



Just hidden beyond the old frontier of the Iron Curtain is the earthly paradise of Slovenia. A former Yugoslav country, Slovenia found independence after a 30 day standoff with Belgrade in 1991, and has ever since been open to all. Flanked around the north & west by the Julian Alps, Slovenia has guarded its beauty from western visitors. In the last decade, starting with the intrepid, more visitors have discovered the Alpine attractions such as the town of Bled and its magnificent Castle on the lake. Much of Slovenia's appeal comes from the outdoors, the dramatic mountains, good skiing and fine whitewater. For the paddler the now well known Soča River with its clean blue waters and fine pool drop nature, is a developing paddlers paradise

The Soča wells up from a mountain spring high above the Alpine village of Trenta, flowing through numerous canyons formed by the dissolving away of the Karst rock. Tight canyons lead to the town of Bovec, where a large tributary joins to start to widen the river and push towards the last wild canyon and the town of Kobarid. Where after calmer waters and hydro projects take the river over the border to Italy, changing its name to Isonzo and then on to the Adriatic beyond

Much of the paddling is centred around the town of Bovec in a splendid setting, nestled just under the ridge of Mount Kanin. Upstream of Bovec is the short and tight third canyon of the Soča, where from the footbridge over the gorge, huge fish can be seen in the clear deep waters. A major tributary, the Koritnica flows down from the Predel Pass to create an excellent mid ability narrow run. The river then flows openly down to Zaga pass the Boka waterfall, a spring jetting a spout out of the mountainside. The area test piece, the Učja confluences with the Soča and slowly begins to descend into the fourth canyon at Srpenica and on to its exit at Kobarid. Within the canyon are 6 different sections with something for everyone, Class 2 to 5

The beauty of the Soča is the clear water, and this is the perfect natural classroom for learning whitewater kayaking. Water quality aids the definition of the rapids, and more importantly the clarity of eddy lines, making it absolutely obvious that where the main current finishes and the eddies start. The pool drop nature of runs make for excellent bite sized challenges for any willing paddler to take on. So unlike other Alpine rivers there is no intimidation of a runaway whitewater, on



the Soča it is possible to see the pools below from above the rapids. So if you are looking to learn, this is the perfect destination

The main action starts below Srpenica, with cruising Class 2 before the gorge and the Graveyard Section. Used as the rafting bread ‘n’ butter run this is an improving paddlers dream. There are pool drop rapids and numerous play features to occupy the most waiting. Below the wooden footbridge at Trnovo, the international slalom site is a cut above other sites, with more technical challenges for the paddler. An abrupt end at a small eddy on the right leads directly into the famed “Siphon Canyon”. Tall stories and tragic tales cloak this section into legend. The Karst rock and steep gradient makes for a two kilometre long boulder garden where every rock conceals a siphon. These abundant features have taken their toll on the misguided and the unfortunate. In most cases these have been private rafting groups, normally kayakers have been more water worldly. The Soča then reveals its best section, with first rate rapids and playspots all the way to Kobarid with its scenic bridge at the canyon exit

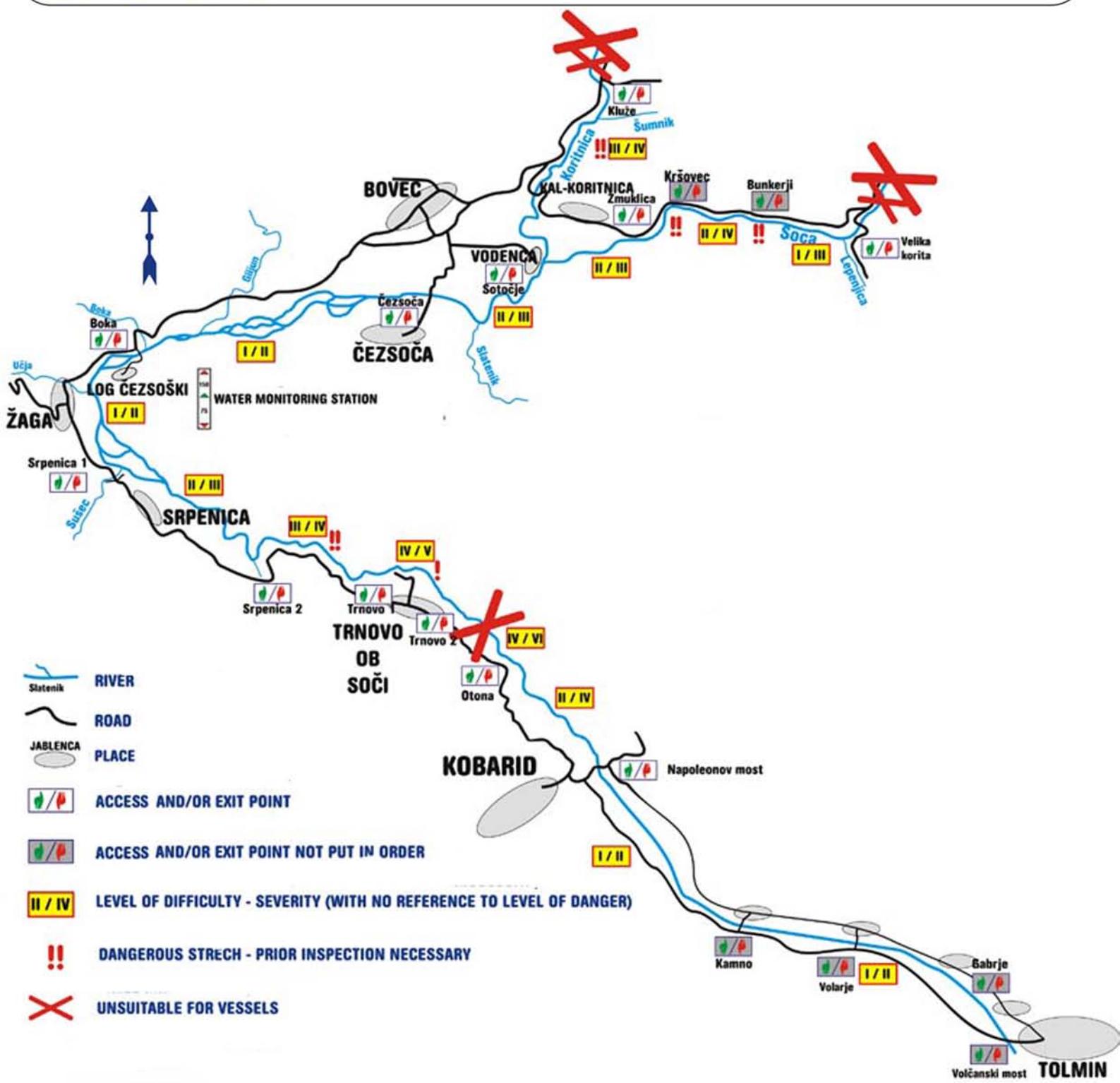
It was not always such a place of beauty, the Soča Valley saw the first ever gas attack in warfare during the Great War. In a three year standoff the opposing forces were caught in an attritious cycle that claimed the lives of nearly a million people. Documented at Kobarid Museum, the whole dark story of the Isonzo front, relieves the horrors of war. During this time, Ernst Hemmingway served as an Ambulance Driver for the Italian Forces, and drew on his experiences to write the famed “Farewell to Arms”. Thankfully there is little obvious sign of this dark chapter evident in the valley today

Although whitewater sport takes place at the bottom of the valley, there are many other activities to get involved in, the hiking trails are legendary, especially through the hidden passes across to Italy. Mountaineering possibilities with the favourable Summer conditions are numerous, also drawing in armies of paragliders to soar the uplift found on Mount Krn. Still the best lure to the river after paddling, is the pursuit of the Soča Trout

So whether you need to get away from it all and relax or want to learn in the best whitewater classroom in Europe the Soča has something for you

Soča

Gene17
kayaking
trips



Third Canyon (Class III & IV) Distance 5Km; Put in at the old Footbridge 1 km short of Bunkerji. Takeout at the Prijon Shop in Čezsoča.

A small boulder garden under the footbridge leads to flat water & clear pools. An over hanging cliff on the left signifies a recent rockfall. More calm water precedes the tight third canyon, that looks intimidating, yet straightforward. More open rapids run down to the Koritnica confluence and Kamp Toni.

The canyon continues on to Čezsoča with straight forward whitewater

Graveyard (Class III & IV); Distance 4Km. Put in in Srpenica I, Takeout Trnovo I just upstream of the wooden swing bridge.

Open swallow waters lead to prefect pool drop boulder rapids down to a sweeping left bend. At this point difficulties step up with longer rapids of open Class IV.

Tighter lines relieve excellent playspots. After a huge near river wide boulder, an awkward twisting rapid with a siphon creates numerous upsets. .

Slalom Course & Siphon Canyon, (Class IV & V) Distance 4Km. Put in Trnovo I Takeout Otona or continue on to Kobarid

The calm beach in Trnovo is soon forgotten as the excellent slalom course sharpens the wits before the in famed Siphon Canyon. Tight & successive difficulties litter the next 2 Km. Route finding for the uninitiated can problematic as there are siphons and uncertainties everywhere.

Fourth Canyon, (Class IV) Distance 5Km. Put in at Otona, down a steep track from a parking place Takeout On the left beyond the bridge

Clean beautiful rapids descend from the putin eddy, with many prefect playspots en route. After a short calmer spot, a great playhole as most levels should be missed. Near endless natural slalom relieves the high bridge at the Canyons exit.