THE WEEKENDER

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# LJUBLJANA

**With a fairy-tale Old Town and an underrated wine scene, it's clear why Slovenia's capital is fast becoming a must-visit. Here's our weekend guide**

## Friday evening

From the airport, take a 30-minute bus to Ljubljana Bus Station for under €4. It's 10 minutes from the station to Prešernov trg square, in the Old Town. Stroll along the Ljubljanica river until you reach cosy Pizzeria Trta. Satisfy those post-flight cravings before choosing from a selection of more than 20 beers at the Lajbah pub next door. Round off your first night by crossing the river to Nostalgija Vintage Cafe, a bar that will transport you 50 years back in time. ▶

The Franciscan Church of the Annunciation, Ljubljana



# SATURDAY





### Saturday morning

Start your morning at the intimate EK Bistro in the Old Town. Opt for eggs or a freshly baked pastry with homemade marmalade to go alongside your coffee and then hop over the river to the Central Market, where you'll find handmade crafts to take home. From here, take a walk west to the city's largest park, Tivoli, on the way picking up a cake from Kavarna Zvezda to enjoy on a park bench before you lose yourself in the picturesque gardens.

**'Ljubljana Castle is an essential stop-off in the city and can be reached by the funicular railway'**

### Saturday afternoon

Walk back to the centre via the National Gallery of Slovenia, where you'll see the Fountain of Three Carniolan Rivers by Baroque sculptor Francesco Robba. Head over to the river for wine tasting at Šuklje, a trendy bar overlooking the river that also runs tasters on the only electric-powered wooden boat in Ljubljana. Sample a range of Slovene wines with local cheeses and then keep the vino flowing with a glass of Cviček – made by mixing red and white together.

Above from top left: Plecnik's Market borders the Ljubljanica canal; view of Ljubljana Castle; the palace-like interiors at the National Gallery of Slovenia





### Saturday evening

Ljubljana Castle is an essential stop-off in the city and can be reached by the funicular railway. At the top, Grajska Vinoteka – the castle's own wine bar and shop – is the perfect place to soak up the views. From here, it's a short walk over the Dragon Bridge to Abi Falafel, run by a Slovenian-Palestinian family on the hip Trubarjeva street, selling delicious mezze. If you have room left, try PROJEKT across the road or Reformator a little further along. ▶

Left to right: The terrace at Šuklje wine bar; Dragon Bridge has become one of the city's icons

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES, GNARTENA GALERIJA, LJUBLJANA, TINA STARMAN, LUKA ESTATO / LJUBLJANA TOURISM

# SUNDAY

## GET OUT THERE

### WHERE TO STAY...



**OCCIDENTAL LJUBLJANA**
**Located in the heart of the capital, Occidental Ljubljana is a short walk from the cobbled streets of the Old Town and close to Ljubljana Castle. The hotel boasts 148 elegantly designed rooms and suites, featuring minimalist touches as well as local artwork. The bedrooms include cosy touches such as plush bedding, blackout curtains for a peaceful night, and well-placed lighting that creates a warm atmosphere. Book now at** easyJet.com/holidays

### Sunday morning

Check out of your accommodation and venture over to Wonderland on Ljubljana's main Slovenska cesta thoroughfare, soaking up its fairy-tale atmosphere with a coffee and morning shakshuka. From here, it's just seven minutes to the bus station, where transport to Bled is frequent. With long queues for each bus, it's easy to work out which buses are Bled-bound and, once on board, you'll be at the bright blue waters of the lake within the hour.





### Sunday afternoon

Once you've arrived in Bled, head downhill to Pub Kitchen. For a taste of classic Slovenian cuisine, opt for the Carniolan sausage with potato salad, then walk it off with a stroll around the picturesque lake, stopping to take plenty of photos and even a dip in the mineral-rich waters. Make sure you spend some time at Kavarna Park for a slice of famous Bled cake – whipped up from flaky pastry, vanilla custard and cream – and stop at Zaka bar, about halfway around, for a drink with a lake view.





Clockwise from top right: An aerial view of Bled Island; the famous Bled cake; the 11th-century castle; wacky interiors at Wonderland cafe-bar

**'Stroll downhill to Pub Kitchen for a taste of Slovenian cuisine'**

### Sunday evening

If you have time, walk up to the 11th-century Bled Castle and round off your trip with a visit to Murka, one of Bled's oldest inns, offering traditional dishes like goulash with stuffed dumplings. Sated, buses from here will take you back to the airport in just half an hour. ■

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