




Tatra Mountains, Slovakia

Fall in love with nature all over again when you set your sights on the peaks of the Tatra Mountains. Even a first look at the beauty of this mountain range that straddles the border between Slovakia and Poland will make you wonder why you haven't heard more about it. It's a budget-friendly alpine hideaway, and the Tatras do not disappoint. Spectacular hiking and skiing, scenic lakes and decadent foods await in this mecca for outdoor enthusiasts.

The Slovakian skiing village of Ždiar provides a quaint base for exploration. Here, you can hike all the way into the High Tetas or choose a more leisurely pursuit, like minigolf with an epic mountain backdrop. Take a cable car to Bachledka Treetop walk, a 600-meter-long elevated walking path that meanders through the forests of Pieniny National Park, for a truly remarkable view of the mountain range.

Nearby sporting opportunities feel limitless. In summer, bobsled tracks, hiking and biking trails, hang gliding, water parks and more beckon. In winter, no matter your favorite way to traverse the snow, you'll be happy here. There are several types of cross-country ski trails in addition to the rich downhill skiing scene, plus snowboarding, snow tubing and ice skating to shake the snow up. Make sure you don't miss your chance for night skiing, which is a truly magical experience that feels even more peaceful than day-time trips down the hill.

All the active adventures remove any guilt from the scrumptious food. Beautifully braided bread loaves and grilled sheep's cheese served with cranberry. Apple pie with blueberry sauce and traditional mountain tea (black tea with lemon vodka). Tempting potato pancakes and žurek (a soup of meats and vegetables with a uniquely sour taste). Whether it's food selections or outdoor explorations, the possibilities abound to create an enchanting journey in the Tetras. 

— Lesley Tkaczyk Miller



TRAVELER

FALL 2021

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