Tourism qualities including cultural and natural heritage attractions of the Liptov region

NATURAL HERITAGE

Liptov Region stretches over an area of 1970 km² and is situated in the eastern and western part of the Liptov valley known as Dolný and Horný Liptov. It includes the valley of the river Váh and its tributaries – Biely Váh, Čierny Váh and other streams. It is surrounded by Západné Tatry, Vysoké Tatry, Choč Mountains and Veľká Fatra mountains. The highest peak is Bystrá (2,248 meters above sea level). There is also a dam Liptovská Mara with the area of 21km².

The Region was a part of Liptov County since Middle Ages up to 1923, than it belonged to Podtatranská County until 1928. The Region has two centres – Liptovský Mikuláš and Ružomberok, which are the district municipalities. The current Region’s population is more than 133 000 inhabitants living in 3 towns and 74 villages.
Liptov Region has many cultural and historical relics. It holds the highest number of National Cultural Relics in the Žilina region – 11, with Hradisko Havránok – archeological site at Bobrovník, wall-paintings in Roman Catholic Church of All Saints at Ludrová-Kúty, Worker's House Čierny orol (Black Eagle) in Liptovský Mikuláš; in Ružomberok - R.C. Church of Virgin Mary of Rosary, the Town House, Mausoleum of Andrej Hlinka, epitaph of Černová massacre and the memorial of the massacre at Ružomberok-Černová.

In numerous tourist guides and brochures, Liptov is described as the heart of Slovakia, not only because of its location, but also because of the warmth of the region’s people. Locals often say that Liptov folk speak the “cleanest” Slovak and although they sometimes have only a vague idea what that exactly means, they know that in 1843 Ľudovít Štúr, the father of the Slovak language, described the central-Slovak dialect as its essence.
If you seek similar qualities in the beauties of nature, you are also in the right place. Majestic mountains, vast meadowlands, picturesque valleys and glimmering tarns hide secrets, tales and enormous natural beauties which you can discover at your leisure, delving into the shadows of the 4th century BC and emerging in the highlights of the second millennium. Liptov is located in the north of central Slovakia, where the most dominant characteristics are the countless ranges of mountains. The Low Tatras, West Tatras, Great Fatra and Choč Mountains all offer exquisite hiking opportunities. But non-ramblers should not worry. There are numerous views worth seeing with a little less sweat required: they can visit some of the lovely valleys such as Račková, Kvačianska, Prosiecka or Demänovská.
Liptov belongs to the most popular touristic regions of Slovakia, thanks to The Vysoké Tatry National Park and the National Park Nízke Tatry which are travel and tourism areas of the 1st category of international significance.

The surrounding mountains reaching altitudes over 2 000 meters above sea level. With their unique beauty and rare natural formations there are many marked and well maintained tourist paths and cycling-treks.
Winter sport lovers can find excellent skiing conditions and ski resorts such as Jasná under Chopok in Nízke Tatry, Malínô Brdo and many others.

Liptov is well-known also for its beautiful caves – Demänovská Cave of Liberty and Demänovská Ice Cave, these caves are ranked among some of the best caves in the world.

Dolný and Horný Liptov provide excellent opportunities for all-year-round individual and group sport activities, they also cater for long and short visits. There are many private as well as hotel accommodation opportunities available for tourists. The Demänovská Valley is widely known for its cave system, the longest interconnected karst system in Slovakia with two of the countries most important caves, Demänovská Cave of Liberty and Demänovská Ice Cave.
Both of them are open to the public. There are also caves in Jánska dolina, where visitors are invited under the Earth’s surface only with hard hat on their head, torch in their hand and the back of professional spelunker in front of them.

Across the whole area flows the Váh River, the longest in Slovakia. In the early 1930s, to safeguard against the danger of flooding, a system of dams and power stations was built, known as the Vážska cascade. Liptovská Mara, one of the dams, is still very popular and offers a variety of recreational activities. Adrenaline enthusiasts are welcome to enjoy rafting on the Váh and fans of bubbly water can compare several aqua parks and thermal pools scattered throughout the area, for example Aquapark Tatralandia, Thermal Park Bešeňová or the thermal pool Sorea in Liptovský Ján.
After hiking at great altitude, swimming at sea level or emerging from under ground, some visitors might also like some intellectual nourishment. Take your pick. Liptov boasts numerous museums, art galleries, castles and churches from different time periods. They vary from Havráňok, an archaeological open air museum with remains of a Celtic settlement, to Pribylina, an ethnographic museum with a full replica of a traditional medieval Liptov village. Although it is not a museum, the working mountain village of Vlkolínec, at an altitude of 718 m, is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and is a magnet for visitors.
For basic orientation in the region you should know that Liptov is divided into three parts, each of which has its own “capital” – Lower Liptov with Ružomberok, Middle Liptov with Liptovský Mikuláš and Upper Liptov with Liptovský Hrádok. The first two are designated “district towns” but Liptovský Hrádok lost this status almost 50 years ago. Even now there is something of a rivalry between the towns, fuelled by vicious comments from self-important townsfolk of Liptovský Mikuláš and somewhat offended residents of Liptovský Hrádok. Fortunately, the majority of people think of it as nothing but harmless teasing.

To explore the region fully would take more than a month of even the most efficient traveller’s time, but it is possible to pick out a few of the most essential stopping points to make the most of a trip to the region. When you decide to explore Liptov, try to do so using a car. Public transport is functional and reliable, but only with your own wheels you can really savour the mountain views, take a picture of cow herd grazing in the meadow beside the road or spot a guy selling blueberries, mushrooms or bee honey just in time to tell the driver to stop and prepare the money.

The first area of interest might be Upper Liptov, specifically Liptovský Hrádok. One of the most attractive points in the town is the Grand Castle, a remarkable former castle and manor house from the first half of the 14th century, now converted into a hotel.

The next stop on our tour of Liptov should be the Museum of the Liptov Village in Pribylina, 10 km from Liptovský Hrádok, through Liptovský Peter and Vavrišovo. Here, you will find yourself in a 19th century Slovak village with Gothic church, Gothic Renaissance manor house and school.
In addition to preserving the traditions of the Slovak village from the turn of the past century, the museum also houses replicas of significant buildings from local areas liable to flooding, including the Church of Virgin Mary from Liptovská Mara and a manor house from Parížovce.

Furthermore, just outside the village is an exhibition of a narrow-gauge Považská forest railway from 1912, which was functional for 60 years and originally ran for 65 km.

**TOWNS IN REGION**

**RUŽOMBEROK**

The city Ružomberok is situated at the junction of the river Váh and Revúca at the north-western edge of the Nízke Tatry (Low Tatras). It is a suitable starting point for the hikes to the Low Tatras, Veľká Fatra (Great Fatra) and Chočské Vrchy (Choč Hills).
The area of today's Ružomberok was inhabited already in the Younger Bronze Age. This fact was proven by findings of sc. Lužitská and Púchovská culture from the beginning of our Dominion. After a Slavonic settlement was founded, German settlers came and became the ruling class. The first written reference about the city is from the year 1233. In 1318 lord Donč (following the example of Partizánska Lupča) awarded the city municipal privileges that were later confirmed by the king Charles Robert in 1340. Among the common municipal privileges it also had a right to mine gold, silver and copper. From 1376 some other villages (such as Černová, Biely Potok, Vlkolíneč and Ludrová) were added to the city. From 1526 the city was freed from the obligation to pay duties and it gained a privilege to organise weekly open markets. Thanks to all these privileges and a suitable location Ružomberok became an important centre of Liptov. In the 15-th century the administration was given to the hands of the local Slovak population. Crafts developed very well. Ružomberok became renowned by its guilds, industrial production, tinkers and raftsmen. During the World War II. the town was liberated by partisan troops and later occupied by the German soldiers again.

In the city, there is a late-baroque monastery from the years 1727 - 1730 with a church that was built in 1806. In the church there are paintings from J. Hanula (a famous Slovak painter who lived in Spišská Nová Ves). A gothic parish church from the 14-th century (rebuilt in 1585, in the 18-th and 20-th century) is a unique cultural monument, too. Inside you will find paintings from J. Hanula and a gothic baptistery from the beginning of the 16-th century. Another interesting building is a manor-house of St. Žofia. Painter Ľudovít Fulla, doctor Dušan Makovický and priest Andrej Hlinka were born or lived in the city.
VLKOLÍNEC

The village Vlkolínc is a typical mountain village, situated in the Velká Fatra mountains below the hill Sidorovo, at the altitude of 718 m. The first written reference about the village is from the year 1376, when it was mentioned as a street of the town Ružomberok. In 1625, it had only 9 houses and in 1828 about 51 houses. The villages burnt out during the World War Second as a part of reprisals performed by the German army against partisans. It was declared a national cultural reservation in 1977 and since 1993 it has been registered in the list of the World natural and cultural heritage UNESCO. The reason was a unique complex of 45 original, almost unchanged little rustical houses with stone socles, walls daubed by clay and roofs covered by shingles. Houses originate mostly from the 19th century and have a typical ground plan with three rooms. Split-level in the entrance-hall and in the pantry is from trampled clay and the living-room has a wooden floor. The oven is located in the entrance hall and the fume is conducted through the opening in the shingle saddle roof. Although the base is made from quarry stone, usually they do not have any cellar.

LIPTOVSKÝ MIKLÁŠ

The city Liptovský Mikuláš is situated right in the middle of the Liptovská kotlina (Liptovská Basin) on the way from Žilina to the Vysoké Tatry (High Tatras). It is a very suitable starting point if you want to go to the Západné Tatry (West Tatras) or to the Nízke Tatry (Low Tatras). Historically, this area was inhabited already during the Bronze Age, which was proven by archaeological findings of bronze instruments. A burying ground from the 11-th and 12-th century was found here, too. The first written reference about the city is from the year 1286. At that time it was a town of yeomen. The first royal privileges it gained in the 14-th and 15-th century: such as the right to organise annual as well as weekly open markets. In 1677 it became the main seat of the Liptov County. Juraj Jánošík (the Robin-Hood like Slovak national hero) was executed here in 1713.
In the middle of the 19-th century the town became a centre of the Slovak national cultural activities. They were based on old cultural traditions and activities of Juraj Tranovský (Tranoscia) in the 17-th century, of Gašpar Fejérpataký-Belopotocký, Michal M. Hodža, Matúš Blaho and others from the group around Ľudovít Štúr in the 19-th century. This group founded a literary and editorial association - Tarín. By the end of the 19-th and the 20-th century the Slovak cultural life developed rapidly in this city (new associations, theatres and editorial activities were founded). National movement culminated on May 10, 1848 by the declaration of "Requests of the Slovak Nation".

At the oblong central square, there are houses of yeomen from the 16-th and 17-th century (Pongráčova kúria, Seligovský dom - nowadays a museum of Janko Kráľ, a County House and a Roman-Catholic church of St. Mikuláš).

The church was built around the year 1280 on the ruins of another building. During the second half of the 15-th century it was rebuilt and enlarged. In the 18-th century it gained some Baroque features, but after the fire in 1883 it had to be totally repaired.
Some gothic vaults, windows, portals, pastrophorium, and a part of original interior. The main neo-gothic altar has original gothic painted wings from the years 1500 - 1510 and a statue of a saint. Between 1783 - 1785 an Evangelic classicistic church with late-roman facade was built in the city. In 1833 - 1885 it was repaired and a new tower was added.

In the city there is also a classicistic synagogue (built between 1842 - 1846, repaired in 1906), a memorial of Janko Kráľ and a picture gallery of P. Bohúň.

Liptovský Mikuláš or “The City of The Olympic Winners” as it says in the sign located at the entrance of the town from D1 highway. But this is a relatively recent addition, recognising the achievements of the double Olympic canoeing champion Michal Martikán, who was born and still lives in the town. What is more permanent, however, is the historical spirit of Liptovský Mikuláš.

The river Váh flows through the town and its northern canal pours into Liptovská Mara, an artificial water reservoir. The Žiarska dolina valley in the Západné Tatry mountains, nearby the Demänovská dolina valley with caves and the skiing resort Jasná Nízke Tatry, the Jánska dolina valley with thermal springs, Aquapark Tatralandia, a mosaic of historical and cultural monuments with the new face of the historical centre, make Liptovský Mikuláš an important centre of tourism. At the same time, the town is regarded as the centre of culture and tourism in the central and upper Liptov region – Liptovský Mikuláš district. The town has the population of 32,500 inhabitants.
LIPTOVSKÝ HRÁDOK

From the centre of Liptovský Mikuláš, go to Liptovský Háradok distant 12 km. The town lies at the confluence of the river Váh and Belá. It is the seat of the Shepherd Museum which shows the culture of the shepherds and herdsmen. In the past shepherds were an inseparable part of Liptov. Even today when walking through the Liptov countryside you can find shepherds’ huts and listen to the sounds of ringing bells of the sheep. In the museum there are huts, you can learn about the life of the herdsmen, you can see the objects and tools, their clothes, wide belts, shepherds’ bags, jewels and decorations. You will enjoy the shepherds’ woodcarving art.

If you decided to visit this museum, you have to turn right in front of the hotel Smrek and at the end of Moyzesova Street turn left to Partizánska Street. In the historical building of the Salt Office of 1729 you will see the shepherd’s exposition. There is also the seat of the forest prefect František Wisner who founded in Liptovský Háradok the first forestry school in Hungary. The ceiling paintings and stucco decorations of the room are unique in Slovakia. After the guided tour of the museum, return to SNP Street and continue towards Pribylina.
You will pass a dominant of **Liptovský Hrádok – a castle** that is together with the manor house used as a hotel for demanding guests. You will go through the villages Liptovský Peter and Vavrišovo spotting the marvellous peaks of the Západné Tatry mountains.

**WOODEN CHURCH SVÄTÝ KRÍŽ**

A unique cultural relic is wooden „articular“, evangelic church at Liptovský Svätý Kríž.

The Region has also the highest number of protected zones – at Hybe, Liptovský Ján, Nižná Boca, Partizánska Ľupča, Stankovany-Podšíp and Východná. The Region has 249 immovable and 479 movable protected relics, one almost in every village. Likava Castle, manor houses at Bešeňová, Liptovská Štiavnica, Liptovská Teplá, Liptovský Hrádok, Liptovský Ján and others belong to them.
Rich is also the network of cultural relics concerning churches situated at Liptovské Museum in Ružomberok, at the exhibition in Roľnícky dom (Farmer’s House) in Vlkolínec, Čierny orol in Liptovský Mikuláš, at the Museum of Liptov Village in Pribylina and in the open air Archeological museum at Liptovská Mara – Havránok.

An important contribution to travel and tourism in Liptov Region is the Liptov curative spa Lúčky and the Fatra curative spa Korytnica. Thermal pools are situated in Bešeňová and Liptovský Ján. Dam Liptovská Mara, providing excellent opportunities for water sports and fishing, this is a very attractive place for recreation and holidays in the summertime.
AQUAPARKS IN LIPTOV

GINO PARADISSE BEŠEŇOVÁ

Thermal park is situated in the beautiful surroundings of the Chočské Mountains with wonderful views on Nízke and Západné Tatry or Veľká Fatra Mountains, in the village resort Bešeňová.

This Thermal park is built on the area of hot springs with curative effects emerging from the depth of 1987 metres and they have beneficial effects on motion and respiratory organs as well as on urological problems.

Thermal park provides year-round relax and fun – Relax all inclusive. It offers recreation in 16 pools, 8 of them with geothermal water, 5 pools with crystal clear warmed-up water and 3 indoor pools with crystal clear water, 5 water tubes and a tube slide.

You can enjoy perfect relax in Wellness & Spa which includes also a complex of 5 saunas, a unique warmed-up armchair made of 24 carat gold, and make the best of wide scale of massages in the Relax centre. Thermal park offers you also accommodation, catering and congress services.
AQUAPARK TATRALANDIA

Aquapark Tatralandia – the largest area of water fun in Slovakia is open during the whole year. You will not find larger one in Czech Republic or Poland.

This extensive complex is situated by the northern shore of the dam Liptovská Mara with the view on Západné and Nízke Tatry. (West and Low Tatras) For relaxation and swimming, it offers 14 pools with thermal water, which has beneficial effect on the motion and respiratory organs – there are 9 round-the-year pools, 3 of which are indoor pools. Various attractions are waiting for you – massage seats and spouts, geysers, water jets, swings, wild ride through 30 tubes and water slides, 9 of them are open whole year.

Indoor tropical complex Pirates’ of the Caribbean Island together with the pool Ocean and children’s pool with Jumbo Castle attract mostly children.
Aquapark includes also untraditional playgrounds – inflatable world Bubble City, mazes, water football, trampolines, children’s playground with many swings, climbing frames, slides and sandpits, and area for volleyball, beach-volleyball, or football. You can enjoy perfect relax in the sauna world Tatra-Therm-Vital. Your health and beauty will be treated well in the complex Wellness Paradise with its wide offer of massages, baths, wraps and other procedures. The comfort of the whole area is supplied with the accommodation complex of Holiday Village TatraLandia with 155 bungalows and apartments with the total capacity of 700 beds.

LIPTOVSKÝ JÁN

The area of **swimming pool** is situated in one of the most beautiful valleys of Nízke Tatry - in the **Jánska Valley**.

In summer months, you can gain new strengths from the thermal water in four **outdoor swimming pools** – 50 m long pool, children’s pool, relaxation pool and a pool with a fountain. The **indoor pool** of the Hotel Sorea Máj is open throughout the year. The pools are drawn from the spring Rudolf, from the depth of 95 m. Comfortably warm (26–28 °C) mineralized water has beneficial effects by treating nervous diseases, motion organ diseases (also conditions after injuries and orthopaedic operations), airway and skin diseases.
AQUA VITAL PARK LÚČKY

Aqua vital park Lúčky are suitable for whole family. For all family members in our first-class care. Whether you are 7 or 70 years old, whether you are male or female, for each will do its best to feel comfortable with us and wanted to come back again.

Our mineral water cures the kinetic system, urology, gynecological diseases, metabolic disorders (obesity), abnormal digestive system. Especially suitable for the treatment of osteoporosis (thinning bones). From October 2008 in Spa Lúčky is possible to treat also nervous disorders and diseases.

DEMĂNOVSKÁ VALLEY

South of the town in the Nízke Tatry Mountains there is Demănovská Valley with the popular resort Jasná under the Chopk Mt. It is the most popular and the most visited locality in the Nízke Tatry. It is attractive for its natural beauty and a wide range of hotels, chalets, bungalows and boarding houses.
Demänovská Valley is the synonym of marvelous mountain sceneries, caves, great slopes and top sport events. In summer it is a perfect place for tourists, in winter the winter sports fans come there. The valley is 15 km long and it was made by the small river Demänovka with its tributaries. It cuts deeply into the Nízke Tatry in which it created a vast underground karst system. Demänovská Valley is a part of the Low Tatras National Park. Your first stop in the valley might be Demänovské caves. There are two parts of this unique cave system open for public – Demänovská Ice Cave and Demänovská Cave of Freedom. If you prefer a lower pace of a trip and you also want to use the cableway to Chopok, we recommend choosing only one cave tour. If you go to the valley, the caves are on your left. You will reach Demänovská Ice Cave first. The educational path will lead you from the car park right to the entrance of the cave. The journey takes about 20 minutes. Demänovská Ice Cave is known for a long time. It was called Dragon’s Cave because the bear bones found in the cave were taken for dragon bones. The cave was opened to the public in 1952 and since then thousands of visitors have admired its ice beauties. The ice fill is situated in the lower parts of the cave and it is the thickest at the beginning of the season. Take a closer look at the sinter formations. They are coloured on the surface into gray up to black from soot of tar torches, oil burners and paraffin lamps, which were used for lighting until 1924. The show path is 650 m. The stay in cave lasts about 45 min.

Then you can drive to the car park next to Demänovská Cave of Freedom. Walking on the educational path for 15 minutes, you will reach its entrance. The cave will charm you with its unique sinter decoration of different forms and colours and with many small lakes. Thanks to its beauty, Demänovská Cave of Liberty is the most visited cave in Slovakia. Stay in the cave will have positive effects on your health. Asthmatics and people suffering from allergy will appreciate the speleotherapy. You can choose from two tours. The shorter one is 1,145 m long and lasts for 60 minutes, the longer one takes about 100 minutes and is 2,150 m long.

After the cave tour you can continue further to the valley. You will pass Lúčky and then you will come to Záhradky. Six-seat cableway goes from the resort Záhradky, which is only a few meters from the hotel Ski Záhradky. After going on the six-seat cableway you will change to the two-way cableway (from Rovná Hill) that will get you just near the top of Chopok to the Chopok Úboč station.
From there a stony path leads to the very top of the mountain. The hike is not very exhausting. Mountain **Chopok** (2,024 m) is **the second highest mountain in the Nízke Tatry mountains**.

The spectacular view over the surrounding area is really unforgettable. You can take a rest and refresh yourself in Kamenná chata lodge. You return back the same way and then take the cableway. If you organize your trip for groups in advance, the cableway from the resort Otupné near the hotel Grand is available for you. If you do not have enough time and enough strength for a hike to Mount Chopok, you can enjoy an easy walk around **mountain lake Vrbické pleso**.

### CULTURAL HERITAGE

**Havránok**

Did you know that even the Celts were part of the history of Liptov? They influenced and enriched the development of the original settlement. They left their most significant trace in **Havránok** inundated by **water dam Liptovská Mara**.

Havránok lying on the hill Úložisko has always been emblazoned with legends and people felt this place to be magical. Today, the archaeological museum outdoors reveals the secrets of the place to the public. Havránek is 18 km from Liptovský Mikuláš. You will pass the villages Liptovský Trnovec and Hliník, then turn left to Bobrovník and you will get to a small church situated next to the dam wall. It is only a tower of the church that stood in inundated village Liptovská Mara. Its copy with the original frescoes brought from the original church can be found in the Múzeum liptovskej dediny (Museum of the Liptov Village in Pribylina). You can park your car near the church, then go up the path and you will get right to Havránok. You will follow the Celts who came in the 1st century BC and built a fortified settlement here. Up to now, there are the remains of the stone walls of this settlement. After entering this magical place,
you can see one of the restored Celtic dwellings and right in front of you there will be the film about the everyday life of the ancient inhabitants of the Liptov region. Just use your fantasy! Only a couple of steps away, the world of the Celtic religious rituals opens to you. Archaeologists have discovered a shrine and uncovered the sacrificial shafts where they found jewellery, some cereal and human skeletons, too. Havránok also uncovers the traces of the early Germanic and Slavonic settlement. Visit the place where there was a wooden castle with a moat in the Middle Ages. The Archaeological Museum is situated in a picturesque place where history and nature create a harmonious unit.

**LIPTOVSKÁ MARA**

You will have a marvellous view from the slope of the surrounding area – from the south Nízke Tatry mountains, from the north Choč Mountains, Západné Tatry and in the middle the peaceful waters of Liptovská Mara. Liptovská Mara is the first dam of the Váh cascade – a system of water power plants on the river Váh. Its part is a smaller pumped storage dam Bešeňová. The waterworks were built in 1965 – 1975 as a protection against floods and except of the production of the electricity they offer excellent conditions for relaxation and sport. Thirteen villages were inundated – the dam Liptovská Mara is named after one these villages. Many people call the waterwork Liptov Sea because it is the largest water reservoir in Slovakia in terms of the confined water volume. After an hour of sailing, the ship will get back to the port in the camp site Liptovský Trnovec which is a popular summer resort. There is a lido and good conditions for surfing or yachting here. You can also find minigolf, children’s playground, and boat and bike rental or play beach volleyball. The remote parts of the dam are a perfect place for sport fishers.
FOLK ARCHITECTURE IN LIPTOV

We invite you to a trip to visit picturesque monuments of the folk architecture in Liptov. From the centre of Liptovský Mikuláš go to Palúdzka. On the right side of the road you will admire the snow-white buildings of the castle Vranovo and the hotel Bocian. If you come here from March to September and you are lucky, you can see storks sitting on the top of the hotel’s chimney. Then take the road I/18 and subsequently the beautiful views of the rolling Liptov countryside, fields, Choč Mountains, Nízke Tatry mountains will appear in front of you. After 9 kilometres you will see a turning to Svätý Kríž.

Passing the village there is a wooden articular church from Paludza – one of five Protestant churches in Slovakia which preserved their original design. After the years of persecution of Protestantism in Hungary the Congress of Sopron of 1681 adopted the article on the basis of which the Protestants in Liptov could build 2 churches on the edge of the settlements. They had to use only wood to build them; they could not have towers nor bells and the entrance had to be turned away from the village. The church from Paludza was consecrated already in 1693. In 1774 the church was restored to the present form that has enabled to accommodate up to 6,000 worshippers. The bell tower was built in 1781 and creates with the church a harmonious unit. Paludza was submerged in the waters of Liptovská Mara reservoir in 1975. Before this happened, the unique church had been dismantled and restored and in the course of the years it was rebuilt in Svätý Kríž.
Thanks to this, you can admire even today this cultural treasure, the only one of its kind in Liptov. The wall decorations, Baroque interior, original furniture but mainly the monumentality of the space leave a very deep impression in everyone. The church of Paludza is the biggest articular church in the Central Europe. Partizánska Ľupča is the first village to obtain the town privileges in Liptov. In its surroundings there were gold, silver and antimony mines. You can easily identify the village from distance thanks to the big tower of the Gothic Church of St. Matthew.

PRIBYLINA

In Liptov village Pribylina is situated the Museum of the Liptov Village. The artefacts of the folk house building and the medieval stone architecture from the villages flooded by the waters of Liptovská Mara were brought here. In the openair museum you can learn about the way of life and about living of different social groups of people in Liptov from the end of the 19th century to the first third of the 20th century. You can enter the craftsmans’, farmer’s and also mayor’s house.

In the castle from Parížovce and in the yeoman’s hall you will see how the yeomanry lived. In the vicinity there is an early Gothic Church of Virgin Mary from the village Liptovská Mara. After the tour in this part of the museum the educational path will bring you to the exposition of Považská železnička railway which was the longest narrow-gauge forest railway in Slovakia. It went from Liptovský Hrádok through Liptovská Teplička right under Kráľova hoľa. Its construction began in 1913 and it was used not only for goods but also for passenger transportation. It was in use until 1971. Today you can find here the steam engines and parts of the rails. Mainly during summer Sundays, events showing the Liptov traditions take place here. If you have the possibility, enjoy the unique atmosphere of the event.
FOLKLORE FESTIVAL IN VÝCHODNÁ

The most famous and most visited event is 3-day Folklore Festival in Východná. During this festival, in the first week in July, the village of Východná becomes Mecca of folklore. Attractive parade across the village with all participants ends on a big outdoor theatre with the view of the majestic panorama of Kriváň and Tatra mountains. The best folklore groups and individuals from Slovakia and abroad perform here from Friday to Sunday. Tradition of this great festival with international participation lasts longer than five decades.

LIPTOVSKÝ JÁN

Liptovský Ján lies on the halfway between Liptovský Hrádok and Liptovský Mikuláš. With the adjacent Jánska valley it is a popular holiday resort with many accommodation and eating facilities. The valley is one of the longest in the Nízke Tatry mountains and is the point of departure of many tourist routes. One of them leads to the highest peak of the Nízke Tatry mountains – Mountain Ďumbier. In Jánska valley you can find the ski resort Javorovica. The tourists are also tempted by the salutary effects of the thermal water. In summer the outdoor thermal swimming pool and during the whole year the indoor pool in the Hotel Sorea Máj is open for public. Next to the natural swimming pool there is a mineral water spring. In Jánska valley about 2 km far from the thermal pool you can also find Stanišovská cave. A guide, your fellows and a lamplight - a forehead lamp - will lead you throughout the cave.

NATIONAL PARKS AT AREA

NATIONAL PARK OF NIZKE TATRY (NAPANT)

National Park of Nizke Tatry (NAPANT) is the largest protected area in Slovakia. It was founded on 14th June 1978. It is a part of the mountains Inner Carpathian Mountains. There is a lot of unique karst phenomenons, large ridges, rich flora and animal kingdom and other factors making this national park unique. Low Tatras are almost the biggest mountains of East Carpathian Mountains. Dumbier is the highest hill (2043m) and the lowest area is situated near the city Banska Bystrica (400m). The length of the area of this park frm the east to the west is about 80 km and from the north to the south it is about 30 km.
This territory is constituted of granite, dolomits and limestones. In the Triassic limestones and dolomits there is the biggest system of caverns in Slovakia - the caverns Demanovske jaskyne caves (the most known ones are the caverns Demanovská ladova jaskyna, Jaskyna Slobody, Pusta and Okno ). The rivers Hron, Vah, Hornad and Hnilec spring here.

Not far from the national park there is a basin called Liptovska Mara. The most known acidulous water is Korytnica. A cold climatic area dominates here. Higher situated territories are influenced by a cold climatic area. The average of precipitation in one year is 900 - 1000 mm and in the highest situated territories more than 1200 mm.

FAUNA

In the Low Tatras there are great conditions for the animals from north. Many bugs that live in high mountains live here. There are also butterflies, amphibians (for example salamander), frogs (toad), reptiles (lizard, viper and the others), different species of birds (thrush, capercailzie, woodcock and the others): carnivorous animals (for example eagle and falcon) and owls (eagle-owl). Small mammals (mouthpiece), rodent (squirrel or marmot) live here, too. There are bats in the caves. We can also find here bears, lynxes, foxes, marten and the others. Rarely we can find wolves or badgers. There are also deer, roe-bucks and wild boars.

FLÓRA

The flora of Low Tatras is very similiar to the flora of High Tatras. There are different high mountain species and East Carpathian endemits. A big area of the park is covered by the forests. The places of growing trees are not influenced only by type of soil, climate or altitude, but also by man. Due to the warm climate in the valleys of Hornad and Vah, there are oaks. In the south there is plenty of beech, but in the north it is rare. Pines, fir trees, maples, mountain ashes, ash-trees, elms and the others grow around the river Cierny Vah. In the highest areas there are dwarfed pines, mountain ashes, small pines and small willows.

**NATIONAL PARK OF TATRY (TANAP)**

National Park of Tatry (TANAP) is the highest mountains of the Carpathian arch. It was founded on 18th December 1948. It was the first national park in Czechoslovakia. It has a big diversity of the natural phenomenons. There are many rocky hills, deep valleys, steep hillsides, seas of rocks, transparent lakes and unique animal kingdom and flora. Territory of TANAP is consisted of High Tatras, West Tatras and Belianske Tatras. Its territory is on the area of 76 763 ha. There is the frontier of Slovakia and Poland in the north. The highest hill is Gerlachovský štít peak (2655m) situated in the centre of TANAP. In the west it is Kriván (2494m) which dominates and in the east it is Lomnický štít peak (2632m).
There are 25 peaks between Krivan and Lomnicky peak whose altitude is over 2500 m. The point whose altitude is the smallest is situated in the south-west part of the park (620m). **High Tatras** and **West Tatras** are consisted of granite. **East Tatras (Belianske Tatras)** are especially consisted of Triasic limestones and dolomits.

In the past there were glaciers. Almost every valley in the Tatras was modified by these glaciers (for example the valley Rohacska dolina, the valley Zierska dolina, the valley Velka Studena dolina and the valley Mala Studená dolina). The water is very important here. More than 600 millions m$^3$ of water is taken away by the brooks during the one year. Ground water is also a big source of water. There are about 110 lakes. Their area is 3 km$^3$ and the bulk is about 10 000 m$^3$. **Hincovo pleso** is the largest and the deepest (20,08 ha and 53,2 m). There are also several waterfalls (or example the waterfall Skok, the waterfall Velky vodopad and the waterfall Studenovodsky vodopad).

There is a cold climatic area with inland climate. The winter is cold here and the summer is warm with precipitation. The average temperature of the year is -3,7° at Lomnicky peak and 5,8° in Poprad. The **flora** and the forests are very various. There are about 1300 species of higher plants, about 900 species of folds, 700 species of lichens and more than 500 species of mosses. About 40 species of plants grow in the altitude over 2600 m. Not every plant has the same origin. There are different endemics: the Carpathian ones, the West Carpathian ones or the endemics from Tatras. In the forests there are beeches, fir trees, pines, mountain ashes and the others. Dwarfed pines grow in the altitude of 1800 m. There is also a fern or a red whortleberry (and the others) and coloured snow. Its colour is caused by the certain species of folds or microorganisms (for example Chlamydomonas nivalis, Coliella tatrae, Rhizocarpon or Acarospora oxytona). There are several law protected plants.

The **animal kingdom** in Tatras is as different as the flora. Several species survived since the period of glaciers. There are some Carpathian endemics (fieldmouse, eagle, lizard and the others). Different species of owls (for example eagle-owl), carnivorous animals (falcon, raven and the others), small beasts of prey (weasel, polecat, marten or cat), big beasts of prey (bear, lynx, fox, wolf), and the deers, the roe-bucks, etc. live here, too. In the bigger altitude there is chamois and marmot (law protected).
Their number diminishes as the number of visitors augments. Today there is about 500 chamois. In the year 1978 there were 14 bears, only 2 wolves and only 6 eagles (law protected). The number of the others diminishes, too.

**WINTER SPORTS**

*Skiing* belongs to the one of the most favourite winter sports. The ski centers offers to our tourists very good conditions not only for beginners, but also for more advanced skiers. Many of the ski resorts are with artificial snow and illuminated slopes. The town Liptovský Mikuláš and especially its close surroundings offers many possibilities to enjoy this sport. There are a number of *ski centres* in Liptov with various levels of difficulty, however, we want to present those which are in Liptovský Mikuláš and close proximity to the town. There are very good conditions not only for classic skiing, but also supporters of snowboarding, *alpine skiing*, freeriding and *cross-country skiing* will enjoy it here. If you decide to go anywhere, please keep in mind your safety and we would also recommend you to buy *mountain insurance*.

**SKI CENTER JASNÁ**

This center of winter sports is situated on the northern side of Chopok Mt. which is the Low Tatras the second highest peak. It is situated 18 km far from Liptovský Mikuláš. **The total length of the ski slopes (North & South) is 36,3 km.** In general, Jasná belongs to the most favourite and most visited ski centers in Slovakia.

In the ski center Chopok North & South there are **24 ski lifts in total, 7 cable cars, 1 cabin lift and 16 lifts.**
The downhill tracks - **Chopok Sever - north - together with 17 lifts** and with the **total length of 24,8 km** can be devided to:

- Záhradky ski center  
  (900 - 2004 m.)
- Biela púť ski center  
  (1117 - 2004 m.)
- Otupné ski center  
  (1141 - 2004 m.)

The downhill tracks - **Chopok Juh - south - together with 7 lifts** and with the **total length of 10,04 km** can be devided into:

- Srdiečko ski center  
  (1080 - 1494 m.)
- Kosodrevina ski center  
  (1494 - 2004 m.)

Most of the tracks are kept up with the **artifical snow** cover and there are also very good conditions for doing **cross country skiing**. In Lúčky and Jasná -Tri vody centers, there are 2 running tracks for cross country skiing which are regularly chacked and they are marked.

The snowboarders will also find their paradise here. There are excellent conditions for freeriding, a lot of rails and barriers for jibbing. The ridges of the Low Tatras are available also for the ski mountaineering.

Everyone who loves extreme sports and wild drive will find the 5 freeriding zones brillant. There are 3 on the northern side and 2 on the southern one. There is also a **snowboard park** open for both the snowboardists and skiers.
SKI PARK MALINO BRDO

**Ski Park** centre is located 1 km far from the center of the town of Ružomberok and the hill slopes of the Veľká Fatra Mountains offer many opportunities for winter sports. The total length of the ski slopes is 12 km and the longest one is 3.9 km long. This hot and modern ski center is at disposal for the beginners, but also for more demanding skiers.

The center offers **1 cabin lift** providing space for 8 persons, **1 cable car** with the seats for 4 persons, **2 ski lifts and 4 ski lifts** for the beginners and children. All the tracks vary in their degree of difficulty - easy, medium and difficult. This means there is enough space for the beginners and for more demanding skiers. Of course, there is also a possibility of doing adrenaline sports. The center obtained the certificates F.I.S for various disciplines: slalom, giant slalom skiing for both men and women. The ski slopes are kept in the good condition, they are prepared and also kept up with a steady snow cover during the whole winter. The surroundings of the Ski Park center offers excellent opportunities for doing **cross country skiing and hiking**.

**SKI CENTER ČERTOVICA**

This ski center is located in the northern part of the Low Tatras, 18 km to the south from the town Liptovský Hrádok. The overall length of the ski slopes is 5,5 km. The center is convenient especially for the families with children and for the groups of friends, in which everyone can ski according to personal ability and they are still all together.

There are **four ski lifts** and **six tracks** in the center and all of them vary in their degree of difficulty. Therefore, both beginners and also more advanced skiers can take an advantage of it. More than 2,6 km of the tracks are kept up with the **artificial snow cover**. There are also possibilities for **cross country skiing**, the tracks are 5 km long. They are kept up in the good condition for the fans of cross country skiing.

Ski center Závažná Poruba - Opalisko

**SKI CENTER ZÁVAŽNÁ PORUBA - OPALISKO**

Ski center **Opalisko** is located on the northern slope of the Low Tatras. It is 6 km far from the town Liptovský Mikuláš. The total length of the ski slopes is 3,2 km. The center is suitable also for less demanding skiers. There are **4 ski lifts** in the center, **1 cabin lift** and also 5 tracks in the level of easy or medium difficulty. The ski slopes are regularly checked and kept up with the artificial snow cover if needed. Evening skiing can be undertaken, although this must be arranged beforehand. It is possible to do the cross country skiing here. The running tracks are floodlit and they are 27 km long.
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Cross-country skiing belongs to favourite winter sports, when everyone has enough time to enjoy the beauty of surrounding nature and beautiful scenery of winter mountains. However the quality of the cross-country skiing tracks depends on the amount of natural snow cover. Favourite cross-country skiing tracks you can find in Low Tatras: Demänovská valley, Závažná Poruba, Liptovský Ján and in West Tatras: Žiarska valley. The town Liptovský Mikuláš and its surrounding offers enough possibilities to enjoy this kind of sport, but a lot of the tracks are not modified.

SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Ski mountaineering is a sport that combines the techniques of skiing (often ski touring) with those of mountaineering. The goal of the ski mountaineer may be to climb a beautiful mountain by a worthy route and then ski the mountain down an elegant line, preferably from the summit. But ski mountaineering is really distinguished from ski touring by a willingness and desire to travel over any part of the mountain, not just those areas with sheltered powder snow fields or other nice descending conditions. This may include significant rock, ice or broken glacier sections, as well as traverses and enchainements rather than just single peak ascents. It can take several forms – the classic, recreational form is basically an alpine ski tour. There is also an extreme form, where the grade of the slopes is 45 degrees and more and the descent may be several kilometers. There is ski mountaineering racing as well. Don’t forget that you need special ski mountaineering gear such as special ski mountaineering skis, climbing skins, climbing irons, pickax, avalanche finder and probe.

Good conditions for ski mountaineering can be found in Slovakia in the High Tatras (Malá and Veľká Studená dolina valley), Western Tatras (Žiarska and Bobrovecká dolina valley) and Low Tatras (Chopok, Dereše and Chabenec).

KLASTER LIPTOV

Klaster LIPTOV is a travel and tourism association of legal entities established with the purpose of making Liptov a travel and tourism destination recognized in Europe and with a strategic goal of making the number of visitors to the Liptov region double by 2013 (compared to 2007). The association was officially registered in 2008. The tasks and conception of Klaster LIPTOV make it the Destination Management Organization (DMO).

Towards its members and partners from the sphere of travel and tourism within the Liptov region it takes on the role of an official joint marketing and organizational centre and coordinates travel and tourism development on regional level, thus cultivating tourism in the region as an independent branch.

Sucha Beskidzka 2013
The founding members of Klaster LIPTOV are four most significant private sector entities in Liptov – Thermal Park Bešeňová, Aquapark Tatralandia, Jasná Nízke Tatry and Skipark Ružomberok and three towns – the town of Liptovský Mikuláš, the town of Liptovský Hrádok and the town of Ružomberok. All the founding members agreed on financing the association from fees for one visitor; in case of private sector subjects ‘a visitor as primary entry to the tourism centre ‘and in case of a town ‘a resident guest within the town’ after paying residence tax (spa tax).

Within the marketing activities Klaster LIPTOV concentrates on several segments – target groups. Apart from marketing aimed at increasing visitor rate, Klaster must also recruit new members, acquire new partners for its products, as well as go on lobbying at both regional and national level.

Goals and main activities of Klaster LIPTOV:

Klaster LIPTOV specific goals:

- targeted LIPTOV brand placement – necessary at both home and foreign markets,
- building up attractive product series and destination LIPTOV products,
- building a complex travel and tourism management system in the Liptov region (districts of Liptovský Mikuláš and Ružomberok) through the well-functioning regional organizational structure and through pro-active and open communication with loyal and potential visitors to Liptov.
Klaster Liptov as a marketing and organizational travel and tourism headquarters in the Liptov region performs the following activities:

- unites travel and tourism subjects involved in active travel and tourism in the Liptov region,
- builds up joint travel and tourism marketing and travel and tourism products offer at the regional level in LIPTOV, including active participation in travel and tourism exhibitions and fairs,
- builds up positive travel and tourism image in Liptov,
- supports and directs efficient territorial organizational travel and tourism structure in Liptov,
- secures active experience, innovations and know-how transfer into the attractions in the Liptov region,
- secures professional analyses and studies, follows market statistics and evaluates trends,
- coordinates the joint procedures in legislation amendments concerning travel and tourism or affecting travel and tourism,
- creates professional background for self-administration and entrepreneurs in travel and tourism,
- carries out joint investment and non-investment projects and promotes participation in cross-boarder projects,
- enhances the human resources quality in travel and tourism through educational system coordination,
- promotes and organizes cultural and sports events with the aim of increasing the visitor rate in the region.

LITERATURE:

Dolný Liptov, Cassovia books, 2007  
Liptovský Mikuláš a okolie, vydavateľstvo Dajama, Bratislava, 2011.

www.regionliptov.sk  
www.liptov.sk  
www.mikulas.sk  
www.visitliptov.sk  
www.ruzomberok.sk  
www.nizketatry.sk/obce/lmikulas/lmikulas.html  
www.vysoketatry.com  
www.zapadnetatry.com