Slovak stereotypes

A lot of foreign visitors experience a culture shock when they visit Slovakia, because we have different culture, way of life and attitudes (postoje).

* **Clothes** – are very important especially for young people and those who live in big cities. People pay attention to what they wear and you are expected to be neatly (upravene), fashionably (módne) and well-dressed, and have polished and clean shoes.
* When you enter a flat you are expected to **take off your shoes** and leave them outside or at the door.
* It is considered polite to bring some **flowers** for a lady and some wine for a man. Always give an odd (nepárny) number of flowers. Before you give them to a woman, take them out of the paper.
* Men should go first when entering the bar in case there is a fight. You have to protect a woman.
* When you are offered a drink, you are expected to clink glasses and to make an eye contact. And I have to say that Slovaks are quite passionate drinkers. They also smoke a lot.
* **Drivers** are impatient and do not respect speed limits. They usually drive above (nad) speed limit (50 km/h) in a village or town.
* Most people live in towns and big cities; they live in blocks of flats (panelákoch) in housing estates (na sídliskách). In the past people used to build big houses but they don’t do that anymore. Young people are moving to towns and buy or rent (prenajímať si) small flats or go abroad to find a better-paid job.
* Slovaks like eating fatty food such as salami, sausages, bacon, fast-food and pizza. Men don’t care about their weight and clothes. Slovaks don’t eat much fruit and they like sweet meals and our national cuisine.
* Slovaks greet themselves by shaking hands, they often hug and kiss.

Prejudices – predsudky

* Slovaks are said to be hospitable, friendly, open and hard-working. But they underestimate themselves. They often think they are poor and do not have enough skills and knowledge get their dream job.
* We often blame (viníme) Romani people for our economic situation, but the truth is that we are not able to get on with them and accept their way of life and we envy them their freedom.
* Slovaks who do not speak Hungarian language often say that Hungarians do not want to learn Slovak language and they refuse (odmietnuť) to accept the rights of this nationality. The truth is that we are afraid to speak any foreign languages and therefore we have problems to find a well-paid job.

Slovakia – places of interest

Bratislava – the capital of Slovakia

* it is the largest town in Slovakia with about 5OO OOO inhabitants
* It´s situated on the banks of the River Danube, in the heart of Europe, on borders of three countries- Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. It also lies (leží tiež) at the foothills (na úpätí) of the Little Carpathian Mountains.
* It is the seat (sídlo) of the president, government (vlády), parliament and many other institutions. A lot of international companies have their offices in Bratislava.
* It consists of (skladá sa z) 5 parts, the oldest part is called The Old Town. There are many museums, churches (kostoly), palaces and beautiful buildings
* It is an ancient (starobylé) city, the first settlement (osídlenie) dates back (pochádza) to the Stone Age.
* **St. Martin’s Cathedral** is built in gothic style. It is situated in the historical city centre below (pod) Bratislava castle. It is one of the oldest churches in Bratislava and it is the largest one. In the past it was a coronation (korunovačný) church of Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. 11 kings and 8 queens were crowned (boli korunovaní) here including Maria-Teresa of Austria. At the top of its tower (na vrchu veže) there is a huge gold Crown of St. Stephen. It weights 150 kg. There is a coronation festival called Korunovačné slávnosti held since (konané od roku) 2003 which simulates coronation of one of the king. You can follow the steps of kings and queens and walk along the coronation path.
* **Bratislava Castle** is situated on the Castle hill (hradnom vrchu). Originally it was built of stone, then rebuilt to a palace but at the beginning of 19th century it was destroyed by fire. It was renovated in the 20th century and today it houses (je domovom) historical exhibitions (výstav) of early settlements of The Slovak national museum. The Medieval Hall of Knights (stredoveká rytierska sála) is used for various ceremonies, artistic (umelecké) and scientific (vedecké) expositions (výstavy).
* **Old Town Hall** (stará radnica) is situated on the Main Square. The oldest part – the tower – is the original house of Mayor Jakub. It was built at a time when the city was not yet protected by massive stone fortifications (hradby), ruins of which we can see renovated today. It houses exhibition of the Bratislava City Museum.
* **Michael’s Gate –** is the only preserved gate of medieval (stredoveký) city fortification. There is a statue of St. Michael placed on the top of 51-metre high tower. At present, the tower houses exhibition of the Museum of Weapons. It also offers a very nice view of the old city.
* **Academia Istropolitana –** the first and the oldest university in Slovakia was founded (bola založená) by Mathias Corvinus in the 15th century.
* **Good shepherd’s house –** one of the narrowest buildings in BA. It houses collection of historical clocks.
* **Primacial palace –** where the so-called Peace of Pressburg was signed between Napolen and Austria in 1805. It is the seat of the mayor (starosta) of the town. It houses a unique collection of tapestries of the 17th century depicting tragic love of Hero to Leandros from an English royal weaving factory (tkáčovňa) at Mortlake.

Other places of interest: Devín Castle, Pálffy Palace, the Presidential Palace, Mirbach Palace, Slavín, historical building of The Slovak National theatre, Ganymedes fountain, Maximilian fountain, Schone Náci, Čumil