best ... they keep it in the country for local consumption. So, if you love good wines, take the opportunity to taste some of Slovenia's finest. Among some of the favorites of Koper's Primorska costal region are: Cabarnet Franc, Pinot Grigio, Karst Teran, Malvazija, Rumeni Muskat, Rebula and a wonderful Merlot.

SHOPPING Other than the tourist shops in the old town there are two main shopping areas in modern Koper: The Super Nova and the Mercator.

A value-added tax (VAT) of 20% is usually included in the price of any purchase you make. Unless you are a citizen of the EU you can get a VAT tax refund for purchases over a certain amount. Affiliated stores display the Tax Free Shopping logo. Keep your receipt and present it to the proper authority when you return to the port.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in this port is the euro. There are 8 euro coins with a common face. On the reverse, each member state contributes a design. There are 7 euro notes. All euro coins and notes are legal tender in member states.

Most stores accept major credit cards and debit cards. ATM's are usually available, especially in heavily trafficked tourist areas. At smaller establishments cash may be required. Traveler's Checks can be exchanged in banks.Banks, Post Offices and Exchange Offices will change foreign currencies.

TRANSPORTATION Taxis are available at the pier.

Car Rental: Slovenia's roads are in good condition and clearly marked with directions and instructions. The minimum age for car rental in Slovenia is 18 and the driver must have had their license for at least 2 years

TOURIST INFORMATION There is a tourist office in Koper at Ukmarjev trg 7, SI-6000 (trg means plaza or square)

# USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Please - Prosim Thanks - Hvala You're welcome - Ni za kaj Good Morning - Dobro jutro Good day - Dober dan Good evening - Dober vecer Good night - Lahko noc Bye - Adijo

## NOTES

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GENERAL INFORMATION The Republic of Slovenia is a stunningly beautiful country that has many neighbors. In the mountainous north is Austria and to the east, Hungry. Croatia is in the south and Italy is to the west. Each country, among many others, has influenced Slovenia both culturally and ethnically over the centuries.

In the southwest of the country, facing out upon the Gulf of Trieste, is the ancient port of Koper, modern-day Slovenia's only commercial outlet to the Adriatic Sea. Slovenia has barely 30 miles of coastline and this region is known as Primorska. The word means, close to the sea. Koper has changed hands and names numerous times over the past two millennia. Today the town is officially and culturally bi-lingual (Slovene and Italian) and has a population close to 50,000.

A small settlement, known to early Greek sailors as Aegida, seems to have been the foundation of Koper. It was built upon an island separated from the mainland by a narrow waterway. This costal region has been inhabited since before recorded history. In the 1st century the Romans fortified the town and renamed it Capris. At the time merchant ships of the Roman Empire were under continual attack from Histrian pirates who came from this region and throughout the coast of the Istra Peninsula. Rome was determined to defeat or destroy the Histrian threat. They were successful and under Rome the region prospered with the production and export of wine, olive oil and wool.

In the 1800s Koper and the island were connected to the mainland by a permanent landfill. Today the town's industrial production includes chemicals, cars, motorcycles and commercial fishing, canneries for regionally grown fruits and vegetables. Despite having grown into a modern and important shipping point for Slovenia, Koper, Capodistria in Italian, has been able to maintain its medieval center. Its narrow streets and alleys weave their way through the old section of town and eventually open up to historic churches and lively plazas.

**HISTORY** The lands that border the northeastern Adriatic Sea have been inhabited since the Stone Age. Slovenia, where Western Europe meets Eastern Europe, is a beautiful country in a region that is generally referred to as the Balkans. Since recorded history the area has changed hands countless times as different tribes and populations have migrated to it, civilized or barbaric invading armies of mighty empires have conquered it or petty potentates have made vain attempts to bring it under submission. The history of Slovenia is culturally rich, ethnically diverse and decidedly turbulent.

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# Koper

The earliest known people to inhabit the costal areas around present day Koper and the Istra Peninsula seem to have been a tribe called the Histrian. Though the Histrian have been referred to dating back as far as 1,000 BC by Greek sailors who plied the Adriatic, archeologists and anthropologists have not been able to determine who they were, or from where they may have originally come. By around 200 BC the Histrian, normally farmers and herdsmen, found that pirating and pillaging Greek and Roman merchant ships was far more lucrative than tending goats on a rocky mountainside. An angered Rome, after initiating a series of wars, destroyed the Histrians and brought the entire region under the Empire's jurisdiction. By the 1st century BC Roman culture and prosperity were spreading throughout the region.

In the mid 500s AD, in the waning days of the Western Roman Empire, barbaric tribes from northern Europe called the Lombard swept into Italy. Much of Slovenia and the costal Adriatic were caught up in the invasion or its rippling shockwave. Roman citizens from Trieste sought refuge in Koper ... known as Capris at the time.

By the mid 600s AD the Asiatic, nomadic and war-like Avars swept west into the Balkans and conquered much of modern day Slovenia. This invasion was





in slow and steady conjunction with the migration of the Slavs who came into the Balkans and Slovenia from southwest Russia. The Slavs would eventually comprise the largest ethnic group in the region.

The Byzantine Empire would rule followed by the Venetian Republic, the Holy Roman Empire and the Austrian Hapsburg Dynasty which would be in power until the end of World War I. After the war the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed. In 1929 it would be renamed Yugoslavia. After World War II, with the victorious Allies drawing a line on the map, Koper was given to Slovenia and thereby came under the rule of communist Yugoslavia. By now Koper, Slovenia and the entire region had been under siege or foreign domination for more than two millennia.

In 1945 Josip Broz Tito became the president of the newly formed Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that consisted of Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia. By the power of his personality he held these very different cultures, ethnic and religious groups together under one flag. When Tito died in 1980 the ancient social, religious, political and economic resentments, that had for so long been suppressed, started once again to simmer.

from the central communist government in Belgrade, Slovenia, held a democratic referendum on independence. The referendum was supported by nearly a 90% majority. Slovenia would not be denied its desire for the formation of a democratic republic and on June 25th, 1991, formally declared its independence from communist Yugoslavia's authoritarian rule. The simmering cauldron would now boil over.

This was truly an example of "David rising up to fight Goliath" for there was no way that tiny and poorly equipped Slovenia could withstand the full might of the Yugoslav Army. But, against all odds, within 10 short and relatively bloodless days, Slovenia won its independence.

After nearly 2,000 years of being invaded, conquered, ruled, governed or subjugated by others, today the people of the small yet free and democratic Slovenia are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations and, as of mid-night January 1, 2008, the first of all the new EU member states to ascend to the rotating 6 month term as President of the European Union.

KOPER PLACES OF INTEREST Dimnice Jama (The Smoke Cave), though known about for countless centuries, it was not until 1904 that the cave was actually explored. Koper's golden age came in the 1400 and 1500s during the ascendance The "smoke" referred to is actually steam that raises from the mouth of the Venetian Republic. Many of the buildings of the old city date of the cave as warm air from deep underground meets the cold air to this period. The center of old Koper is now called Tito Square. It is of the mountains. Visitors can safely descend almost 350 feet unfascinating and easy to stroll through the narrow cobblestone streets derground and explore the amazing rock formations, giant stalactites, of the medieval city. stalagmites, huge open chambers as well as the underground river.

The Muda Gate is an interesting way to enter the old city. This Pliskovica is a charming village on the Karst Plateau of the Vipavska **L** was the original city gate and passageway for all who crossed the Valley not far from the Bay of Trieste. The village itself is delightful bridge and entered from the mainland. Tolls on merchants bringing to explore and is surrounded by rolling meadows and ancient vinetheir goods into the city were assessed and collected here. The gate yards. In a country that is full of stunning scenery this area is certainly was built in the early 1500s and is now the last remaining of the origisome of the most beautiful. The word "karst" refers to the amazing nal twelve gates that once surrounded the city. rock formations found in the area that have been carved and shaped The **Praetorian Palace** is the symbol of Koper and was built durover thousands of years by moving water.

ing the 1400s in a combination of Gothic and Renaissance styles. The palace is located on the main square in the center of the town. SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Koper Atop the palace is a statue of Cybele whom the Romans worshiped as and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore their goddess of fertility and nature. Excursions. For Information concerning tour content and pricing, consult the Tour Information Sheet or contact the onboard Shore Excur-3 The **Cathedral of Saint Nazarius** that you see today was built in the 1700s upon the foundation of earlier churches that date back sion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

centuries. The beautifully designed interior of the church is the resting place of the sarcophagus of Saint Nazarius, the patron saint of the city. LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Prices are usually clearly marked The bell tower of the cathedral, built in the 1300s and now referred to and bargaining is not a custom. as the City Tower, was at one time used as a defensive fortification.

Tipping: We have seen it written that, under the old communist re-The Carmine Rotunda was built in the 1100s and is located just gime of Yugoslavia, taking care of a paying customer was often referred to as "Service with a snarl". Today you will find that the people of Slovenia are warm and welcoming. Most restaurants will add an automatic service charge but a 10% tip to your waiter and taxi driver is customary and always appreciated.

4 The Carmine Kounda was can an and behind the Cathedral of Saint Nazarius. The baptistery is one of the oldest surviving church structures in all of Slovenia. **5** The Almerigogna Palace can be found on Gortanov Square. Built in the 1400s, like many of the buildings in Koper, it is a combination of Gothic and Renaissance styles.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES Except for ap-The Municipal Museum is housed in the Belgramoni-Tacco Palproximately 30 miles of coastline on the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia is completely landlocked. Italy is to the west, Austria to the north, Hungary to the east and Croatia to the south. Some epicureans have stated that Slovenia does not have its own identifiable style of cuisine ... they have borrowed what they liked from their neighbors and made signed and built on the main square in 1462. With a nice café on it their own. This has made for many different styles, depending on the region. So, to refer to "traditional Slovenian food" actually means the simple dishes and hardy recipes of the common people. There is no snobbish or fancy haute cuisine here. A few of the local favorites include: Zlinkrofi, much like Italy's ravioli. Krvavice, a pork blood sausage. Bograc, similar to a Hungarian goulash. Prezganka, a hardy soup made from beef and potato. Kranjske Klobase, spicy pork sausage from Slovenia's Carniola region. Kurja Obara, a chicken stew with onions. Ricet, a soup made with dried meat, barley and dried fruit. Ocvirkovka, bread made with the addition of crisply fried pork rinds. Kislo Zelje, smoked sausage with cooked beans. Struklji, bread rolls stuffed with vegetables, meats or cheese

**O** ace, built in the 1500s. The museum has on display numerous interesting artifacts, paintings and sculptures that trace the history of Koper and the surrounding region. The City Loggia is a beautiful arched colonnade that was dethe ground floor, it is the only surviving gothic style loggia in Slovenia. Beyond Koper Ljubljana, the capital, is the cultural and social heart and soul of Slovenia. A visit to this city will reveal its beautiful Renaissance and Baroque architecture and monuments, Franciscan cathedrals, graceful 18th century fountains and masterfully designed and engineered bridges that span the lovely Ljubljanica River. There are peaceful parks and colorful markets throughout this medieval city that invite visitors to explore and enjoy.

Vineyards have been cultivated in Slovenia for over 2,000 years. The Bled Castle sits on a precipice that rises over 300 feet above Bled Lake. A fortification has stood on this site for well over 1,000 years. first vines are believed to have been brought to the region by the Celtics The view of the surrounding mountains and countryside is nothing or perhaps the Illyrian. It was the Romans who, as they did throughout short of spectacular. The castle is now a museum that is home to an their empire, greatly improved and increased grape cultivation and wine production. The wines of Slovenia have an excellent reputation. interesting display of armor and weaponry that date back to the 1500s. This is one of the oldest medieval fortresses in Slovenia. Small boats Though the country produces just a fraction when compared to councalled "plentas" are available to take visitors out on the beautiful altries like France and Italy it exports only 5% of production. A little known fact regarding Slovenian wine is that they do not export their pine lake much the way they have been doing for the past 400 years.

On December 23, 1990, fully expecting a violent military reaction