

Slovakia

Six days across two very different faces of Slovakia — Bratislava’s compact, pastel-colored Old Town with a hilltop castle over the Danube, and the jagged High Tatras, Europe’s smallest alpine range, reached by a single train ride north — with a UNESCO-listed medieval town, a cable car to one of Slovakia’s highest peaks, and a gorge hike up fixed ladders bolted into a waterfall, with real hotels and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION

6 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

May - September

warm, mild days (upper 60s–80°F / 20–27°C) in Bratislava and reliably open hiking trails and cable cars in the High Tatras; June and September bring the fewest crowds, while July–August is peak season for Slovak families. Winter (Nov–Mar) closes many Tatra trails and some cable car sections to snow.

FROM

\$950 USD / person

for 2 people, incl. 5 nights’ lodging, train travel between Bratislava and the Tatras, and key admissions

Day 1

Bratislava Arrival & Old Town at Dusk

A first afternoon on foot through Bratislava’s small, walkable Old Town, closing with a climb up to the castle for sunset over the Danube.

Airport Transfer — M. R. Štefánik Airport (BTS)

~20–25 minutes to Old Town • taxi/Bolt ~\$14–\$20 USD, bus 61 ~\$1.50 USD

Bratislava’s airport sits just northeast of downtown — the 61 city bus runs directly to the main train station on the edge of Old Town, or Bolt (the local ride-hailing app) is the simpler door-to-door option.

Old Town Walk — Main Square & Michael’s Gate

~2 hours, self-guided • free

Bratislava’s entire historic core is small enough to cover on foot in an afternoon: Hlavné námestie (Main Square), the Old Town Hall, St. Martin’s Cathedral where Hungarian kings were once crowned, and Michael’s Gate, the last surviving gate of the medieval fortifications.

Visit Bratislava • www.visitbratislava.com

Bratislava Castle Grounds at Sunset

~1 hour, self-guided • grounds free, museum ~\$12 USD

A short uphill walk from Old Town to the whitewashed, block-shaped castle overlooking the Danube and the modernist SNP Bridge — the courtyard and ramparts are free to wander and are the best sunset spot in the city.

Bratislava Castle • www.visitbratislava.com/en/place/bratislava-castle

Dinner — Slovak Pub

~1.5 hours • \$12-\$22 USD / person

A rambling, wood-beamed Old Town institution spread across several connected rooms, serving hearty Slovak classics like bryndzové halušky (potato dumplings with sheep's cheese) alongside local draft beers.

Slovak Pub · www.slovakpub.sk/en

Overnight — AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava Old Town

From \$130-\$190 USD / night, for 2 people

A modern, well-reviewed hotel a few minutes' walk from Hlavné námestie, with a rooftop terrace looking over the Old Town rooftops toward the castle.

AC Hotel Bratislava Old Town · www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/btsac

Day 2 UFO Deck & a Devín Castle Day Trip

A morning view from Bratislava's strangest landmark, then a short trip upriver to the ruined clifftop castle where the Danube and Morava rivers meet.

UFO Observation Deck, SNP Bridge

~45 minutes, self-guided • ~\$14 USD / person

A saucer-shaped restaurant and viewing deck perched 95 meters above the Danube atop the SNP Bridge, with a 360-degree view over Old Town's spires on one side and the Petržalka housing estates on the other — mornings are quieter than the sunset crowd.

UFO Bratislava · www.u-f-o.sk

Devín Castle Day Trip

~3 hours round trip, bus or river boat • admission ~\$9 USD, bus ~\$1.50 USD

Ruins of a medieval fortress on a dramatic limestone cliff where the Danube meets the Morava River, marking the Slovak-Austrian border — bus 29 runs directly from Bratislava's Nový Most, or a river boat makes the same trip in summer.

Devín Castle · www.muzeumdevin.sk/en

Dinner — Old Town, Bratislava

~1.5 hours • \$18-\$35 USD / person

A last evening among Old Town's courtyard restaurants and wine bars before the train north — the streets around Frančiskánske námestie fill with outdoor seating on warm evenings.

Overnight — AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava Old Town

From \$130-\$190 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night in Old Town before the morning train to the Tatras.

AC Hotel Bratislava Old Town · www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/btsac

Day 3 Train North to Štrbské Pleso

A scenic train ride the length of the country, ending at a glacial lake ringed by the jagged High Tatras peaks.

Train — Bratislava to Štrbské Pleso (via Poprad-Tatry)

~4 hours, Slovak Railways (ZSSK) · from ~\$25-\$75 USD / person

A direct or one-change train ride across the length of Slovakia, with the flat Danube lowlands gradually giving way to the High Tatras' granite skyline in the final stretch before Poprad-Tatry, where a narrow-gauge electric railway continues up into the mountains to Štrbské Pleso.

ZSSK Slovak Railways · www.zssk.sk/en

Štrbské Pleso Lakeside Walk

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free

A glacial lake at 1,346 meters, its still water mirroring the surrounding peaks on calm afternoons — a paved path circles the lake in under an hour, an easy way to settle into the altitude after the train ride.

Dinner — Hotel restaurant, Štrbské Pleso

~1.5 hours · \$25-\$45 USD / person

Slovak and Central European dishes with a lake or mountain view — most Štrbské Pleso hotels keep kitchens open late for arriving train travelers.

Overnight — Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras

From \$260-\$420 USD / night, for 2 people

A five-star lakeside hotel directly on Štrbské Pleso with a spa and floor-to-ceiling views of the Tatras — the trip's base for the next three nights.

Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras · www.kempinski.com/en/grand-hotel-high-tatras

Day 4 Lomnický štít Cable Car

A three-stage cable car ride to Slovakia's second-highest peak, with the rest of the afternoon free for an easier valley walk.

Cable Car — Tatranská Lomnica to Lomnický štít

~3 hours round trip incl. summit time · from ~\$65 USD / person

A three-stage ride — gondola, then large cable car, then a small summit car — climbing to 2,634 meters at the top of Lomnický štít, Slovakia's second-highest peak, with a viewing platform looking north into Poland on clear days; summit time is limited to 30 minutes and tickets are timed, so book the morning slot ahead online.

VT — Tatry Cable Cars · www.vt.sk/en/resort-info/cableway-trips/lomnicky-peak

Tatranská Lomnica Village Walk

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free

A small Belle Époque resort village of early-1900s wooden villas at the base of the cable car, with easy forest paths and mountain-view cafés for an unhurried afternoon after the summit.

Dinner — Štrbské Pleso

~1.5 hours · \$25-\$45 USD / person

Back at the lake for the evening, with a choice of hotel dining rooms and a couple of standalone restaurants along the lakeside promenade.

Overnight — Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras

From \$260-\$420 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night on Štrbské Pleso.

Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras · www.kempinski.com/en/grand-hotel-high-tatras

Day 5 Spíš Castle & Medieval Levoča

A day trip east to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites — one of Europe's largest castle ruins and a walled medieval town built around the tallest wooden altar in the world.

Rental Car or Transfer — Štrbské Pleso to Spíš Region

~1 hour each way · rental car from ~\$45 USD / day, or private transfer ~\$120 USD round trip

Spíš Castle and Levoča sit about an hour east of the Tatras — a rental car from Poprad gives the most flexibility, or hotels can arrange a private driver for the day.

Spíš Castle (Spíšský hrad)

~2 hours, self-guided · admission ~\$11 USD

One of the largest castle complexes in Central Europe, its ruined walls and towers spread across a hilltop visible for miles across the Spíš countryside — a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993, with a small museum inside the upper castle.

Spíš Castle · slovakia.travel/en/spissky-hrad-castle

Levoča Old Town & Basilica of St. James

~2 hours, self-guided · basilica ~\$4 USD

A walled Gothic and Renaissance town, its arcaded main square lined with burgher houses leading to the Basilica of St. James, home to the tallest wooden altarpiece in the world, carved by Master Paul of Levoča around 1517.

Basilica of St. James, Levoča · www.bazilikalevoca.sk/en

Dinner — Levoča Old Town

~1 hour · \$12-\$22 USD / person

A handful of family-run restaurants around the main square serve Spíš regional dishes — a good stop before the drive back to the Tatras.

Overnight — Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras

From \$260-\$420 USD / night, for 2 people

A last night back at Štrbské Pleso after the day trip east.

Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras · www.kempinski.com/en/grand-hotel-high-tatras

Day 6 Suchá Belá Gorge & Departure

A last morning scrambling up a waterfall gorge on fixed ladders in Slovak Paradise National Park before the train back to Bratislava for the flight home.

Suchá Belá Gorge, Slovak Paradise National Park

~2.5-3 hours, self-guided (one-way route) · park entry ~\$2 USD

The best-known of Slovak Paradise's via-ferrata-style gorge trails, following a stream past a series of waterfalls via chains, iron rungs and fixed wooden ladders bolted directly into the rock — a one-way, uphill-only route requiring reasonable fitness and sturdy shoes; the trailhead at Podlesok is about 40 minutes' drive from Štrbské Pleso.

Slovak Paradise National Park · www.npsr.sk/en/hiking/75/sucha-bela

Train — Poprad-Tatry to Bratislava

~4 hours, Slovak Railways (ZSSK) · from ~\$25-\$75 USD / person

The same scenic route in reverse, timed to connect with evening flights out of Bratislava's airport. ZSSK Slovak Railways · www.zssk.sk/en

Departure — M. R. Štefánik Airport (BTS)

~20-25 minutes from the train station · taxi/Bolt ~\$14-\$20 USD

Closes the loop on six days that ran from a hilltop castle over the Danube to a cable car above 2,600 meters to a ladder-scramble up a waterfall gorge — check in for the flight home.