

Mission 3 - The High Tatras Mountains

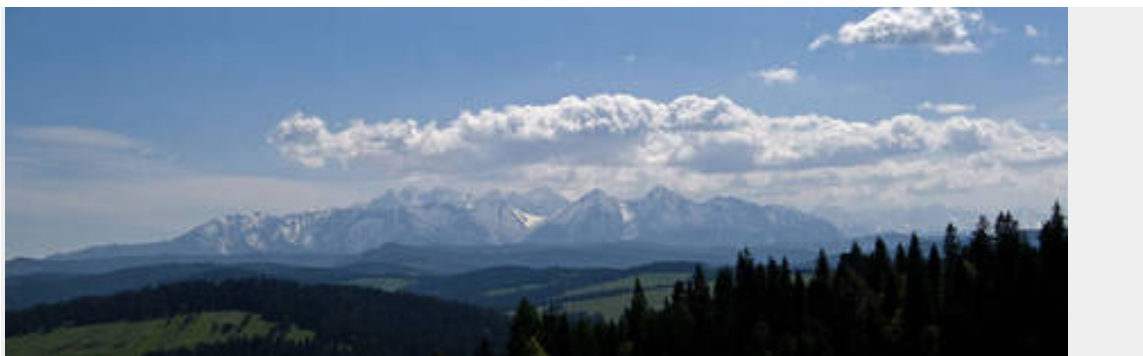
The High Tatras is the most popular tourist region in Slovakia



Do any of these challenges:

1. Where are the High Tatras? Find it on the Google Earth.
2. Why do many people come to High Tatras? What can they see?
3. Make a poster of wildlife or plantlife of High Tatras.
4. How will damaged area of High Tatras look in 2020?

The **Tatra Mountains, Tatras** or **Tatra (Tatry** in both Polish and Slovak), constitute a mountain range which forms a natural border between Slovakia and Poland. They occupy an area of 750 km², the major part (600 km²) of which lies in Slovakia. The highest mountain is Gerlach at 2,655 m, located in Slovakia just north of Poprad. The north-western peak of Rysy (2,499 m) is the highest Polish mountain.



Panorama of Tatras (from [Poland](#))

The Tatras consist of:

- Western Tatras (Slovak: *Západné Tatry*, Polish: *Tatry Zachodnie*)
- Eastern Tatras (*Východné Tatry*, *Tatry Wschodnie*), which consist of:
 - High Tatras (*Vysoké Tatry*, *Tatry Wysokie*)
 - Belianske Tatras (*Belianske Tatry*, *Tatry Bielskie*)

Description

The area is a well-known winter sports area, with resorts such as Zakopane, the "Winter Capital" of Poland, Poprad and the town (Mesto) Vysoké Tatry in Slovakia (in English literally (*Town of the High Tatras*); created in 1999 and including the former separate resorts Štrbské Pleso, Starý Smokovec, and Tatranská Lomnica), and The High Tatras, with their 24 (or 25) peaks over 2500 m above sea level, are, together with the Southern Carpathians, the only mountain ranges with an Alpine character in the whole 1200 km length of the Carpathian Mountain range.



The Tatras should be distinguished from another Slovak mountain range, the [Low Tatras](#) (in Slovak *Nízke Tatry*), situated south of the Tatras. Sometimes, however, the term 'Tatras' is used freely to refer to both the Tatras and the Low Tatras.

Climate

The Mountains lie in the temperate zone of Central Europe. They are an important barrier to the movements of air masses. Their mountainous topography causes the most diverse climate in that region.



The effects of global warming in the Tatra Mountains started to be visible around the 1980s.

Wildlife in Tatra mountains

The Tatra Mountains are home to many species of animals: 54 tardigrades, 22 turbellarians, 100 rotifers, 22 copepods, 162 spiders, 81 molluscs, 43 mammals, 200 birds, 7 amphibians and 2 reptiles.

The most notable mammals are the Tatra chamois, marmot, snow vole, brown bear, wolf, Eurasian lynx, red deer, roe deer, and wild boar. Notable fish include the brook trout and alpine bullhead. The endemic species include the caddis fly, spider *Xysticus alpicola* and wingless springtail. The chamois "mountain goats" (which appears on the TANAP logo) bears, boars, marmots and various deer species are only some of the many animals which help give the Tatras their character. Birds of prey, too, are found here in a unique combination.

Below are pictures of some of the wildlife which many tourists see every day in the Tatras.



Chamois



Wolf



Lynx



Ural owl



Deer



Wild boar



Common Viper



Tatra Marmot



Buzzard



Goshawk



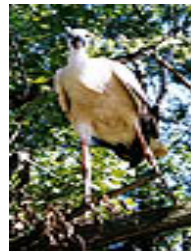
Eagle



Pipit



Crane



Stork

Plantlife in Tatra mountains

The Mountains have a diverse variety of plants. They are home to more than 1,000 vascular plants, about 450 mosses, 200 hepatics, 700 lichens, 900 fungi, and 70 slime moulds. There are five climatic-vegetation belts in Tatra:

The distribution of plants depends on altitude:

- up to 1,300 m: Carpathian beech forest; almost no shrub layer, herb layer occupies most of the forest floor
- to 1,550 m: Spruce forest; shrub layer poorly developed, mosses are a major component
- to 1,800 m: Mountain Pine, numerous herbs
- to 2,300 m: high altitude grasslands
- from 2,300 m up: Subnivean - bare rock and almost no vegetation (mostly lichens)

Some **1,300 plant species** make their home in the Tatras. The flowering season, though short, is spectacular, as seen below. Varieties unique to the region, as well as species which have adapted themselves to local conditions, join more common plants.

Many of these are on the list of endangered species. Please note that **all plant life in TANAP is protected**.

Below are pictures of some of the more colorful **flora of the Tatras**.

Horec bodkovany – Gentiana punctata



Zvonček alpínsky – Campanula alpina

Plesnivec alpínsky - Leontopodium alpinum



Prvosienka dlhokvetá - Primula halleri
(Long-flowered primrose, rare in Europe)

Kamzičník chlpatý - Doronicum styriacum



Veternica narcisokvetá - Anemone narcissiflora

Prvosienka najmenšia - Primula minima
(The least primrose)



(Boletus edulis)

Stračonôžka tatranská - Delphinium oxysepalum



High Tatras' Peaks



The best-known Tatra Peak, attracting the largest number of tourists, is the **Lomnický Peak** (2634 m). A cabin cableway taking people to the summit from **Tatranska Lomnica** has been in operation since 1940. The peak is reached by means of a four-seat gondola from Tatranska Lomnica to **Lake Skalnaté**, where visitors transfer to a cabin cableway with a capacity of 15, which take them to the upper station.

On the summit of Lomnický Peak there is a meteorological station. When visibility is good, it is possible to see a large part of Slovakia from the top of the mountain. Those who wish to climb **Gerlachovsky Peak** do so in the company of an experienced mountain guide.

Eastern Tatras

- Gerlachovský štít - 2654 m (Slovakia)
- Lomnický štít - 2634 m (Slovakia)
- Ľadový štít - 2627 m (Slovakia)
- Pyšný štít - 2623 m (Slovakia)
- Kežmarský štít - 2556 m (Slovakia)
- Rysy (middle peak) - 2499 m (Slovakia/Poland)
- Kriváň - 2495 m (Slovakia)
- Slavkovský štít - 2452 m (Slovakia)
- Batizovský štít - 2448 m (Slovakia)
- Svinica (Slovak); Świnica (Polish) - 2301 m (Slovakia/Poland)
- Široká - 2210 m (Slovakia)
- Havran - 2151 m (Slovakia)
- Veľká kopa - 2052 m (Slovakia)
- Brestová - 1934 m (Slovakia)
- Sivý vrch - 1809 m (Slovakia)
- Osobita - 1687 m (Slovakia)

Western Tatras



- Bystrá - 2248 m (Slovakia)
- Baranec - 2184 m (Slovakia)
- Banikov/Banówka - 2178 m (Slovakia)
- Klin (Slovak)/Starobociański Wierch (Polish) - 2176 m (Slovakia/Poland)
- Volovec - 2064 m (Slovakia/Poland)
- Kasprow vrch/Kasprowy Wierch - 1,987 m (Slovakia/Poland)
- Giewont - 1894 m (Poland)

High Tatra National Park

High Tatra National Park is located in the northern part of Slovakia bordering with Poland. Recorded on the **UNESCO Biosphere Reserves** List, the Tatra National Park covers both the Polish and Slovakian parts of the range.

Tatras are the largest alpine-type massif in Central Europe with **Gerlachovsky Peak** (2654m), the highest peak in the High Tatras and in the **Carpathians** as a whole. There are further 25 Tatra peaks reach a height of 2500 meters above sea level. On account of its accessibility and the beauty of the panorama, High Tatra is one of the most frequently visited alpine summits.



Many tourist trails lead hikers to mountain lakes, waterfalls and caves as well as through scenic mountain valleys. The mountains are also the home to chamois, bears, and marmots.

The High Tatras are toured in all seasons by mountain climbers and hikers and by winter sports fans in the winter seasons.

Lakes in High Tatra National Park

In the High Tatras, there is the highest concentration of natural lakes in Slovakia. There are about **165 lakes** in the Tatras on the Slovak Republic territory and they mainly were left behind from the Ice Age.

The largest and the deepest lake is **Lake Veľke Hincovo** (1945 meters above sea level). It lies at the end of **Mengusovska Dolina**, which is the most popular valley among tourists.

The lake situated at the highest altitude is **Lake Modré** (2192 m); it lies in the valley of **Malá Studená Dolina**. The shadow cast by the surrounding peaks makes the water in the tarn look a dark blue color. The best way to reach it is from **Lake Skalnaté** or from **Hrebienok**, a tourist center above **Stary Smokovec**.



Waterfalls in High Tatra National Park

The Tatra valleys also have some cascading waterfalls as natural attractions. One of the most visited waterfalls is the **Vodopády Studeného Potoka**. The waterfall situates in **Malá Studená Dolina** and **Veľká Studená Dolina** (Small and the Big Cold Valley) and can be reached from **Tatranska Lomnica**, or from the other side from **Hrebienok** in the direction of **Lake Skalnaté**.

Veľká Studená Dolina also exceptional in a way that it hides the largest number of mountain tarns of all the Tatra valleys.

Other popular waterfalls are **Obrovsky Vodopád** (1330 m), which falls 20 meters; **Maly Vodopád** (1247 m), **Veľky Vodopád** (1226 m) with its 13 m cascade and **Dlhy Vodopad** (1160m).

Disaster in High Tatra Mountains

Pictures before the storm



On November 19, 2004, the most beautiful mountains in Slovakia were hit by an unprecedented storm. The forests in the High Tatras National Park mountain range were obliterated after powerful windstorm blew over Slovakia resulting in damages of billions of Slovak crowns. The devastation was horrendous as trees were blown away like straws by the gusts of wind reaching at times a speed of up to 173 km/ hour.

The windstorm completely destroyed 13 000 hectares of forest, which comes up to a third of the total of the High Tatras National Park 46000 hectares. The total amount of destruction is yet to be determined as evaluations are still in progress. The storm is believed to have damaged approximately 3 million cubic meters of soft wood, which is about 90% of annual extraction in this category in Slovakia. Low Tatras were hit by the storm as well. The damages there are estimated to come up to another 500-600 000 cubic meters.

Pictures after the storm:



Slovak government described the situation in Slovakia as a catastrophe of unseen proportions. It will take two to five years to repair all of the damage. The reforestation of the area could take up to 20 years. The Slovak Government has mobilized all necessary means to repair the damage and to return the region to normal as soon as possible. Slovak citizens are trying to help and appeal to their friends abroad to do so as well.

Rarities of Tatra mountains



The oldest snow

The Medena valley is the place where the snow stays even in the summer months. This location-yearlong in the Lomnický peak's shadow determines this valley as the place where the snow doesn't disappear.



The highest located botanical garden

The highest located botanical garden lies on the Lomnický peak in 2634 altitude. You can find 22 plants in their natural surroundings.



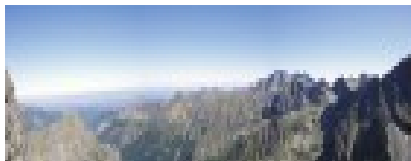
The rainiest area

The rainiest area is the cottage Zbojnická chata in the upper part of the Velka Studena valley. The average rainfall totals is about 2130mm yearly.



The biggest wind speed

The biggest wind speed was measured on the Skalnate pleso, where the wind reached 78,6 m/s, regarded as hurricane with damages.



The longest glacial valley

The longest glacial valley is the Bielovodska valley with its 10km length. It was created by the biggest Tatra glacier with the length 13km, the thickness 280m and the width 1,5km. As the only one from the Tatra valleys it has an alpine character.



The smallest alpine mountains of the world

The High Tatras are the smallest mountains with an alpine character. Its location between the Alps, the Caucasus, the Ural and the Arctic Ocean makes it the highest inland mountain in Europe. The main ridge is 26km long.



The most legendary rocky wall

The most legendary rocky wall is the 300 meters high south wall called Galeria Ganku. It's the most popular climbing challenge. The tourists can observe it from the saddle Vaha during the Rysy ascent.



The biggest rocky wall

The biggest rocky wall is the north wall of Maly Kezmarsky peak with 900 meters. It's possible to see it from the cottage Chata pri Zelenom plese as well as from the tourist track (red track heading from the cottage to the mountain lake Skalnate pleso).



The biggest peak of the Belianske Tatras

The biggest peak of 14km long ridge of the Belianske Tatras is Havran (2151,5), which isn't made accessible to public. In the Belianske Tatras is situated the only public Tatra cave - the Belianska cave lying upon Tatranska Kotlina resort. The cottage Plesnivec lies in 1290 altitude on green marked tourist track from Tatranska Kotlina.



The biggest waterfall

The biggest waterfall, Kmetov vodopad, is situated in the south-west part of the Koprova valley (Nefcerka) in 1245 altitude. Through the public inaccessible valley flows the Nefcersky brook with the 80 meters high waterfall. The flow width is 1,5 meter. It is possible to see it from the blue tourist track in the Koprova valley.



The longest tourist track

The longest tourist track is the Tatranska magistrála from the resort Podbanske to the mountain lakes Biele plesa by the saddle Kopske sedlo. It traverses the south parts of the High Tatras and its length is 46,25km. The track starts in the resort Podbanske, continues through the Jamske plesa to Popradske pleso, Sedlo pod Ostrevou, Sliezky dom, Hrebienok, Zamkovskeho chata, Skalnate pleso, Zelene Pleso and ends by Biele plesa-on the place of former Kezmarska cottage.



The biggest polish peak

The biggest peak of the Polish Tatras is the north-west peak of Rysy (2499,6). It is situated on the Slovakian-Polish border and has three summits- the biggest one is the middle summit (2503) on the Slovakian side, the second one is the polish one and the smallest is on the south-east part (2473). The tourist track from the Slovakian side goes from the cottage by Popradske pleso, nearby the mountain lakes Zabie and the cottage Chata pod Rysmi up to the Rysy peak (3 hours). From the Polish side the track goes from the mountain lake Morske oko (4hours).



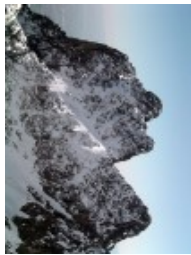
The biggest animal

The biggest animal is the brown bear weighing 140-350kg male and 80-200kg female. The adult male measures 170-220 cm and female 160-200cm. Young weighs 0,5kg and stays by mother 2,5 years. In Slovakia live about 700-900 bears. The brown bear belongs to beasts, but it became an omnivorous. 85-90 % of its feed is created by plant foods.



The biggest bird

The biggest bird in the High Tatras is the golden eagle with the wing spread 190-240 cm and the body length 75-90 cm. The male weighs 3-4,5kg, but female 3,5-6,5 kg. In the Slovakia 100 pairs of golden eagles is monitored, but the whole population is suggested about 200-250 individuals. The term of live of the golden eagle is 15-30 years in nature. It reaches the 150km/h speed by his hunts.



The biggest Indian

The biggest Indian is possible to see in the Mala Studena valley, on the track from the Teryho cottage through the Sedielko saddle to the Javorova valley. Nice view on the Indian is from the mountain lake Modre pleso. The Indian is created by Prostredny Hrot, Maly Hrot and Zlta Veza.



The most zigzag track

The most zigzag track with the total 32 goes from the mountain lake Popradske pleso to the saddle pod Ostervou. Other serious rival is the track from the mountain lake Zelene Pleso through the Svistovka peak to the Skalnaté pleso with 27 zigzags.



The highest situated building

The highest situated building is the end-station of the cable railway on the Lomnický peak in altitude 2632. It was built in 1940 and open for public in 1941. The difference in altitude was in that time the world unique. Recently the metrological station and SAV station are situated on the peak. The building was built with no help of aeronautical techniques. All needed material was carried up by manpower.



The highest yearlong open cottage

The highest yearlong open cottage is the Teryho chata in the 2015 altitude located in the Mala Studena valley nearby five mountain lakes Pat Spisskych plies.

The longest bridge in Tatras

The longest bridge in the High Tatras is the reconstructed bridge upon waterfalls of the brook Studeny potok, open for tourists from 11.7.2009. The length of the bridge is 25 meters, 3 meter more than before reconstruction. It took 45 tons of material carried on worker's shoulders from the Rainerova cottage.