

Our company welcome you on board of our raft. The rafter.....and.....will take care of you. We have started our trip on the place which is named Barierová. There were many nature obstacles in the past as well as there were many artificial barriers during the second war.

In front of us we can see the rock Besná which is well – known from the work of the Slovak poets and documentarists.

The rocks Margita and Besná are not dangerous any more because some parts of them were removed /destroyed/ in 1921 – 28. The rafters coming to the rock Besná knew that they had to go left and than when they are near the rock they had to go to the middle of the river. The material of the rocks was used for the building of the rail – way that you can see left. The meander of the river builds a right curve – there are the highest waves on the whole river. This part is suitable for water sports – rafting, canoeing.

Now, in front of us we can see the next rock – called Margita, which was dangerous in past, too because it protruded out of the water as a rake. It was possible to pass just between two parts of the rock. The rock was removed in 1928 and that´s why the river became safe.

The rock is remarkable in present for its level point, too. Some people think it is the centre of Europe or it could be a memorial. The level point was placed in 1942 there, originally it was situated near the tunnels since 1888. This point is the only one in Slovakia. The rock we can see in front of us is named a carp rock. The stream of the river is very strong here. If you are in an air-plane you would be said: Fasten the safety belts.

This part of the river is very quiet, that´s why we can tell you something about the history of the rafting. The history of the rafting in Slovakia comes in the 11 th century. The greatest development was in 18 th and 19 th century and in the beginning of the 20 th century. The rafting finished in 1915 till 1935 because of rail-way.

The rafts were done of the 6 - 16 wooden pieces and the single boards were connected together. The rafts were 40 metres long and the longest of them were able to take about 180 cubic metres. It was driven by 1 till 5 men, the most important rafter was in the front. The most dangerous Part of the river is exactly the part we are passing now.

The story about Margita and Besná speaks about a young widow, who fell in love with the most handsome boy in the village. But the boy loved Margita – her step-daughter. She sent Margita to Turiec /region near Žilina/ and on the way there she threw down Margita into deep water. People in the village supposed that the widow caused Margita´s death. After the widow became mad and when she should be judged she sprang into water from the rock which is called Besná. Now we are passing Domašín meander . It is the largest natural formation in Malá Fatra. It has about 81 hectares and it is the protected nature area.

The castle Starhrad was known as an old castle called Varín. It should protect the way to the region of Turiec and Liptov. His most important owner was Matúš Čák Trenčiansky. The castle became ruins in 18 th century. One story about the castle speaks about the unhappy love between Milko Pongráč and Marienka. Marienka´s father didn´t like Milko, that´s why he married his daughter to the owner of the castle of Strečno Vladimír. Marienka didn´t love him and Vladimír killed Milko. He was found under the castle. Marienka started to hate her husband. She often visited Milko´s grave and her husband forbade her to go there. Vladimír started drinking more and more. Once he returned home and he saw somebody at the Milko´s grave . Vladimír came nearer and killed him. How great was his surprising because it was Marienka . Suddenly Vladimír was killed with a lightning. His body was found in the morning with the head of his wife in his hands.

On the right we can see a valley. This way it is possible to do a trip to the top of the mountain Suchý to the village Terchová.

In front of us we can see the hill Polom. It has its own history. During the second war the hard fights took place there. There is a monument for Sowjet soldiers on the top. This part of the river is exacting in case of strong wind, that can push the raft to the left bank of the river. Now we are on the place called The place of two castles because it is possible to see 2 castles from this place.

Next we can see the railway tunnels, they are the first ones on the direction west-east. The tunnel which is nearer is older and it was built in 1870-73. It is 524 metres long. The second tunnel was built in 1937-40 and it is 590 metres long. The tunnels were destroyed during the second war. The railway bridges were built together with the tunnels. They were destroyed, too. The pillars are placed 7 metres under the water level.

In 1996 it had been decided about the construction of the motorway from Žilina to Martin. According to one project the motorway should be solved with a bridge built above the village Strečno. Fortunately, this project was refused by nature protectors and mainly by public opinion. The motorway

is built according other project with the tunnel 7 700 metres long from the village Višňové. . It should be finished in 2003.

The other construction which can make impossible rafting on the river Váh is the project of a dam which should be built 420 metres under the railway bridges. We hope this idea will never come true.

On the right side we can see the monument to French soldiers who were fighting in the second war. It was built in 1956 and 54 French soldiers have their grave there.

Our village has lively contacts with the French region Bretagne. Every year French or Slovak children come to visit their friends. . This way was always very dangerous for rafters as well as there were many accidents on the route we can see left.

In front of us we can see the castle of Strečno. It was built in 14 th century. The first mention about the castle is from the 1321. The name of the castle was changed many times and it probably comes from the word strecha which means roof.

There were more owners /proprietors/ of the castle. The most famous is Fraňo Vesselényi and mainly his wife Žofia Bosniaková . Her life was very pious , she helped the poor people, who loved her. Her body was found safe 45 years after her death. Now we can see her body in the church in Teplička. King Leopold had the castle destroyed in 1698 because it was the place of rebels.

On the right we can see the village Nezbudská Lúčka, which is connected with Strečno with another attraction – with a ferry – boat. The ferry was built for the first time in 1923 but after the huge flood in 1958 it was destroyed. The ferry we can see now was built in 1992, its bearing capacity is 30 tons. Taking the ferry you can make shorter the way to Terchová in 25 kilometres.

Left we can see the place where toll was paid. The toll was the income of the owner of the castle. In past there was a pub, too.

The village Strečno has population about 2500 people. The inhabitants work in Žilina or in Martin. The village lies 365 metres above the sea. The river Váh flows at the end of the village into the dam which was finished in 1997.- A recreation centre should be there in future.

Another attraction we would like to mention is an asphalt mine about 1 kilometre far from Strečno. It was till 1924 the only place in Europe where natural asphalt was dug. The next place was the island Trinidad. Now there is an artificial lake.

We are coming to the boarding – house Irenka.

We hope you liked our trip and you enjoyed many interesting things you could see on the way.

We would like to wish you good time and we hope to see you again in Strečno