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VYSOKÉ TATRY THE HIGH TATRAS



Slovakia – a part of Europe worth seeing



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The Smallest Alpine Mountains in Europe



The Tatra Mountains dominate the northern part of Slovakia. They form part of the massive Karpaty Mountain span, 1200 km long and form its highest mountain range. The Tatras form a natural frontier between Slovakia and Poland. The Tatra Mountains, a relatively small area spreading 786 sq. km, 550 sq. km in Slovakia, are abundant in natural monuments, rich and individual fauna and flora species. The Tatra Mountains are 78 km long and 17 km wide and are divided into the West Tatra and East Tatra Mountains. The East Tatra Mountains are further divided into the Vysoké and Belianske Tatry Mountains. Regardless of your actual location, you will surely succumb to its magic and be overwhelmed with the desire to familiarize yourself with the Tatra Mountains.

Since the beginning of time, man has been drawn to the sky. In the Tatra Mountains you can really enjoy the excitement that the elevation gives you. In the company of experienced guides, less experienced tourists can also conquer the high peaks of Slovakia, eleven of which exceed a height of 2,600 m. It is a unique experience to ascend the highest peak of the High Tatras, the Gerlachovský štít (peak) (2,655 m above sea level). In the sunshine, you can enjoy a breathtaking view not only of Popradská kotlina (basin), with its small towns and villages, but also an immense part of the Slovak country in the distance.

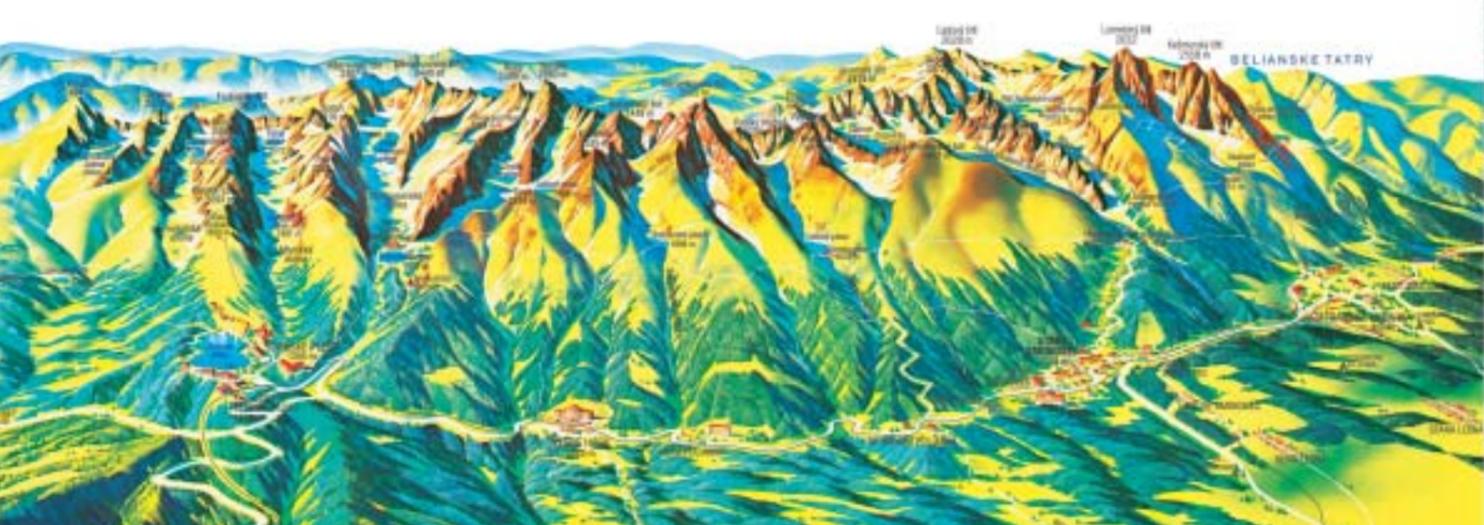
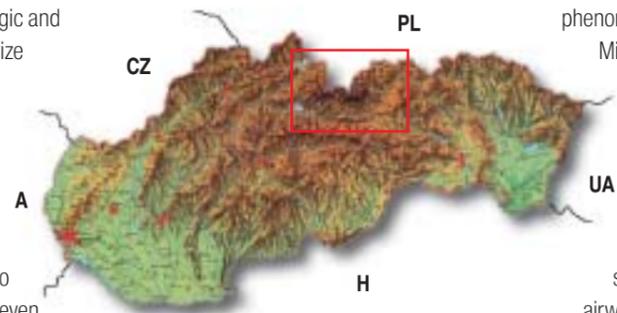
The Tatras are ideal for family holidays. Due to their exquisite natural scenery, the Tatras offer many possibilities to enjoy moments of relaxation, entertainment and physical exertion in the fresh air. In summer, the Tatra Mountains offer not only ideal terrains for mountaineering, a dense network of tourist and cycling tracks of all levels of difficulty, but also terrains for skating, paragliding, bungee jumping, horseback riding, tennis, fishing and

many other sport activities. In winter, the nine ski-resorts offer excellent downhill courses and tracks with regularly maintained ski slopes spanning 5 to 50 km, for all age groups and degrees of difficulty. Our modern, rushed lifestyle drives many people to continuously strive for personal records and set themselves higher and more bolder objectives. The area of the Tatras also offer optimal conditions for the devotees of extreme sports and alpine tourism. The visitors must, for security sake, observe the Visiting Order of the Tatra Mountains.

We must not forget another important phenomenon: the alpine air. In the 19th century Mikuláš Szontágh discovered its extraordinary curative effects, and established climatic sanatoriums in Nový Smokovec, which welcomed its first balneal guests in 1876. These sanatoriums became very popular with guests from all over Europe. Many therapeutic facilities specializing in the treatment of the upper airways, bituminosis and pneumonic surgery are situated in the Tatras.

The foothills of the Vysoké Tatry, are dotted with villages and settlements maintaining the folk tradition. The villages have kept their original architecture, folklore and customs. Castles and manor-houses with splendid collections of old furniture and objects of art, royal towns with preserved town centres, museums and open-air museums are situated in the close surroundings. Many restaurants offer refreshments, from the most luxurious, to original shepherd huts, well-known for their grilled specialties and Gypsy music; self-services, small bistros and friendly coffee-houses.

Come and enjoy the Tatra Mountains! The magic atmosphere of the smallest alpine mountains in Europe will refresh you and invigorate you with the optimism and energy you need to overcome the demanding days ahead.



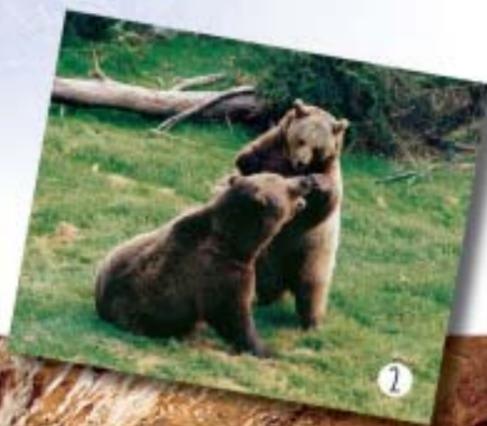
1. The most important architectural sight in Tatranská Lomnica, Grandhotel Pina, constructed in the Art Nouveau.
2. The Liptov Village Museum at Pribilina is situated 24 km from Štrbské Pleso.
3. The harsh nature in the Tatras astounds one with a wide palette of colours.
4. A carpet of flowers unfolds each spring at the foothill of the alpine mountains.

On the Paths of the Tatras

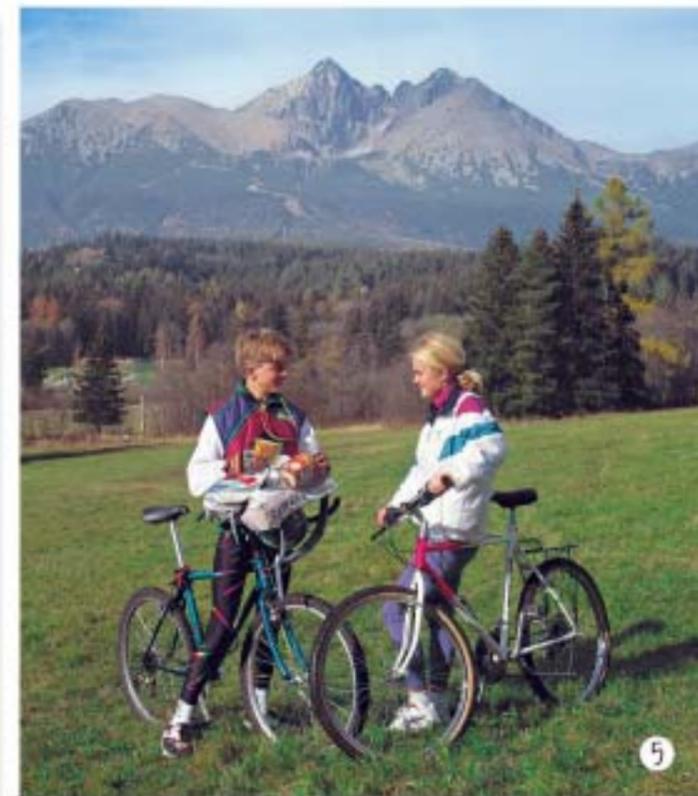


Vysoké Tatry and Belianske Tatry Mountains contain 297.5 km of marked tourist paths. The hub of these paths represents the Tatranská magistrála (Tatras Artery), a tourist path marked in red, 70 km long, stretching through the attractive environs of the southern hillsides of the Tatra Mountains, towering over the forest belt. To follow this path from its very beginning in Jalovecká dolina (valley), in the West Tatras, to its end at the Biele pleso (lake), would take several days.

Trips through the beautiful Tatra countryside on normal or mountain bicycles are highly recommended. The cycle paths are divided, according to their strenuousness, from easy to intermediate, and demanding. Six paths are designated only for mountain bicycles, and the remaining six are for mountain and normal bicycles. All paths are made mostly from tar, gravel or reinforced coating, and are marked with boards and arrows. In addition to panoramic views of the peaks of the Tatras, visitors can also see typical fauna and flora species.



1. The surroundings of Štrbské Pleso offers visitors various tourist programmes during each season.
2. It is very rare for tourists to observe such performances; at present only about 50 bears live in the Tatras.
3. The Belianská jaskyňa, the largest, single accessible cave in the Tatras, is situated in the limestone slope over the Tatranská Kotlina (fold).
4. The valley Dolina Kežmarskej Bielej vody, mostly wooded in the eastern part is 7.5 km long.
5. One of the most attractive cycling tours leads from Tatranská Lomnica to the cableways.
6. On the Mengusovská dolina (valley) route, it is possible to closely admire the rare Tatras flora.





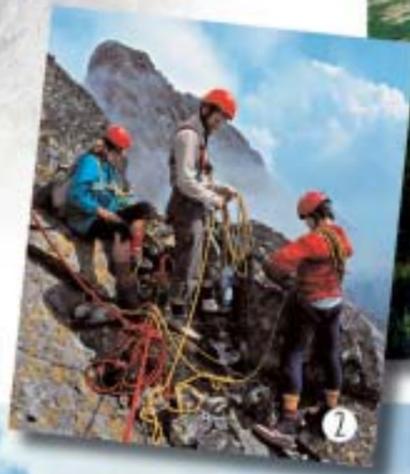
From the Observation Tower

The rocky world of the Tatra's peaks rises from the dark green of the forest and dwarfpine belt. The most advantageous way to view and enjoy the highest peaks are from an airplane or balloon. If you are not keen on this type of adventure, you can ascend the peak Lomnický štít (situated 2,632 m above sea level) by aerial cableway. The other peaks you must climb by yourself, however. You can try mountaineering in the training areas or directly in the mountains themselves, under the supervision of experienced leaders. They will teach you how to use a climbing rope and move safely along the terrain.

The magnificent views from the highest peaks of Slovakia can hardly be surpassed. You will also experience unforgettable moments on the alpine tour to Mlynická dolina (valley), at the impressive Skok Waterfall or in the neighbouring Mengusovská dolina (valley), containing the largest lake in the Tatras, the Hincovo pleso (lake), extending to 20.08 ha and 53.7 m. deep. Do not forget the ground cable-railway from Starý Smokovec to Hrebienok, totalling 1,352 m in length, following one of the most attractive routes in the Vysoké Tatry. On some paths leading to the mountain chalets, constructed "in the sky", you can meet mountain porters who supply chalets with the necessary supplies and foodstuffs.



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1. The Ihla v Ostrve (1,980 m) is extremely challenging.
2. Tourist accompanied by experienced mountain leaders, venture to conquer the highest Tatra peaks.
3. The Prostredný hrot (2,440 m) lies expose from the Lomnické sedlo (saddle).
4. The cabin cableway from Tatranská Lomnica to Skalnaté pleso can transport 900 persons per hour.
5. The view from Vysoká (2,560 m) to the eastern part of the Vysoké Tatry.
6. The most exquisite view on the peaks is from the basket of a hot-air balloon.



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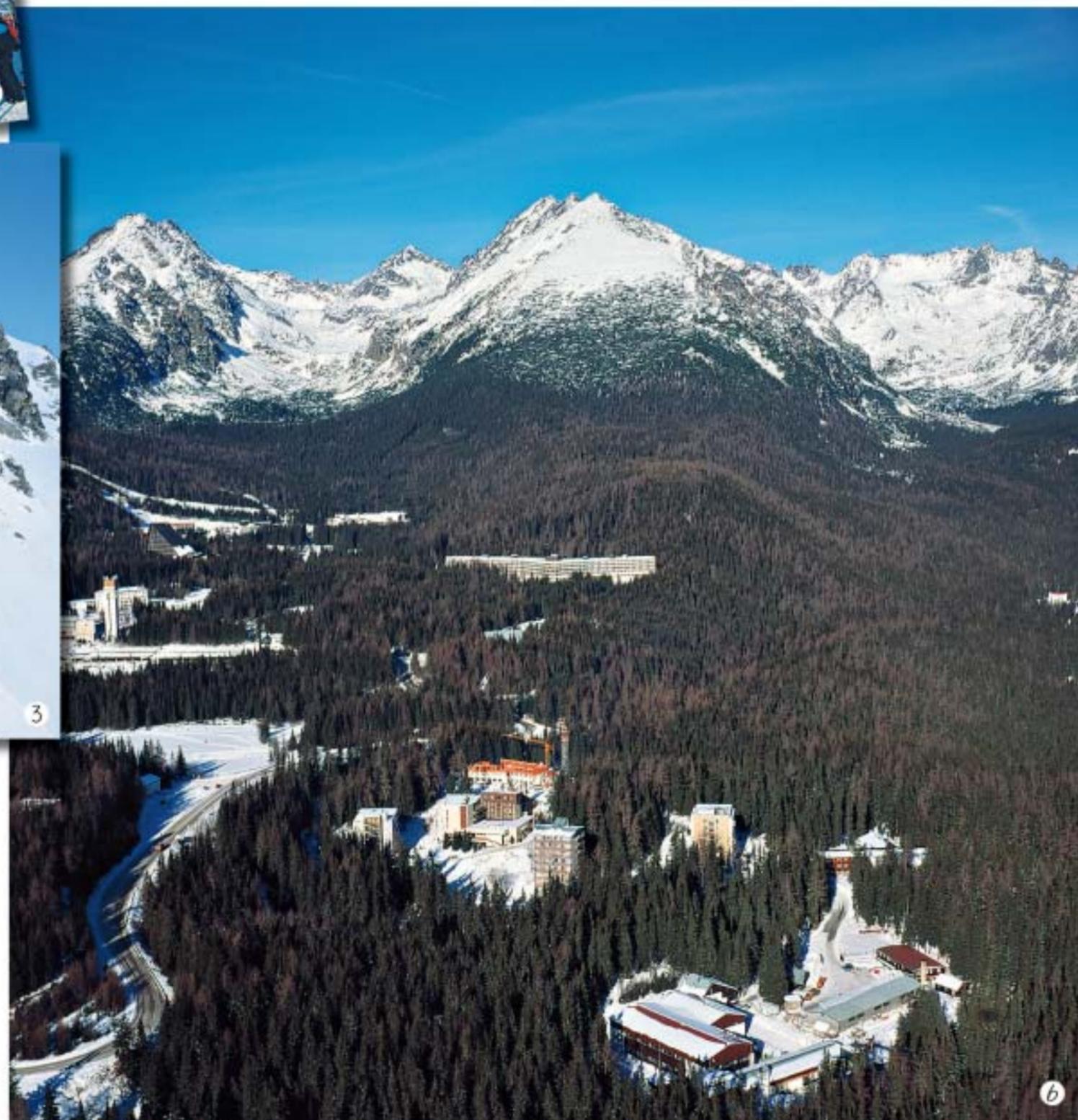
Through the White Country

The Mountains covered with snow, is the most perfect place for any skier. The nine ski resorts are equipped with perfectly constructed paths, with a total of 19 km for cross-country skiing and 58 km of downhill slopes. The longest downhill slope meanders from the Lomnické sedlo to Tatranská Lomnica, a total length of 4.8 km, enabling one to savour the beauty of skiing. Another extraordinary experience is sledding from Hrebienok to Starý Smokovec on a slope exceeding 3 km. All resorts are equipped with modern ski-lifts and chair lifts; six chairlifts and cable railroads and 34 ski-lifts, able to transport more than 20,460 persons per hour.

The Tatras welcome children. The smallest visitors can join ski schools, under the guidance of experienced leaders and venture to try their first steps on skis, "falling" for this beautiful sport forever. The highlight of a memorable day – a cup of aromatic tea in pleasant environs, at a coffeehouse or restaurant nearby.



1. Ski-jumps in the ski-resort in Štrbské Pleso village.
2. Cabin cableway from the Skalnaté pleso to the Lomnické sedlo.
3. Not even snow will turn back experienced mountaineers.
4. The High Tatras can be discovered also on ski.
5. In the children's ski-school at Tatranská Lomnica.
6. Aerial view at the resorts in the High Tatras in winter.





Taste the Excitement

Do you want to enjoy a delightful look at the Tatra peaks in winter? You can, if you descend any ski jump in the FIS area in Štrbské Pleso. Both ski jumps, the smallest with a height of 70 m, the highest constructed for the championships in 1970 and towering 90 m, offer delightful views of the neighbouring peaks. In the vicinity of the ski jumps, is a stadium with the mark and finish line of racing tracks designed for cross-country skiers. In winter, the Solisko slope becomes a paradise for downhill skiers. Each winter, races and show performances by acrobatic skiers and snowboarders take place on the lower part of the downhill course, the slope INTERSKI.

Considerably more demanding ways of enjoying a delightful look over the Tatras in winter, is to ascend any Tatra peak. A seemingly easy ascent on a well-known track can become very complicated. Daredevils, under the supervision of expert mountain climbers, can ascend icefalls or, with the help of ropes, climb peaks that are reserved only for golden eagles.



1. Facilities at the highest weather station in Slovakia, at Lomnický štít, situated on a plateau, 2,635 m above sea level.
2. Paragliding enables one to enjoy a bird's eye-view of the Tatra Mountains.
3. Skiing on slopes of the Tatras is a real delight.
4. On ascending the slope, ski must be carried on, on descending – fastened to your feet.
5. The FIS Sport Resort in Štrbské Pleso village offers ideal conditions for snowboarding.
6. Crawling in the ice-fall is one of the most exciting experiences.



Holiday Resorts in the Tatra Mountains

The highest located holiday resort in the Tatra Mountains is the Štrbské Pleso village (situated 1,335 m above sea level). The village is situated around the lake of the same name. In summer, its perfect location offers many day trips and in winter, excellent ski conditions. Cross-country raceways, so-called Health Ski Lanes are very popular.

The largest village in the Tatras is Tatranská Lomnica. It is home to the company The State Forests of the Tatras National Park and the TANAP Museum, housing expositions of the flora of the Tatra Mountains. Visitors can make use of the picnic spots, sports grounds, horse racing tracks, tennis courts and the skating-rink.

The oldest village is Starý Smokovec, being also the transport crossroad, connecting villages in the Tatras with Poprad, the most important foothill town of the region. Starý Smokovec is the spa and ski, administrative, business and cultural centre of the region.

The architecture of the villages is mainly modern, but decorative balconies, towers, steep roofs and stud walls from the beginning of the 20th c. attract the attention of the visitor. The region offers all categories of accommodation, as well as four-star hotels and stylish chalets, totalling 12,980 beds.



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1. Favourite means of transport is the cog railway.
2. Folk music adds ambience to any meal.
3. The TANAP-Museum in Tatranská Lomnica, shelters extensive natural science, ethnographic and historical collections.
4. It is also possible to play chess in such exquisite environs.
5. After a day-trip, it makes good sense to enjoy a rest on a summer terrace.
6. The Téryho chata in the valley Malá Studená dolina is the highest situated chalet in the Tatras (2,015 m), open all year round.



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The Magic of the Tatras Foothill Region

The Vysoké Tatry Mountains form part of the historic Spiš and Liptov Region, where exquisite nature supplements the jewels of folk architecture and the artistic building industry, concentrated mainly in Poprad, Levoča, Kežmarok, Spišská Belá and the neighbouring surroundings. Visitors to Levoča can admire the beautiful woodcarvings of Master Pavol, the most important craftsman of Spiš, whose supreme piece of work is the carved altar of the St. Jacob Cathedral (1508 – 1517), the highest gothic carved altar in the world (18.6 m). In Spišská Sobota, in the Poprad area, the listed preserve with the Late Roman church of St. George, dated 1273 and well-preserved Renaissance houses is situated. The historic Spišská kapitula (chapter), the seat of the Spiš archbishop, The Liptov Village Museum at Pribylina, the natural amphitheatre in Východná, Gothic Carthusian Red Closter in the Červený Kláštor village, Betliar and Strážky manour-houses, castles in Kežmarok, Krásna Hôrka and Stará Ľubovňa or ruins of the Spišský hrad (castle) are also worth seeing. Near at hand are the natural jewels of the Dobšinská ľadová jaskyňa (ice cave), Demänovská jaskyňa (cave), Važecká jaskyňa (cave) and Belianska jaskyňa (cave).

1. The lovely Gothic-Renaissance manor-house in Strážky houses expositions of the Slovak National Galery.
2. The gothic altar detail by Master Pavol from Levoča.
3. During the summer folklore festivals, visitors can admire the vivacious folklore dances of mountaineers.
4. The ruins of one of the largest castles in Middle Europe, Spišský hrad, spreads over 4,2 hectares.
5. The picturesque Ždiar village, is situated directly at the foot of the Belianske Tatry Mountains, and its distinctive rustic houses are unique in Europe.
6. The square of the royal town Levoča, is dominated by town hall, constructed in the 15th century.

