



## **Tour**                      **Slovakia**

BRATISLAVA BOTANIC GARDEN • BETLIAR CASTLE  
KOŠICE BOTANIC GARDEN • SLOVENSKY KRAS NAT'L PARK  
HIGH TATRA • SPIŠ CASTLE • PRIMEVAL FOREST OF DOBROČ  
ARBORETUM BOROVA HORA, ZVOLEN

## **Dates**                      **10 to 17 September 2016**

### **TOUR INTRODUCTION**

Slovakia, in the heart of Central Europe, is a land full of promise. Although it is a new State, it has experienced much fortune and misfortune over its thousand-year history, closely linked to that of its neighbouring nations. Part of Hungary for 1,000 years, attached to the Czech Republic for 75 years under Communist rule, it only regained its independence in 1993. Despite long centuries of subordination, Slovaks have not lost their national sentiment. Proud of their natural riches, their architectural and artistic heritage and traditions, they are striving to enhance that legacy. The country will also captivate you with its diverse landscapes, from the southern plains to the High and Low Tatras where you can explore the well-preserved flora and fauna.

In the course of a week we will be visiting some very different parts of Slovakia. From former excellent dendrologically interesting parks and gardens – some suffering neglect, to the wonderful High Tatras, the Karst region and a unique primeval forest.

### **TOUR SCHEDULE**

#### **DAY 1**

**SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER**

Arrival of participants at the hotel in Bratislava.

#### **DAY 2**

**SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER**

**Morning** Sightseeing tour Bratislava.

Bratislava Botanical Garden. The garden is home to around 5,000 plant species, especially from exotic areas. Its most beautiful parts include a rose garden that covers half a hectare and features, most importantly, up to 150 hybrid rose varieties.

**Afternoon** Transfer to Betliar (ca. 4 hours).

Betliar Castle, an extensive English Park with many romantic buildings, fountains and statues surrounding the manor house.

**Evening** Penzion pri Kastieli Betliar.

#### **DAY 3**

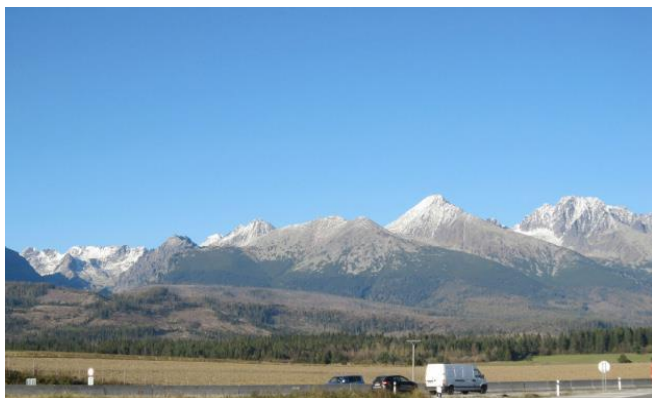
**MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER**

**Morning** Botanical garden of Košice, the largest botanical garden in Slovakia.

**Afternoon** Slovensky Kras National Park.



## IDS Tour information



High Tatra



Sequoiadendron in Banska Stiavnica Botanical Garden

The National Park of Slovensky Kras is the largest karstic area in middle Europe. Visit and walk down the nature trail in Zadiel gorge. Besides the wonderful formation of the karst landscape this area has a high diversity of flora and fauna.

**Evening** Penzion pri Kastieli Betliar

### DAY 4

**TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER**

**All day** High Tatra.

Populations of *Pinus cembra* in the Carpathian mountains are isolated and restricted to island like stands at high-elevation mountain ranges. We will be visiting one of the areas where *Pinus cembra* grows naturally in Slovakia. From the alpine village of Strbský pleso (1350 m) we hike to Popradské pleso (1500 m).

#### **Option to add on to daytrip:**

- Liptovský Hradok arboretum, a small arboretum, unique because at 650 m, it is the highest of all arboretums in central Europe.
- Ruins of Spiš Castle, built in the twelfth century. This is one of the biggest European castles by area. The castle stands high with wonderful views around.

**Evening** Penzion pri Kastieli Betliar.

### DAY 5

**WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER**

**Morning** Primeval Forest of Dobroč (700 - 1000 m).

Dobročský prales is one of the oldest and most precious areas of virgin forest in Slovakia. The forest has been protected since 1913. The virgin forest is interesting because of the majesty of its old trees. We will be visiting the forest area on foot, with one of the park guides.

**Afternoon** Arboretum Borová Hora in Zvolen.

The arboretum is a research and development workplace of the Technical University in Zvolen. The collections (nearly 1800 taxa) are intended for educational, scientific and research work with an emphasis on forestry dendrology. In 1981 it was declared as a Protected Area because of the significance of the value of its collections.

**Evening** Park Hotel Tartuň, Beladice Nitra.



## DAY 6

**THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER**

### **Morning** Arboretum Mlyňany.

The largest collection of non-native trees and shrubs in Slovakia. The arboretum was founded in 1882. The creator Dr Stefan Ambrozy -Migazzi established one of the first large-scale plantings of evergreen trees in Central Europe.

### **Afternoon** Protected area Jelenská Gaštanica (Chesnut Park).

An old preserved forest stand of sweet chestnuts in Trábeč hills. Trees are more than 300 years old.

### **Or**

Topolčianky Manor house and Garden.

An extensive landscaped park with waterworks and champion trees (*Abies cephalonica*). The castle was used as a summer residence of the Habsburg royal house. After WWI it served as a summer residence of Czechoslovak presidents. It has now been turned into a museum.

**Evening** Park Hotel Tartuf, Beladice Nitra.They

## DAY 7

**FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER**

All day

Banská Stiavnica (UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage village).

The oldest mining town in Slovakia (amongst others gold and silver). Centuries of mining were accompanied by a high wood consumption. Since the surrounding forests needed to be managed professionally, the study for forestry began at the Mining Academy, followed by the establishment of the Botanical Garden in 1838.

Banská Stiavnica Botanical Garden.

Contains a variety of domestic and exotic plants (about 250 specimens).

Arboretum Kysihybel.

An experimental forestry area specializing in rapidly growing exotic wood species. The arboretum serves to show students how exotic wood species acclimatise to central European conditions.

**Option** City sights and historical mining sites.

**Evening** Park Hotel Tartuf – Beladice Nitra.

## DAY 8

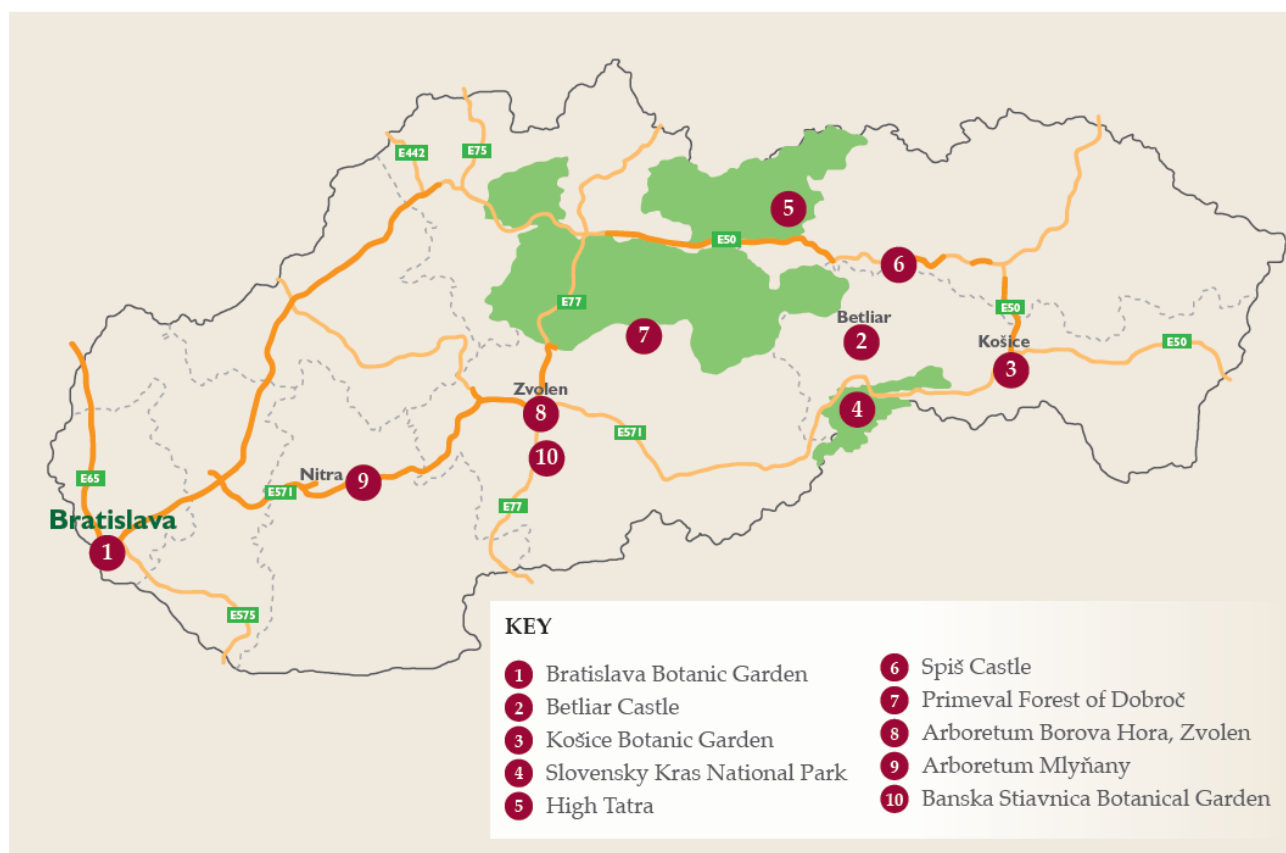
**SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER**

After breakfast return to Bratislava / airport.

Tour concludes.



## LOCATION / ROUTE MAP



## TOUR SUMMARY

Location	Slovakia
Dates	Arrive: Saturday 10 September Depart: Saturday 17 September
Tour organiser	Charlotte Rauwenhoff
Tour dendrologist	Zdenek Blahnik
Availability	Tour restricted to 20-30 participants
Accessibility	For some excursions we will be hiking in strenuous and uneven terrain (Primeval forest Dobroč, High Tatra, Zadiel gorge, Kysihybel arboretum).