Ljubljana, European Green Capital 2016, dedicates this year to Jože Plečnik’s architecture

Ljubljana, Green Capital of Europe 2016, is recognized worldwide as one of the greenest capitals in Europe and in the world. Back in June 2014, the European Commission awarded Ljubljana the prestigious European Green Capital 2016 title for ‘raising environmental awareness amongst its citizens, its sustainability strategy ‘Vision 2025’, its implementation of a range of urban green measures over the past decade and its impressive transportation network'. Ljubljana is also the first capital of a European Union country to have announced a zero waste plan. The year 2017 is dedicated to the architect Jože Plečnik, whose work left a mark on Ljubljana as significant as that which it made on Vienna and Prague. In cooperation with other institutions, Ljubljana Tourism is preparing numerous events dedicated to the greatest Slovenian architect. The Slovenian capital is established also as a city of cuisine and culture.

2017 is dedicated to Jože Plečnik’s architecture

Ljubljana is a picturesque city full of romantic views, with a medieval hill-top castle towering over the historical city centre and a calm river spanned by a series of beautiful bridges running right through it. The city owes a great deal of its architectural appeal to the famous Ljubljana-born architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957), whose soul and vision are imprinted on Ljubljana just as Gaudí’s are on Barcelona.

Being the 145th anniversary of the birth and 60th anniversary of the death of the famous Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik, 2017 has been announced as the Plečnik Year. This Slovenian architect left a lasting mark on three central European cities: Vienna, Prague and Ljubljana. After 1921, Plečnik’s greatest impact was on the appearance of his native Ljubljana. Plečnik’s Ljubljana rates among the 20th century’s most prominent holistic art. According to Friedrich Achleitner, a renowned art critic from Vienna, Plečnik’s singular style may come to be considered the architecture of the future. Plečnik Year will also be marked by numerous events held in Ljubljana. For those interested we recommend a special Walking Tour of Plečnik’s Ljubljana on Wednesdays or Saturdays, or a cycling tour on Tuesdays and Fridays (starting from April 2017). From 21 January to 28 February you can visit the Plečnik’s Slovenia exhibition at the Krakovski nasip embankment and from June to September, the Plečnik at Home and Worldwide exhibition will be displayed at the Jakopič Promenade (Jakopičovo sprehajališče).

Green tours of Ljubljana

When Ljubljana was the European Green Capital 2016, eco-friendly tours of Ljubljana were added to the range of already available tours. The “green tours” take visitors on a tour of Ljubljana, not only to the old town, which is aligned with the friendly mobility and sustainable strategy of the city. We invite you to explore Ljubljana on guided tours by bicycle, jogging or Nordic walking. For an unforgettable green experience of Ljubljana, try stand up paddleboarding or kayaking on Ljubljanica River, and the Ljubljana Beekeeping Trail Guided Tour will reveal the organized and sweet life of bees. In 2016, Ljubljana also introduced the electric-powered Urban tourist train. During a circular ride of a little more than an hour you can visit all the main sights of Ljubljana outside the city centre.

Culinary Capital

Slovenia and Ljubljana lie at the crossroads of different culinary cultures, so Slovenian cuisine reflects traditional influences from Mediterranean, Alpine, and Pannonian cuisines as well as influences from the culinary art of the Balkans and several other parts of the world. Visitors to Ljubljana have expressed a
growing interest in typical local food and where they can taste it, so Ljubljana Tourism created the Taste Ljubljana brand. In December 2016, we enriched the existing selection with new typical Ljubljana dishes. The mission of this project is to ensure that traditional Ljubljana dishes prepared using modern cooking methods are included in the culinary offerings of the Slovenian capital. The Taste Ljubljana project was ranked among the Top 10 Green Solutions in the world.

Visitors can also explore the flavours of Ljubljana by joining a guided city tour called the Taste Ljubljana Food Tour, or learn about a very long tradition of brewing in Ljubljana while tasting various local beers during a guided tour known as A Beer’s Lovers Experiences of Ljubljana.

City of Culture
Ljubljana is a lively city. It offers a remarkable agenda of more than 14,000 events each year - including 14 international festivals. During the warm months, a host of thousands of free events enliven the public spaces in the city centre area, helping to create a special atmosphere in the Slovenian capital. The scope of musical events held in Ljubljana reflects both a rich musical tradition and a burgeoning contemporary music scene.

The festivals that contribute most significantly to the musical life of Ljubljana include the prestigious Ljubljana Festival (June – September 2017), which brings together the world's biggest names in classical music, opera, and ballet, the June in Ljubljana Festival, the Druga Godba Festival (25 – 27 May 2017), which is considered to be one of Europe's best world music festivals, and the highly acclaimed Ljubljana Jazz Festival. The European Jazz Conference 2017 will be held in Ljubljana at Cankarjev dom Congress Centre. From 25 May till 29 October Ljubljana will again host BIO – The Biennial of Design in Ljubljana, an esteemed international exhibition of products from industrial design, visual communication, corporate identity, and design concepts. It is an international platform for new approaches in design, that was founded back in 1964, making it the first design biennial in Europe.

In the summer, a large number of free festivals are held on open-air stages and city streets, one of the most interesting being the ever-surprising Ana Desetnica Street Theatre Festival. At the end of the year, the city centre hosts a festive fair and countless entertainment events as part of the December in Ljubljana Festival, thanks to which Ljubljana is considered to be one of the most attractive European capitals during the Christmas season and a must-visit Christmas destination.

Ljubljana might not immediately come to mind as one of Europe’s most gay-friendly destinations, but thanks to a relaxed culture in the city, it’s an increasingly popular destination for LGBT tourists. The city also has plenty of LGBT-specific venues and parties, as well as an annual Pride Parade and Pink Week (25 - 30 May 2017).

City of Sports
Every year, Ljubljana also hosts numerous sports events. The most well-established is the Ljubljana Marathon, taking place every year at the end of October and featuring an increasing number of international participants. At the end of July, the Kongresni trg square holds a beach volley tournament within the Ljubljana Beach Volley Challenge event. At the beginning of June 2017, Ljubljana will organise the Canoe Slalom European Championship. At the start of May, all visitors can participate in the traditional March along the Barbed Wire (Pohod ob žici) along an almost 35-kilometre-long trail around Ljubljana. This is where a wire fence was erected during the Second World War by Italian and later
German occupiers, and which is therefore called the *Trail along the Wire*. The march was held for the first time in 1957. The event tried to encourage movement and healthy lifestyle with its first march and this still remains its main goal today. On 20 May 2017, the streets of Ljubljana will also feature the world's largest *Secondary School Graduates' Parade (Maturantska parada)*, which has appeared in the Guinness Book of Records as many as nine times.

**Explore the Region**

Ljubljana lies at the center of Slovenia, a scenic and diverse country where distances are short and major attractions easily accessible. The green outskirts of Ljubljana are composed of 25 municipalities that form quite a diverse area combining mountains, plains, karst fields, marshes, rivers and lakes. As these natural sights are not far away from towns and villages, the area is appropriate for interesting day excursions, as well as for longer explorations of the exceptionally diverse landscapes.

**The Ljubljana Marshes** is a natural area of wetlands and peat bogs, known for its rare animal and vegetation species, and for the remains of the prehistoric pile dwellings, which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

One of the lovely areas to visit in the region is Kamnik, with the scenic Velika planina high mountain plateau, health resort, botanical garden and golf course nearby. We have enriched the selection of experiences in the region: during your visit to Polhov Gradec you can enjoy a cup of tea with Count Blagaj, famed for his discovery of the *Daphne blagayana* flower, which the botanists named after him. At Bogenšperk Castle in Šmartno pri Litiji you can visit Valvasor, a nobleman from the 17th century, who dedicated his life to science, collecting, and studying the land of Carniola and who, among other works, wrote the Glory of the Duchy of Carniola, which is today a priceless source of information regarding the late 17th century life of what is today called Slovenia. In Vrhnika you can learn about the life of the most important Slovenian dramatist and most universal Slovenian writer, Ivan Cankar.

**International awards received by Ljubljana**

The list of international awards and accolades awarded to Ljubljana in recognition of its sustainability efforts is impressive. In 2014 and 2016 Ljubljana was included in the Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100 list, compiled by Green Destinations. At the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) global summit Ljubljana won the *Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Award for 2015*. In 2016 Ljubljana won the so-called tourist Oscar, The Golden Apple Award (La Pomme d’Or), organised by FIJET (World Federation of Travel Journalists and Writers), for its excellent achievements in tourism development.

**InterContinental Hotel Ljubljana has just opened**

InterContinental Hotels Group has just opened the first 5 star hotel in Ljubljana - InterContinental Ljubljana. There are 165 guest rooms, a spa, fitness centre, and swimming pool, while the two large banquet halls will host conferences and events. The star feature is the 21st floor restaurant with an outdoor terrace boasting panoramic views over the city.

So Visit Ljubljana, taste the finest local cuisine, invigorate your body and mind, pamper yourself and relax, spend time and have fun with friends.

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For more info visit: [www.visitljubljana.com](http://www.visitljubljana.com).
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