

# Danube Cycle Route EuroVelo (EV) 6

## Bratislava - Štúrovo SK/Esztergom HU

The aim of this guide is to invite cyclists to EuroVelo 6, the relatively unknown Slovak section of Danube Cycle Route. This section is particularly interesting because of its natural beauty and proximity to the river.

### Bratislava – Gabčíkovo - 45 km

The most beautiful part of Bratislava is its historical centre, which is a pedestrian zone filled with lively cafes, bars, restaurants and friendly Bratislavians. It is not suitable for cycling, especially in the summer, as the cosy streets and squares are crowded with tourists. However, with the exception of the section from Most SNP (SNP Bridge) to Starý most (Old Bridge) on the left bank of the Danube and the Eurovea embankment, you can enjoy safe and pleasant ride along the Danube. Cycling in these sections is not expressly forbidden, but it's inappropriate if many pedestrians are there.

You can find general tourist information at [www.visitbratislava.com](http://www.visitbratislava.com) and useful information for cyclists at <http://bratislavabikepoint.com/EN/bike-info-en.html>

In Bratislava, you can choose on which side of the Danube you will ride along on your way to Gabčíkovo; moreover you have 2 options for crossing the river.

#### 1 / along the right bank of the Danube

From the historic centre, cross to the other side of the river over Most SNP (SNP Bridge) and ride next to the river. On your right is the oldest public park in Central Europe - Sad Janka Kráľa and on the left in the summer (June to September) the city beach. Continue under three bridges (Starý most, most Apollo and Prístavný most) and along the Petržalka residential district. Just follow the embankment itself and the many cyclists and inline skaters, especially during the weekends.

After a while you'll reach the Rusovecké Lakes – a favourite Bratislava destination for swimming and sunbathing for naturists and the clothed. Take a break and enjoy the clean water and the local atmosphere.

History lovers can also ride to the village of **Rusovce** – from 1973 one of Bratislava's districts. The route is well marked from the embankment. The museum of the Gerulata Roman military camp is located near the beginning of the village.

The beautiful Rusovce manor house, which is reminiscent of the architecture of the Windsor Chateau, is located near the museum. Its last inhabitants were the Belgian Princess Stephanie, the widow of the Crown Prince Rudolf and her husband. She was rejected by her royal family for marrying Hungarian Count Lonay, who in their eyes was below her status. Stephanie and her husband enjoyed a happy life of love and understanding. They were respected and loved by the local residents until the end of World War II, when they had to leave. It is said that even the hardened Russian soldiers helped them pack their things on the wagon after seeing how the old count cared for his sick wife. Due to unresolved inheritance claims, the manor house remains closed and unreconstructed.

From the manor park you can admire the precious natural beauty of the Danube wetlands which are protected by the Ramsar Convention. The red trail markers will show you the way.

Continuing along the embankment you will arrive in **Čunovo** and the Hrušovská reservoir, the first stage of the Gabčíkovo reservoir, one of the important nesting areas in the vicinity (For more information about the birds found in this area, go to <http://bird.watching.sk>).

The embankment continues across the reservoir bridge. On the right you will see the Divoká voda Resort and if you're lucky, you might see some white water training sessions or even competitions. The Resort features hotel accommodation, bungalows, camp sites and a restaurant.

If you happen to be interested in art, we recommend that you visit the Danubiana museum of modern art. Even if you don't visit the gallery, you'll see the amazing architecture of the gallery from the road. I'm sure you'll like it.

The Modrá čajka (Blue Seagull) dock can be found before reaching the Danubiana. It operates a restaurant, a boat rental, and the Čunovo - Hamuliakovo cycle ferry. This is the first option for crossing to the left bank of the Danube.

The Bratislava city limits end with the Danubiana Gallery. From the city centre up to this point you don't have to worry about refreshments, as this is a popular cycle path of Bratislavians and seasonal refreshment stands are located at regular intervals. Although there are no stands along the cycle path from the Danubiana to Gabčíko, refreshments can be found in the nearby villages.

Continue along the embankment (you can also use the lower motorway in case of strong winds). The trail passes through Malý Žitný ostrov, (Small Rye Island) formed on the left side by the Danube canal and on the right by the River Danube - which forms the border between Slovakia and Hungary. The villages of Dobrohošť, Vojka nad Dunajom and Bodíky can be found here. A floodplain forest with a network of branches of the Danube are located beyond the villages. The ferry in Vojka nad Dunajom is the next option for crossing the river. Local villagers – islanders use this free-of-charge ferry on a daily basis. There is also a restaurant next to the ferry landing which offers refreshments.

If you want to know this unique area of the Danube's arms and lakes, ride from the Vojka ferry landing towards the village church; at the football field you will join the old embankment which leads to Vojka Lake, a private recreation area not accessible from the main embankment.

Šulianske Lake is also located nearby (For information about rafting on the branches of the Danube, go to <http://www.vodnetury.sk>). Cyclists on MTB bikes can get to know the Danube branches by following the red trail markers. Be prepared to get slightly wet if the smaller bridge has fallen into the water.

The Sea Eagle Island National Nature Reserve, the only nesting area for these birds in Central Europe, lies beyond the village of Bodíky. Large cormorant and other rare birds also nest here.

## 2 / along the left bank of the Danube

We recommend starting from Most SNP (SNP Bridge) or Starý most (Old Bridge). The easiest and safest way is to cross either of the bridges and continue to Prístavný most (Harbour Bridge), cross it and follow the well-marked EuroVelo 6 Danube trail. The section immediately beyond the Prístavný most Bridge is not very pleasant as it passes through the industrial area of the winter harbour but you will soon come to the garden area followed by a recreational boat marina. Here you can find refreshments at the boat – restaurants. The most famous is called “U Doda”.

Continue along the embankment, and if you want to see the floodplain forest, just turn toward the Kopáčsky ostrov (island) - a protected landscape area, and follow the blue trail markers.

The embankment then passes by Danube beaches and the village of **Hamuliakovo**, which has a marina and a water sports centre. The reservoir is extremely vast and is ideal for boating, windsurfing and swimming. The Kite Beach Cantina is the only kitesurfing and kite boarding centre in Slovakia.

The most interesting site in Hamuliakovo is the 13th century Church of the Holy Cross, which is visible from the cycle path. It is known as the Slovak Pisa because the church tower leans to one side. This deformation is either the result of the aging construction material or dampness. Frescoes from the second half of the 14th century can be found inside this Romanesque church.

Next up is the X-bionic® Sphere, home of one of the largest and most modern sports-congress centres with a total area of more than 1,000,000 square metres. The resort features a modern and large Olympic riding centre, an athletic centre, the first-class X-BIONIC® HOTEL and top congress facilities.

The Kormorán Hotel with a marina, hotel, natural swimming pool, park and small zoo is located just beyond the sports centre. Along the way you will come to the Kyselica – Vojka ferry landing from where you can cross the Danube or continue on the left bank 23 km along the embankment to Gabčíkovo. Refreshments can be found in the villages next to the cycling path.

Both trails lead you to the much discussed, criticized and glorified Gabčíkovo dam. From the bridge, you can see how the navigation chambers work and climb to the observation tower.

The main parts of the Gabčíkovo dam are the Hrušov reservoir the Čunovo stage, the Gabčíkovo stage and the waste canal. The Gabčíkovo stage consists of a hydroelectric power station and navigation chambers. The hydroelectric power plant exploits the Danube's energy potential and the navigation chambers allow for comfortable international cruises on the Danube. Thanks to the dam, the territory of Slovakia and Hungary are protected against flooding; however, the ecosystem has certainly been changed.

**Gabčíkovo** - the most interesting fact about this town is its name. In 1948, the name was changed to honour Jozef Gabčík, one of the participants in Operation Anthropoid, and the man who assassinated Reinhard Heidrich, the Acting Reich Protector of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in 1942.

The town offers standard accommodations Nimrod and hotel Arpad, while luxury accommodations Amade Hotel can be found in Vrakúň, approximately 9 km from Gabčíkovo. In addition, Penzion Platan, a small family guesthouse in Ňárad, is located close to the cycle trail; just follow the signs.

## Gabčíkovo - Komárno 55 km

From Gabčíkovo you will continue along the left bank of the Danube canal, and after 10 km, along the Danube river. In Medvedov you can cross the bridge to Hungary and visit Győr, the 6th largest city in Hungary which has an attractive historical centre. However, to get there you will have to ride on the motorway as there is no cycle path.

Continuing along the embankment on the Slovak side you will reach the Čičov National Nature Reserve – one of the most important wetland areas along the Danube and protected by the Ramsar Convention. The main part is comprised of a lake surrounded by a thick alluvial forest that is impenetrable in some places. At the edge of the area and in the shallow parts of the lake, dense reeds provide a habitat for up to 107 bird species. The nature reserve can only be visited on foot and is closed during the nesting period (from 1 March to 15 July). Cyclists can see the Reserve as the cycle trail passes by the southern end of the reserve.

In **Čičov**, the asphalt part of the cycle route gives way to a heavy gravel path leading to Komárno. You can continue along main road No. 63, which is quite busy during weekdays or you can take the Regiojet train from Zemianska Olča to Komárno. The journey takes about 30 minutes.

If you decide to continue on the gravel path, you will be awarded with another remarkable protected landscape area - Veľkolélsky ostrov near Zlatná na Ostrove. It is the last large Danube island on the Slovak section of the river with an area of more than 250 hectares. The Ecofarm with a campground and refreshments featuring local milk and cheese can be found here.

Slovak **Komárno** and Hungarian **Komárom** - After World War I, the city at the border was divided into Slovak Komárno which was the centre of the city and Hungarian Komárom, a suburb. Komárno, the site of the confluence of the river Váh, the longest Slovak river, and the Danube.

The best known tourist attractions in Komárno are Europe Square and the Fortress System. To get to city centre from the cycle path cross the Alžbetin most (Elizabeth Bridge) and turn right on Župná Street. This will take you to General Klapka Square and the Town Hall. Take the underpass in Zichy Palace, where the exhibition of the Danube Museum is located, to get to Europe Square. The designs of the buildings on the Square were inspired by the countries and regions of Europe. There are also statues of sovereigns and historical figures. From General Klapka Square you will get to the Fortress, where visits must be arranged in advance.

The New Fortress is part of the Komárno Fortress System, the largest defence structure of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Construction of its oldest part (Old Fortress) began in 1546 and was designed to defend against invasions by the Ottoman Empire. It was strengthened in 1673 by the New Fortress. Entry to the New Fortress is through Leopold Gate, named after the Hungarian King Leopold I. The fortress system was completed in the 19th century but gradually lost his defensive function. In the 20th century, the Old and New Fortresses were used mainly as army warehouses. The occupation by the Soviet army from 1968 to 1991 considerably contributed to its desolation.

The Monostor fortress in Hungarian Komárom is also worth seeing. Just cross the Bridge and turn right.

Komárno provides several possibilities for accommodation of varying standards.

Bike service: piko-bike, Meštianská 3018, tel: +421 35 773 13 90

## Komárno – Štúrovo 40 km

After stopping in Komárno, continue along the embankment to the bridge over the River Váh, cross the bridge continue along the Váh and after a while along the Danube again. This section has a new asphalt cycle trail.

The first interesting site is in **Iža**. Next to the cycle path on the left you will pass by Kelemantia, a Roman military camp from the 2nd to 4th centuries and as a part of the Limes Romanus defence system built along the Danube. It features parts of original and reconstructed buildings of this once large camp. Information boards provide more details. With a bit of fantasy, you can easily imagine the camp in its heyday.

The **Patince** recreation area is another interesting stop. To reach it, turn left off the cycle path. The Resort is famous for its thermal pools and lakes and offers accommodation of various levels, refreshments and sightseeing cruises on the Danube.

The segregated cycle route continues to Žitava, where it joins road No. 63 which passes through villages and is quite safe (4 km). You will reach Radvaň na Dunaji, where you can stop for the night at Penzion Mlyn or for refreshments at Sedliacka Carda.

Before reaching Moča you will join the old road No. 63, marked as EV 6. You will be riding through one of the most beautiful stretches with cosy Danube beaches, branches and a view of the hills on the Hungarian side, a true natural paradise.

The village of Kravany nad Dunajom, with its observation tower right next to the cycle path, is a pleasant place to stop and rest. It offers accommodation at Penzión Vinery and the ferry to Hungarian Lábatlan.

The asphalt cycling route ends at the village of Čenkov and leads to road No. 63. The cycling route continues along the Danube on the gravel road to Obid and then to Štúrovo. I recommend road No. 63; it's not very busy and the distance to Štúrovo is only 10 km. You enter the town passing by railway station and then down to the Danube from where you enjoy the best view of the famous Esztergom Basilica.

**Štúrovo** sits at the confluence of three rivers: the Hron, the Ipel' and the Danube. The town is known for its Vadaš thermal resort. In addition, Burda Hill with a height of 395 m above sea level is located just outside of town.

The Maria Valérie Bridge, named after the daughter of Franz Joseph I., was blown up by the Nazis in 1944 but it wasn't restored until 2001. Now it has guards protecting it from another tragedy).

This Bridge marks the end of the Slovak section of the Danube cycling trail and the beginning of the Hungarian section, starting with the prettiest Hungarian part of the Danube bend.