

Ljubljana Travel Guide

Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia, is a charming city full of galleries, museums, and art, and with a population of just 330,000. The Ljubljanica river flows through the centre of town and divides the city like a timewarp, with the modern city to the West, and the old city & Ljubljana Castle to the East. These two city halves are connected by several bridges, Tromostovje (triple) bridge being the most famous. The city is well connected, with a good bus network, but the centre is small enough to walk everywhere should you choose. If you find yourself outside of the city, grab a taxi - they are very affordable, and a convenient way of getting around.

Old Ljubljana is a hotspot for monuments, historic buildings, churches and museums. Keep your eyes open as you wander round for Zmajski Most (Dragon Bridge), one of the most famous crossings on this part of the Ljubljanica. The Dragon has become a traditional symbol of Ljubljana and four of them stand here, carved in stone, forever guarding the bridge. Ljubljana castle, accessed by the 'tourist train', is another popular attraction in this area of the city. Entrance to the courtyard, chapel and gift shop is free, while there is a charge for access to the tower and its fine views over the old city to the Sava River and Julian Alps. The National Museum of Contemporary History charts Slovenia's turbulent history, passing from regime to regime. The immersive exhibits include a walk through WWII trench. For some natural history, take a trip to Postojna Caves - 20 km of underground galleries, chambers and corridors with a constant temperature of 8 C. A guided tour on special cave train takes one and half hours.

Cross the river to the new city for more modern attractions and developments. This part of the city is great for families, with fun attractions including Water City of Atlantis, a water park with 14 pools, thermal baths, slides and saunas, and Laguna Fun & Spa, with open air pools during the day and themed parties at night. The Vodafone Live Arena offers bowling, pool, laser games & a 3D Theatre, and the Kolosej (Colosseum) multiplex cinema, unlike most European cinemas, plays the majority of it's films in their original language with Slovenian subtitles. The main exception to this rule are animated films, which tend to be dubbed for children. For a truly remarkable experience, take a walk round Ljubljana zoo, considered to be amongst the most beautiful in Europe.

You'll probably want to eat at some point during your trip, and you'll find a whole host of options on the streets of Ljubljana. If you need a quick, cheap fix, there are seven McDonald's restaurants dotted around the city. For the slightly more adventurous, however, try Hot Horse, fast food with a twist - all the meat served is horse meat! For a more relaxed lunch, try Luka Gourmet Lunch Cafe, one of a line of cafes on Stari Trg with outside seating. This cafe serves up tasty, mainly pasta dishes with reasonable prices and friendly service. For your evening meal, Gostilna Sokol deals up authentic Slovenian cuisine, complete with all waiters and waitresses dressed up in traditional costume. Alternatively, Manna, South from the main tourist area, serves excellent traditional dishes for about €20 for a full dinner. It boasts "Slow food", but in effect the service is both helpful and fast, and has a friendly and artistic atmosphere.

Ljubljana really comes to life in the evening, with locals and tourists all seeking a fun night out. Patrick's Irish Bar is the ubiquitous Irish Pub, with Guinness and Local Beers on tap and a typical menu of Hearty Meals available. Also typical is the welcoming atmosphere that seems common to all Irish Pubs. BI-KO-FE is a lively little bar that plays excellent jazz music, and the place the youngish locals hangout to drink the night away. Wine lovers must try Vinoteka Movia, a cosy, candlelit wine bar comes with knowledgeable barmen who can recommend a wine based on your tastes. Be careful, however - the prices can vary from modest to a remortgage! For clubbers and anyone else who'd like to dance the night away, K4 is a nice spot at 4, Kersnikova Trg. National and international DJs play electronic music to an enthusiastic crowd.

About the Author

Matt Davies writes travel articles for <http://www.HotelHippo.com>, who offer cheap hotels in Ljubljana.

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