

SLOVENIA'S TREASURE: THE THOUSAND YEARS OF BLED



Bled Castle is often considered a symbol of Slovenia. It sits on a steep cliff and the striking vistas it offers have been a great lure for many tourists. Its long history never ceases to impress, especially this year, when the castle celebrates 1000 years of its existence.

Slovenia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, has gained a very positive reputation among holiday makers. During winter holidays, visitors come to enjoy local beautiful sceneries and amazing ski opportunities. Summer days lure hikers and bikers alike, and culture enthusiasts will not feel left out either. **Many travel only to visit Bled, one of the most popular tourist attractions of the country.** Local infamous landmark, the Bled Castle, perched 130 metres above a striking lake, celebrates an impressive thousand-year existence in 2011.

The first written reference to Bled dates back to 1004 when then German King Henry II donated the Bled estate to the Bishopric of Brixen. The emperor was hoping to strengthen German influence in the Northern part of Italy. At that time, only a tower stood on the steep rock on the estate, however, in 1011 Castellum Veldes is mentioned in another of Henry II's donation deeds. Eventually, it became known as the Bled Castle.

It has quite an intricate history, having changed owners a great many times. In 1947, a fire erupted on the castle roof, destroying a large part of it. However, **during the early 1950s, renovation works restored the castle's former beauty and also prepared it better for the wave of tourists it was about to receive.**

Even today, overlooking the charming Lake Bled, the castle attracts thousands of visitors each year. Great celebrations will be held there at the end of May, featuring medieval performances and fireworks; surviving a millennium is a very impressive accomplishment.

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