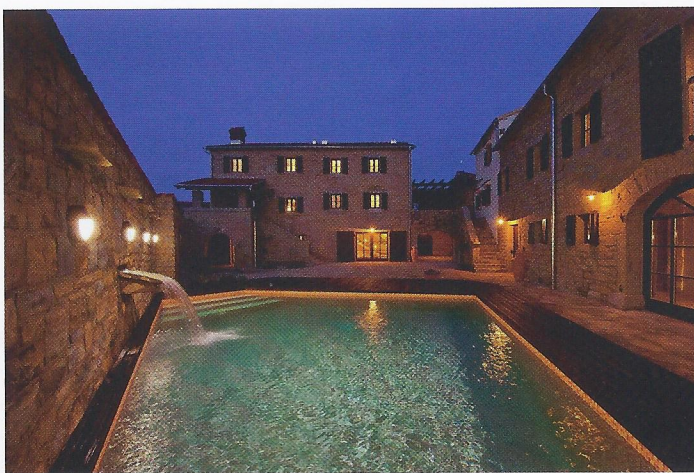


## Property profile

# Slovenia

With a variety of picturesque properties and excellent fly fishing and shooting, why not think about Slovenia, suggests Roderick Easdale



This five-bedroom villa in Topolovec in south-west Slovenia has a swimming pool and staff rooms. €2.4 million, Elite Property Slovenia at (020-7016 3740; [www.savills.com/international](http://www.savills.com/international))

### The market



Slovenia borders Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia and has an intriguing cultural and architectural mix. Around Lake Bled (*facing page*) are alpine properties similar to those in neighbouring Austria; in the west are stone villas and Italian architecture; and the Adriatic coastal region has Mediterranean villas. At the higher end of the market, prices have remained constant or fallen a little. In high-demand areas, such as the capital Ljubljana, Lake Bled and Bohinj—three spots popular with foreigners—prices have stayed solid, and property along the Adriatic coastline also remains in high demand.

### Who buys?



The British, Americans and Russians mainly. Britons and Americans tend to buy the old stone villas and renovate; the Russians prefer new builds. Lovers of the outdoors are drawn to the country because alpine holiday homes tend to be cheaper than elsewhere in Europe and there's a range of outdoor sporting activities nearby, such as skiing, walking, fishing, rafting and shooting.

### Plenty of character...



There is a wide range of property types, from new-build resort apartments to farmhouse renovations, chalets in pristine alpine settings near the skiing and Mediterranean villas in the Adriatic coastal region. Ljubljana's pedestrianised Old Town is the only part of central Ljubljana to have survived intact an earthquake in 1895, and it's popular with investors seeking apartments, including ones for renovation, especially as budget airlines now fly regularly into Ljubljana's Joze Pucnik airport. Ljubljana is in the centre of the country, and is one of Europe's smallest capital cities with a population of 270,000.

### Up and coming



The Soca region in the west of the country offers mountains, emerald-green rivers, outdoor activities and access to the Triglav National Park, with Italian cultural influences and relatively low property prices. It's about an hour from Ljubljana and Trieste airport and two hours from Venice. Elite Property Slovenia are selling a restored 19th-century five-bedroom farmhouse with superb views to the Julian Alps for €850,000. For a renovation project, Think Slovenia have for sale a single lot of three houses built in 2005 in the Lepena Valley in the Triglav National Park for €350,000. Other mountain resorts, such as Kranjska Gora in the Upper Sava Valley, also offer potential bargains.

### Best agents



Elite Property Slovenia (020-7016 3740; [www.savills.com/international](http://www.savills.com/international)) is a Savills associate and its office is in Ljubljana. It can offer advice on design, renovation and construction works, as well as dealing with all aspects of property sales. Think Slovenia (020-8123 2898; [www.thinkslovenia.com](http://www.thinkslovenia.com)) are real-estate brokers who also manage rental properties.

### Where to eat



The town of Kobarid in the Soca region is a gourmet's delight. Here, Kotlar ([www.kotlar.si](http://www.kotlar.si)) serves seafood and pasta, Topli Val ([www.hotelhvala.si](http://www.hotelhvala.si)), fuses Mediterranean and local cuisine, Ana's kitchen at Hisa Franko ([www.hisafranko.com](http://www.hisafranko.com)) uses local produce to craft an exciting interpretation of fusion Slovenian, and Gostilna offers good-value local dishes. In the capital is Neboticnik ([www.neboticnik.si](http://www.neboticnik.si)), once the tallest building in Yugoslavia and recently restored to its original Art Deco glory, where the food matches the views in quality, plus the highly regarded JB ([www.jb-slo.com](http://www.jb-slo.com)), where you can experience the more delicate flavours of Slovenia.

### What to do



The Bohinj and Soca regions have some of Europe's best fly-fishing. The population of boar, deer and foxes has meant that hunting has a long tradition, particularly in the vast mountain areas in the Goricko region. Cerknica lake is a popular spot for shooting wild duck. Lipica is the birthplace of the white Lipizzaner, with the original stud farm established in 1580 to breed horses for the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. Nowadays, the stud ([www.lipica.org](http://www.lipica.org)) is the centrepiece of a huge tourist complex, with two hotels and many equestrian and non-equestrian activities.

### What to see



About 50 minutes north-west of the capital, Lake Bled is surrounded by rolling hills and woodland, with the Julian Alps as a backdrop, and is towered over by Bled Castle. A picturesque island in the middle of the lake holds the Church of the Assumption. Not far away is the village of Vintgar and its spectacular gorge, through which the Radovna river cascades. The Postojna Caves can be viewed during a 1½-hour train ride through them with a tour guide and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Skocjan Caves contain Europe's largest underground gorge.



