



Slovakia INFORMATION SHEET

Slovakia is modern European country mixed with a deep rural tradition. Geographically, it is primarily a mountainous country with numerous winter activities. Most infrastructure and many of the tourist facilities are on par or near Western European standards. Quaint and jovial with a surprisingly rich cultural life, Bratislava is a capital city without the usual congestion. The High Tatras are a magnificent range of European mountains dotted with villages with deep peasant traditions. You'll find Slovaks to be an extremely helpful, pleasant people prepared to go out of their way to welcome you. From city breaks, film and folk festivals, to castle tours to snow boarding and hiking you'll find Slovakia a spectacular country to visit.

The following is a general information sheet. It is as accurate as we can make it. However, things sometimes change unexpectedly. *Please use this only as a guide.*

Expectations

While group tours are one of the most enjoyable ways to travel, they require a certain degree of flexibility and understanding on every individual's part. We have carefully planned your itinerary and have done our best to provide you with information about what to expect. However, much of what makes travel interesting is the unexpected. Travel with an open mind and you will get the most and best out of your holiday. Please be assured that our mission is to create and provide you with the most enjoyable and memorable travel experience.

Currency

The unit of currency is the Euro. It is available in various denominations. We recommend that you purchase \$100 - \$200 in local currency, depending on your spending and tipping habits. Major banks generally have an international division and can make this conversion for you. Only exchange money in banks and certified exchange offices. Exchange offices can be found in all major hotels, travel agencies and department stores. They are denoted as ZMENAREN (Exchange/Cambio/Wechsel). Many shops and restaurants in the cities and tourist resorts accept major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa and, less frequently, American Express) and offer the best exchange rates. Credit cards are less easy to use in the countryside. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services like cash withdrawal, which may be available. U.S. travelers' checks have fallen out of favor with travelers, and despite the fact that they are the safest way to carry money, they are not always the most economical or handy, since banks may charge commission for cashing them, and shops and restaurants give less favorable exchange rates. If accepted, you may be required to show your passport to cash traveler checks. Travelers are recommended to take 2 different credit cards (debit/credit) as fraud alerts can be activated by your bank or credit card company. Having 2 cards will ensure you won't have to waste time on the phone rectifying the fraud alert. Cash is often preferred but should not be carried in large quantities. Money can be changed at banks in all of the main tourist areas or exchange offices as well as most hotels and railroad stations. Bank hours are usually 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. ATMs are widely available in major cities and will give you your cash in local currency. For many, this is the most convenient way to get money abroad. There are currency exchange kiosks in most major airports, if you are not able to get it converted prior to departure. Be sure to have some local coins with you to use in the public bathrooms as this may be required for use.

PLEASE REFER TO THE ENCLOSED CURRENCY CONVERSION SHEETS FOR ACCURATE RATES.

Weather & Clothing

Slovakia has a continental European climate with moderate winters and warm summers. Listed below are the average 24-hour temperatures for the seasons in the various areas of the country. Even though we have noted the usual temperatures, you may experience unusual weather conditions. For that reason, we always suggest that you pack clothes that can be layered. Please check the newspaper, the Weather Channel, or www.weather.com before you pack to verify the most current weather situation.

CITY	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
Bratislava	34 - 72	59 - 81	34 - 72	25 - 36

While in Europe, you will see temperatures forecast in Celsius. To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply the Celsius number by 9, then divide your answer by 5, and add 32.

It is advisable to bring a mid-weight coat or jacket. Most locals will dress smartly when dining out. You may wish to pack one outfit that is a little dressier for a special evening. Be sure to bring comfortable soft-soled shoes or sneakers for the days you are sightseeing. A small packable umbrella and sweaters are always handy to have with you. It is important to remember that you may stop at churches. Shorts and short skirts are not acceptable. Please remember to wear pants or knee-length or longer skirts on those days.

Packing Smart

Be sure to pack any prescriptions that you will need for your trip in your carry-on bag. Any liquids in your carry-on must be in quantities of three ounces or less, be in clear containers, and those containers must be in a clear, quart-sized Ziploc bag. You may wish to bring any special soaps or accessories from home. European hotels do not always have washcloths in the room. It's a good idea to pack your own if you require one. You may wish to pack a pocket calculator (useful in money conversion) and a small multi-language guide with basic phrases. Wake-up calls will be available from the front desk, but you also might want to bring your own battery-operated alarm clock. The availability and quality of hairdryers and irons at hotels vary greatly. Don't forget your camera and extra film (film tends to be more expensive overseas). Due to heightened security at the airports, remember to pack questionable items in your checked luggage, not your carry-on (knives, scissors, any cutting implements, knitting needles, etc.). If in doubt, pack it in your checked bag.

Enjoying the trip

Please remember that you are booked on a group ticket. Durgan is unable to guarantee seating assignments, often not able to assign seats at all. We do forward all seating requests to the airlines but they are not always able to accommodate all requests. You will likely have with an intermediate stop while flying to your final destination, where you will change planes, but your luggage will be checked all the way to your final destination. Since the airplane is dry, and you will have a long international flight, it helps to drink a lot of non-alcoholic liquids while flying. Alcohol contributes to jetlag, as does eating heavy meals onboard. Feet swell at high altitudes, consider wearing a pair of compression socks for your flight. You will probably want to bring a small book or magazine in your carry-on luggage.

A valid U.S. passport is required. **It must be valid for at least 6 months past the time your tour ends.** If you are a not a U.S. citizen, you may need further identification. Contact National Passport Information at 1 888-362-8668 (toll call) or the Slovakian Consulate for further information. No Visa is necessary for this tour for U.S. citizens. No vaccinations are necessary for U.S. citizens. Remember that you are responsible for having all valid documentation needed for this tour.

Electrical Current

The standard current is 220 volts A.C. **A transformer may also be necessary and can be purchased in many stores or online.** Sockets, Type F, generally have two or three round pins. Adapters are needed for U.S. plugs (for hairdryers & irons). Please use only hairdryers with 1250-watt setting. The hairdryer may not work or fry if it is set on 1500 and may damage dryer even with an adapter.

Food, Drink & Entertainment

Since water away from home can often be upsetting to the digestive tract, we recommend that you drink bottled water, which is not usually complimentary. This will usually be offered in restaurants for a fee. If in doubt, ask the tour escort. Water supplies marked “non potable” should not be used for drinking or brushing your teeth. If you have special dietary requests, let your tour escort and the dining room staff know and they will try to accommodate your needs. If you have a very limited diet, we suggest that you bring some snacks that you might need. Breakfast at most hotels is a continental buffet, though cereal is not always provided. Included hotel dinners are also typically a buffet but the menus change each night. Europeans generally dine later than is customary in the U.S.

Optional Side Trips

Optional side trips to nearby attractions *may* be available. Your tour escort can help you arrange these trips during your free time. Operators on these side trips often will not take credit cards, so you may want to carry more money, local currency only, if such trips interest you. The prices on the excursions vary greatly depending on the length of the tour and the places visited.

Safety and Health Services

We recommend that you leave a copy of your itinerary with friends or family, in case of emergencies.

In order to have a trouble-free trip, you should avoid flaunting jewelry and wear your handbag securely strapped across your chest. Many stores sell security wallets that are worn inside your clothing. They are large enough to hold your passport, money, etc., and offer a secure option if you prefer to carry them with you. You should keep a record of your credit cards and Traveler’s check numbers separate from your purse or wallet. It is also a good idea to carry a photocopy of the picture page of your passport and leave your passport and any valuables locked in the hotel safe, unless you have a security wallet. Losing your passport is expensive and inconvenient. Avoid going off on your own, unless you are familiar with the area. Be alert for suspicious people or circumstances.

There is no reciprocal health agreement with the U.S. and treatment is expensive. If you have health issues, be sure to check with your health care provider before leaving home to verify what procedures they want you to follow, should the need arise. Should an injury or accident occur, you will be responsible for any costs involved, medical and/or travel related. For this reason, we **strongly urge** you to take out traveler’s insurance before your departure. Be sure to get receipts for anything you expect to be covered for.

Accommodations

Hotel rooms in Europe are usually smaller than in the United States and rooms often differ. Hotel rooms in major cities tend to be smaller than hotel rooms throughout the rest of the country – but what you don’t get in spacious accommodations is more than compensated by the wealth of attractions surrounding you. Please remember that a 3* hotel in the US is different than a 3* hotel in Europe. The European custom for a twin room is two single beds made up separately and placed side by side. A double room will usually have one double bed. A single room will have one twin-size bed. A triple is generally a twin room with a cot or small bed added. Also, please be aware that single rooms in Europe are almost always smaller than twin rooms.

Unfortunately, we can only request room types and locations. Room assignments are made at the discretion of the hotel at the time of check-in.

Telephones

To call Slovakia from the U.S., dial 011 and the country code (+421) followed by the city code and then the phone number. It is very expensive to call the United States from your hotel room. We suggest that you use a phone card or download a Wi-Fi based messaging app to your phone before you travel. To call the U.S. from abroad, once you have a local line, dial the access code, then the area code and number. No need to dial “1” first.

Transportation & Shopping

Taxis are available from the hotel. Ask the front desk for help in summoning a taxi. Secure a fixed price from the driver before you depart. Public transportation is available in many cities. Bratislava has a very good public transportation system. Most shops are open between 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., but some smaller ones take lunch breaks. Many banks are open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, most stores close by noon, and few are open on Sundays. Nevertheless, there are some 24-hour convenience shops usually located at gas stations. Most major shopping malls are open until the evening seven days a week. Souvenirs include pottery, porcelain, wooden carvings, hand-embroidered clothing and food items. There are a number of excellent shops specialising in glass and crystal, while various associations of regional artists and crafts people run their own retail outlets. Some of the most famous brands are Modra and Tatran, which have an international reputation for craftsmanship. A value-added tax (VAT) is sometimes added to purchases. If the purchase is over a certain amount, you can get it partially refunded. Ask for a form where you purchase the item or at the airport. You must submit the form at the airport before you depart. Your refund will be mailed to you. For more information call Global Refund 1-(800)566-9828.

Time

Slovakia is 6 hours ahead of us and practices Daylight Savings Time from the end of March to late October.

Gratuities

Gratuities to your tour director, driver, local guides, dining room staff, and maids are not included in the tour price. While the amount of these gratuities will depend upon your degree of satisfaction for services received, these are general tipping guidelines. For a good job, we suggest 4-5 Euro per person per day for your tour director and 3-5 Euro per person per day for your driver. Local guides, consider tipping 3-4 Euros per person for half day tours and 6-7 Euros per person for full day tours. Tipping is not entirely necessary at restaurants, though a 10-20% tip is reasonable. Oftentimes, people simply round up their bill to the nearest whole amount and have that be the tip. Do not say “thank you” when you pay your bill if you’re expecting change. Saying thank you indicates that you want the server to keep the entire amount you are handing them. Please remember, these are suggested rates and are ultimately up to you to show the guides, escort, and drivers your appreciation.

Custom Regulations

Luggage may be examined upon entering and leaving countries. U.S. citizens can bring home up to \$400 worth of foreign goods. Each member of the family is entitled to the same exemption and the exemption can be pooled. You cannot bring back fresh fruit, meat, cheeses or plants.

Language & Customs

The official language is Slovak. Some English is spoken, largely by hotel personnel and other service industries.

Common Phrases

Good morning/day	Dobré ráno	Good evening	Dobrý večer	Coffee/tea	káva/ čaj
Hello	Dobrý deň	Goodbye	Do videnia	Where is bathroom?	Kde je kúpeľňa?
Please	Prosím	Thank you	Ďakujem	Bottled water	voda
How much?	Koľko to bude	Yes/No	Áno/ Nie	Do you speak English?	Hovoríš po anglicky?