



SLOVAK PARADISE AND SPIŠ



DISCOVERING THE BEAUTY AND ATTRACTIONS OF THE REGION

TOURIST GUIDE
AUTUMN & WINTER



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SLOVAK PARADISE & SPIŠ



Welcome to

SLOVAK PARADISE AND SPIŠ

Spring, summer, autumn and winter. Each season gives the region of the Slovak Paradise and Southern Spiš a distinctive face and charm. Whatever you choose, you will always experience something different, something special and typical for the season. In spring - a unique atmosphere of the birth of new life, blooming meadows, fresh smells and colours of young vegetation, meeting new generations from insects to beasts. During the summer you can enjoy long warm days made for fun and relaxation by the water... However, in this booklet, we would like to draw attention to the other two seasons, which are often unjustly neglected.

Four Seasons

FOUR TIMES A DIFFERENT SLOVAK PARADISE AND SPIŠ

Stable autumn weather creates perhaps the most pleasant conditions in the year for hiking as well as for visiting cultural and historical monuments. The atmosphere on hiking trails within the Slovak Paradise and its environs is more peaceful and romantic compared to the summer. Thanks to the omnipresent bright colors and soft light autumn is the most popular season for both amateur and professional photographers.

During winter the Slovak Paradise and South Spiš region become a winter sports paradise, but there is no need to be afraid of hiking too. Snow cover dampens all the noise, there is a perfect silence and peace in nature, only interrupted by creaking snow under the boots. For more experienced tourists the winter gorges of Slovak Paradise are challenging. They are open all year except for Ferrata HZS Kysel'. In case of favorable conditions, even climbing on selected icefalls is permitted.

On the following pages we bring you some tips for autumn and winter wandering in our region. We focus on places and attractions, which usually do not appear at the first pages of tourist bedeckers, but their hidden beauty may pleasantly surprise you.

We wish you a pleasant stay in Slovak Paradise and Spiš region!



I.

The Markušovce Walls

The Markušovce village near Spišská Nová Ves is mostly visited by tourists because of its splendid Renaissance mansion and summer-house Dardanelly with museum expositions.



Šiklavá skala, photo: Peter Olekšák

However, not everyone knows about the equally interesting natural gem – The Markušovce Walls located in the neighborhood of the village. The yellow-marked nature trail leads you from the center of Markušovce along the Markušovce Walls, and ends in the neighbouring village Matejovce nad Hornádom.



Markušovce Walls, photo: Milan Barlog

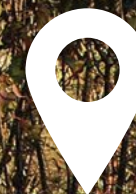
The entire educational trail is 6 kilometers long and takes about 2 hours to walk. Therefore it is an easy walk suitable for all ages, even in autumn or winter. If you decide to take the trip in winter, you can continue from Matejovce nad Hornádom on the right side of the Hornád River to the so-called Šiklavá skala Rock. This massive rock overhang forms in case of strong frosts an icefall with a height of up to 14 meters, where you feel like in the ice kingdom.

A unique formation the Markušovce Rocky Mushroom is also a part of the Markušovce Rocks.



The Markušovce Walls rise along the left side of the Hornád River and create a unique landscape scenery here. In 1988 the site was even declared a national natural monument. It also includes a unique formation of Markušovce Rocky Mushroom.

THE MARKUŠOVCE WALLS



GPS: 48.9165, 20.64988

II.

White rock

Due to its karst relief, the Galmus Mountains are often marked also as the „Little Slovak Paradise“. In addition to several karst valleys and interesting rock formations, it also attracts tourists with its glamorous scenic peaks.

One of them is Biela skala - the White Rock - towering above the distinctive village Slovinky. Walking the yellow-marked hiking trail from Slovinky to the White Rock takes about an hour and a half.

On the top of the White Rock there is a 3 meter high wooden cross, and benches for tourists to rest after a steep ascent.



WHITE ROCK



GPS: 48.89642, 20.83578

In good weather you can see from the rock the panoramic views of the ridge of Hnilecké vrchy Mountain, Slovinky Rock, Kojšovská hoľa and the village of Slovinky. You can also sign the book located in a steel box on the tourist signpost.

According to your time and strength, you can continue from the White rock in several directions. Either to Krompachy, recreation area Zahura near Spišské Vlachy, village Olcnava, or even walk the whole ridge of Galmus Mountain to the village Poráč. During such a whole day trip you will be rewarded by other two attractive views - Kňazovka and Vysoký vrch. Short deviated routes lead from the main, blue marked trail to the views.

The top of the White Rock is dominated by a 3 meter high wooden cross.



III.

Rocky town in Dreveník

The historic gem of Spiš region, Spiš Castle, also registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List, becomes a destination for thousands of tourists every year. However, we recommend visiting the nearby Dreveník National Nature Reserve too.

Dreveník is divided into two travertine rock towns named "Hell" and "Heaven". They contain numerous karst formations, travertine walls and towers, often sought by rock climbers.

In the vicinity of the Dreveník reservation there are other smaller travertine mounds - Sobotisko, Spiš Castle Hill, Ostrá hora and Sivá brada.

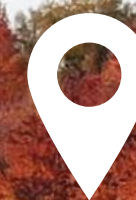
Dreveník is the largest travertine hill in Slovakia, also registered in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List.



The view from Dreveník to Spiš Castle, photo: archive of OOCR Slovenský raj & Spiš



ROCKY TOWN IN DREVENÍK



GPS: 48.98609, 20.77562

From the top platform of Dreveník there are impressive panoramic views of the Spiš landscape surrounding, namely the Hornád Basin bounded by the Branisko Hills, Levočské vrchy Hills and Volovské vrchy Hills. The yellow-marked hiking trail leading directly from the Spiš Castle and ending in the village Žehra, known for its late Romanesque church, also registered on the UNESCO list, runs through the entire territory of the Dreveník.



IV.

Museum of mining in Hnilčič

For centuries, the South Spiš region owed its prosperity and growth mainly to mining. Miners have been mining ores of various metals here since ancient times in dozens of mining sites. Today, when this activity dies down in the region, various themed educational trails and open-air museums are being built in memory of the former mining fame in former mining villages and towns.



Open-cast mining tunnel Ľudmila, photo: Miloš Greisel



MUSEUM OF MINING IN HNILČÍK

GPS: 48.85627, 20.57175

The mining museum in Hnilčič consists of three parts:

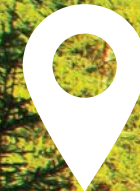
1. MUSEUM EXPOSITION
2. UNDERGROUND SPACE
3. FOUR EDUCATIONAL TRAILS

One of the most interesting mining open-air museums is located in the village of Hnilčič, which, incidentally, is one of the longest municipalities in Slovakia. The mining museum in Hnilčič consists of three parts. The first is a museum exhibition located in historical building of a former school in the local part of Jerhout, near the municipal office. Furthermore, in local part Roztoky you can have a look directly into the underground spaces of the open-cast mining tunnel Ľudmila. The third part of the open-air museum consists of four nature trails: route A - Roztoky, route B - Bindt, route C - Gretľa and route D – through the valley of Železný potok Creek.

An experienced lecturer will recommend you the most suitable variant of exploring the open-air museum according to your time possibilities. More information about the museum can be found on the website skanzenhnilcik.sk.



MALE ZAJFY



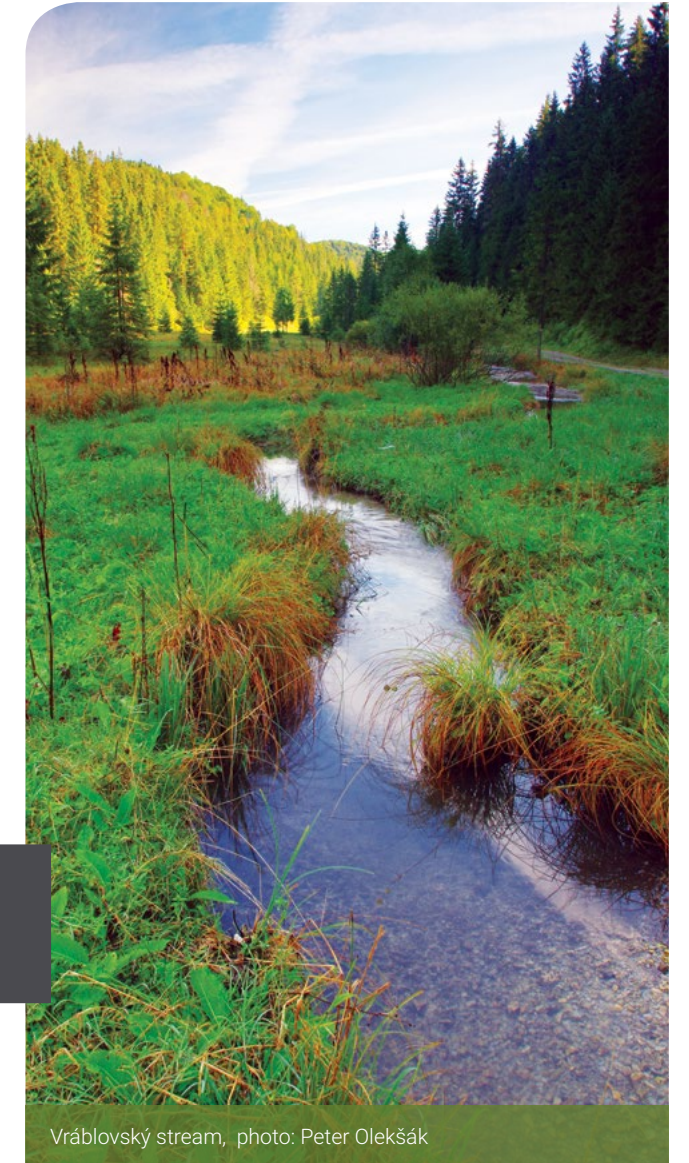
GPS: 48.88988, 20.37025

Malé Zajfy is a name of one of the charming but relatively little known valleys in the south of the Slovak Paradise National Park. Unlike the gorges of the Slovak Paradise, the valley of Malé Zajfy has no karst character. However, it is home for a number of rare plant communities and animals, thanks to which it was declared a Nature Reserve in 1993.

The centre line of the valley is the Vráblovský potok Creek, which creates attractive meanders on its stream. A walk from Stratená village through Stratená sawmill to Malé Zajfy is undemanding in any season, suitable for all age categories of visitors. Thanks to the fact that up to the crossroads of the Veľké and Malé Zajfy the hiking trail leads along the asphalt road with a slight incline, the families with small children in carriages can also choose this destination.

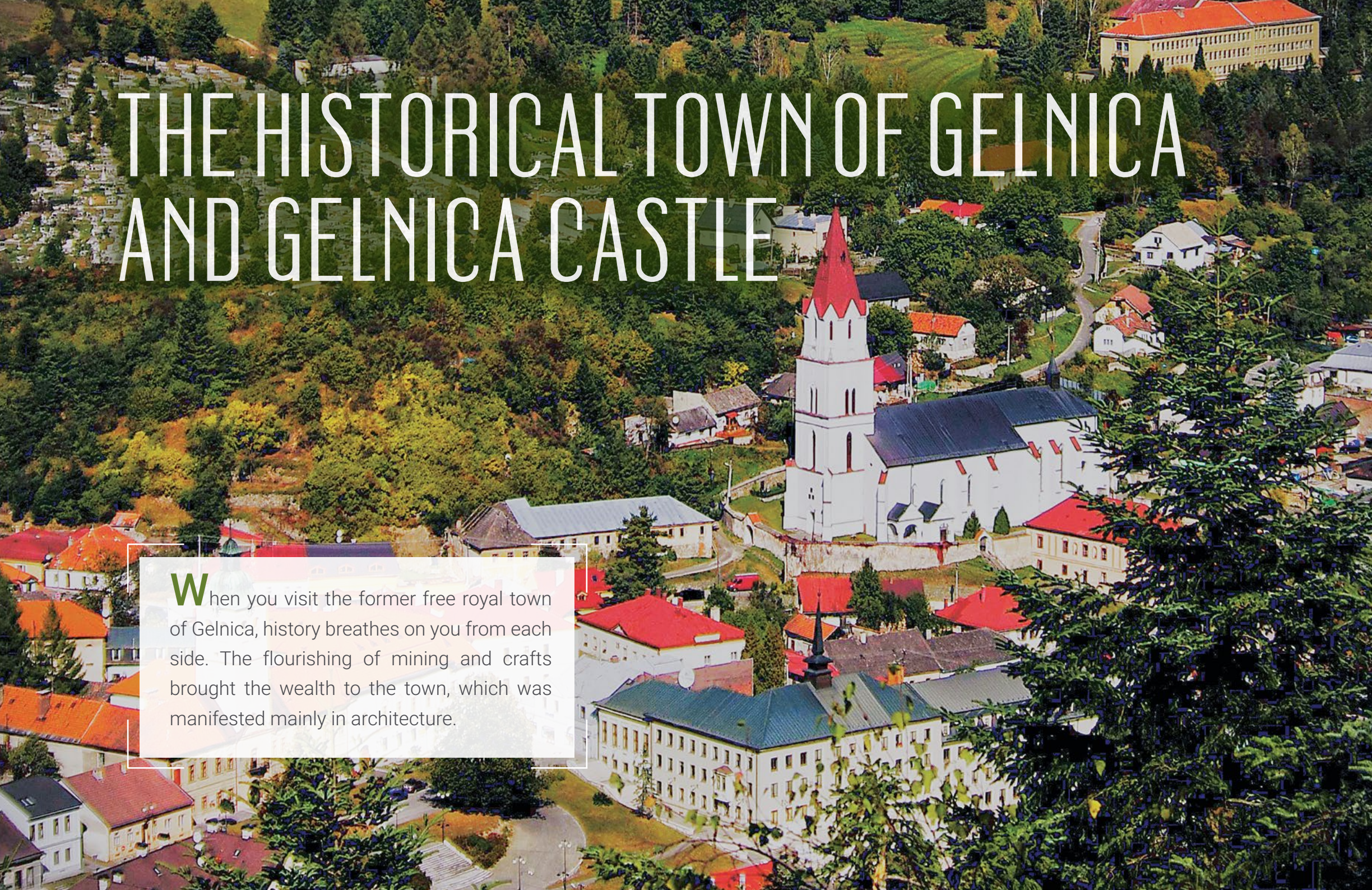
An ideal route for more demanding tourists is the educational trail Slovak Paradise - South. It starts in the village Dedinky, leads along the shore of the Palcmanová Maša dam to Stratenská píla, up the valley Malé Zajfy, to the Geravy plateau and back to Dedinky. The whole circuit is 11 kilometers long and it takes about 3,5 hours walk it all through. The beautiful natural scenery in the valley of Malé Zajfy and its surroundings generously reward everyone who decides to come to this part of the national park.

A twisting stream of creek dominates the picturesque valley of Malé Zajfy.



Vráblovský stream, photo: Peter Olekšák

THE HISTORICAL TOWN OF GELNICA AND GELNICA CASTLE



When you visit the former free royal town of Gelnica, history breathes on you from each side. The flourishing of mining and crafts brought the wealth to the town, which was manifested mainly in architecture.

The historic town center is lined with splendid Baroque mansions of wealthy owners of mines. It is dominated by the Roman Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary's Assumption and the building of the historic town hall, currently the seat of the Mining Museum. When visiting the town, take a walk to the ruins of the Gelnica Castle, dating back to the 13th century.

The historical town of Gelnica and Gelnica castle



The ruins of Gelnica Castle, photo: OOCR Slovak Paradise & Spiš

Gelnica Castle rises above the western part of the town on the Zámčisko hill. In the 16th century the castle was demolished, but then it was owned by the noble family of Thurzo, who restored it. Since then, the castle was also called Thurzo castle. It is interesting that in the past the castle was interspersed with underground corridors for emergency escape from the castle. A walk to the castle ruins is easy, suitable for visitors of all ages. You will be rewarded with a view of the surrounding Volovské vrchy Hills, which open from the castle hill.



Gelnica's Mining Museum, photo: archive of city Gelnica

Raven Rock - 1156 m above sea level

The Southern Slovak Paradise offers several very attractive viewpoints. One of them is Raven Rock, which rises with the height of 1 156 meters near the village Stratená.

RAVEN ROCK

1156 m above sea level



GPS: 48.89007, 20.34452

This dominant hill is characterized by high rock cliffs falling into the east of valley Veľké Zajfy. From the top of the hill there are panoramic views of the central part of the national park, as well as the western corner of the Palmanská Maša dam. There are also several smaller accessible caves in the rock itself.

Pod Havraňou skalou v Suchej doline sa nachádza zvláštny prírodný jav Slovenského raja - Občasný prameň.

You can get to Raven Rock by three different hiking trails - from Stratenský Canyon, Stratená Píla and directly from the village Stratená. Because of steep gradients, this is a moderate walk requiring some condition. However, on your way up, you can relax by the interesting natural creation of the Občasný prameň Spring. From there to the top of Raven Rock you will be accompanied by an educational trail with seven information panels dedicated to the history and natural attractions of the surroundings.



Panoramic view from Raven Rock, photo: archive of OOCR Slovenský raj & Spiš



Raven Rock, photo: Peter Olekšák



VIII.

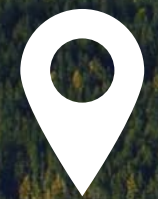
Borovniak (Ondrejisko)

One of the most popular tourist attractions near Stratená is undoubtedly the world famous Dobšinská Ice Cave. An attractive but slightly less well-known tourist destination in its vicinity is the Borovniak view tower, which, unlike the cave, you can visit during all year.

Borovniak is part of the Ondrejisko massif and with its height of 1 272 meters it is one of the highest peaks of the Slovak Paradise. It offers views of the entire western part of the national park with the valley of the Hnilec River, as well as the nearby Kráľova Hoľa, which is already part of the Low Tatras Mountains.



BOROVNIAK (ONDREJISKO) - 1272 m above sea level



GPS: 48.85983, 20.25858

Borovniak offers beautiful views to the surrounding countryside and the nearby Kráľova Hoľa.



The border of three regions - Spiš, Gemer and Horehronie - meet on the top of Besník under the Borovniak saddle. At the same time there are three national parks – Slovak Paradise, Muránska planina and already mentioned Low Tatras. After a demanding ascent you will appreciate a wooden bench, which is set right on the top view and is perfect for a moment of relaxation and meditation over the beauty of the surrounding nature.

The fastest way to get to Borovniak is directly from the Besník Saddle, or from the village of Dobšinská Ladová Jaskyňa, where there is also a railway station, parking and refreshment stalls.

IX.

Šarkanova Diera Cave - Poráč

The Galmus Mountains near the village of Poráč is known for its many karst formations and mysterious caves. Perhaps the best known of these is the so-called Šarkanova diera Cave – Dragon Hole. It is located under a rocky ridge between the hills Vysoký vrch and Borisová. In 1979 it was declared a protected natural reserve.

The cave is 177 meters long. It consists of the Shepherd's Corridor, a high Archaeological Dome and ends with the Gallery. The cave is inhabited by bats that are legally protected. In addition, the cave has been declared a protected natural reserve since 1979, so entry to the cave is only allowed during the season and accompanied by a guide.

The cave represents a great concept among archaeologists as a site of precious artifacts of prehistoric man who inhabited it already in the Late Stone Age, around 4 400 BC. There is also a smaller cave Chyža with a length of 14 meters near Šarkanova Diera, where the oldest remains of a domesticated dog in Slovakia were found.



Entrance to the Šarkanova diera cave , photo: Majka Sabolová Rusnáková

The cave has remnants of sinter decoration, significant archaeological and paleontological findings.



ŠARKANOVA DIERA CAVE- PORÁČ



There is a red-marked hiking trail from the village Poráč, through Vysoký vrch with spectacular views, as well as an educational trail with four information panels, starting at the popular recreation center Porač Park in Poráčska dolina.

Water reservoir Klauzy

The starting point for the hike to Klauzy can be either tourist centers Čingov, Košiarny Briežok, Podlesok, village Spišské Tomášovce (through Tomášovský Výhľad view), or village Dedinky in the south of Slovak Paradise. The Klauzy lies on a green marked hiking trail that crosses the whole national park. Whichever way you choose, this is a medium-demanding walk, for which you definitely need all day.



Klauzy, photo: Peter Olekšák

The Klauzy reservoir is located in the middle of a picturesque natural scenery on the upper flow of the Biely Potok Creek. It served its original purpose from its construction in 1781 until 1950. Today it is primarily used for fish farming and fulfills an aesthetic function. Swimming is not allowed here. Anyway, the temperature of the water in the tank is very low even during the hottest summer.



Klauzy, photo: Peter Olekšák



WATER RESERVOIR KLAUZY

In the territory of today's Slovak Paradise National Park, several artificial waterworks were built in the past. However, these did not serve the purpose of mining as in other parts of Slovakia, but activities related to logging and rafting of the wood. Right in the heart of Slovak Paradise you can visit one of them, called Klauzy.

I.

Downhill and cross country skiing, ice climbing

If you are a cross-country skiing enthusiast, come to enjoy fantastic sport practise in the cross-country skiing areas **in the Grajnár** saddle near Spišská Nová Ves, in the new cross-country skiing area **in Dobšinská Ice Cave** or in the village **Mlynky - Biele Vody** or **Poráč**. In the case of favorable snow conditions there is also possible **cross-country skiing at the sports airfield in Spišská Nová Ves**.



Cross-country skiing area Mlynky - Biele Vody, photo: archive of OOCR Slovak Paradise & Spiš



Sokolja dolina, photo: Peter Oleksák

Ice climbing enthusiasts will certainly appreciate the possibility to climb icefalls with special equipment in the gorge of **Suchá Belá, Piecky, Sokolia dolina Valley, Kláštorská roklina Gorge, Zejmarská roklina Gorge** and also **at the Letanovský Mlyn**.

Ski resorts in the region:

- **Ski Telgárt** | www.skitelgart.sk
- **Ski Gugel Mlynky** | www.skimlynky.eu
- **Ski Mlynky - Biele Vody** | www.skimlynky.sk
- **Ski centrum Hnilčík - Mraznica** | www.scm.sk
- **Relax Center Plejsy - lyžiarske stredisko** | www.plejsy.sk
- **Ski Poráčska dolina** | www.poracpark.sk/sk/lyzovanie
- **Ski Vernár - Studničky** | www.vernar-studnicky.com



DOWNHILL AND CROSS COUNTRY SKIING, ICE CLIMBING

During the winter, there is perfect peace in the Slovak Paradise and southern Spiš. The rush persists only in popular regional ski resorts, which are searched by skiers and snowboarders from all over Slovakia and abroad for their quality services, family atmosphere and affordability. If you are tired of pushing among the crowds of skiers in prestigious Slovak or foreign resorts, come to ski here!

WINTER ACTIVITIES IN PARADISE

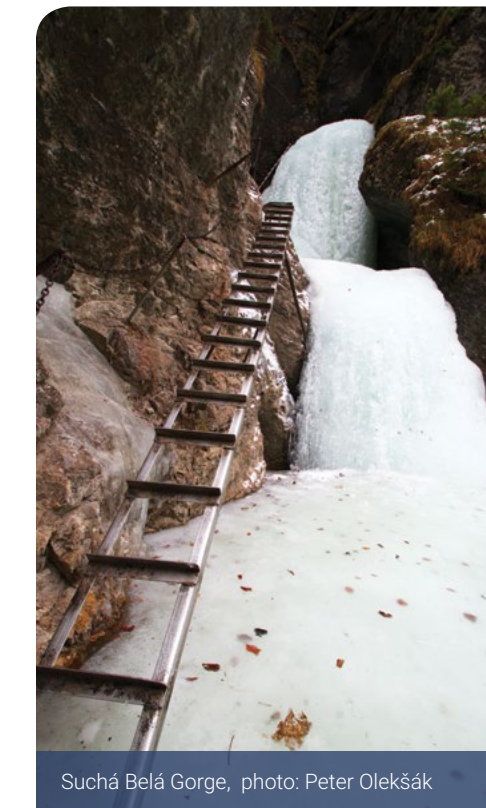
The Slovak Paradise and Southern Spiš region does not lose its charm even during the winter. The waterfalls in the gorges of Slovak Paradise, which are accessible all year round except for Ferrata, are transformed into magical icefalls, snow creaks under the feet, everything shines whitish and there is captivating peace and quiet on the hiking trails.

If you are a fan of an active holiday with a pinch of adventure, do not miss the tourist resort **Čingov** in Slovak Paradise. It is located near the villages of Smižany and Spišské Tomášovce and the town of Spišská Nová Ves. And it has a lot to offer to demanding tourists. Not an hour's walk separates you from one of the most beautiful sightseeing points in Slovakia - **the Tomášovský výhľad View**, from which you can enjoy beautiful views of the surrounding area and the nearby High Tatras. **Sokolia dolina Valley**, with its 75 meters high Zavojový vodopád Waterfall is considered the wildest in Slovak Paradise.

We also recommend visiting the historical **Kláštorisko** with the remains of a 700-year-old Carthusian monastery, where you will be lead through the picturesque Kláštorská roklina Gorge. A very touristy starting point for numerous popular routes in the Slovak Paradise (direction Kláštorisko, Kláštorská roklina Gorge, Prielom Hornádu Canyon ...) is also **Letanovský Mlyn** near the nearby village Letanovce.



The Carthusian Monastery in Kláštorisko, photo: archive of OOCR Slovak Paradise & Spiš



Suchá Belá Gorge, photo: Peter Olekšák



Winter activities in paradise

II.

III.

Winter in Southern Spiš

The almost unknown jewel of the southern Spiš nature, represented by the karst mountains of the Galmus, often called the „Little Slovak Paradise“, or the national nature reserves Galmuská tisina and Červené skaly Rocks, can boldly compete with much better known valleys such as Zádielská on Gemer or Gaderská in Liptov. Impressive views of the whole Spiš open from the peaks of Vysoký vrch Hill, Bukovec, White Rock, Kňazovka and Slovinská skala Rock, which you will surely love.



Vysoký vrch (824 m n.m.), photo: Majka Sabolová Rusnáková

Perfect rest “at the end of the world”. If you are looking for this, the distinctive village of Poráč with its adjacent Poráčska dolina Valley is the ideal choice for you.

WINTER IN SOUTHERN SPIŠ



A popular place for adventurers is also the mysterious cave Šarkania diera, which was once inhabited by a prehistoric man and a cave bear. Nordic walking lovers can enjoy walking through beautiful nature on specially marked circuits. Numerous attractive, well-marked cycling routes connect Poráč with the town of Krompachy and the tourist center Plejsy, as well as with neighbouring mountain villages Závadka and Hnilčík. This secluded piece of Spiš is also known for its mining traditions, so accept the invitation to look into the mining past of the village of Poráč. Visit the Mining Museum at Poráč Park or take a walk through one of the three circuits of the Poráč Mining Trail.

Enjoy the tranquility and intimacy of this charming place in the area of lively and hospitable Ruthenians with their own distinctive culture that will make you feel welcome among them.



The Regional Tourism Organization Slovenský raj & Spiš (OOCR) is a destination management organization in the territory of the Slovak Paradise and southern Spiš.



OOCR

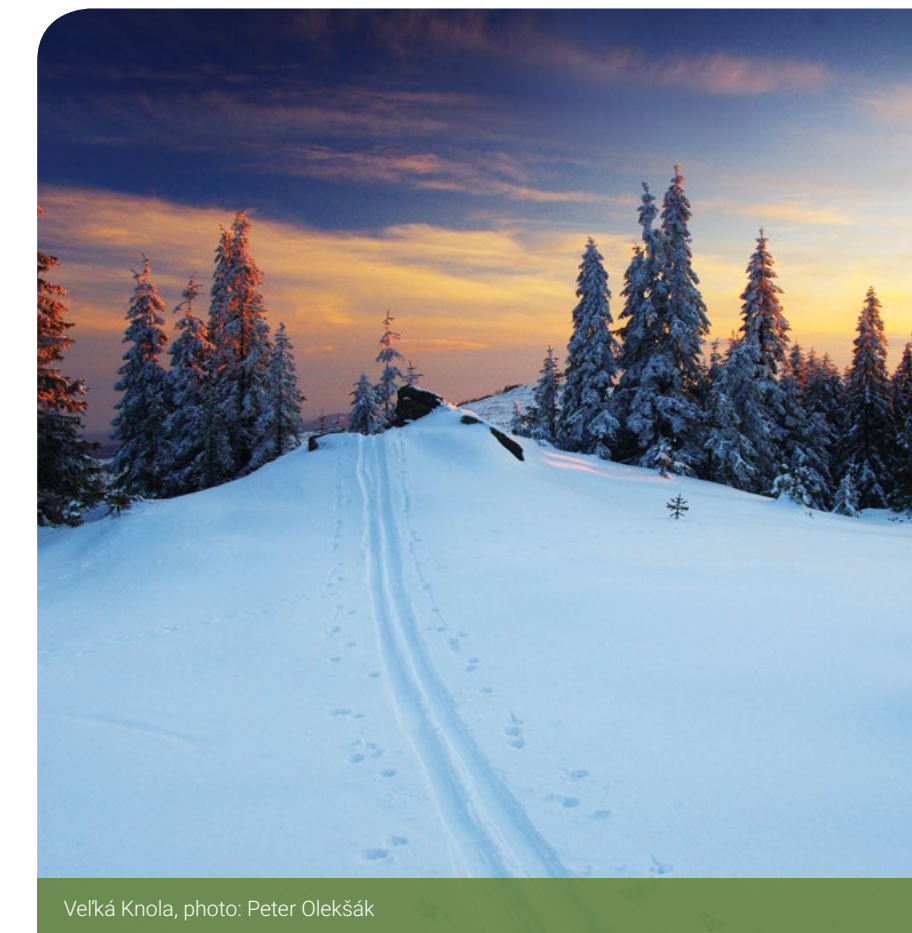
SLOVENSKÝ RAJ & SPIŠ

OOCR Slovenský raj & Spiš creates an active partnership platform of cooperation between entrepreneurs offering products and services in tourism, municipalities of towns and municipalities of the region, Slovak Paradise National Park Administration based in Spišská Nová Ves and a wider range of professional and non-profit organizations.

The common goal of more than 50 partners is to make the Slovak Paradise an important and internationally renowned tourist destination, while promoting and supporting other attractive destinations in southern Spiš.

Here we can mention Poráčska and Hnilecká dolina valleys, Krompachy - Plejsy, historic towns such as Spišská Nová Ves, but also Gelnica and Dobšiná, which are known mainly for their mining history and traditions. OOCR Slovenský raj & Spiš creates conditions for the support of tourism development and realizes new challenges in the development of the territory within its competence.

Through active communication with its members, it reveals not only specific shortcomings, but also opportunities and possibilities for improvement in the field of regional tourism. To the best of its ability, it systematically seeks to implement these improvements in practice.



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