



TOUR UPDATE



The Newsletter of mikesworldtour



Tour Highlight:

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Bratislava, Slovakia

Pit Stop in a New Country!

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A QUICK HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, & SOCIAL OVERVIEW

Slovakia was a part of one country with Czechia until 1993 when the two nations decided to split (see Volume 15). At the time Vladimir Meciar was the new prime minister and he and his Czech counterpart were very for the split. The Slovak people were more apprehensive and many feared the future of the country and began applying for Czech citizenship. It had been seen as Czechia little brother so many feared the ability to be economically independent. In its infancy the country had conflicts with Hungary especially when Slovak was adopted as the official language and Hungary was concerned about its minority population living in Slovakia. Meciar became an unpopular leader, and organized crime became an issue in the country. Politics began to stabilize in the 21st century, and the country joined NATO and the EU in 2004. Freedom House gives it a score of 90/100 meaning free but corruption and persecution of the Roma people and ethnic minorities are current issues. EIU gives it a score of 7.03/10 in the flawed democracy category due to lack of political participation and political culture.

Bratislava, Slovakia



Some quick tips for Bratislava :

- Every big attraction in the city can be seen within the span of a few hours
- It is a super easy train from Vienna, so you can do two cities in one day (tickets are about \$8)

EXPERIENCES

When looking at trains from Prague to Vienna I noticed it was cheaper to take a train from Prague to Bratislava and then to Vienna which saves money (yes) but also allows me to visit a new country (major yes). I had a four hour "layover" (idk if you call that for trains) and spent the time exploring Bratislava.

CUMIL



His official name is Cumil the Sewage Worker and was installed within the Old Town of Bratislava to make the area more interesting and try to renovate the old Communist structures. Today it is a popular sight for tourists but a danger to pedestrians and drivers. It has been so much of a danger that there is a sign warning pedestrians and drivers of his existence. Tourists debate if he is either sitting down or if he is going to work underground in the sewage areas. Either way tourists enjoy sitting on his head and taking photos with this entertaining bronze statue.

MICHAEL'S GATE



Besides having a great name (#mikesworldtour) this gate was built in 1300 and reconstructed in 1758. When the city was fortified during the medieval times this was one of the four entrances into the main city. The gate is named after St. Michael and St. Michael's Church that used to be directly next to the gate. The first written document of the existence of the gate is in 1411 and there used to be a drawbridge and moat connected to the gate that visitors would have to go through in order to enter the town of Bratislava (now the old town today but this was a long long time ago).

Bratislava, Slovakia

BLUE CHURCH



The church of St. Elizabeth (commonly known as the blue church) was built from 1908 to 1913. Initially it was part of the high school that was nearby and served as the church and chapel for the school. It is in the style of Hungarian Art Nouveau. This style dominates the inside of the church as well. Although it was closed we could peek inside and see blue mosaics as well as tiling. The outside colors seem to blend into the inside providing beautiful blue tones inside and out.

UFO TOWER



Although it has an official name of Most SNP (noticing a trend here that nothing is called by its og name) the UFO tower is connected to the UFO Bridge which is the 7th largest hanging bridge in the world. Its unofficial names comes from the flying saucer disk shape on top of the tower. The building provides panoramic views of Bratislava, and is an iconic symbol in the "skyline" of the city.

OLD TOWN SQUARE



The main square in Bratislava is formally called Hlavné námestie, and is home to the main Christmas market during the Christmas season. Here you can find local foods as well as goods such as ornaments and other textile goods. During WWII the square was named after Adolf Hitler, and once the communists took over it was named 4 April Square representing the day that the red army liberated Slovakia from Nazi rule. Many of the main attractions (Napoleon's army soldier which unfortunately I did not get a picture of) are located in the square.

See You On the Next Stop on the Tour!