

Slovenia – basic information

Yelyzaveta Denysenko

Area:

Slovenia, country in central Europe that was part of Yugoslavia for most of the 20th century. Slovenia is a small but topographically diverse country made up of portions of four major European geographic landscapes—the European Alps, the karstic Dinaric Alps, the Pannonian and Danubian lowlands and hills, and the Mediterranean coast. Easily accessible mountain passes (now superseded by tunnels) through Slovenia’s present-day territory have long served as routes for those crossing the Mediterranean and transalpine regions of Europe. [1]

The Slovenes are a South Slavic people with a unique language. For most of its history, Slovenia was largely controlled by the Habsburgs of Austria, who ruled the Holy Roman Empire and its successor states, the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary; in addition, coastal portions were held for a time by Venice. As part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia came under communist rule for the bulk of the post-World War II period. With the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation in 1991, a multiparty democratic political system emerged. Slovenia’s economic prosperity in the late 20th century attracted hundreds of thousands of migrants from elsewhere in the Balkans. In the early 21st century, Slovenia integrated economically and politically with western Europe, joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as well as the European Union in 2004. Slovenia’s capital and most important city is Ljubljana. It covers an area of approximately 20,273 square kilometers (7,827 square miles). [1]

Population:

Slovenia has a population of around 2.1 million people. The capital and largest city is Ljubljana, situated in the central part of the country. Other major cities include Maribor, Celje, and Kranj. The official language is Slovene, and the majority of the population practices Christianity. [3]

Regions:

Slovenia is divided into 12 statistical regions, which are further divided into municipalities. The regions are: Pomurska, Podravska, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Primorsko-notranjska, Goriška, and Obalno-kraška. Each region has its own regional capital and local government. [4]

Geography:

Slovenia is a predominantly mountainous country, with the Julian Alps in the northwest and the Kamnik-Savinja Alps in the northern part. The country is also known for its numerous lakes, including Lake Bled and Lake Bohinj. The Sava River is the longest river in Slovenia, and it flows through the capital city, Ljubljana. Slovenia has a diverse range of natural attractions, including Triglav National Park, Postojna Cave, and the Škocjan Caves, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites. [5]

Land:

Slovenia is bordered by Austria to the north and Hungary to the far northeast. To the east, southeast, and south, Slovenia shares a 416-mile- (670-km-) long border with Croatia. To the southwest Slovenia is adjacent to the Italian port city of Trieste and occupies a portion of the

Istrian Peninsula, where it has an important coastline along the Gulf of Venice. Italy's Friuli-Venezia Giulia region is situated to the west.

Slovenia is mostly elevated. Outside the coastal area, its terrain consists largely of karstic plateaus and ridges, magnificently precipitous Alpine peaks, and (between the elevated areas) valleys, basins, and arable or pastorally useful karstic poljes. The only major flat area is in the northeast. Tectonic fault lines cross the country, and Ljubljana suffered a devastating earthquake in 1895

Relief:

In Slovenia four main physiographic regions can be distinguished. The first is the Alpine region, which takes up about two-fifths of Slovenia's surface area. In the north and northwest, along the borders with Italy and Austria, are the High Alps, comprising the Kamnik and Savinja, the Karavanke (Karawanken), and the Julian Alps; the latter includes Slovenia's highest peak, Mount Triglav, at 9,396 feet (2,864 metres). In a vale beneath Triglav lie idyllic Lake Bohinj and Lake Bled. Slightly lower than the High Alps is the subalpine "ridge-and-valley" terrain. The main subalpine range is the Pohorje, located south of the Drava River. The historical name for the central Alpine lands is Gorenjska (Upper Carniola), a name that Slovenes still use. Slovenes refer to the Mea and Mislinja river valleys as Koroška (Carinthia). On Gorenjska's southern edge is the spacious Ljubljana basin, which contains the capital as well as the industrial city of Kranj.

Slovenia's second major physiographic region, the Kras (Karst), a spur of the lengthy Dinaric Alps in the southwestern part of the country, is dotted with caves and underground rivers, the characteristic features of karst topography (whose term is derived from the name of the region). Although it constitutes one-fourth of Slovenia's area, the Kras region has only a fraction of the country's population, which is concentrated between the wooded limestone ridges in dry and blind valleys, hollows, and poljes. Water is scarce in this region. The Suha Krajina is a karstified plateau; the Bela Krajina is a transitional belt that contains plains and points toward the Subpannonia (Pannonian Plain). Most of the region is known to Slovenes by its historical names: Dolenjska (Lower Carniola) and Notranjska (Inner Carniola). Scientific study of karst terrain is a Slovene specialty, research having begun during the 18th century in Habsburg Carniola.

The next largest physiographic region (occupying one-fifth of the country) is the fertile Subpannonia; it is located in eastern and northeastern Slovenia and includes the valleys of the Sava, Drava, and Mura rivers. Its basins contain the cities of Maribor (on the Drava) and Celje (on the Savinja River, a tributary of the Sava). Subpannonia corresponds in part to the lower part of the old Austrian duchy of Styria; Slovenes call their portion Štajerska and share some traits with their Austrian neighbours. Beyond a saddle of hills known as the Slovenske Gorice is Prekmurje, a wheat-growing region drained by the Mura River in the extreme northeast of the country. It was ruled by Hungary until 1918; its main town is Murska Sobota.

The fourth principal region (occupying barely one-twelfth of Slovenia's surface) is Primorska, or the Slovene Littoral. It overlaps what were the Habsburg regions of Trieste and Gorizia and is made up of Slovenia's portion of the Istrian Peninsula, the Adriatic hinterland, and the Soča and Vipava river valleys. The 29-mile (47-km) strip of coast makes up Slovenia's riviera. The city of Koper (just south of Trieste) is Slovenia's major port.

Drainage:

Most of Slovenia's intricate fluvial network is directed toward the Danube River. The Sava originates in the Julian Alps and flows past Ljubljana toward Croatia; its narrow valley serves as a rail conduit to Zagreb, Croatia's capital, and farther to Belgrade, Serbia's capital.

The Drava enters Slovenia from the Austrian state of Kärnten, and the Mura emerges from the Austrian state of Steiermark; they meet in Croatia and, like the Sava, ultimately reach the Danube. In the west the Soča originates beneath Mount Triglav and, after a precipitous course, reaches the Gulf of Venice in Italian territory.

The relatively steep gradients of Slovenia's topography create fast runoff, which in turn ensures most of Slovenia copious water and hydroelectric resources. On the other hand, it also washes away valuable soil nutrients. Pollution of the rivers remains a problem.

Soils:

Slovenia's complex geology has created a pedological mosaic. The small, thick Pleistocene cover is acidic and viscid. Permeable thin brown podzols—cambisols and fluvisols—are productive if fertilized, but they cover only about one-tenth of its surface, chiefly to the northeast. The carbonate bedrock underlying much of the country produces thin lithosols suited to forest growth. There are many good alluvial soils (particularly in Subpannonia) as well as bog varieties. Karstic sinkholes and poljes are famous for having terra rossa, a red soil produced by the degradation of the underlying limestone.

Climate of Slovenia:

Slovenia may be divided into three climatic zones. Conditions in Istria indicate a transition from the Mediterranean climate of the Dalmatian coast to a moderate continental climate. In the moderate zone the highest monthly precipitation (up to 15 inches [381 mm]) occurs in spring and autumn, and the highest temperatures (often rising above 80 °F [27 °C]) occur in June and July. Winter temperatures rarely drop below 50 °F (10 °C), but this mildness is sometimes interrupted by the strong bora, a cold northerly wind.

Central and northern Slovenia have a continental "cool summer" climate; the eastern third of the country also falls into the continental category but has warm summers. Monthly summer rainfall in the cool belt is more than 3 inches (80 mm), and high temperatures average in the upper 60s F (about 20 °C), although there are uncomfortable hot spells. The east and northeast have much less overall precipitation, and midsummer highs reach well past 70 °F (21 °C). From November to February, temperature readings below freezing occur frequently, but snow cover has become less frequent and usually melts rapidly.

History:

Slovenia has a rich history that dates back to ancient times. The area was inhabited by various Celtic, Roman, and Slavic tribes. Over the centuries, Slovenia was part of the Frankish Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, Slovenia became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In 1991, after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Slovenia gained independence and became a sovereign state. Since then, it has undergone significant political and economic transformations. [6]

Economics:

Slovenia has a developed and prosperous economy. It is known for its high standard of living and is considered one of the most advanced economies among the former communist countries. The country has a diverse economy, with sectors such as manufacturing, services, tourism, and agriculture playing important roles. Slovenia is a member of the European Union and the Eurozone. It has a well-developed infrastructure and is known for its environmental sustainability initiatives. [7]

Culture and tourism:

Slovenia has a rich cultural heritage influenced by its history and diverse population. The country is known for its folk traditions, including music, dance, and traditional crafts. Slovenian cuisine is influenced by various neighboring countries and is known for dishes such as potica (rolled pastry with various fillings) and kranjska klobasa (Carniolan sausage). Slovenia offers a wide range of tourist attractions, including medieval castles, charming coastal towns, and scenic alpine landscapes. Lake Bled, Predjama Castle, and the Postojna Cave are among the popular destinations for visitors. [8]

References:

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