



Dobšinská Ice Cave

If a subterranean flow in a karst system moves to a deeper level, it sometimes results in the weakening and collapse of the more elevated chamber ceilings, creating open sack-like spaces in which cold air may be trapped over a long time and may, under suitable conditions, allow ice to form. Two stunning examples of such processes are found in the Slovak Karst: the Silická ľadnica Cave and Dobšinská Ice Cave. The former is Europe's lowest ice cave, while the latter contains more underground ice (110,000 m³) than any other temperate-zone cave in the world.



Silická ľadnica Cave

Coin details

Denomination: €100

Composition: 900 gold, 75 silver, 25 copper

Weight: 9.5 g

Diameter: 26 mm

Edge: milled

Issuing volume: up to a maximum of 5,000 coins (proof)

Designer: Roman Lugár

Engraver: Dalibor Schmidt

Producer: Kremnica Mint (Slovakia)

The obverse design captures the essence of cave formation by showing the surface of a small cave lake and ripples caused by water dripping from a stalactite. Positioned prominently in the upper and right side of the design is a depiction of the white cave-dwelling crustacean *Niphargus aggtelekiensis*, its shape mirroring the outer ripples. The Slovak coat of arms appears at the bottom centre, and to the left of it is the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO' inscribed in semi-circle along the edge. The year of issuance '2017' is shown next to the upper left edge. At the top of the design are the stylized letters 'RL', the initials of the designer, Roman Lugár, and the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint (Mincovňa Kremica), consisting of the initials 'MK' placed between two dies.

The reverse of the coin shows a bat flying in front of the Rožňava Cavers' Dripstone in Krásnohorská Cave. The coin's denomination '100 EURO' appears in two lines above the bat. Along the edge of the design are the inscriptions 'JASKYNE SLOVENSKEHO KRASU' (Caves of Slovak Karst) and 'SVETOVÉ PRÍRODNÉ DEDIČSTVO' (World Natural Heritage).



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<http://www.nbs.sk/en/banknotes-and-coins/euro-coins/collector-coins>



World Natural Heritage
Caves of Slovak Karst

Gold Collector Coin

Among the temperate-zone plateau karsts typical of central Europe are the Slovak Karst and the Aggtelek Karst (Hungary), which feature almost the full range of surface and subterranean karst phenomena, including karren fields, dolines, uvalas, blind valleys, gorges, caves and chasms. Their cave systems are interconnected and genetically homogeneous. The inscription of “Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst” on the UNESCO World Heritage List was based on a bilateral Slovak-Hungarian nomination project and was approved by the World Heritage Committee at its session in Berlin on 4–9 December 1995. In 2000 the property was expanded to include Dobšinská Ice Cave situated in the Slovenský raj (Slovak Paradise) National Park.

Extending over a relatively small area, the subterranean landforms of the Slovak Karst and Aggtelek Karst are outstanding for their extraordinary diversity of composition and morphology, variety of flowstones and dripstones, remarkable fauna (including many endemic species), and trove of archaeological treasures that provide evidence of past human habitation and activity (primarily from the Early and Late Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Middle Ages). A total of 1,184 caves are currently recorded in the Slovak part of this karst system, and 280 caves in the Hungarian part. No other temperate-zone cave system in the world features such a concentration of archetypal caves.

Gombasecká Cave



Domica Cave

A favourable climatic and geographical condition has given rise to a variety of species of subterranean fauna in the Slovak Karst and Aggtelek Karst. These cave-dwelling animals include species found only in this cave system, their endemism is a result of an exclusively underground (hypogean) habitat. Such species include the tiny white crustacean *Niphargus aggtelekiensis*, the pseudoscorpion *Neobissium* (*Blothrus*) *slovacum*, *Pseudosinella aggtelekiensis*, and the tiny beetles *Duvalius hungaricus* and *Duvalius bokori*. Other rare invertebrates such as *Eukoeneria spelaea* and *Typhlo-lulus* sp have recently been discovered in Gombasecká Cave and Domica Cave. Bats are another important group of animals found in these caves.

Water played an essential role in the formation of the caves. Over several million years, rainwater – enriched with carbon dioxide from the soil and, to a lesser extent, air – steadily dissolved the thick limestone layers of the Slovak Karst, forming hollow spaces that evolved into caves.

Pseudosinella aggtelekiensis



Rhinolophus ferrumequinum



The most well-known of these formations are river caves. The dissolution was aided by mechanical fluvial erosion, often originating from ponors on the borders between karst and non-karst areas. Some river caves are active throughout the year, and others only during heavier rains or snowmelt. Subterranean flows of several kilometres are often observable in these caves. In the Domica-Baradly cave system, a subterranean river called Styx flows to Hungary and surfaces more than 25 km further downstream as a karst spring, leaving behind a magical world of underground chambers with remarkable pagodas, stalagnates and flowstone cascades. In Gombasecká Cave, the straw stalactites are up to three metres long, while in Krásňohorská Cave there is a 34-metre-high sinter stalagmite, extremely large even by European standards. In Jasovská Cave, water is present only in the lowest depths, while the massive sizes and fascinating surfaces of the more elevated older chambers are a huge attraction for visitors. Interestingly, a legible Hussite inscription from 1452 has been preserved in this part of the cave. Some caves were formed by the dissolution effect of standing or slowly flowing water which filled underground chambers up to the ceiling. One example is Ochtinská Aragonite Cave whose chambers, once drained, were seen to be covered with clusters of beautiful needle and spiral helictites of aragonite crystals.

Ochtinská Arragonite Cave

