



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELER

All Travel, All the Time

SLOVENIA PORTFOLIO

Picture-book scenes—like mountain-cupped Lake Bled—appear everywhere in this newly emerging European nation.

SLOVENIA IS THE

ultimate example of overlooked Europe.

A country about the size of New Jersey (“hardly bigger than an Australian sheep farm, with two million people,” says a local), it blends emerging modernity with time-honored traditions, haute-palate food with farmer’s fare, bucolic landscapes with villages that seem to have changed little in 100 years. Once part of Yugoslavia, but independent since 1991, this country in the middle of Europe reveals a remarkable diversity even during a two-hour helicopter ride: a rumpiled rug of Alpine peaks, soft green valleys, a sliver of Adriatic coast. You can zigzag along Slovenia’s borders with Austria, Hungary, Croatia, and Italy. You can view 9,396-foot Mount Triglav, which is climbed by most natives at least once as a matter of national pride. You can tour a bevy of medieval castles; descend into one of the world’s largest mercury mines; enjoy Lake Bled, where, on the nation’s only island, you’ll find a baroque church and a centuries-old “wishing bell”; ride Lipizzaner horses, a famed breed that has roots in present-day Slovenia; explore networks of caves; and search out isolated monasteries, like the medieval-era Carthusian monastery at Pleterje. And for those despairing that Europe’s ancient cities are giving way to skyscrapers there is cobblestoned Ljubljana, where on a market morning one can sample cheeses and meats that challenge the best fare of top restaurants. This is a country that honors its past and accommodates the future. These pages will give you a sense of the place. But—just go.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY VILIUS KIRVAITIS



