

# Escape: Budget break

## Slovenia for under £100 a night

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia's capital, sits on the meandering river Ljubljanica with dramatic mountains rising to the north. The city has a population of fewer than 300,000 and a centre of narrow streets which run from cafe-packed riverbanks to a hilltop castle. Art galleries and museums are interspersed between splendid art nouveau and neo-classical buildings.

### Where to stay

#### Hotel Galleria

TUCKED in a corner of the old town, Hotel Galleria is a great little hideaway in a distinguished 17th-century building in the heart of the city. There are 16 rooms, all elegantly dressed with lilac and soft-grey modern decorations. Some of the back rooms have views of the castle. Galleria is family-run and friendly.

B&B doubles from £66 ([hotelgalleria.eu](http://hotelgalleria.eu)). A three-night stay with return flights from London Stansted is from £305 pp based on two sharing ([easyjet.com/holidays](http://easyjet.com/holidays))

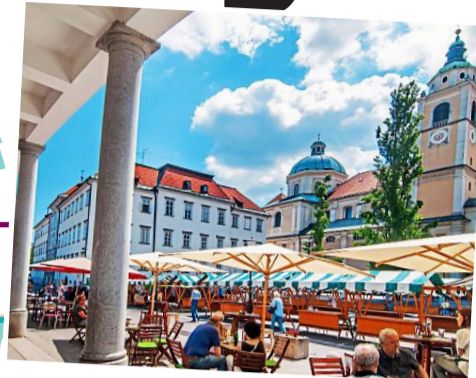
#### B&B Hotel Park

FROM the outside, this may look like a grim, Tito-era apartment block — which originally it was — but inside is a slick hotel run on ecological principles with rooms spread over a dozen floors (ask for one of the recently refurbished ones on a higher floor for great city views). It's a short walk to all the attractions. Honey from the rooftop beehives is for sale in reception.

B&B doubles from £64 ([hotelpark.si](http://hotelpark.si))

#### City Hotel

THE 200-plus rooms at this central hotel — a moment or two from the river — are reasonably sized and



Cafe culture: By the Market Colonnade. Left: A boat cruising the Ljubljanica river and, far left, the city centre

to the hilltop castle, stroll down the long narrow steps and make this your target for a late lunch.

Address: Gornji Trg 33

#### The Market Colonnade

BETWEEN the city's two most famous bridges — Dragon Bridge and Triple Bridge — the Market Colonnade is an extraordinary riverside structure designed by famous local architect Joze Plecnik to resemble a Greco-Roman temple. It overlooks the market and is home to little cafes where delicious veal stews are to be had for £6 (try Grand Cafe Ljubljana) and coffees and cake for £1.75 (try Pekarna Pecjak).

Address: Glavna trznica

#### The Cacao Cafe

ABOVE the Market Colonnade, on the other side of the river, this is the place to go for ice-cream. Flavours include tiramisu, mango and (especially good) chocolate and raspberry; £1.55 a scoop. You may have to be patient to get one of the pleasant outside tables.

[cacao.si](http://cacao.si)

#### Cin Cin

THIS bar/restaurant in an old tobacco factory has a chic industrial interior with higgledy-piggledy chairs and DJs or live music. Outside you can drink in old ski gondolas. It's £1.40 for a glass of wine. Juicy burgers in its Food Porn basement are £6.

[tobacna.eu](http://tobacna.eu)

### How to get there

■ EASYJET has return flights from London Stansted from £61 ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)).

■ TAXIS from the airport — around a half-hour drive from the city centre — cost about £25, or you can take a shared airport taxi for £8.70, which will drop you exactly where you need to go; kiosks are to the left as you exit the baggage hall.

TOM CHESHYRE

### What to see and do

#### Go for a river picnic

THE city's Botanic Gardens along the river are free ([botanicgardens-ljubljana.com](http://botanicgardens-ljubljana.com)). After seeing the grounds, stop for a picnic at a little cafe in a nearby bend in the river; the perfect spot to avoid crowds.

#### Tour Plecnik House

MUCH of the most attractive architecture in the city centre

is by Joze Plecnik (1872-1957) — and his house is now a museum (£5.20, [mgml.si](http://mgml.si)). Free tours are given of his studio, conservatory and bedroom.

#### Hang out with hipsters

HOSTEL Celica is a converted 1890s prison with 20 artily designed 'cell rooms' (£52 a night) as well as dorm beds (£18 a night, [hostelcelica.com](http://hostelcelica.com)). It's worth visiting for its jolly restaurant/bar with a cool little art gallery.

#### Buy a Ljubljana Card

IF YOU'RE a museum fiend, you should buy a Ljubljana Card. Available at the airport, information centres and hotels, they can be valid for 24 hours (£27), 48 hours (£34) or 72 hours (£39) and include entry to almost every attraction, plus airport transfer on a public bus, boat rides, tours and transport.

contemporary styled with black and white pictures of Ljubljana landmarks on the walls.

Expect wide beds, good shower rooms and balconies on the best corner rooms (ask for these, but expect to pay £35 extra).

B&B doubles are from £63 ([cityhotel.si](http://cityhotel.si))

#### Vander Urbani Resort

SPLASH out a little on this 20-room, river-front hotel with a brilliant rooftop pool and deck with sunloungers. Drinks are served here as well as at the lively bar with outside tables by the waterfront. This is one of the most fashionable hotels in town — it's a member of the hip Design Hotels group. Rooms are in shades of grey with modern art and leather armchairs.

B&B doubles from £97 ([vanderhotel.com](http://vanderhotel.com))

### Where to eat

#### Vino & Ribe

JUST off the river in the old town, Vino & Ribe delivers what its name promises: wine and fish. This tiny, tapas-style restaurant has seating for about ten. Grilled sardines and red herring are to be had along with fresh calamari and octopus salad. It costs about £13 for a decent Slovenian carafe of wine and a couple of dishes.

Address: Stari Trg 28

#### Gostilnica 5-6 KG

THIS bustling restaurant's name comes from the weight of the suckling pig used in its signature dish (popular with locals). It also serves excellent pizzas and salads; a pizza with a glass of wine is £10. After a trip

#### MOST MEMORABLE PLACE?

NEW YORK. I went for the first time when I was 17 with the BBC when I worked behind the camera. At the time, I hadn't even got a passport. My parents weren't travellers so I had never been abroad. I had the pleasure of living there when my husband (footballer Frank Lampard) played for New York City FC.

#### WHAT DO YOU NEVER TRAVEL WITHOUT?

I HAVE a green scarf from Zara that I've had for about ten years. It doubles up as a blanket and, as I'm quite a nervous flyer, I think it makes me feel better.

#### EARLIEST TRAVEL MEMORY?

GETTING on a boat from Belfast over to Scotland and driving through all the luscious Highland landscapes aged four.

## Checking in... Christine Lampard

Travelling with a celebrity



#### FAVOURITE HOTEL?

THE One&Only Royal Mirage hotel in Dubai ticks all the boxes for children and adults. From a couples' perspective the best place I've been is Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes.

#### WHAT KIND OF HOLIDAYER ARE YOU?

I CAN slum it for a certain amount of time, but then I want a nice warm shower and hot towel. Holidays should be a time for yourself, when you don't have to worry about the housework.



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