



## Slovakia Travel Guide

### Description



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**“Travel because you have no idea who you are until you experience yourself through different people and realize that we’re all the same”**  
***Anonymous***

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## Top Seven Destinations In Slovakia

- **Bratislava** Is the nation's capital and Slovakia's largest city. Bratislava has the Danube River right through the heart of it. This brings many riverboats to this fascinating city. It is a city with an impressive old town, but in the distance, old Soviet Union housing is apparent, one reason Bratislava is so fascinating to explore. At the city's historic heart, one can find a magnificent hilltop castle and a range of medieval and Gothic buildings, with some fine Baroque palaces to visit. Don't forget to visit the famous UFO Bridge and stop by for dinner.
- **Kosice**, Slovakia's second-largest city, has an abundance of fun and fascinating things to see and do, with bars, restaurants, and shops alongside its many art galleries, museums, and theaters. Over the centuries, Kosice has been ruled by the Hungarians, Turks, Czechs, and Slovaks. As a result, there is a vast collection of notable monuments, statues, and cultural landmarks.
- **The High Tatras is a magnificent mountain range and home to the tallest mountains in the country. They make for fantastic hiking and rock climbing. There are great slopes to ski and enjoy all winter sports.**
- **Bardejov** has a charming historic center to explore. The well-preserved picturesque medieval town with a marketplace is the heart and soul of Bardejov, as it has been for centuries. There is also an old synagogue and a small Jewish quarter. 14th—and 15th-century fortifications surround the town.
- **Slovak Paradise National Park encompasses a wide array of wild and rugged landscapes. It is a breathtakingly gorgeous part of the country to visit, with its deep canyons, valleys, and rivers cutting through the forests that seem to go on forever.**
- **Vlkolinec** Is one of the only remaining folk villages in Central Europe. The town has impressive architecture, with traditional log houses, a beautiful Baroque chapel, and an antiquated old bell tower. A quaint and charming village is set in an idyllic spot amidst forest-clad hills and fields, with mountains seen in the distance.
- **Levoca** is known for its beautiful old townhouses, spectacular historic central square, glorious Gothic church, and a 15th-century town hall. Levoca is full of incredible historic sights and cultural landmarks, with magnificent architecture scattered around town; you'll see Baroque, Renaissance, and Gothic features.

## Did you know?

### Country Stats

- Population: 5.46 million
- Capital City: Bratislava
- Currency: Euro
- Government type: Unitary parliamentary republic
- Ethnic populations: German 88.5%, Indigenous minorities 1.5% (includes Croatians, Slovenes,

Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Roma), recent immigrant groups 10% (includes Turks, Bosnians, Serbians, Croatians) (2018)

- Languages: Slovak is official and uses the Roman alphabet. Hungarian
- Religions: Roman Catholic 55%, Orthodoxy 5.1 Other Christina 3.8 No religion 26%, Muslim 8.3%, other 1.2%,
- Urban Population is 55%
- Independent Slovak Republic since 1993 after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia
- U.S. State Department Risk Level: Level 1 (August 2022)
- Terrorist groups: ISIS
- President: Zuzana Caputova
- Slovakia is an industrialized nation with a growing service sector.
- The area of Slovakia is 18,933 square miles,
- Border countries are Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine.
- Slovakia's national flag consists of three horizontal bands of color, from top to bottom: white, blue, and red. Superimposed over the bands on the left (hoist) side is a shield displaying the national emblem: a double apostolic cross in white sits atop the middle peak of three blue mountaintops, all on a red background.
- The Slovak landscape is primarily known for its mountainous nature, with the Carpathian Mountains extending across most of the country's northern half.
- Slovakia produces metal and metal products, fossil fuels (oil, gas), chemicals, synthetic fibers, machinery, paper, ceramics, transportation vehicles, rubber products, optical and electrical apparatus, food and beverages, electricity, and nuclear fuel.
- Export partners are Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, Australia, Hungary, Poland, and France
- GDP(PPP) 2023 is 229 billion (70th),
- Typical Slovak families have two or three children. At the same time, most women hold jobs outside the home.
- National Holiday is September 1, Constitution Day
- The literacy rate is 99.62%
- Life expectancy is 76.87 years

## Fun Facts

- Slovakia has hundreds of caves and caverns under its mountains, of which 30 are open to the public.
- Slovakia is home to more than 180 castles.
- Bratislava is the only city in the world that borders two countries. Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, sits on borders with Austria and Hungary.
- The highest wooden altar in the world is located in Slovakia. The altar of St. Jakub, created by Master Paul, is in the Church of St. James in [Levoča](#).
- After Austria, Slovakia has the most extensive natural freshwater supplies. It's mainly the underground reserves of Žitný Ostrov. High-quality drinking water is flowing right from our taps.
- The tallest cave column in the world is also located in Slovakia. The Krasnohorska Cave is a unique karst formation, with a giant column reaching over 100 feet.
- The highest statue of a horse in the world is located in the Sport and Congress Center in Šamorín-Cilistov. It is made entirely of stainless steel, rises to almost 30 feet, and weighs 20 tons.
- Slovakia has the first folk architecture village in the world. Wooden ?i?many village is at the



foothill of the Strážov Hills. All the gingerbread houses are original! The first mention of the village dates back to the year 1272.

- You can celebrate two birthdays. There is the day you were born, but there is also your namday. Every day of the year has assigned one or two names. When your name day comes up, you can expect well wishes, cards, and sometimes even gifts. The tradition's origins can go back to the Catholic calendar of saints.
- Central Europe's oldest archeological toy discovery was in the archaeological site near Košice—the four-wheeled pushcart from a child's grave dates from around 1600 BC.
- In Slovakia, we have a unique active geyser that spouts water to a height of around 45 feet. It erupts every one and a half days. Similar geysers are located only in Iceland. This one is in Heržany.
- Slovakia is home to the world's newest and most accurate astronomical clock. It is located in the tiny Slovakian village of Stará Bystrica.
- Slovaks are enormous fans of Andy Warhol, whose mother is Slovak.
- Almost 50 well-preserved wooden churches stand all over Slovakia. They are part of the cultural heritage of UNESCO, all wood and without a single nail. The oldest is the church of St. Francis of Assisi in Hervatov (near Bardejov). It originated in 1500.

## Slovakia Map

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- [Slovakia](#)

## Good to know before you go

- Tipping is not customary or even normal in Slovakia. Of course, tipping a server, hotel staff, or taxi is always a nice gesture. Ten percent would be very welcome. It is often best to leave it in cash to ensure the service staff receive the tip. You can also round up to the closest euro or two.
- In their everyday lives, the Slovaks dress like people anywhere else in the Western world. They are casual, often wearing jeans and sneakers, which is the trend all over Europe. People dress up in the evenings, especially for dinner, and a collared shirt and long pants are recommended for men. A dress, slacks, and a nice blouse are recommended for women. Clothing in urban areas is fashionable, while older, rural people remain more conservative.
- Driving in Slovakia is usually relatively easy. The roads are overall well-maintained. In the Slovak Republic, vehicles travel on the right side of the road. Headlights must be on at all times (day and night). The maximum legal speed on highways is 130 kilometers per hour (78 mph). On smaller roads, the maximum speed is 90 kph (54 mph). Seat belts are a requirement for all passengers, even in the back seats. Right turns on red are not permitted. Using your mobile phone while

driving is strictly prohibited. Driving under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited. The blood alcohol tolerance level is zero percent. A highway user decal/vignette must be purchased [online](#) for travel on most major roads outside Bratislava. People seemed respectful drivers and not aggressive.

- Credit cards are accepted in hotels, restaurants, and some shops, and there are plenty of ATMs in larger towns. Exchange offices can be found, but it's usually better value to change your money in a bank. Always exchange in the local currency rate and not your home rate.
- Economically, this is a strong country with low unemployment. Many international automobile companies base their operations here due to the local expertise of the population.
- When meeting strangers, shake hands, and don't use first names when addressing older people. Casual greetings like *ahoj* are only for close friends.
- Slovak cuisine rests on three elements: potatoes, pork, and cabbage. Because of the many neighboring countries, you'll also find hints of Polish, Hungarian, and Ukrainian cuisine. The main courses are usually a combination of meat with potatoes or dumplings. Slovak dumplings are similar to gnocchi. Meat is usually breaded and fried or cooked in a sauce. The main meal of the day is lunch, which starts with soup.
- Whether in a restaurant or at home, starting your meal with soup is the norm in Slovakia. Some soups are broth-based with veggies, while others are cream-based. Some soups pique your appetite, while others feel like entire meals!
- Table manners are Continental, where the fork is in the left hand and the knife is in the right while eating. Put your napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down. Finish everything on your plate.
- If invited to a Slovak home, you must remove your shoes at the door, even when told not to (they're just being polite.)
- Bring wine or chocolates if you're invited to dine at a local home.
- Vineyards in the southeast produce good white wine, the most distinctive being Tokaj, a sweet dessert wine. For a few weeks in September, you can get fresh *burčák*, a fruity, bubbly, semi-fermented white with which Slovaks and Czechs toast the harvest. We bought some during our travels and enjoyed it. *Slivovica*, made with plums, and *borovička*, made with juniper berries, are popular spirits.
- Due to various occupations in the last century. The feelings about Russia and Czechoslovakia can differ widely based on the generations. Our driver from Slovakia told us that in his family, his parents did not feel life was bad under communist rule. They felt safer, and life was predictable. The younger generation can see it in a very different. He said it is a topic that can cause a lot of strain, so it is best not to go there. This is a good recommendation for a visitor as well. Avoid such topics so as not to insult their view of the past.
- Keeping fish in the bathtub before Christmas is a tradition because eating carp at Christmas is supposed to bring good luck. Since carp are bottom feeders, they taste better if kept in clean water in a tub for several days before eating. Keeping the fish in the bathtub also ensures it stays fresh until Christmas Day. These days, many families in the countryside still carry on this tradition.
- May 1 is a national holiday in Slovakia, without school or work. Instead, the men go out into the forests to find tall trees to use as Maypoles. The Slovak traditional Maypole is a tall tree that has been stripped of all of its branches except the very top two to three feet, which are left intact to look like a small Christmas tree. Slovaks tie colorful ribbons to these branches, symbolizing love, new life, and good growth.
- The Slovaks love their tea. Herbal teas are an incredibly popular way to heal whatever ails you. If you get ill, ask the local pharmacist what they recommend. Many of these herbal tea blends are produced in the country. Slovakia's tea obsession isn't evident only during illness but also in

health. Several beautiful tea houses, like ?ajov?a na zámku in Zvolen Castle or ?ajov?a Klopa?ka in Banska Stiavnica, offer a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy the perfect cup of tea.

- The Slovaks tend to be reserved yet have a friendly demeanor. They value good humor and hard work.
- Ice hockey and soccer are the most popular team sports in Slovakia. In winter, Slovaks enjoy skiing, snowboarding, and ice skating.
- It is a safe country with low crime.

*Our visit to the capital city of Bratislava enchanted us. Check out [our article from our visit](#).*

## Slovakia Essential Info

### U.S. Consular Emergency

The 24-hour number from a U.S. Phone is 1-888-407-4747  
Outside of U.S., 011-202-501-4444

### US Embassy Bratislava

811 02 Bratislava

Slovak Republic

Phone: +421-2-5443-0861

Emergency +421-9-0370-3666

Visa Call Center:+421-2-3305 7000 (on business days from 9.00 AM to 5.00 PM) from Slovakia  
+703 520 2569 from the U.S.

**Email:** consulbratislava@state.gov

### [Embassy Website](#)

### Emergency Numbers

GENERAL 112

Medical 155 Fire 150 Police 158

### Country Code

+421

### Time Zone

UTC+1

### Adaptors for Slovakia

“Standard” Euro plug  
Type C or F

**Driving**  
Right side

[Official online travel guide Bratislava](#)

[Official Slovakia Tourism Office](#)

## When to go to Slovakia

The dry continental air brings in the summer heat and winter frosts. There is often fog in the lowlands and valleys, especially in winter. The Slovak climate lies between the temperate and continental climate zones, with relatively warm summers and cold, cloudy and humid winters. The weather differs from the mountainous north to the plains in the south.

Bratislava and Southern Slovakia are the warmest regions, where temperatures may reach 86 °F in summer. During the night, the temperatures drop to 68 °F. The daily temperatures in winter average between 23 °F and 50 °F. It may be freezing at night, but it is usually not below 14 °F.

Spring is characterized by colder weather, with an average daily temperature of 48 °F in the first weeks, about 57 °F in May and 63 °F in June. In Slovakia, the weather and climate in the spring are unpredictable and can get rainy.

Late Spring and early Fall are the loveliest months of the year to visit. Though the country is still not a typical tourist destination, even in the summer months, you will not see the crowds seen in so many other European cities.

## Our Favorite Slovakia Resources

*This resource section contains some Amazon affiliate links. If you use these links to buy something, we may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. Thank you!*

### Travel Books/Guides

[Rick Steves Eastern Europe](#) There is no dedicated book for Slovakia, but there is still great info in

this guide. Full disclosure: We are huge Rick Steve fans; it would be rare not to recommend one of his wonderful guides. We love his travel style and perspective. His off-the-beaten-path approach, together with his independent travel philosophy, matches well with how we travel. The guides never disappoint and are an excellent resource. This great travel companion is full of expert advice and independent reviews on what to see and do, plus detailed itineraries and suggestions for exploring this fascinating country. He offers a pocket guide to Vienna as well. [Find this guide here.](#)

### Our favorite websites

1. [Official Slovakia Tourism Office](#)
2. [U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs Slovakia Country Info](#)

We cannot encourage you enough to visit this website as you plan and prepare for your trip. The U.S. Federal Government addresses the safety, security, travel risk, entry, exit, visa documents mandates, emergency U.S. and Embassy contacts, health, local laws, exceptional circumstances, threats, traveler vulnerabilities, government warnings, and transportation in Switzerland. This is your best and most reliable resource for all this critical info. Check back often before you go, as things can change quickly. Being prepared is essential in all travel, but especially internationally.

3. [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Slovakia Travelers Health Resource](#)

This CDC travel resource provides essential health info for your specific destination. Using their tool, you can determine which vaccines, medications, and health advice recommendations are needed for Slovakia.

### Our favorite maps

[Slovakia \(National Geographic Adventure Map, 3323\)](#) Easy to read maps with practical road and travel information. These maps are meant for the adventure traveler and are very durable. Detailed highlights and weather info. Significant sites and landmarks are well-marked. Great for planning your route before your trip. Though we default to Google Maps, this came in handy when service was poor or during construction detours. [Find this essential map here.](#)

### Our favorite apps

**Google Maps:** Entering any address, landmark, or city in the app will instantly display all your travel options and booking info, along with accommodation providers and things to do. It is especially fantastic when used for public transportation options; it is spot on. Find it on your local app store.

**Duolingo-Language Lesson** Audio lessons that help improve your listening and speaking skills. Find it on your local App Store.

**Rick Steves Audio Europe** This app includes Rick Steve's audio content library. It also provides cultural and travel information, including self-guided tours of top attractions and historic walks. It is a must-have. Find it on your local App Store.

**Google Translate** We did find not as many people spoke English in smaller towns but Bratislava is a

bit better. As we always encourage, it is essential to learn the basics of greeting and thanking people in the local language. Google Translate was an easy app to use. If needed, you can enter text in English, and it will speak back in the language you need to aid in communicating with locals.

To check out the best travel apps, visit [Best Travel Apps for the Savvy Traveler](#).

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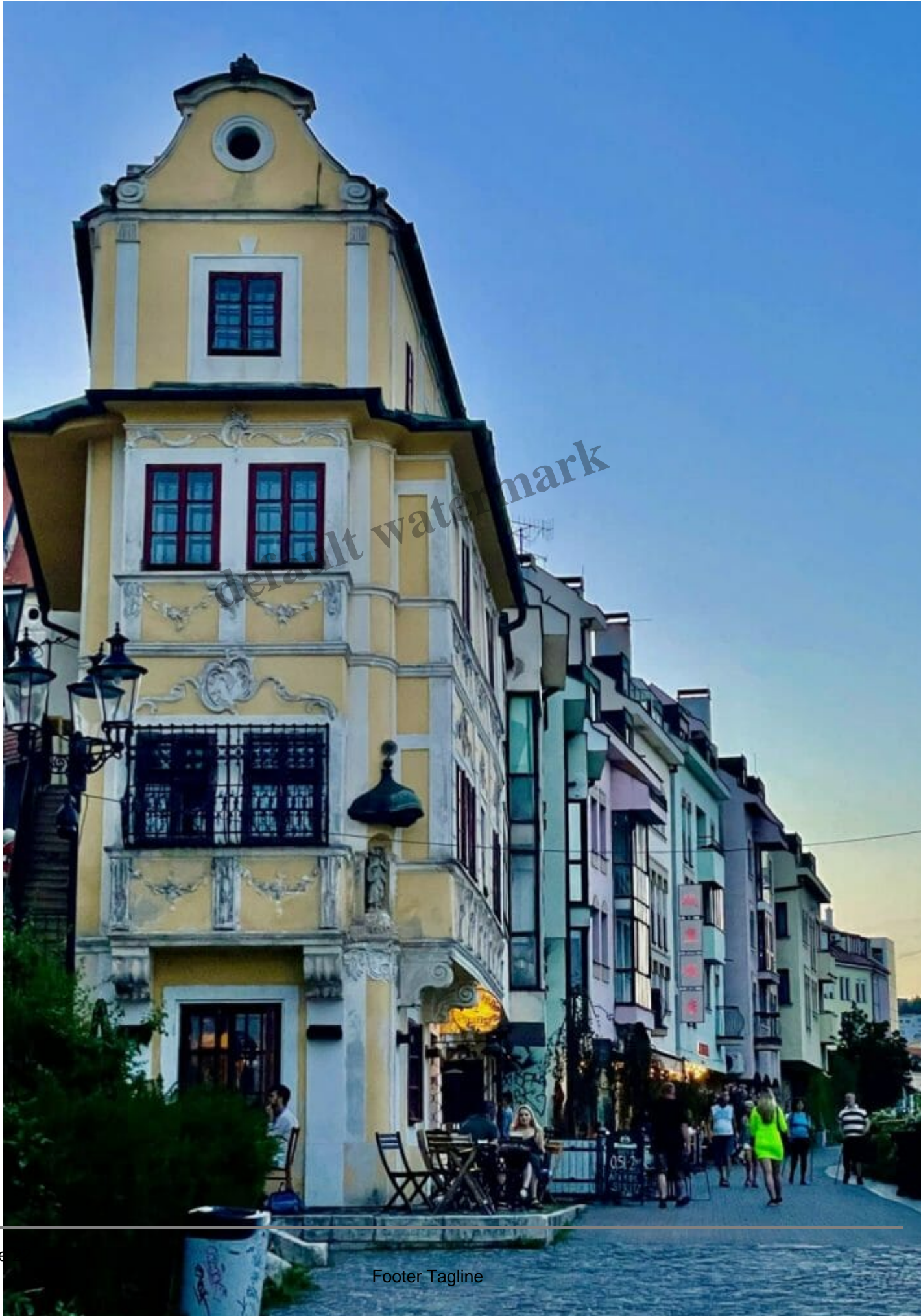
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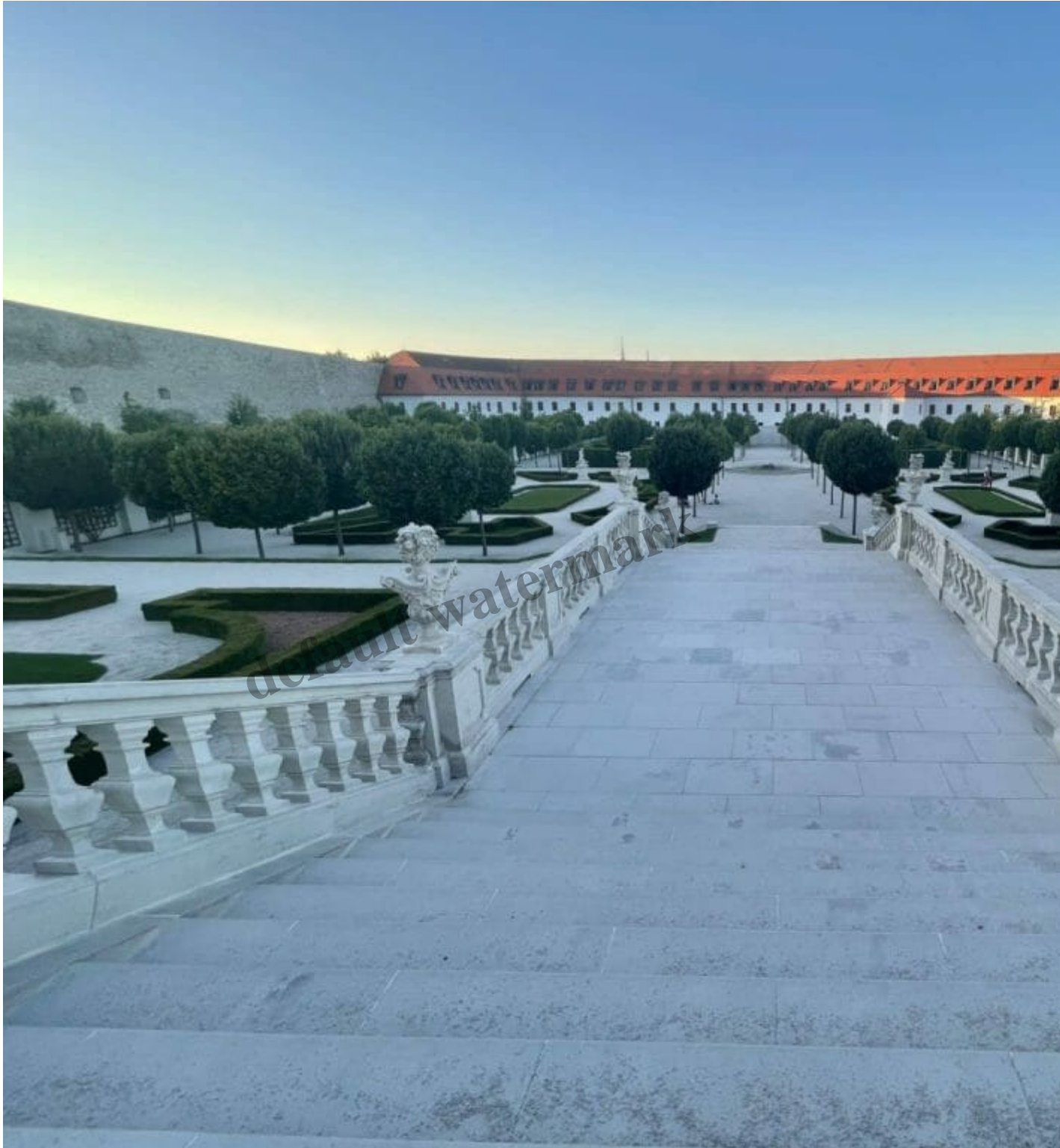
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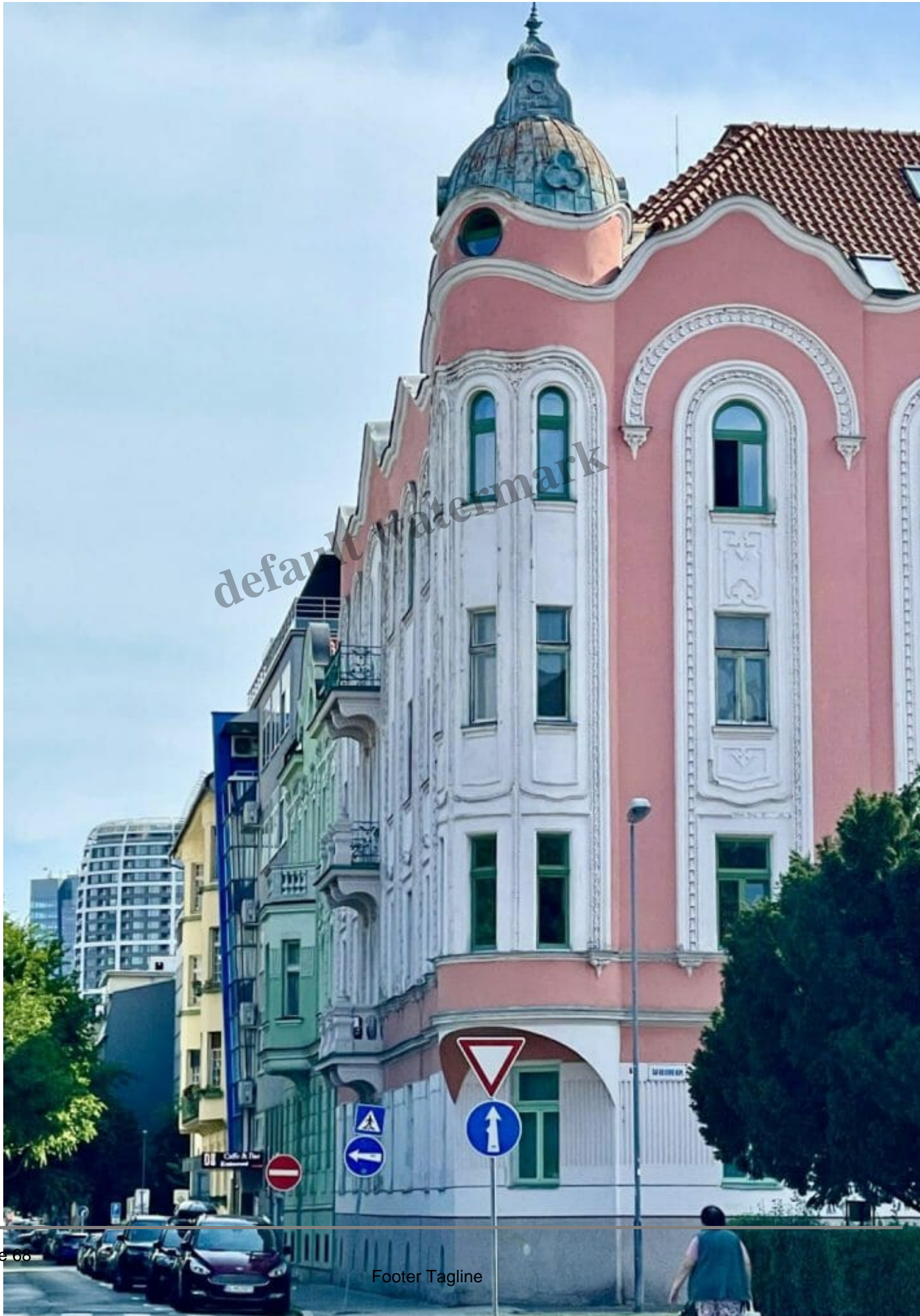




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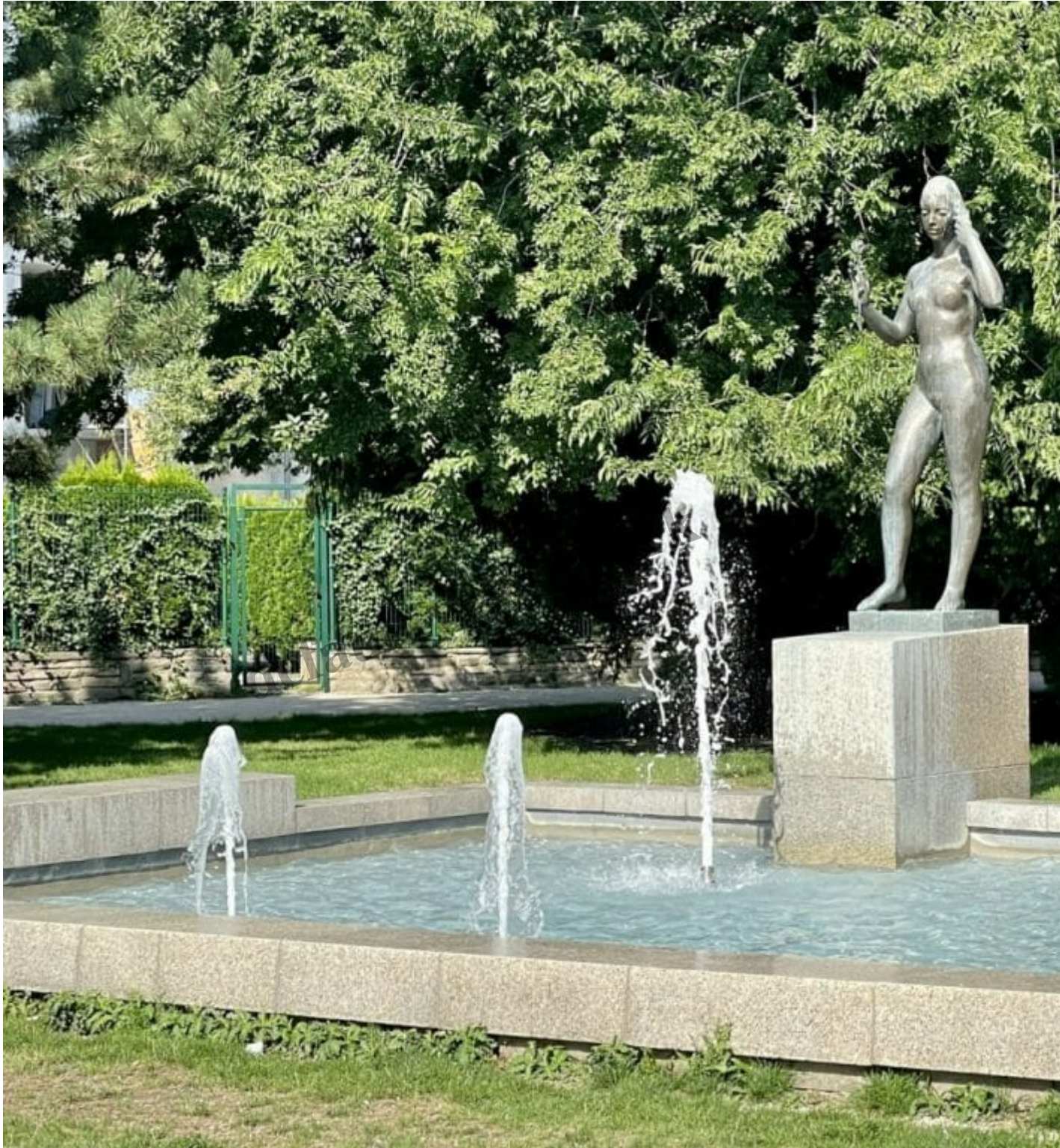






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