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Study Abroad Slovenia (with excursion to Venice) July 2017



Thanks to a generous presidential award from President Morales, and a scholarship from the Mediterranean Studies Academy, I have been able to make my dream of studying in Europe a reality. When I first embarked on this trip I had an open mind as far as what to expect when arriving in Slovenia. I initially chose to study in Ljubljana, Slovenia because of its central location and close proximity to many popular cities in southern and central Europe. Another pull factor was the picturesque lake Bled with icy blue water surrounding a quaint church on a tiny green island in the center of the lake. When I saw pictures on google I knew it was someplace I had to visit while in Slovenia. Every place I visited during this study abroad turned out to be so much better than I could have ever pictured.

Lake Bled, Slovenia



The landscape in Bled simply cannot be described, as it is far too beautiful for any words I could find in the English language, and perhaps Slovenians have a word for the perfection of nature that is Bled. Bled castle overlooks the lake and the tiny island with its church. My favorite part of the castle though was the replica printing press. There was a man who was able to use the printing press to produce personalized postcards. Before actually watching the man create these postcards one after another for each tourist I had no idea the strength and attention to detail that is necessary to create just one page in the days when automatic printing was unthought-of. Just at the edge of lake Bled there is a café that still sells the original recipe of a famous Slovenian cream cake. The cream cake was probably the best dessert in all of Slovenia.

### Venice, Italy



Being so close to Italy was definitely a plus to staying in Slovenia. I was able to travel to Venice by bus in just around two and a half hours. The highlight of Venezia was being able to finally speak Italian with native speakers, which has always been a dream of mine since I started learning Italian. Through this experience I realized that my Italian is slightly better than I thought it was. I was able to get directions, and order at a small Italian restaurant. Speaking of food, Italy truly does have the best food in the world. Eating in Italy was an experience I will never forget. My mouth waters at the thought of thin slices of Margherita pizza dusted with oregano, and creamy spaghetti carbonara. The canals seem to be the best way to see what Venice had to offer. There really is something magical about a gondola ride through the grand canal, it's almost a walk through history since nearly nothing looks modern in this ancient city. Unfortunately, Venice isn't the calm city that authors, and postcards depict and it was nice to head back to quiet Ljubljana after the frenzy of Venice.

My perspective on Slovenia has certainly changed and despite my eagerness to see Italy, I must admit now that Slovenia has stolen my heart with its amazing sights, sculptures, architecture, genuine people, and delicious food.

