



SLOVAKIA

Short Facts

Official Name: Slovak Republic

Political System: Parliamentary Democracy

Official Language: Slovak

Currency: Slovak Crown 1 Sk=100 haliers

Capital City: Bratislava (Population 428,672)

Geography: Total Area : 49,035 square kilometres Slovak divided into 8 administrative regions which have in total 79 districts

Population: 5,379,455 (51% female)

Neighbours: Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria

Ethnicity of the population: Slovak (85.8%), Hungarian (9.7%), Romany (1.7%), Czech (0.8%), Rusyn, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Polish and others (2%)

Population by religion: believers (84.1%) of which: Roman Catholic (68.9%), Evangelical (6.9%), Greek Catholic (4.1%), Reform Christian (2%), undetermined (2.2%), atheist (13.7%)

CLIMATE

The Slovak climate has relatively warm summers and colder, snow rich winters. However, there is a relatively big climate difference between lowlands and mountains. Summers are usually quite warm, with highest temperatures over 30o C (July and August), winters mostly with temperatures below 0 oC (December to February). The southern part of Slovakia, which is mostly lowlands has higher average temperatures than the mountainous northern areas

CURRENCY

The currency in Slovakia is a crown (koruna, currency symbol Sk). 1 Australian dollar=approx 25 Crowns and one New Zealand dollar = approx 19 Crowns

FAMOUS SLOVAKIANS

- **Jozef Maximilián Petzval** (Josef Maximilian Petzval, 1807-1891) – mathematician, optician, constructor of camera zoom lens, is considered by many to be the founder of modern photography.
- Parents of **Andy Warhol** (Andrej Warhola, 1928-1987), immigrated to the USA 7 years before Andy's birthday, in 1921, from Eastern Slovakia. Andy Warhol, the significant personality within the Pop-Art movement, has been considered one of the most influential artist of the 20th century.
- The former world No. 1 in women tennis, **Martina Hingis**, was born and lived her first years in Košice in a family of Slovak father and Czech mother, who has later immigrated to Switzerland.

SCHOOLS IN SLOVAKIA

The school year in Slovakia begins at the first working day in September (1st of September is a national holiday – the day of Constitution) and ends on the last working day of June.

Slovak schools are typically European with a large variety of subjects and classical style of education. Most of the schools in Slovakia are public schools, private schools are only a small part of the system

Students are divided into stable classes: it means you will have most of the lessons with the same classmates (and in the same classroom). Each class has a class teacher, who is responsible for the communication between students and school.



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There are mostly 5 to 7 lessons a day, rarely lessons in the afternoon (it depends on the school, large school sometimes divide the lessons into morning lessons and afternoon lessons). The Slovak speciality is the "Oth" lessons (begins at 07:00 or sometimes even slightly earlier) – this is sometimes a solution if the school uses experts from not pedagogical sphere or if the schedule does not allow to arrange the lessons in other way.

Most of the subjects are compulsory (Slovak language and literature, Maths, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography). Schools offer several other subjects. You can also choose which foreign language you would like to learn.

Most students attend school for 12 or 13 years before going on to higher education. At the end of the Year nine of school students sit entrance exams to attend one of the following types of schools (Gymnasium- general academic education- high schools specialising in economics or Technical or vocational high schools)

RECREATION

Most of Slovak high school students spend their mornings at school with afternoons reserved for their spare time activities. It is very common for students to attend language courses in the afternoon, to be a part of a sports club or to attend music classes. There are several institutions offering such courses: language schools, music schools, sport clubs. It is not usual to have these opportunities offered through high school.

In Summer, many people spend the warmest days near water. There are many natural and artificial lakes that allow people to swim or sail a boat. Hiking in the mountain areas is also popular in summer. Slovakia is a mountainous country so in winter ski resorts are popular for skiing and snow-boarding.

Football (soccer) is the most popular game in Slovakia Almost every town and village has its own soccer field and a team that is playing in the regional league. Ice-Hockey is very popular with most clubs having youth teams. Other popular games are volleyball ("volejbal"), basketball ("basketbal"), tennis ("tenis"), handball ("hádzaná"). Sports that are very popular in other countries, such as baseball, rugby, softball are beginning to be established in Slovakia.

FAMILY LIFE

The Slovaks are very open to those, who are interested in their country. If they see you are learning their language (which is definitely not a world language, they will respond warmly to you. Although the relationship to the friends at the same age is very important for most of young people in Slovakia, it is still quite common that children do spend significant time with their parents: dinners are mostly reserved for family gatherings, weekends sometimes as well.

FOOD

There is no real "Slovak cuisine" that would be known and used all around the world, like the Chinese or Italian. Potatoes, flour, cheese, cabbage, onions and garlic are the bases of the traditional food in Slovakia.

Although rice does not belong to the crops grown in Slovakia, it is imported and widely used in the modern Slovakian kitchen as are beans, corn, lentils and other vegetables. Slovaks also eat a lot of fruit (apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries, plums, grapes, oranges, kiwi fruit, grapefruit, bananas).

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



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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.

YFU SLOVAKIA

The first YFU organisation, operating in our region, was YFU Czechoslovakia. In 2004, an independent YFU Slovakia began to operate. The YFU office is in Bratislava and has a network of volunteers in the regions of Slovakia. Exchanges with Germany, USA, Australia, New Zealand among others.