

### The things that make Slovakia great

So what do Slovaks think that make their country great? Well, many love its nature. The beautiful forests and mountains that are in its national parks. The Tatra Mountains are perhaps the country's greatest asset. They form part of the Carpathian Mountain range. Another great thing in Slovakia is the national park Slovak Paradise (Slovenský Raj). Slovakia also has many beautiful lakes to see including Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatras. Slovakia has a lot of interesting castles to visit including Spišský castle and Bratislava Castle. Spas are pretty popular, especially those at Piešťany and Bardejov. There are some interesting caves to explore including those at Dobšinská ľadová and Demänovská. There is some great folk architecture to see including many traditional villages. On the eastern side of Slovakia there are many wooden churches to visit. Folk music and dancers wearing traditional costumes are also great things to enjoy. Slovakia is also famous for its pretty girls. It is said they are the most beautiful women in the world. It thus boasts some top models. It also has some incredibly nice people.

Food and drink help make Slovakia great. It has some really nice beer e.g. Zlatý Bažant, Šariš, and Smädný Mních. Its men like to drink spirits e.g. Slivovica and Borovička though this does produce a few alcoholics. Kofola is a great local alternative soft drink to Coke or Pepsi. In September, Slovaks love to drink Burčiak, a two week old sweet thick wine that is purple or white. Great wines from Slovakia include Slovak Tokaj or wines grown around its capital on the slopes of the small Carpathian Mountains, especially around Pezinok. Great Slovak foods include Bryndza (Sheep's cheese) halušky (dumplings), and lokše (pancakes – some with poppy seed in). A favourite food in the autumn is goose. Slovaks love going to goose parties – the most famous village for this activity is Slovenský Grob, but take a thick wallet with you.

Slovakia is great for skiing and hiking. Slovaks love to ski and to go hiking in the mountains. The country is greatly into ice hockey. The sport is watched by more Slovaks than football though in 2010 Slovakia played in the FIFA World Cup in South Africa for the first time in its short history – and they played pretty well, even beating former world champions Italy!

**Category: Central Europe / Slovakia / Great things**

**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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Slovaks also like water sports – kayaking is popular. The country has some great top tennis players.

The car industry makes Slovakia great. The country is known as the 'Detroit of the East' due to car manufacturers like Kia, VW and Peugeot Citroen producing cars here. Another top manufacturer is Samsung. Other things that make Slovakia great include its ethnic minorities. The gipsies, the Hungarians, the Rusyns, the Poles and the Czechs.

Slovakia is great because of its capital Bratislava, which sometimes can be regarded as a country within a country, as the real Slovakia lies outside it to the east. Slovaks love its Old Town, its trams, trolleybuses; the UFO Bridge across the river Danube, its panel built flats and its super new shopping centres. Slovaks love IKEA and Tesco! Bratislava has Europe's oldest park. It has Zlaté Piesky beach with its lake and there is Bratislava Airport!

Other things that make Slovakia great include its present and past Presidents and Prime Ministers. Slovakia has its own heroes (and villains!). One famous Slovak hero is Juraj Jánošík who is regarded as the Slovak Robin Hood. Like most countries Slovakia does have some negative points, for example, the taxis that rip off the foreigners, the corruption, the terrible service in some restaurants and its communist bureaucracy!

Things that have made Slovakia great in the past include communism. Slovaks call it socialism (Westerners call it communism). Many have fond memories of the socialist pioneer camps teenagers went on, the communist hotels, the socialist store Prior, and Tuzex stores. The latter were coupon shops for those with hard currency to convert and spend who could then obtain western goods. Slovaks used to drive Skoda, Lada, Trabant and Tatra cars. The latter being adorable and famous, as in the 1960s the classic T603-1 that had three front headlights; however, these were for the party elite!

Ultimately, Slovaks love Slovakia because at the end of the day for them it's home!

## EXERCISES

**1. Geography: Slovakia:** Where is Slovakia? What is its capital? What countries surround it? Who is its President? Draw a map on the board then look on Google maps to help you.

**2. Slovakia:** Briefly, what three things do you know about Slovakia? Go round the room swapping details.

**3. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**4. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**5. Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**6. The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

**7. Let's think!** Think of five things about Slovakia. Then add five great things about the country. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

Five things about Slovakia	Five great things about Slovakia
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**8. Let's think: Slovak's great economic recovery:** In *pairs/groups* think of four ways Slovakia is going forward with its economic recovery after the economic crash. Discuss together.

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**9. Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with the '**Slovakia**'. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

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**10. Let's talk! Radio Slovakia:** *In pairs.* You are in the Radio Slovakia studio. One of you is the presenter, the other student is a Slovak who is going to be asked what makes Slovakia great? *5 minutes.*

**11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) Name the mountain range.
- 2) Name the soft drinks.
- 3) Name the beers.
- 4) Name three foods.
- 5) Name the caves.

**Student B**

- 1) Name the car manufacturers.
- 2) Name the cars Slovaks used to drive.
- 3) Name the ethnic minorities.
- 4) Name three things in Bratislava.
- 5) Name three things Slovaks have fond memories of.

**12. Let's think!** With your partner think of three things on each of the following subjects about Slovakia that help make it great! Write them below. Why these?

Three Slovak foods	Three Slovak drinks
1	1
2	2
3	3
Three Slovak towns	Three Slovak Castles
1	1
2	2
3	3
Three Slovak pop songs	Three Slovak writers
1	2
2	2
3	3

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**13. Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **The things that make Slovakia great.** Your e-mail can be read out in class.

**14. Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Slovakia \_\_\_\_\_
- b) I love Slovakia \_\_\_\_\_
- c) The things that \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Does the article make you want to visit Slovakia? Why? Why not?
- 3) What does the article tell you about the Slovak nation's food and diet?
- 4) What does the article tell you about how Slovaks live?
- 5) Is Slovakia a flat country? Explain further.
- 6) Are Slovak girls pretty? Compare with other countries and discuss further.
- 7) Would you consider a skiing holiday to Slovakia? Why? Why not?
- 8) Would you consider visiting the Slovak capital Bratislava? Why? Why not?
- 9) How does Slovakia rate against other world ice hockey teams?
- 10) What do you think of Slovakia's national football team? (At the time of writing they are ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world)

### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think of what you read?
- 2) What do you think about the trams and trolleybuses in Bratislava?
- 3) Can you name three great Slovak tennis players?
- 4) What do you think of the corruption in Slovakia?
- 5) What do you think of the taxis in Slovakia?
- 6) Do you prefer to drink Slovak red or white wine?
- 7) What three things from the past help made Slovakia great?
- 8) What do you think of Bratislava airport?
- 9) What do you think of the service in Slovak restaurants?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

## SPEAKING

The things from the past that helped make your country great!

*Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

Think of as many different things from the past that helped to make your country great! Write them either below or on the board. Discuss together.

The teacher can moderate the session.

## GAP FILL: READING:

*Put the words into the gaps in the text.*

So what do Slovaks think that make their country great? Well, many love its nature. The beautiful (1)\_\_\_\_\_ and (2)\_\_\_\_\_ that are in its national parks. The Tatra Mountains are perhaps the country's greatest asset. They form part of the Carpathian Mountain range. Another great thing in Slovakia is the national park Slovak Paradise (Slovenský Raj). Slovakia also has many beautiful (3)\_\_\_\_\_ to see including Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatras. Slovakia has a lot of interesting castles to visit including Spišský castle and Bratislava Castle. (4)\_\_\_\_\_ are pretty popular, especially those at Piešťany and Bardejov. There are some interesting caves to explore including those at Dobšinská ľadová and Demänovská. There is some great (5)\_\_\_\_\_ architecture to see including many traditional villages. On the eastern side of Slovakia there are many wooden churches to visit. Folk music and dancers wearing (6)\_\_\_\_\_ costumes are also great things to enjoy. Slovakia is also famous for its pretty girls. It is said they are the most beautiful women in the world. It thus boasts some top (7)\_\_\_\_\_. It also has some incredibly (8)\_\_\_\_\_ people.

*lakes*

*spas*

*folk*

*mountains*

*models*

*forests*

*nice*

*traditional*

Food and drink help make Slovakia great. It has some really nice beer e.g. Zlatý Bažant, Šariš, and Smädný Mních. Its men like to drink (1)\_\_\_\_\_ e.g. Slivovica and Borovička though this does produce a few (2)\_\_\_\_\_. Kofola is a great local alternative soft drink to Coke or Pepsi. In September, Slovaks love to drink Burčiak, a two week old sweet thick wine that is purple or white. Great wines from Slovakia include Slovak Tokaj or (3)\_\_\_\_\_ grown around its capital on the slopes of the small Carpathian Mountains, (4)\_\_\_\_\_ around Pezinok. Great Slovak foods include Bryndza (Sheep's cheese) halušky (dumplings), and lokše (pancakes – some with poppy seed in). A (5)\_\_\_\_\_ food in the autumn is goose. Slovaks love going to goose parties – the most famous (6)\_\_\_\_\_ for this (7)\_\_\_\_\_ is Slovenský Grob, but take a thick (8)\_\_\_\_\_ with you.

*especially*

*favourite*

*activity*

*wallet*

*alcoholics*

*spirits*

*village*

*wines*

## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### The things that make Slovakia great

So (1)\_\_\_ do Slovaks think that make their country great? Well, many love its nature. The beautiful forests and mountains (2)\_\_\_ are in its national parks. The Tatra Mountains are perhaps the country's greatest asset. (3)\_\_\_ form part of the Carpathian Mountain range. (4)\_\_\_ great thing in Slovakia is the national park Slovak Paradise (Slovenský Raj). Slovakia also has many beautiful lakes to see including Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatras. Slovakia has a lot of interesting castles to visit including Spišský castle and Bratislava Castle. Spas are pretty popular, especially (5)\_\_\_ at Piešťany and Bardejov. There are some interesting caves to explore including those at Dobšinská ľadová and Demänovská. There is some great folk architecture to see including (6)\_\_\_ traditional villages. On the eastern side of Slovakia there are many wooden churches to visit. Folk music and dancers wearing traditional costumes are also great things to enjoy. Slovakia is also famous for its pretty girls. It is said they are the most beautiful women in the world. It (7)\_\_\_ boasts some top models. It also has (8)\_\_\_ incredibly nice people.

Food (1)\_\_\_ drink help make Slovakia great. It has some really nice beer e.g. Zlatý Bažant, Šariš, and Smädný Mních. (2)\_\_\_ men like to drink spirits e.g. Slivovica and Borovička though this does produce a few alcoholics. Kofola is a great local alternative soft drink to Coke or Pepsi. In September, Slovaks love to drink Burčiak, a two week old sweet thick wine that is purple (3)\_\_\_ white. Great wines from Slovakia include Slovak Tokaj or wines grown around its capital on the slopes (4)\_\_\_ the small Carpathian Mountains, especially around Pezinok. Great Slovak foods include Bryndza (Sheep's cheese) halušky (dumplings), and lokše (pancakes – some with poppy seed in). (5)\_\_\_ favourite food in the autumn is goose. Slovaks love going to goose parties – (6)\_\_\_ most famous village (7)\_\_\_ this activity is Slovenský Grob, but take a thick wallet with (8)\_\_\_.

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## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	beautiful	11	bureaucracy
2	perhaps	12	latter
3	asset	13	autumn
4	especially	14	wallet
5	incredibly	15	ultimately
6	architecture	16	adorably
7	traditional	17	elite
8	alternative	18	minorities
9	manufacturers	19	trolleybuses
10	corruption	20	though

### LINKS

[http://www.google.sk/images?hl=sk&client=firefox-a&hs=VIH&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=s&q=slovakia&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&ei=YAURTJiIAobGswa706S2AO&sa=X&oi=image\\_result\\_group&ct=title&resnum=4&ved=0CEIQsAQwAw&biw=1728&bih=751](http://www.google.sk/images?hl=sk&client=firefox-a&hs=VIH&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=s&q=slovakia&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&ei=YAURTJiIAobGswa706S2AO&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&ct=title&resnum=4&ved=0CEIQsAQwAw&biw=1728&bih=751)  
<http://www.slovakia.org/>  
<http://www.slovakia.travel/intropage.aspx?l=2>  
<http://www.slovakia.com/>

### ANSWERS

GAP FILL: The things that make Slovakia great: So what do Slovaks think that make their country great? Well, many love its nature. The beautiful **forests** and **mountains** that are in its national parks. The Tatra Mountains are perhaps the country's greatest asset. They form part of the Carpathian Mountain range. Another great thing in Slovakia is the national park Slovak Paradise (Slovenský Raj). Slovakia also has many beautiful **lakes** to see including Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatras. Slovakia has a lot of interesting castles to visit including Spišský castle and Bratislava Castle. **Spas** are pretty popular, especially those at Piešťany and Bardejov. There are some interesting caves to explore including those at Dobšinská ľadová and Demänovská. There is some great **folk** architecture to see including many traditional villages. On the eastern side of Slovakia there are many wooden churches to visit. Folk music and dancers wearing **traditional** costumes are also great things to enjoy. Slovakia is also famous for its pretty girls. It is said they are the most beautiful women in the world. It thus boasts some top **models**. It also has some incredibly **nice** people.

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