

Vienna and challenged all comers. This brutal giant had already slain most of the city's knights. Reluctantly, Krpan accepted the challenge and by using his exceptional strength and ingenuity he defeated the brute in a duel. In gratitude, the Emperor issued Krpan a special permit which allowed him to legally traffic in salt and bestowed upon him a pouch of gold coins.



*Krpan lifting his horse off the road.
Illustration by Tone Kralj, 1954*

Kurent - Slovenian Dionisius

Kurent, or Korant, is regarded as the personification of unrestrained revelry and high spirits not unlike the Greek Dionisius.

The Kurents - formed in groups - are dressed in sheepskins with cowbells hanging from their belts. On their heads they wear huge furry caps decorated with feathers, sticks or horns and colored streamers. The leather face masks have eye holes outlined in red, long trunk like noses and large red tongues that hang down the chest.

The Kurents move from house to house in procession scaring off evil spirits with their cowbells and wooden clubs. They continually jump from side to side and spin around to sound the bells and chains they wear. These sounds are heard all day and into the night as the Kurents work their way throughout the village.

Kurent is the central figure in the annual festival known as Kurentorvanje which is celebrated for ten days up to Shrovetide. This is a pre-Lenten festival that bids farewell to winter and welcomes spring.



Korenti in Ptuj, photo by Andrej Jakobčič

The Slovenian city of Ptuj has the Foremost Kurentovanje festival in Slovenia.

These examples of Slovenian folklore have their origins in specific geographical areas of Slovenia and represent only a small fraction of the folk tales and legends throughout this small country.

For more information on Slovenia, Slovenian Folklore, and Slovenians in the Twin Cities visit us at:

www.twincitiesslovenians.org

Folklore of SLOVENIA



The Ljubljana dragon, the protector Of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana.

Slovenia is situated at the crossroads of central Europe, the Mediterranean, the Alps and the Balkans. It borders Austria on the north, Italy on the west along with 46.6 km of the Adriatic Sea, Croatia on the south and Hungary on the northeast.

Slovenia established its independence in 1991 and is a member of the European Union and NATO.

Slovenia is a small country about the size of New Jersey and has a population of two million people. Not only is it situated at the crossroads of Europe but it is also situated at the crossroads of diversity having several unique geographical areas which have given birth to a rich treasure of folklore.

Slovenian tradition is rich in tales, myths and legends. They abound with magical

beings such as dragons, fairies and water sprites as well as many folk figures which have a unique Slovenian character. Many of the Slovenian tales deal with ordinary people who were successful in overcoming many perils and hardships which were seemingly beyond their control.

Jason and the Argonauts and the Dragon of Ljubljana

According to the celebrated Greek legend, the hero, Jason and his companions from the ship, Argo, stole the Golden Fleece and in an effort to escape their pursuers ended up sailing northward on the Danube rather than going south on the Aegean Sea.

Jason and the Argonauts continued on the Danube, the Sava and eventually the Ljubljanica River. At the source of the Ljubljanica they stopped, took their ship apart and carried it to the Adriatic Sea, where they reassembled it and continued on their way back home.

However, on their way to the Adriatic they encountered a large lake surrounded by a marsh. It was here that Jason came across a terrible monster which he fought and eventually killed. This monster was the Ljubljana dragon which now appears on the castle tower on the coat of arms of Ljubljana. Several winged dragons also decorate the Dragon Bridge which crosses the Ljubljanica River in Ljubljana.

Ljubljana coat of arms, image by Željko Heimer



The Legend of Zlatorog

The legend of Zlatorog, the white mountain goat with golden horns, is one of the best known Slovenian tales. The name, Zlatorog in Slovenian means “Golden Horn.” Zlatorog’s realm was in the heights of Slovenia’s fabled Mount Triglav in the Julian Alps.



Mt. Triglav - Photo by Andrej Jakobčič

Slovenia’s Flag



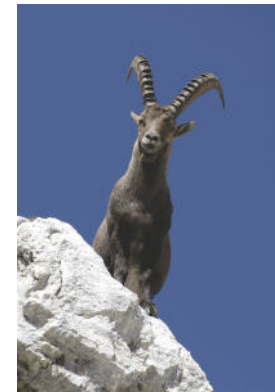
Mt. Triglav’s shape is on the coat of arms.

Zlatorog, attended by three virgins guarded a fabulous treasure hidden in a secluded mountaintop garden.

Over the years many men tried to kill Zlatorog so they could get the treasure. One day a greedy hunter came to steal the treasure. The hunter stalked the goat until he got him into his sights. He shot Zlatorog. The injured Zlatorog’s blood ran for miles, carving out the mountains and lakes surrounding Triglav. At the scene, a lovely flower, the world’s first edelweiss

according to legend, grew out of the soil and upon eating a blossom, Zlatorog had his life restored.

Zlatorog ran towards the hunter, who being blinded by the sunlight reflected from its golden horns, lost his balance and fell from the mountain to his death in the gorge below.



The Zlatorog legend presents us with a timely warning against greed.

Martin Krpan

Martin Krpan was a very strong man who made a living by smuggling salt from the Adriatic Sea coast to the inland villages of Slovenia with the help of a small mare. On one of his travels he encountered the emperor’s carriage on a snowbound road. Martin picked up his laden horse and moved aside so that the imperial carriage could pass. This feat of strength did not go un-noticed by the Emperor. Several years later the Emperor summoned Krpan to Vienna in order to fight against a brutal warrior who set up camp on the outskirts of