Fest perception survey, these target groups have been complemented by lovers of culture, foodies, and the LGBTQI+ community.



Foto: Marko Delbello Ocepek

In three years, LUV Fest has developed from concerts, theatre, opera, ballet, dance and film performances, literary encounters, experiential guided tours and creative workshops, to art installations in the city and special offers from hoteliers, caterers, and retailers.

## Project progress and results:

We began designing the new Ljubljana love festival in spring 2022 as one of the key measures in maintaining competitiveness in accordance with the Ljubljana and Ljubljana Region Tourism Destination Development Strategy 2021-2027.

After deciding on the idea of the festival, we carried out a review and analysis of the main attractions and events in Ljubljana during February and March, and identified key partners and target audiences for the festival. We developed a concept and an integrated graphic identity, and then worked with the stakeholders involved to prepare and run the first edition of LUV fest in 2023. We have involved stakeholders from various sectors: cultural institutions, event producers, artists, craftsmen, hoteliers, caterers, retailers, and many other providers who co-create the festival programme under a common overarching theme.

The inaugural edition of LUV Fest, held in 2023, brought together 35 partners from the realms of culture, art, and hospitality. The festival then grew rapidly in its second and third editions, and in 2025 over 90 partners united to present more than 200 diverse activities and events, transforming Ljubljana into a vibrant cultural tapestry.



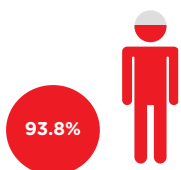
**200**

activities and events

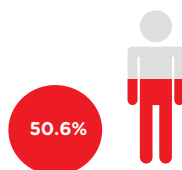


**90**

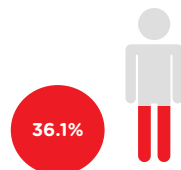
partners



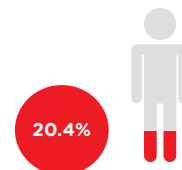
of respondents like or partly like the concept of the festival



of participants reported seeing LUV Fest in the city



of participants reported seeing LUV Fest on social media and in the municipal newsletter



of respondents had attended at least one event

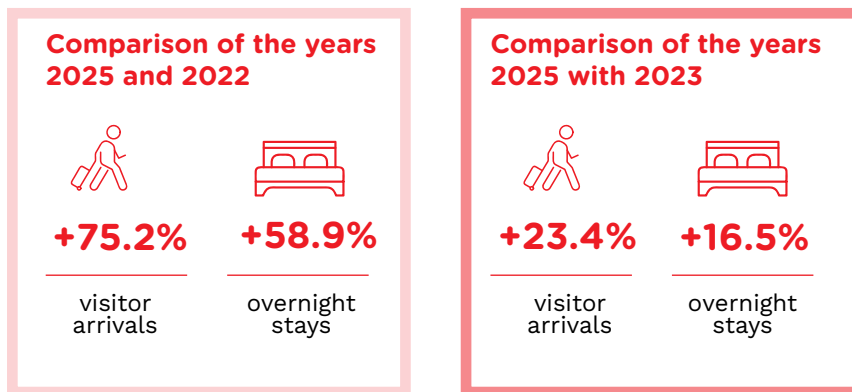
Source: LUV Fest 2024 survey results

Following its debut, over 94% of surveyed locals praised the festival's concept, with 84.7% expressing a keen desire for even more events in February. Remarkably, as many as 65.6% of attendees discovered the festival events through the VisitLjubljana website.

In addition to an exceptionally varied and high-quality programme, in 2024 we at Ljubljana Tourism enhanced the festival by co-producing events that expanded LUV Fest's presence and visibility throughout the city, including decorations on outdoor flower planters and shop windows, open-air galleries, the traditional Pozdrav pomladi (Welcoming Spring) event, and the Ana Srčna ambient light experience. In 2025, primary schools joined the festival for the first time with the charming project Oblečene lanterne (Dressed Lanterns), adding a personal, youthful touch to the city.

Compared to data from 2022, the year before the festival began, tourist arrivals in February and March 2025 increased by 75.2%, and overnight stays rose by 58.9%. The comparison between 2025 and 2023 also shows growth – arrivals increased by 23.4%, and overnight stays by 16.5%. This growth during the otherwise quieter months of February and March demonstrates that LUV Fest is successfully changing seasonal travel patterns and contributing to a more balanced distribution of visitors throughout the year.

## Growth in visitors and overnight stays in February and March



Source: SURS

The second edition of the festival also took into account the suggestions of Ljubljana residents from the 2023 survey, and included more literary events, workshops, outdoor artworks, and content for the LGBTQI+ community. An important role is played by artistic integrity and the activation of public spaces – from poetic installations to theatre and literature in unexpected corners of the city, which the festival transforms into shared cultural stages, in line with contemporary principles of spatial design and urban regeneration.

The festival is also important from the perspective of cultural heritage preservation, as it coincides with the Slovenian cultural holiday and includes Gregorjevo (St Gregory's Day), a folk festival of love and spring that is registered in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Register. We thus strengthen ties between contemporary cultural practices and historical traditions, fostering pride in local identity and cultural richness.

LUV Fest is not designed as a top-down project nor as an exclusively tourist-focused event, but as a collaborative platform where residents, creators, public institutions, and private partners jointly shape a shared cultural experience. Despite limited financial resources, the festival has grown year on year – thanks to clear communication, prudent resource management, and close cross-sector cooperation.

The growing interest and engagement of the audience is also reflected in the festival's expanding digital presence. The total reach of LUV Fest posts on social media increased from 315,715 in 2024 to 596,786 in 2025.

Contrary to the usual trend of events worldwide, which follow peak seasons and tourist appeal, LUV Fest prioritises revitalising the local community during the winter months and invites visitors to experience the city alongside locals, making the experience more authentic and culturally meaningful. The festival's uniqueness is based on a strong network of stakeholders and the empowerment of smaller NGOs, young artists, students, pupils, and underrepresented groups. In doing so, the festival establishes an inclusive and resilient model of festival production that reflects the city's contemporary social dynamics.