



Ljubljana Tourism



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Ljubljana - the beloved city

Ljubljana, a city whose name means 'The beloved', is a great place to visit, although you will not find world-renowned attractions here. Nevertheless, it has history, tradition, style, arts & culture, an atmosphere that is both Central European and Mediterranean; many also add the adjectives multilingual and hospitable. Being close to many of the major sights and attractions of Slovenia, Ljubljana can also be your starting point to discover the country's diversity.

Slovenian capital Ljubljana is situated about **halfway between Vienna and Venice**. Its character and appearance have been shaped by diverse cultural influences and historical events. While in winter it is remarkable for its dreamy Central European character, it is the relaxed Mediterranean feel that stands out during summer.

Legend about the origin of Ljubljana

Legend has it that Ljubljana was founded by the Greek mythological hero **Jason** and his companions, **the Argonauts**, who had stolen the golden fleece from King Aetes and fled from him across the Black Sea and up the Danube, Sava and Ljubljanica rivers.

At a large lake in the marshes near the source of the Ljubljanica they stopped and disassembled their ship to be able to carry it to the Adriatic Sea, put it together again, and return to Greece. The lake was the dwelling place of a monster, which Jason fought, defeated and killed. The monster, now referred to as the **Ljubljana Dragon**, found its place atop the castle tower depicted on the Ljubljana coat of arms.

History of Ljubljana

Ljubljana bears traces of a rich and dynamic history spanning five thousand years. Around 2000 BC, **Ljubljana Moors** were settled by **lake dwellers** living in wooden dwellings built on stilts driven into the marsh ground or lake bed. In 2002, the **remains of the world's oldest wheel**, made between 3350 and 3100 BC, were found by archaeologists at Ljubljana Moors. The wheel, measuring 72 centimetres in diameter, was made from ash wood and its 124-centimetre-long axle from oak wood. The wheel is kept at the City Museum of Ljubljana.

The site of the present Ljubljana was first settled by the **Veneti**, and later by the **Illyrians**, the Illyrian-Celtic tribe of Iapydes, and, in the 3rd century BC, by the Celtic tribe called **Taurisci**. Two thousand years ago, a **Roman city called Emona** stood on the site of the present-day Ljubljana. During the 9th century, **Slavic settlements** gradually fell under the rule of the **Franks**. Between 1112 and 1125, the nobleman Rudolf of Tarcento gave a small estate near Ljubljana's castle hill to the **Patriarchate of Aquileia**. Later the Ljubljana Basin passed into the hands of the Carinthian family of the **Dukes of Spanheim**. In 1270, Ljubljana was conquered by the **Czech king Premysl Otakar II**.

In 1278, it fell under the **Hapsburg** rule as part of the **Province of Carniola**, gradually gaining influence and wealth. In 1461 the Ljubljana Diocese was founded and Ljubljana's Church of St. Nicholas became a cathedral. In the 15th century Ljubljana became renowned for its art. After the **earthquake of 1511**, the city was rebuilt in the Renaissance style and surrounded by a new town wall. The end of the 17th century

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saw the foundation of the **Academia operosorum**, a scholarly society modelled on Italian associations of the kind, starting the city's cultural renaissance. 1701 saw the establishment of the **Academia philharmonicorum**, one of the first institutions of the kind to be founded outside Italy. Honorary members of its immediate successor, the Philharmonic Society, included composers such as Josef Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven and Johannes Brahms, and the violinist Niccolò Paganini. **Gustav Mahler** was one of the Society's conductors between 1881 and 1882. Under **French occupation** (1809-1813) Ljubljana was the capital of the French Empire's Illyrian Provinces. In 1821, after the **re-establishment of Austrian rule**, the city hosted a **Congress of the Holy Alliance** which brought together several European rulers. To commemorate the Congress, one of the city's main squares was named Kongresni trg (Congress Square).

During the first half of the 19th century, Ljubljana was home to the greatest Slovenian poet, **France Prešeren** (1800-1849), who made a name for himself for his Romantic poetry and endeavours to modernize the Slovenian language. The following decades brought rapid progress. 1849 saw the arrival of the first train from Vienna. Ljubljana was also becoming the emerging **Slovenian nation's cultural centre**. Following a devastating earthquake in 1895, Ljubljana assumed a more modern appearance and was rebuilt in **Art nouveau style**. Maks Fabiani, a collaborator of the Viennese architect Otto Wagner and one of originators of the Viennese Secession movement, created a new urban development plan for Ljubljana. That laid the foundation for the work of architect **Jože Plečnik**, who continued Fabiani's work. The so called Plečnik's Ljubljana, a unique example of urban planning, is considered to be one of the 20th century's most important total works of art.

During **World War II**, Ljubljana was occupied first by the Italian and later by the German army. In order to break its strong resistance movement, in 1942 the occupiers surrounded it with a 30-kilometre barb wire fence, whose course is now the course of a recreational path. After World War II, Ljubljana became the **capital of Slovenia**, one of the six republics constituting the **socialist Yugoslavia**. On 23 December 1990, the citizens of Slovenia voting in the independence plebiscite decided in favour of an autonomous and independent state. The **independent Slovenia** was declared on 25 June 1991 and Ljubljana was named its capital. In May 2004 it entered the **European Union**.

Ljubljana's sights and attractions

Ljubljana is a picturesque city full of romantic views, with a medieval hilltop castle towering over its historical city centre and a calm river spanned by a series of beautiful bridges running right through it. It's a city with a medieval heart, a city of the **Baroque** and **Art Nouveau**, with an old castle resting above it like a sleeping beauty.

In Ljubljana eastern and western cultures met; and the Italian concept of art combined with the sculptural aesthetics of Central European cathedrals. The city owes its present appearance partly to Italian baroque and partly to Art Nouveau, which is the style of the numerous buildings erected immediately after the earthquake of 1895. 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 like Gaudí's are on Barcelona.

The central point of interest in Ljubljana is **Ljubljana Castle**, watching over the city from the centrally located castle hill. The beginnings of the medieval castle go back to the 9th century, although the castle building is first mentioned only in 1144. It gained its present image after the earthquake of 1511 and

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following further renovations at the beginning of the 17th century. The provincial rulers occupied it until the first decades of the 17th century, while later it became a garrison and the provincial prison. The castle's gradual renovation, ongoing since the mid 1980's, is approaching its completion. A funicular connects the Old Town to the castle hill, adding an even more convenient access alternative to the tourist train.

Ljubljana's relaxed lifestyle

The lifestyle in Ljubljana is refreshingly relaxed and the city life always vibrant due to Ljubljana's **large number of cultural events** and **excellent culinary offerings**, which have, over recent years, become increasingly popular with travelers from around the world.

Despite being vibrant throughout the year, Ljubljana is **never crowded**, which makes it a great place for visitors to relax and rest from the hustle of daily life – just like the locals do on a regular basis, getting together at the city's countless cafés with outdoor seating. To really feel the pulse of the city, it is perhaps best to go to the **Central Market**, which sells all kinds of Slovenian specialties, or visit the **Open Kitchen**, a Friday street food market where delicious food is freshly prepared by Slovenian chefs right in front of their customers.

European Green Capital 2016

Ljubljana, the winner of **European Green Capital Award 2016**, is a green city in more than just one sense of the word. The city managed to preserve its green character to the present day and welcomes you to various green areas in the heart of the city. Ljubljana is also the proud holder of a **Tourism for Tomorrow 2015 award**.

The **European Commission** named Ljubljana as European Green Capital 2016 for 'its 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'. 2012 saw the closing of the core city centre area for motorized vehicles.

Urban cycling is rapidly increasing in popularity and the city's cyclists thoroughly enjoy using the free **Bicike(LJ) bike sharing network**. More and more public city buses in Ljubljana are fuelled by methane in order to achieve reduction in CO2 emissions. Electric-powered vehicles called **Kavalir** can be hailed for a free ride within the core city centre area.

Tap water in Ljubljana is potable without any prior technological treatment. Free drinking water from a large number of **public drinking fountains** is available in the city's streets during the warm part of the year, from April to October.

Ljubljana is a city boasting excellently preserved green spaces and countless pleasant green nooks and crannies even in the heart of the city centre. The city's picturesque **embankments on the river Ljubljanica**, designed by the world known architect Jože Plečnik, are surrounded by trees and grassy spaces. Not far away you can find **one of Europe's oldest botanic gardens**, more than 200 hundred years old.

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The historical city centre of Ljubljana is towered over by **Ljubljana Castle**, built at the top of a green hill criss-crossed with walking paths and scattered with exercise stations shaded by trees, while the city's largest and most beautiful park, **Tivoli**, extends right into the city centre.

One of Ljubljana's special features is a 35-kilometre circular recreational route around the city. The route, known as the **Path of Remembrance and Comradeship**, runs along the course of the barbed-wire fence that surrounded Ljubljana during the Second World War.

A perfect base for exploring Slovenia

Ljubljana lies at the center of Slovenia. In the morning you can visit the stunningly beautiful **Lake Bled**, **Lake Bohinj** or **Soča Valley** in the high mountainous region of the **Alps**, and in the evening enjoy the sunset in one of the charming little towns on the **Adriatic coast**. The world famous **Postojna Caves** are only about 50 kilometers from Ljubljana. It only takes minutes to reach the peaceful and unspoiled countryside of the city's green surrounding areas, which offer endless opportunities for hiking, cycling, fishing and horse riding.

In Ljubljana you can choose from a vast range of attractively priced **day-trips** offering the opportunity to visit the country's major attractions or explore the distinctive features of its amazingly diverse regions.

Tourist information

At Ljubljana's two **Tourist Information Centres (TICs)**, managed by Ljubljana Tourism, you can get free brochures about Ljubljana, book guided city tours, purchase your Ljubljana Card, which entitles you to many benefits, including free admission to the city's major sights, book your accommodation, buy imaginative souvenirs or hire a bicycle available as part of the **Ljubljana Bicycle project**. TICs in Ljubljana are open daily throughout the year.

The best way to explore the sights of Ljubljana is to get the **Ljubljana Card**, which grants not only access to the city's major sights and museums, but also free travel on public buses, a free guided city tour, unlimited wireless internet access throughout the city center and a number of other benefits at a price that may be up to €80 lower than what one would pay without the card. By purchasing card online you save 10% off the regular price.

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