

Slavonia

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Slavonia

– A New Experience of Croatia

You will always have a smile on your face when travelling through Slavonia! The people of Slavonia will greet you and bid you farewell with a smile. It is in their nature – they are great hosts, with a heart of gold. Their hospitality has a special appeal. They will make you feel like home. Every trip to Slavonia is like coming home to your friends and family.

Castles, museums, forts, extraordinary religious heritage, architecture intertwined with its ambiance, a turbulent history involving different conquerors and customs, and rich tradition... All of these just waiting to be discovered. River banks are the most inviting promenades in Slavonia, the cultural heritage is intriguing, and the nature inspiring.

Slavonia has long been a favourite haunt for hunters and fishermen, it is equally liked by cyclists, and is slowly becoming an attractive camping destination. Those who are looking for an active holiday can enjoy walks, hiking, free climbing, paragliding, horse riding, flying, bird watching... Beautiful forests and the nature parks of Kopački rit and Papuk, which is also a UNESCO Geopark, are the perfect spots to relax and reconnect with nature.

Slavonia has plenty of delicious food to offer, all of it prepared with love and unlike anywhere else. You will want to try everything. Sausages, among them the famous *kulen* and *kulenova seka*, pork rinds (*čvarci*), the paprika-flavoured fish stew *fiš paprikaš*, the traditional shepherd's stew *čobanac*, carp grilled on a fork, home-made bread, delicious cakes and honey, and aromatic schnapps called *rakija* are hard to resist, even for the strongest of characters.

Local wines are a different story entirely! Aromatic Traminer wines, the exquisite Welschriesling, Sylvaner, the best Croatian Blue Frankish wines, irresistible fruit wines, the intriguing wine roads, award-winning wineries and some of the oldest wine cellars are all the more reason to visit the region.

Slavonia is an excellent choice in all four seasons, especially during the summer months, when it offers the perfect combination of land and sea, since everything in Croatia is close and within reach.

It is difficult to determine where towns end and villages begin in Slavonia; forests, plains and rivers are all intertwined here. In the west it merges with the Podravina region, and in the east with Baranja and Syrmia. Geographically speaking, the Pitomača township belongs to the Podravina region. Although at first you may think there is no real difference between the two, the people of Podravina will be the first to tell you they are not Slavonians. If you listen carefully, you will hear their accent is different, as they speak with the northern Croatian Kajkavian dialect, and they cherish the traditions of their region.

With people of Baranja and Syrmia, things get a bit tricky. They speak with the Shtokavian dialect, typical of Slavonia. The differences in their customs, way of life, traditions, and gastronomy are more nuanced, so you need to rely on geography. If you google Baranja, you will learn that the region is bounded by the rivers Drava and Danube. If you visit the city of Osijek, the locals will tell you that the border runs along the Drava bridge. Baranja will draw you in with its mystic beauty, wetlands, estuaries, forests, traditional villages, wines, as well as the multiculturalism reflected in its rich gastronomy.

Geography will not help you much with Syrmia, though, because its borders are not strictly defined. In the town of Vukovar, they say the border is at the mouth of the river Vuka, where it flows into the Danube, about halfway into the town. The people of Vukovar wrote "Slavonia" on the asphalt on one side of the imaginary border, and "Syrmia" on the other. Make no mistake, once you cross the bridge over Vuka, you have entered Syrmia, which will impress you both with its culinary offer and world-renowned wines and the memorable views of Fruška Gora mountain, whose vineyard slopes descend to the Danube.

Even after this little geography lesson, you too will forget about the borders once you arrive! In Slavonia you will feel relaxed and stress-free, and you will discover a new way to vacation. It is time you discovered its beauty and experience Croatia in yet another way. //



Full of





Beautif



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Virovitica – Draped in “Schubert” Red and Blue

The “**Bridge of Love**”, the “**Music Bridge**”, the “**Mirror Bridge**”, the “**Gymnasium Bridge**”, the “**Portal Bridge**”, connecting the old and new parts of town... You would be hard-pressed to find another place with so many original bridges as there are in the Virovitica town park. They were designed by students from the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb as an unusual urban experience that accentuates the beauty of the park in the very centre of town. The focal point of the park is the newly renovated Pejačević Castle, built in the Baroque style, dating back to the beginning of the 19th century. Despite the harsh competition of the First Croatian Savings Bank, the centenarian gymnasium school, the monastery and Church of St Rocco, characterised by the Franciscan version of the Baroque style, the people of Virovitica will tell you without question that the Pejačević Castle is the most beautiful building in



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Something for everyone – three words that best describe Virovitica. A little bit of culture, entertainment and nature, all of it within reach.

town. Today, it houses the Town Museum and represents the cultural heart of town, alongside the library, which dates back to medieval times, the famous Music School, and Virovitica Theatre.

In addition to being theatrically and musically gifted, the locals know exactly what the “šubert red and blue” shades are. Those are the colours of the geometric shapes on the building façades along the promenade, named after Edita Schubert, the first lady of the Croatian avant-garde.



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1 Franciscan monastery and Church of St. Rocco, Virovitica | IGOR ŠELER | 2 Edita Schubert Promenade, Virovitica | 3 Pejačević Castle, Virovitica | SAŠA PJANIĆ
4 Ferragosto Jam Music Festival, Orahovica | SAŠA PJANIĆ | 5 Janković Castle, Subopolje | SAŠA PJANIĆ | 6 Fortress (Tvrđa), Slavonski Brod | IVO BIOČINA

Virovitica also likes trains, and is home to an unusual exhibit at the main train station that includes over 3,500 train models from around the world, from steam engines to intercity trains. The most fascinating part is that all of the trainsets are fully functional.

There are plenty of reasons to visit Virovitica – the wine hills, an excursion to the fish ponds, the wooded slopes of Bilogora Mountain, the beautiful Drava river, the sweetest honey and the most delicious peppers... //



Slavonski Brod – the Greatest Love Story Ever Told

All of the roads in Slavonski Brod lead to the old part of town, Stari Brod. This is the centre of the town, comprised of three streets – Starčevićeva and Mesićeva streets and the Sava promenade, a favourite among locals. It can be reached via the longest promenade in Slavonia, the Ivana Brlić Mažuranić Square, which has a prominent statue of the famous author who wrote the most beautiful Croatian fairytales. Mažuranić came to Brod on her 18th birthday, and the foundations of the house she lived in were used to build a Neoclassicist single-story building that now houses the Art Gallery.



7 Klepetan and Malena, Slavonski Brod
/ IVO BIOČINA

Potjeh, one of her more famous characters, is sitting on a bench on the Sava promenade. Lost in thought and carrying a backpack, he urges you to take a selfie. His biggest competition as the best selfie spot in Slavonski Brod is »

the great white stork located at the entrance to the town, which became its unofficial symbol. The statue was inspired by the greatest love story involving the most famous stork couple in Croatia. With each spring comes the anticipation of Klepetan and Malena reuniting. The female Malena cannot fly because of a broken wing, so during the winter months she is taken care of by the owner of the house on whose roof the happy couple built their nest.

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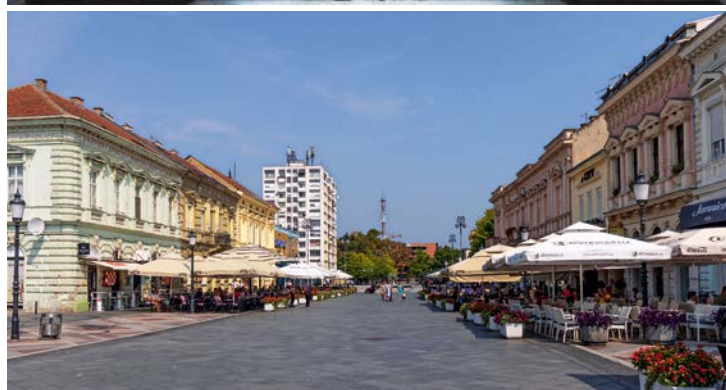


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Slavonski Brod boasts not only the longest promenade, but also the largest church in Slavonia. The Church of the Holy Trinity forms a part of the Baroque Franciscan monastery that houses an extensive library of old books and incunabula. You simply cannot leave Slavonski Brod without visiting the Fort, a grand monument of the highest category, and an impressive example of Baroque fortification architecture in the fertile plains along the Sava river. The fort dates back to the Roman settlement Marsunia as evidenced by a Roman military diploma from 71 AD. The modern Slavonian town was built on the site of the ancient Roman settlement. It is mentioned under the name “Brod” as early as 1244, as a village in the area where Sava was easiest to cross. //



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Slavonski Brod is full of surprises – from the home of the famous Croatian poet Dragutin Tadijanović that was turned into a memorial centre, the Tambura Museum, dedicated to the traditional string instrument of the region, and the Ružić Gallery, to the tourism and industrial park that is home to trains and vehicles manufactured in the well-known Croatian factory “Đuro Đaković”.



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The Požega Valley, known as the Golden Valley since ancient Roman times, is surrounded by five mountains, which are perfect for hiking and recreational activities, as well as mountain biking.

Požega – “Athens of Slavonia”

The town of Požega, built on the only flat piece of land among a range of mountains, will show you that Slavonia is so much more than the vast plain it is thought to be. The first known mention of Požega dates back to 1227, proving its long history. Due to its economic and cultural significance, it was referred to as the “Athens of Slavonia” in the 19th century.

Its green parks, sports courts and public pools, as well as cycling and pedestrian infrastructure are popular among young people and the young at heart. A special kind of atmosphere takes over at the end of August and beginning of September, during the Aurea festival “Golden Strings of Slavonia” (*Zlatne žice Slavonije*), the oldest music festival in Croatia.



A 1.5 km path called the “Falcon Trail” (*Staza sokola*) leads from the town centre to the Sokolovac hill on the Požega Mountain, »

1 Statue of the writer Ivana Brlić Mažuranić, Slavonski Brod / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 2 Franciscan monastery, Cernik / FILIP BEUSAN | 3 Main promenade (Korzo), Slavonski Brod / ALEN VRLAŽIĆ
4 Museum of the Franciscan monastery, Cernik / FILIP BEUSAN | 5 “Gjuro Pilar” exhibition, Slavonski Brod / FILIP BEUSAN | 6 Holy Trinity Square, Požega / IVO BIOČINA
7 Plague monument (Kužni pil), Požega / SERGIO GOBBO | 8 Cathedral of St. Teresa of Ávila, Požega / Tourist Board of the Požega-Slavonia County (TZ PSŽ)
9 Cathedral of St. Teresa of Ávila, Požega / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 10 Sokolovac viewpoint, Požega / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ





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You will enjoy walking around the Baroque centre of town – from the main square, Square of Holy Trinity, the Town Museum, Church of the Holy Ghost, the Franciscan monastery, Church of St Lawrence, which contains frescos dating back to the 13th century,

and the 300-year-old secondary school (Gymnasium), all the way to the Cathedral of St Teresa of Ávila and a square of the same name, where you can visit the Diocesan Museum of the Požega Bishopric, which holds a rich treasury of religious artefacts.

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and makes for a perfect spot for walking and recreational activities. It was named after a local hero, friar Luka Ibrišimović – “Sokol”, who helped liberate the town from the Ottomans in 1688. The Ottomans ruled the Požega burg for more than 150 years. Although the burg no longer exists, the part of town where it was located, now taken up by a park and the Strossmayer promenade, is known simply as the Old Town. The “Love promenade,” with its dozen benches and stories of famous couples from Požega, as well as some universal messages of love, is the perfect spot for a couple selfie.

One of the more interesting stories and legends of the area is that of the monument to the plague, a votive monument to the Holy Trinity in the centre of town, erected by the townsmen after a plague epidemic in the late 18th century took nearly 800 lives. Its builder, a certain Gabrijel Granicije, was given two thousand eggs and 300 Hungarian forints as payment. Legend has it that he used the eggs as a binding agent for the monument.

Dakovo – Life’s Work of Bishop Strossmayer

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1 *Diocesan Museum of the Požega Bishopric* / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 2 *Treasury of the Požega Bishopric* / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 3, 4 *Aurea Fest Festival, Požega* / KRUME IVANOVSKI
5 *Cathedral of St. Peter, Đakovo* / FILIP BEUSAN | 6 *Cathedral of St. Peter, Đakovo* / IVO BIOČINA | 7 *Đakovački vezovi Festival* / IVO BIOČINA

The biggest church square after Rome is located in Slavonia, in the town of Đakovo, which is the result of the life's work of Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer. The town represents a masterpiece of 19th-century Croatian culture, and if that is not reason enough to visit, there is also the famous Slavonian hospitality, traditional cuisine and great wines.

If you ask the people of Đakovo, their St Peter's Cathedral is the most beautiful cathedral in the world. To prove that it is not just a matter of their opinion, Pope John XXIII once said that there is not another one like it from Venice to Istanbul. After a tour of the cathedral, the Bishop's Palace, the

Curia of the Đakovo Archdiocese, Strossmayer's park, the Theological Seminary, the Church of All Saints, which used to be the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque, the old town centre, and the Lipizzaner State Stud Farm, take a break over a glass of Welschriesling from the Trnava wine country in one of Đakovo's restaurants.

A favourite selfie spot in Đakovo is the mysterious rock in Strossmayer Park. Some say it is a meteorite, some that it was placed there by the bishop, while others think that it is all just a good joke. However, the rock became one of the town's symbols, along with the monument to "berda", the biggest instrument in *tamburica* ensembles.

It is unclear whether it is true, but legend has it that there are underground tunnels in Đakovo. Some say they were built by Ibrahim Pasha, while others believe it was Strossmayer.

Đakovo is also known for the unique Jewish cemetery, where over 570 victims of WWII concentration camps were buried. Their names would be lost to history if it had not been for Stjepan Kolb, a grave-digger who secretly buried them in individual graves, instead of a mass grave, and left drawings of their layout and a list of their names in his notebooks.

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Osijek – the Metropolis of Slavonia

The Citadel (“Tvrdća”), at one point the most advanced fortress in Central Europe, which never actually fulfilled its military purpose, is now known for museums and galleries, great nightlife, charming

cafés and restaurants. Thursdays are reserved for student parties, so you are bound to have a good time even if your student days are behind you. Cafés and clubs are usually also jam-packed on Fridays



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and Saturdays. During the day, the old city centre is filled with tourist groups and their guides, admiring its beauty and taking in all the interesting details from its past.

Osijek boasts the largest number of city parks and urban green spaces in Croatia. There are 17 parks in the city area, covering a total of 394,000 square metres, and two of these – the park of King Petar Krešimir IV and King Tomislav Park – are monuments of landscape archi-

1 *Evening of Wine & Art (Večer vina i umjetnosti), Osijek* / LUX PRODUKCIJA BY MARKO BANIĆ | 2 *A tramway in Osijek* / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 3 *Citadel (Tvrdća), Osijek* / IGOR ŠELER
5 *Advent Festival in Osijek* / JULIEN DUVAL | 6 *Co-cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, Osijek* / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 7 *European Avenue (Europska avenija), Osijek* / FILIP BEUSAN





Osijek has one of the most beautiful river promenades that spans the “Winter Port”, Osijek Hotel, the suspension bridge, numerous cafés and restaurants on one bank of the river Drava, and green spaces, the largest zoo in Croatia, and the famous beach Copacabana on the other. //

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ecture. They are bordered by European Avenue, which has the longest row of Art Nouveau buildings in Southeast Europe.

Along with the pedestrian suspension bridge on the Drava river, which many still call by its old name, the “Bridge of Youth”, the most distinctive symbol of Osijek is the 94 m spire of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul. Even though it is a co-cathedral of the Archdiocese of Đakovo-Osijek, the locals simply

call it “the cathedral”. It was built in late 19th century at the initiative of Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, so it comes as no surprise that its neo-Gothic style is reminiscent of the Đakovo cathedral.

Another important part of European cultural heritage is the famous Osijek tramway, which has been in operation since 1884, as well as St Ana Cemetery, listed as an important cultural structure and monument by the Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe.

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4 Pedestrian bridge, Osijek



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This university city and the fourth largest city in Croatia is a must-see on every tour of Slavonia. It is also known as “the city on the Drava river”, which in itself shows that a walk along the river is simply unmissable.

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Vinkovci

– Over 8000 Years of Settlement

A creative urban scene with a long-standing tradition of rock music and comic strips lies beneath the surface of this seemingly quiet town in Slavonia. Life in Vinkovci began an astounding 8,000 years ago, which earned it the title of the oldest town in Europe. This is where Orion, the first Indo-European calendar, was found, as well as double moulds for casting axes, Slavic cremation

graves from the 7th century, and the remnants of a later Bijelo Brdo culture, together with a medieval settlement... Two Roman emperors were born here, Valentinian and Valens, two early Christian saints lived here, Eusebius and Pollio, and a specific Baroque style of the military border type was created and maintained from the time of the Ottoman Empire.



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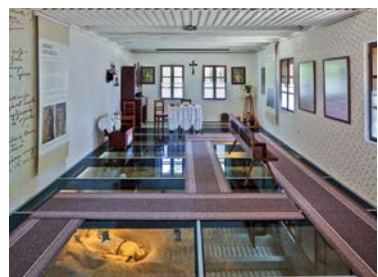
The Town Museum building is considered to be the most beautiful Baroque monument in Vinkovci. In the very centre of town, you can see the Gymnasium, the Art Nouveau building of the Brod Estate Community, and the house of doctor Georgević, which now houses the office of the Tourist Board.

Take a walk down one of the most beautiful town promenades, along the Bosut river. The promenade leads from Krnjaš, an old street once populated by the ethnic group Šokci, where the house of the well-known Croatian author Ivan Kozarac is located. His forbidden love towards Marija Kozarac is still a topic of conversation in Vinkovci. A monument to the Romeo and Juliet of Vinkovci in front of the author's old house is a perfect selfie spot.

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Feel the rhythm of the town in one of the numerous cafés along the Korzo, the main promenade, which is paved with motifs of the Orion, the first Indo-European calendar depicting the starry skies above Vinkovci.

1 Promenade along the Bosut river, Vinkovci / MIRJANA PJEVAC | 2 Statue of Marija and Ivan Kozarac, Vinkovci / FILIP BEUSAN
3 Orion on the Korzo promenade, Vinkovci / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 4 Birth home of Ivan Kozarac, Vinkovci / FILIP BEUSAN
5 Vinkovci Town Museum / FILIP BEUSAN | 6 Advent Festival, Vinkovci / JULIEN DUVAL | 7 Park, Vinkovci / DRAŽEN BOTA
8 Roman Days Festival (Rimski dani), Vinkovci / TOURIST BOARD OF THE TOWN OF VINKOVCI (TZG VINKOVCI)
9 Autumns of Vinkovci Festival (Vinkovačke jeseni) / IVO PERVAN



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If you go for a walk along the Bosut river, you will see the “Birds” (Ptice), a unique set of sculptures by a world-renowned artist Dina Merhav, who used to live in Vinkovci. Kunjevci forest, the Great park, Prkos, Archaeological park and the Sopot excursion site, with six traditional houses of the ancient Sopot culture, are favourite places to visit among the people of Vinkovci, and the town itself and its immediate vicinity are interconnected with a network of red, blue and yellow cycling routes starting from the bridge over Bosut.

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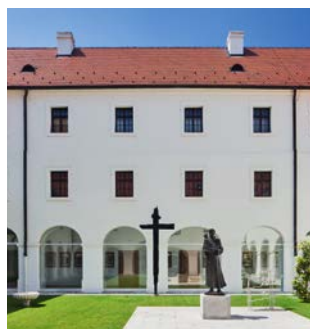




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Vukovar

– Along
the Danube
and Vuka



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The entire protected Baroque complex in Vukovar is inviting – the Franciscan monastery and Church of St Philip and St James, right next to the Gymnasium, the promenade along the Danube leading to the building of the mail coach and the Magistrate, then the former Grand Hotel or Workers' Hall as it is sometimes called, the Eltz Castle further on, which houses the Town Museum, and Symria Palace across the street, dating back to the 18th century, which is the seat of the Vukovar-Srijem County...

While taking in the town's beauty, it is difficult to imagine it was nearly destroyed at the end of the last century, during the Croatian Homeland War. This tragic

*The Vukovar-Vučedol-Ilok tourist destination follows the downstream flow of the Danube, and is **packed with castles, museums, architecture complexes with great ambient value, and gastronomy delights.** Its beauty has led it to being named a European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) in 2016/2017.*



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1 Vukovar / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 2 Franciscan monastery, Vukovar / FILIP BEUSAN | 3 Town Museum, Vukovar / FILIP BEUSAN | 4 Vukovar, panoramic view / SAŠA PJANIĆ
5 Vukovar Film Festival / DARIO NJAVRO | 6 Vučedol Culture Museum / MIROSLAV ŠLAFHAUZER | 7 Memorial cross at the spot where Vuka flows into the Danube / MATIJA ŠČULAC
8 Memorial cemetery, Vukovar / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 9 Vučedol Culture Museum / MARKO VRDOLJAK | 10 Vučedol Culture Museum / LUCIJA ŽUPANČIĆ



part of Croatian history is told by the Vukovar Nocturne (*Vukovarski nokturno*), a tour that covers the tragic sites of the Vukovar Hospital, as it was in 1991, the Memorial Centre and mass grave at Ovčara, the Memorial Cemetery of the Victims of the Homeland War, the central cross at the mouth of the river Vuka, where it flows into the Danube, and Memorial Centre of the Homeland War in the Vukovar barracks.

Living in Vukovar means living on the Danube and the Vuka rivers. Their banks form beautiful promenades, and scenic boat tours on the Danube offer a unique experience. A walk to the Adica Park Forest is the perfect choice for nature and adventure lovers, the birth house of the Nobel Prize winner Lavoslav Ružička will give you an opportunity to meet the famous chemist face to face – or at least a hologram of him – while the numerous cafés and restaurants will give you a sense of the local spirit, hospitality and easy-going lifestyle.



Only a few kilometres downstream on the Danube, at the most important archaeological site of the Eneolithic Period, you can visit the Vučedol Culture Museum dedicated to the ancient people of Vučedol who had a strong influence on as many as 13 European countries. The Vučedol “Dove” and “Boot”, ceramic masterpieces dating from the same period, are two famous emblems of the town, as is the 1968 water tower. //



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Full of



Flavour

Kulen – a Culinary Icon from Slavonia



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His majesty, the kulen is one of the most sought-after delicacies of Slavonia. This exquisite product is prepared and smoke-dried according to a protected recipe, using the best parts of chopped pork meat, cleaned from fat and connective tissue, with added garlic, salt and red paprika, and sometimes a little pepper. It takes the right ratio of sweet and spicy paprika to give it the required spiciness. Some believe it is best when the meat is hand-cut; others say that the truly best pieces of meat are hand-cut to provide all the taste, while the rest is ground up to give it consistency.

Although the recipe may seem simple, the finest kulen is difficult to make, and only a rare few can do it just right. An especially tasty kind of kulen is that made from the Black Slavonian pig, which could once be found in every rural household in Slavonia. Experts claim that the pig's diet is the most important factor for obtaining high-quality meat, so the pigs still roam free in the meadows and forests of Slavonia, enjoying their favourite treat – the acorns of Slavonian oak.

You simply cannot leave Slavonia without trying kulen. You can eat it at any time – before your meal, after it, for breakfast, lunch or dinner, as a snack, on its own, together with pork rinds (čvarci), dried bacon, ham, traditional pressed sausage called švargl, a sausage similar to kulen known as kulenova seka (literally “kulen's sister”), cow or goat cheeses in various forms, regardless of whether you are hungry or not...



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1, 2 Budrovci | IVO BIOČINA | 3 Pork rinds (čvarci) | MAJA DANICA PEČANIĆ | 4 A spread of typical Slavonian dishes | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 5 Kulen sausage | IVO BIOČINA
6 Cauldrons | DENIS DESPOT | 7, 8, 10 Karanac | IVO BIOČINA | 9 Shepherd's stew (čobanac) | SAŠA PJANIĆ



Sometimes called *kulen*, sometimes *kulin*, whether it is from the region of Slavonia or Baranja – it does not matter. When it is cut thinly and served on a wooden board, you will not be able to resist.

What is the secret of Slavonian gastronomy, you ask? It lies in the preserved authenticity of

the ingredients and recipes, in the short time it takes for the food to reach the table from the field and, of course, the well-known Slavonian hospitality. And remember, each meal in Slavonia begins with a small glass (*čokanj*) of the aromatic alcohol drink *rakija*, and ends with an exquisite wine from the Slavonian vineyards. //

In addition to the fish stew, Slavonia offers other fish dishes as well – grilled trout, catfish stew perkelt, carp grilled on a fork, zander or smoked fish.

An incredible five tonnes of fish are served every August, at the annual three-day festival “Davor Fishermen’s Nights” (Ribarske večeri u Davoru).

Fiš, čobanac...

When it comes to food, Slavonians only ever worry about two things – that there will not be enough food for everyone and that their fish stew is not spicy enough.

They need not worry, though, because it has yet to happen that anyone is left hungry here, or that they do not remember their first taste of *fiš* very vividly. And whether you like it or not, you simply have to try the *fiš*. It comes in many different variants, from mild to extremely spicy, from the more traditional ones from the Baranja region to those with a modern twist, such as the boneless stew that spread from the town of Ilok to Požega. Whatever its form, one thing is for sure – it is always made with the freshest freshwater fish, and cooked in a cauldron with lots of love, passion, and ground red paprika.

The top masters say that the secret to a good fish stew lies in a harmony of flavours. This cauldron speciality must be lightly salted, moderately thick and spicy, and when it comes to the latter, “moderate” has a very flexible meaning. This is especially true in Baranja, where *fiš* is somewhat of a trademark, associated with the Hungarian community in Croatia, which is famous for producing its vital ingredient – ground red paprika.

Much like *fiš*, another stew called *čobanac* is prepared in all parts of Slavonia, all year round, and it can be found in nearly every restaurant in the region. It takes three hours of simmering in a cauldron over an open flame to make it, and every village and town in Slavonia has its own recipe or secret ingredient. Various kinds of meat, lots of vegetables, and the key ingredient of ground red paprika, coupled with Slavonian wine, and you have yourself a true feast. »

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Slavonia will seduce you with the smell of freshly baked bread and tasty, greasy scones that no foodie can resist, even those who are careful about their weight. The same is true of desserts, which offer an endless array of delicacies – Floating Islands (or *šnenokle*), jam pastry *tačke s pekmezom*, deep fried flat bread *poderane gaće* or *langoši*, a multilayered pastry cake *gibanica*, the puff pastry *salenjaci* made with pork lard, walnut and poppyseed rolls (*orahnjača* and *makovnjača*, respectively), etc. //

Anyone Can Be a Foodie Here

The multiculturalism and rich history of the region influenced not only the customs and way of life, but also the wide variety of foods and wine. Throughout the centuries, some added to the cuisine, and others took from it, eventually creating original Slavonian specialities from Hungarian, German and oriental recipes.

Two types of meat, smoked bacon, onions and peppers wrapped in pork caul fat and grilled, friends gathered around the fire, and a glass of fine wine... All of these make for a unique gourmet experience! This is a specific version of kebab unique to the area of Požega, made

as a combination of meats on skewers with oriental influences in meat preparation, which became a traditional food of the winegrowers and winemakers of Požega, who gave it the name of *vinogradarski čevap* ("vineyard kebab").

It may not be an original Slavonian dish, but *sarma* is certainly everyone's favourite. Fans of this



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The book called **Muzej u loncu** ("Museum in a Pot"), issued by the Požega Town Museum, will introduce you to traditional Slavonian dishes from the turn of the twentieth century. If you are looking for a more modern culinary experience, be sure to visit one of the restaurants with a Michelin Guide recommendation – **the Waldinger Club in Osijek or the Dunav Hotel in Ilok.**

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minced meat and cabbage dish will agree that there is no better smell than freshly cooked *sarma*. It used to be prepared exclusively from dry-cured pork in Slavonian villages, except during traditional pig slaughtering feasts, when there was fresh meat aplenty. A special meatless *sarma* was traditionally made from chopped pumpkin seeds and served on Good Friday. It is still included in the “Flavours of Golden Slavonia” (*Okusi Zlatne Slavonije*) menu, a designation of authentic cuisine of the area surrounding the towns of Požega and Pakrac.

A similar designation, “Flavours of Posavina’s frontier” (*Okusi Graničarskog Posavlja*), has been given to fifteen restaurants in and around Slavonski Brod, while Eastern Croatian authentic cuisine bears the label “Flavours of Syrmia and Slavonia” (*Okusi Srijema i Slavonije*). No true foodie will miss the Baranja region, and the cuisine

of the villages Kopačevo, Zmajevac, Vardarac, Suza and Karanac. The area of the town of Pitomača will show you all the beauty of traditional cuisine of the Podravina region, from nettle bread to freshly caught fish from the river Drava.

Križnica, an island of unexpected beauty, will surprise you by bringing the river Drava to your table, while in the Papuk Mountain region you will find dishes made from ingredients from the forests and game meat. //



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1 Bread baked “under the bell” / MAJA DANICA PEČANIĆ | 2 Hand-torn pasta (*šćipanci*) / MATIJA TURKALJ

3 Poppyseed and walnut rolls (*makovnjača* and *orahnjača*) / MAJA DANICA PEČANIĆ | 4 Puff pastry (*salenjaci*) / MAJA DANICA PEČANIĆ | 5 *Jankovac* / SAŠA PJANIĆ

6 Vineyard kebab (*vinogradarski ćevap*) / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 7 Paprika-flavoured fish stew (*fiš paprikaš*) / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 8 *Ilok* / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 9 Trout / SAŠA PJANIĆ





1 1 A vineyard in Erdut / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 2 Principovac, Traminer wine / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 3 Wine tasting room, Kutjevo / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 4 Baranja vineyards / SAŠA PJANIĆ
5 Ilok / IVO BIOČINA | 6 Kutjevo / BOJAN HARON MARKIČEVIĆ | 7 Brodski Stupnik / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 8 Wine tasting room, Bošnjaci / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 9 Pleternica / IVO BIOČINA

Wine as a Lifestyle



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Slavonia will tell you one of the most beautiful wine stories you have ever heard. Surrounded by forests, nestled on slopes that reach all the way down to the rivers, just outside towns and villages, there are vast rows of grape vines creating the most beautiful landscapes. Ever since the Roman emperor Probus planted the first vines in 3rd century AD, wine became an inextricable part of Slavonian tradition. The fertile plains, a lot of sunny days, a specific microclimate, knowledge, and experience joined to make Slavonian wines, which tantalise even the most demanding wine lovers with their aromas and flavours. Slavonian wines are always held in high regard, so the region has the largest, oldest and award-winning wineries in Croatia.





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ence is offered by the traditional festivals dedicated to vineyards and wine, such as the annual grape harvest, taking place in September, the Feast of Saint Martin in November and of St Vincent in January, St Gregory's Day in March in Požega, or the Festival of Welschriesling (*Festival graševine*) that takes place every June in the town of Kutjevo.

In addition to these traditional festivities, there is a growing trend of modern wine festivals that combine hedonism, art, and active holidays, such as the WineOs and Evening of Wine & Art (*Večeri vina i umjetnosti*) in Osijek, as well as the Wine&Bike Tour in the area of Erdut.

The entire story would be incomplete without a hundred or so charming family wineries and farms with tasting rooms that will give you an insight into all of the facets of Slavonian hospitality. The essential specialities such as *kulen*, *kulenova seka*, sausages and cheese, as well as the sounds of *tamburica*, or sometimes even bagpipes (*gajde*), will make the wine go down more smoothly. A very special experi-

You will learn that wine in Slavonia brings so much more than pleasure – from the wine roads of Bilogora Mountain near the town of Virovitica, of Papuk near the town of Orahovica, and on the Stupnička brda hills, to the vineyards on the slopes of Kutjevo, Požega, Pleternica, and Pakrac, Erdut, Baranja, Đakovo and Feričanci, and all the way to the vine-covered hills of Syrmia. Wine is a lifestyle here! //

Welschriesling, Traminer wine, Sylvaner, Blue Frankish wine...

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You can never go wrong with a Welschriesling! Also known as Riesling, this grape variety is considered to be Central European, although some wine experts, such as Jancis Robinson and Steven Spurrier, claim Croatia is its country of origin. Slavonian winemakers are sure to agree, as they have always »

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1 Brodski Stupnik / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 2 Red wine / MAJA DANICA PEČANIĆ | 3 Dunav Art Festival / ADVERT&EFFECT MEDIA | 4 Sylvaner wine, Oraštica / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 5 Wine tasting / EXE PRODUKCIJA | 6 Wine cellars, Kutjevo / SINIŠA UŠTULICA

considered it native to Croatia. It even gave its name to the main square in Kutjevo, a small town widely known for high-quality wines. Many believe this variety gives the best results right here.

The palatable and refreshing wines made from this grape variety will initially seduce you with their lovely floral and fruity aroma, followed by a full and harmonious flavour. It complements white meat and pasta, thick sauces, as well as fish and seafood specialities. From the finest Welschriesling wines to the late, selected, or ice harvests... One thing is for sure, you will enjoy a unique experience!

Although it is also the most common grape variety in the Syrmia wine country, this part of Croatia was made famous by a top-quality Traminer wine that has been produced since 1710. Many fans of this royal variety consider it one of the best wines in Europe. It gives you a very special feeling when you drink it with rich Syrmia dishes, or in Principovac, Ilok's most famous wine area.

In addition to their fruit wines, the people of Oraštica are especially proud of the Sylvaner, one of the oldest grape varieties in

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7 Sparkling wine from Slatina / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 8 Wine cellars, Ilok / MARIO HLAČA



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the world, which found its perfect terroir here. It makes for fresh and sophisticated wines that perfectly complement freshwater fish and white meat.

Attractive, intoxicating, and unpredictable... just like a woman. This is what the Slavonians have to say about the Blue Frankish wine, a red variety of grapes grown in the village of Feričanci and Ilok that makes exquisite wines. With its ruby red colour with a scarlet hue, a strong aroma specific to the variety, and an intense, long-lasting and excellent taste, the Blue Frankish pairs well with ham and *kulen*. Some find it even more appealing after it has been aged in oak barrels. It complements dishes

made from game meat, freshwater fish, and spicy delicacies straight from the cauldron, *fiš paprikaš* and *čobanac*. It is also an excellent choice for a barbecue, grilled lamb meat, steak, and matured cow and goat cheeses.

Other grape varieties are represented in Slavonia as well, such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot noir, Syrah, Zweigelt, and the white varieties Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Rhein Riesling, Pinot blanc, Pinot gris... *Salut!* //

Wine Stories

Slavonia's rich past as an exceptionally fertile wine country is evidenced by its numerous legends. According to one of them, widow Clicquot – the very same one who conquered the world in the 19th century with her champagnes – visited the town of Pleternica on



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her way to Peterburg. She was so delighted by its hills that she had vine grafts sent there upon returning to Champagne. In her honour, one of the hills on the Rose and Wine Road (*Cesta ruža i vina*) in Pleternica – and subsequently also a *coupage* of Welschriesling, Rhein Riesling, Pinot blanc and local Ranina wines – was named Klikun, by the way the locals pronounced Clicquot. »

The first Croatian sparkling wine was produced in 1864 in the town of Slatina, using the Champagne method. It was created on the estate of Georg Wilhelm, Prince of Schaumburg-Lippe, and is still produced under the name of "Slatinski biser" (The Pearl of Slatina).



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If you visit Kutjevo, you will hear the story of a passionate love affair between Empress Maria Theresa and Baron Franz von der Trenck (Franjo Trenk in Croatian), who allegedly spent an entire week

in 1741 in an old wine cellar in Kutjevo, enjoying the intoxicating powers of its wines. The story is corroborated by notches on the wall and a dent in the centre of a stone table, which supposedly grants all your romantic wishes if you place your palm on it.

Ilok wines, which are used in some of the highest ceremonies to this day. The Traminer from Ilok cellars that was used during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II is still talked of. //



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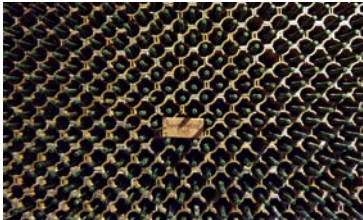
One of the largest barrels in the world, which can hold up to 53,000 litres of wine, is used during wine production in the old Kutjevo cellar. An even larger one, with a capacity of 74,000 litres, which can even hold the Kutjevo barrel, is used in the vineyards of Erdut. The Erdut barrel weighs 17,000 kilograms when empty, its insides are as big as a one-bedroom apartment, and the oakwood used in its construction took ten years to cure. Its impressive size earned it a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.



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The people of Ilok will tell you how the princely family Odes-calchi filled their wines in special containers in the old cellars, 200 years before Bordeaux and Burgundy. This was their way of protecting its reputation from merchants and resellers who mixed it with wine of poorer quality, and the tradition continued to the present day. If a bottle does not have a label stating that the wine was filled in an original bottle, then the wine was not produced in the Ilok cellars. It comes as no surprise that royals have always appreciated

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Interested in learning more?

Bor Anya or “mother of wine” – this is what the Hungarians call one of their most fertile wine regions, known for its fine white grape varieties, and increasingly for red ones, which make complex, structured wines. The highest viewpoint in Baranja, located on the Banskobrdohill, offers views of endless rows of vineyards. Steep, deeply cut roads created by gullies specific to Baranja, called “surduk”, are flanked by “gatori”, unique wine cellars dug into the hill. The most beautiful

examples can be found in Zmajevac, a village known for its “Wine Marathon” (*Vinski maraton*), where several thousand participants gather every September. One of three stories of the largest wine cellar in Croatia, spanning 1200 square metres, which belongs to the Belje Winery in Kneževi Vinogradi, also belongs to the “gator” type. The now renovated and modern cellar was built over 500 years ago, and once served as a stable, armoury and dungeon for the army of Suleiman the Magnificent. »

1 Kutjevo castle / IGOR ŠELER | 2 Barrel, “Erdutski vinogradi” vineyard / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 3, 9 Winery, Zmajevac / MATIJA ŠČULAC | 4, 5 Wine cellars, Ilok / IVO BIOČINA
6 Gatori wine cellars of Baranja / NENAD MILIĆ | 7 Winery, Zmajevac / BOŽIDAR PREZELJ | 8 Winery, Zmajevac / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 10 Baranja vineyards / NENAD MILIĆ





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While the Belje Winery cellar is the biggest in the country, the Kutjevo cellar – dating back to 1232 – is the oldest, not only in Croatia, but in the entire Southeast Europe. It was built by the Order of Cistercians in one of the leading wine-growing towns in Croatia, known for the southern exposure of its vineyards. The 45.3 parallel that passes through the town also connects the most famous

wine countries of Piemont, Val du Rhone, Bordeaux, Oregon and Istria.

Slavonia boasts the most awarded Croatian winery, Iločki podrumi, where wine is still kept in the old 15th- and 18th-century cellars. Their history is intertwined with the Italian princely family Odescalchi, who planted the first Traminer vines on the hills surrounding Syrmia, and built a country estate with a beautiful summer house in the wine-growing region of Principovac. It can be reached by the wine road leading from the centre of Ilok, which passes by a dozen famous Croatian wineries.

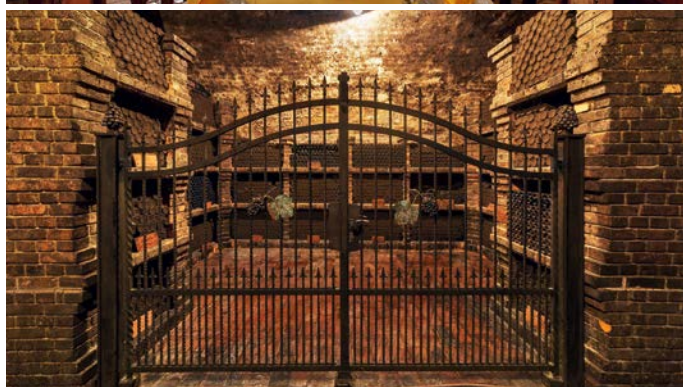
The largest vineyard plantation in Croatia covers 490 hectares and is owned by the Erdutski vinogradi vineyards. It was planted on the gentle slopes of the Dalj Mountain, where the Danube meanders around Erdut on three sides, creating a beautiful wine peninsula.

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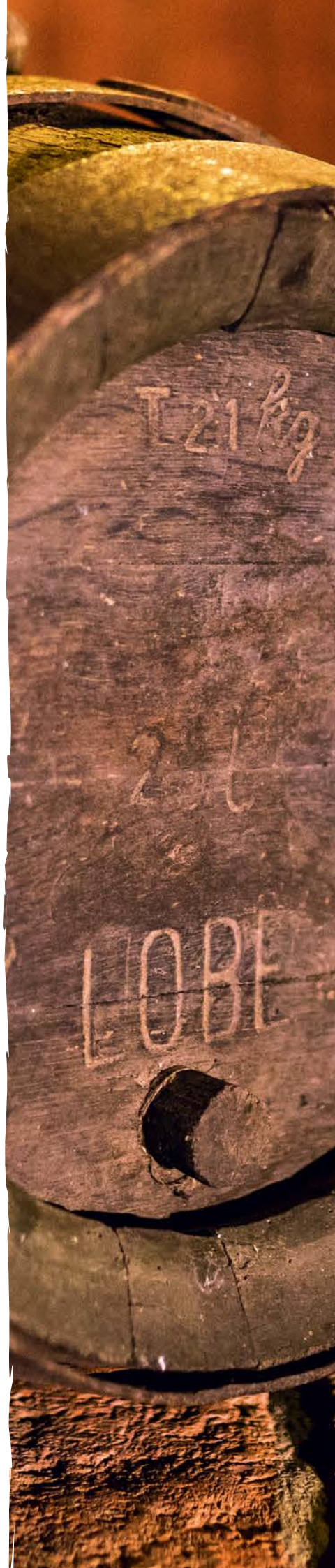
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1 A vineyard in Erdut / MATIJA ŠČULAC
2 Vineyards at the latitude of 45.3°, Kutjevo / JIGOR ŠELER | 3 Wine cellar at Kutjevo / BORIS ŠTADUJAR | 4, 5 Wine cellars, Ilok / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 6, 8 Craft beer / GORAN CONJAR / HOME-BREWED BEER TASTING ROOM BOŠNJAK | 7 Pub, Požega / SINIŠA UŠTULICA



A Brief Guide to Slavonia's Craft Beer Scene

You have probably already heard that beer production was discovered by accident, but what you might not know is that it happened precisely in Slavonia, around five thousand years ago. This was the era of the Vučedol culture, centred a mere five kilometres from Vukovar.

Beer has therefore traditionally always been produced here. The tradition dates back to the 17th century, when brewers from Osijek laid the foundations for the Osječka pivovara brewery, the oldest one in Croatia. Today, Osijek has several tasting rooms and craft breweries, such as Beckers and Legionar, and a very lively beer scene.

Some of the more daring Slavonians left for other cities and towns to bring their homemade products to the market. They have attracted all those who like experimenting with hop aromas and scents, fruits and spices, bringing life to the Slavonian craft beer scene in recent years.



Brewing in Slavonia has always been a DIY affair, confined to basements, garages, farms... **The homebrewing** record is held by Kitišanci, a village outside the town of Beliše, where apparently one in 75 inhabitants brew their own beer.

The Bošnjak brewery in Nova Gradiška is a pioneer of the Croatian craft beer revolution. One of the most popular craft beers in Croatia is produced there, according to a Czech recipe. The craft brewery in Vinkovci was named after Valens, who was the only ancient Roman emperor born on Croatian soil – in the Roman settlement Cibalae – along with his brother Valentinian. The name is no coincidence. Unlike his brother, who was praised for his military prowess, Valens was known for his love of beer, hence the nickname *sabaiarius* or “beer belly”. The town of Županja produces Hepburn, a beer dedicated to the English family who built a tannin factory there in the 19th century, and brought tennis and the first football to Croatia. Đakovo is known for Black Hat, Požega for

the Slawoner, Barel and Shadow, Pleternica for Franz, Pakrac for the Grof and Grofica, Slavonski Brod for Popster, Pitomača for the light and dark Pitko beers, and the well-known Vukovarsko beer has been accepted as a craft beer even though it is mass produced.

Beer lovers do not miss a single homebrewer meetup – Pijana čaplja (literally “The Drunk Heron”) in Slavonski Brod and Hombre in Osijek, as well as three of the most interesting beer festivals – the Osijek Craft Beer Festival that takes place in May, the “Golden Beer Mug” in Požega (*Požeska zlatna krigla*) in July, and the Beer Festival in Slavonski Brod (*Pivski sajam*) in November. Gallons of beer and a lot of positive energy are sure to attract even the less enthusiastic beer lovers! //



Explore



Slavonia



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Ljelje from Gorjani

The village of Gorjani still tells the story of a time when its women saved the village. During the Ottoman invasion, all of the men were captured, so women dressed in colourful clothes, put men's hats with flowers on their heads and came to the Ottoman camp with scythes, sickles and sabres. Mistaking them for ghosts, the Ottomans fled, and in honour of this unusual victory, the women of Gorjani hold an annual procession in the village on Pentecost Sunday.

They are dressed in rich traditional folk costumes, and divided into two groups – queens, or *ljelje*, and twice as many kings. The queens resemble brides with their heads covered in white wreaths, while the kings carry sabres and wear hats with flowers on them, much like in the legend. After Sunday mass, the *ljelje* and their kings dance in a circle (the traditional *kolo*) in the centre of

the village, followed by visits to all of the houses. People welcome them and offer them food and drink. After the traditional songs, mostly dedicated to young men and women or a young bride, the kings perform a sabre dance, accompanied by bagpipes (or *gajde*) and the *ljelje*. This goes on for two days, until all the houses and neighbouring villages have been visited. Each visit is finished with a folk dance, in which the hosts often take part.

Although it is easy to believe all of these Slavonian stories and legends, especially when they are told enthusiastically, with lots of good food, singing and dancing, more pragmatic ethnologists will tell you that this wonderful custom from Gorjani actually predates Christianity. It is based around the story of Ljelja and Ljeljo, the lost children of the highest god in old Slavic mythology, Perun. This interpretation is supported by the



1 *Ljelje girls from Gorjani* / IVO PERVAN | 2 *Folk costume, Bapska* / IVO PERVAN | 3 *Folk costume, Donja Bebrina* / IVO PERVAN | 4 *Ljelje girls from Gorjani* / IVO BIOČINA
5 *Bečari singers from Slavonia* / DAVOR ROSTUHAR | 6 *Bagpipe players (gajdaši) from Slavonia* / DAVOR ROSTUHAR | 7 *Đakovački vezovi Festival* / IVO BIOČINA





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fact that during the 19th century, the annual *ljelje* procession was widespread in villages across Slavonia, Baranja and Syrmia. The incredible value of this piece of heritage which the people of Gorjani brought back to life was confirmed by UNESCO in 2007, when the annual procession of queens or *ljelje* was included on the intangible cultural heritage list. //



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Bećaruša od glave do pete, Slavonijo, ja sam tvoje dijete
(I'm a wild thing through and through, oh,
Slavonia, I love you)



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*A treasure trove of customs and traditions, beautiful national folk costumes, bagpipe and tamburica players, old crafts, Đakovački vezovi and Vinkovačke jeseni festivals... **Only in Slavonia will you be able to experience such diverse folk heritage.***

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It is still a subject of literary studies as a unique example of folk poetry from the 19th century. It was studied by Friedrich Salomon Krauss, an ethnographer, folklorist, philologist and sexologist, Sigmund Freud's friend and colleague, who lived in the Slavonian towns of Pleternica and Požega. He experienced first-hand this traditional Slavonian folk song of a satirical, romantic or erotic theme, at the time considered scandalous in other parts of the world. »



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Although it may seem that this type of traditional folk song, called *bećarac*, has always been a part of Slavonia, it actually emerged in late 19th century, when the Ottomans were banished, and the Military Frontier (*Vojna krajina*), a borderland of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was abolished. The witty decasyllable verses praise the subject's personality and beauty, and they are usually sung by two or more singers in the form of shouting back and forth. It is usually accompanied by an instrument – once by bagpipes (*gajde*) or the string instrument *samica*, now mostly by *tamburica*.

In the past, it was usually sung by *bećari*, young bachelors, drunks and jolly fellows prone to drinking and chasing women. Older people will look fondly on the old days and tell you that the real *bećar* does not exist anymore – the only thing that is left is the song they used to sing, the *bećarac*. Deeply woven into Slavonian tradition, it represents a key ingredient for a good time; the following verses simply cannot be avoided at a

party: “Kad bećari šorom zapivaju pendžeri se širom otvaraju” (*When the bećari come singing down the street, windows open to show everyone they could greet*), “Bećari se ne ženiju mladi, bećaruju dok im ne dosa-di” (*Bećari are never quick to settle down, they would much rather go to town*), “Svaka cura voli tamburaša, a berdaša i cura i snaša” (*Every gal likes a tamburica player, but when a berdaš comes around, he will not have a prayer*)...

Out of the two thousand *bećarac* songs that Friedrich Salomon Krauss collected, over a hundred originated from Pleternica. This tiny town not only lives and breathes *bećarac*, it is also the only place in Slavonia to dedicate an Interpretation Centre, a museum, promenade and main square to it. The village Babina Greda even holds a special festival in its honour, the popular “Bećarfest”. You are sure to hear at least one *bećarac* when you visit Slavonia. Its value was acknowledged by UNESCO in 2011 by including it on the list of world Intangible Cultural Heritage. //



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1, 2 Bećarac Square, Pleternica | IGOR ŠELER | 3, 7 State Stud Farm Dalovo, Ivandovo | SAŠA PJANIĆ | 4 State Stud Farm Lipik | IGOR ŠELER | 5 Carriage with Lipizzaner horses, Lipik | IGOR ŠELER | 6 State Stud Farm Lipik | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ



Đakovo and Lipik

They are born completely black, and then gradually become lighter. When they reach the age of 8-10, they become light grey, almost white, and only a rare few remain black. This is the story of the magnificent Lipizzaner horses. Although they owe their name to the Slovenian village Lipica, the root of the word is reminiscent of Lipik, a small Slavonian town known for the State Stud Farm, founded in 1938. However, the Lipizzaner horse became a distinct symbol of Lipik and its biggest tourist attraction even earlier, in 1843, when Count Izidor Janković built the first stables there. The Lipizzaner and Marten Trail (*Staza lipicanaca i kune*), which connects Lipik and Pakrac, is around a hundred kilometres long, and its beautiful nature attracts a lot of horse riders, cyclists and hikers.

Slavonia has one of the oldest stud farms in Europe. The State Stud Farm in Đakovo was founded

a long time ago, in 1506, and has been used as a Lipizzaner farm since the beginning of the 19th century. In addition to the Stallion Station in the centre of town, they are also bred in Ivandvor, a few kilometres from Đakovo. The Stallion Station includes the largest indoor riding hall in Croatia, which hosts horse jumping, harness racing and dressage competitions and shows.

When Queen Elizabeth II saw a four-in-hand with Lipizzaner horses from Đakovo at the opening of the Munich Olympics, she was so impressed that she paid a visit to the State Stud Farm in Ivandvor and the Stallion Station with her family in October 1972. She even took a ride in the four-in-hand through the centre of town. History repeated itself some 40 years later, when Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and her husband Charles, Prince of Wales visited the Stallion Station and Ivandvor on their tour of Croatia.

Slavonians consider the Lipizzaner horses to be much more than mere working animals – they are a sign of prestige and a reflection of the estate they are bred on. Decorated and proud, these magnificent animals are part of nearly every traditional ceremony and festival in Slavonia.



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1, 4 *Pejačević Castle, Virovitica* / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 2 *Janković Manor, Kapela Dvor* / MATIJA TURKALJ | 3 *Janković Manor, Kapela Dvor* / SAŠA PJANIĆ
5 *Summerhouse of Count Drašković, Noskovci* / IGOR ŠELER | 6 *Višnjica Wold, Slatina* / ANTE VUČEMILOVIĆ | 7, 8 *Pejačević Castle, Našice* / SAŠA PJANIĆ

Pejačević Castle on the “Noble Families Route” in Virovitica



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The Janković Manor in Kapela Dvor is situated seven kilometres north of the town of Virovitica, and is a perfect spot for modern tourists looking for an original

experience. This former country estate and hunting lodge, belonging to the Janković family from Suhopolje, is now a 4-star heritage hotel.

Historians will research family trees, architects will look at forms and use of landscape, ethnologists will explore customs and culture, artists will seek inspiration, and regular tourists will simply enjoy the legends, the culinary experience, and the beauty and harmony of nature. Regardless of your affinities, the “Noble Families Route” (*Plemićka ruta*) will reveal some of the most beautiful parts of the Virovitica area. It connects the summerhouse of Count Drašković from the 19th century in the village of Noskovci, known today as the “Drava Story” (*Dravska priča*), the beautiful excursion site Višnjica Wold near the town of Slatina, Janković Castle in Suhopolje, Janković Manor in Kapela Dvor, and the splendid Pejačević Castle in Virovitica.



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It seems that the Suhopolje castle was not up to standard when it comes to European tastes at the time, as evidenced by the story of a Hungarian noblewoman who turned down the marriage proposal of Count Elemir Janković because she did not like his estate. Although the count subsequently expanded the castle and planted gardens around it, it was not meant to be. In the meantime, the count took a liking to Ilka, the daughter of the steward of his estate, who

would later become his wife. The renovated castle in Suhopolje is now a Visitor Centre that has 15 rooms. Behind its mid-18th-century façade lie all the wonders of state-of-the-art technology – a multimedia showroom, 5D cinema, and a creative lab.

Whichever road you take, the “Noble Families Route” will take you to the heart of Virovitica, to the beautiful Pejačević Castle built in early 19th century. Even though

Even though the “Noble Families Route” is a themed trail in the Virovitica area, it could easily be expanded to cover the entire Slavonian region, given the number of manors and castles.

it was owned by the German princely family Schaumburg-Lippe, and later on by the Croatian Count Drašković, it was actually named after its original owners and builders. The Pejačević family was very influential and spent quite a lot of time at the Habsburg court. While researching a medieval fort underneath the castle, archaeologists discovered a secret passageway that led to the Count’s chambers, which still stirs the imagination of tourist guides. //



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From Našice and Valpovo to Donji Miholjac

She was once called the “Princess of Našice”, her father and grandfather bore the high-ranking title of Croatian *ban*, and her mother and grandmother loved the arts. The composer Dora Pejačević kept coming back to Našice her entire life. This is where her ancestors, from the same bloodline as the Pejačević family in Virovitica, built their castle in 1812, only a hundred yards away from where her brother would build his smaller, Neoclassicist estate at the beginning of »



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the 20th century. The large and small castles, as they are known in Našice, still form the focal point of the same town park where Dora sought inspiration for her music.

The town of Valpovo also has a castle – one of the largest in Croatia, in fact. The Prandau-Norman is a unique medieval and Baroque complex built in the first half of the 18th century, which has since been renovated. Valpovo still tells the story of the “White Lady”, covering the events from the 19th century, when the ghost of a girl haunted a young first lieutenant called Kuschmann, a guest of Baron Prandau.

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While he was taking the waters at the Valpovo thermal springs, each night a young woman appeared before him claiming she had been murdered a hundred years ago, and that her body had been abandoned next to the town chapel that was part of the castle. She told him that she would not rest until she was buried in hallowed ground and that if he granted her wish, she would

restore his health and tell him the location of a secret treasure. Much to the surprise of everyone who believed that the lieutenant was hallucinating, a skeleton of a young woman was indeed found right next to the chapel. The story goes on to say that about a month later, Kuschmann was completely healed, and the ghost of the woman and the treasure disappeared forever.

On the remnants of the Cistercian abbey of Vallis Honesta de Gotho in Kutjevo, from the 13th century, the Jesuit Order built a grand castle in the Baroque style in the 18th century, which was at the height of its glory during the time of the Turković family.

The two castles in Donji Miholjac, belonging to two different time periods, are connected by a shared portico. The older one, Prandau Castle, was built in 1818 in a late Baroque style, while the newer Mailath Castle was built in early 20th century in the English Tudor style. Count Mailath allegedly made a promise to Emperor Franz Joseph I during his visit to Donji Miholjac in 1901 to build a castle in time for his next royal visit. And that is exactly what he did. //

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of gratitude for their help in liberating Ilok from the Ottomans. His nephews expanded the castle in the 18th century, giving it the look we see today, and set up modern wine cellars beneath it, which are still in use. After it was destroyed in the Homeland War, it was completely rebuilt as a cultural monument, with visible traces of various layers that were added over time, and its atrium offers magnificent views of the Danube.

The Eltz and Odescalchi

castles are unusual, culturally invaluable, and represent an important element of the rich tourist offer at the Vukovar-Vučedol-Ilok destination which holds the prestigious EDEN Destination of Excellence title thanks to its value in cultural tourism. //

Eastern Croatia: Eltz and Odescalchi castles

Behind the heavy wooden door of the Eltz Castle in Vukovar lie centuries of rich and turbulent history. Construction began in 1749, when its owner was Count Anzelmo Kazimir Eltz, the landowner of the area around Vukovar. The first major expansion came around thirty years later, at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Viennese architect Siedeka gave it the distinct grand look. Unfortunately, at the end of the century it was completely destroyed during the Croatian Homeland War. The castle was restored to its former glory in the new millennium. Art historians and architects now consider it one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in Croatia, and many locals and tourists find it to be the most beautiful building in town.

Since 1968, it has been the home of the Vukovar Town Museum, which relocated from the building of the mail coach. The Museum was founded through a donation of Dr Antun Bauer which included ancient Roman coins, furniture, weaponry, and a late 19th-century art collection.

Another castle in eastern Croatia was also converted into an interesting museum. The Odescalchi castle now houses the Ilok Town Museum that has an archaeological, medieval, ethnography and gallery section. It has dominated the centre of town since the 15th century, when it was built by Nicholas of Ilok (Nikola Iločki in Croatian). It was gifted to Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi and his princely family in Italy as a token

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1 Kutjevo Castle / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 2 Prandau-Mailath Castle, Donji Miboljac / IVO BIOČINA | 3, 4 Prandau-Normann Castle, Valpovo / SAŠA PJANIĆ
5 Eltz Castle, Vukovar / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 6 Odescalchi Castle, Ilok / IVAN RIPIC | 7 Odescalchi Castle, Ilok / SAŠA PJANIĆ





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Although they have not been renovated yet, **the Kulmer-Marković Castle in Cernik, the Adamović-Cseh Manor in Erdut, the castle of Prince Eugene of Savoy in Bilje, Esterházy family castle in Darda, the Tikveš Castle complex, Kneževo Castle, and the Baroque castle Gosseau-Sandor-Khuen in Nuštar** all speak to the rich history of the region. Even the nobility couldn't resist Slavonia's charms.



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The Osijek Citadel, the fort in Slavonski Brod and the old royal town of Ilok

The body of General Johann Stephan von Beckers, construction supervisor for the Osijek Citadel (or "Tvrdća"), was allegedly walled into the city walls near the Water Gate in the north. The story goes that in 1768, Emperor Joseph II was not allowed entrance to the Citadel, having arrived in Osijek

after sundown, so he decided to seek shelter at the "K šaranu" (*The Old Carp*) tavern, on the spot of present-day Esseker business centre. Legend has it that the Citadel still holds a hidden chest of the Habsburg Imperial treasury, which was completely relocated to Osijek as Napoleon drew closer to Vienna.

Although it was reputed to be one of the most state-of-the-art forts of the 18th century, it never actually served as a military structure. In addition to the Water Gate and water tower-watchtower, the only thing that has remained from the original Citadel are the walls facing Drava and the Crown fortification (*Krunske utvrde*) on the left river bank, but the Baroque city that was built on it is widely regarded as the most beautiful part of Osijek.

1 **Kulmer-Marković Castle, Cernik** / IGOR ŠELER | 2 **Citadel (Tvrdća), Osijek** / GORAN ŠAFAREK | 3 **Ilok** / IGOR ŠELER | 4 **Church of St. John of Capestrano, Ilok** / SAŠA PJANIĆ





In the 18th century, a military fort that could hold four thousand soldiers and 150 cannons was built at the initiative of Eugene of Savoy along the river Sava in Slavonki Brod, at the border between Turkey and Austria – one of the most important strategic positions and sites of transit. The peasants of Slavonia worked on this enormous star-shaped structure day and night for sixty years. This well-preserved and renovated monument, which houses the Tambura Museum, the

Ružić Gallery and a live history programme, is now the cultural centre of Slavonki Brod.

The medieval walls in Ilok are around 1,350 metres long, and together with its small towers represent the largest preserved

fortification complex in continental Croatia. When he reconstructed the walls in the 15th century, Nicholas of Ilok, the *ban* (or governor) of Croatia, Slavonia and Mačva, Duke of Transylvania and King of Bosnia, erected a new palace in the western part of town. Seeing as Nicholas of Ilok bore a royal title, Ilok was no regular medieval fort, but a real royal town. //

5 Medieval town walls, Ilok / SERGIO GOBBO

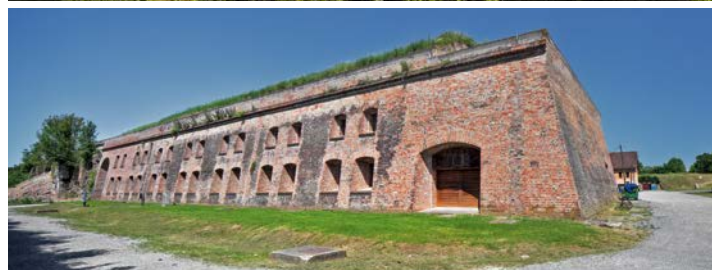


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6 Fortress (Tvrđa), Slavonki Brod / IGOR ŠELER | 7 Fortress (Tvrđa), Slavonki Brod / FILIP BEUSAN



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Medieval Towns on the Slopes of Papuk

Some say that the town was named after a beautiful fairy that was walled in its foundations, some that it was a beautiful princess that jumped to her death from the highest tower. Others like the story of a blue-haired ox that slept in the shade of a walnut, next to a flowering rose, so in that exact place a town was built that was as tough as a walnut and as beautiful as a rose. Although it is assumed that the impressive Ružica grad (literally "Rose town") above Orahovica was founded before 1220, it is uncertain when exactly it was built, who its builders were, or how its big stone blocks were brought to the top of the hill, on the North-east slopes of Papuk Mountain.

Out of the eight old medieval towns on the slopes of Papuk, one of the most beautiful ones is situated on the southern slopes of Lapjak hill near the village of Velika, the entrance to the Nature Park. Built in the 13th century, it was originally owned by the Befekijevci family from Velika, and after the Ottoman conquest became a military outpost. Its unusual, elongated pentagonal plan, whose monumental northern façade resembles the prow of a ship, differentiates it from all other forts in the area. It is only partly preserved, drawing the attention of day-trippers and hikers that find themselves on the Lapjak educational trail.

The medieval town Kaptol, also situated on the periphery of Papuk, was once a distinguished part of the Collegiate Chapter of St Peter in Požega, founded in the 13th century. With the advent of the Ottoman rule in 16th-century Slavonia, it served as the residence of the infamous Dizdar Agha. The fort was renovated in the 18th

century, and it has been the property of the Cathedral Chapter of Đakovo since the 19th century. The town was inhabited until 1943, so it has been well-preserved and has become a must-see spot for hikers and nature lovers. By the decree of Pope John Paul II, the medieval town of Kaptol is now owned by the Požega Bishopric.



Slavonia has always held an important strategic position, as evidenced by the remnants of old towns and forts, such as the early medieval fort in Lovčić near Slavonski Brod, the old town of Čaklovac on the slopes of Psunj Mountain, the medieval towers in Erdut, the Šaregrad forts...

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1 Old town of Velika, Papuk / ALAN ČAPLAR | 2 Old town of Velika, Papuk / IGOR ŠELER | 3 Medieval town of Kaptol, Papuk / Tourist Board of the Požega-Slavonia County (TZ PSŽ)
4 Medieval tower, Erdut / IGOR ŠELER | 5 Town of Ružica, Orahovica / MATIJA TURKALJ | 6, 7 Slavonian banovac coin / IVO BIOČINA

Explore Slavonia | For the Curious of Heart



From the Janković Family to Aston Martin

The first mint in Croatia operated in 1256-1260 in the small town of Pakrac. The Slavonian *banovac*, a silver coin produced there, was used not only in Slavonia, but also in Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bosnia. The medieval coin had the image of a marten on one side, so the people of Pakrac probably rightly believe that their coin is a forerunner of present-day Croatian currency, the *kuna* (literally “marten”). It was no accident that this little animal was used on the coin. Before the advent of money, its fur was a highly valuable means of payment. Although the

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mint remained in operation for only four years, after which it was relocated to Zagreb, its memory is still preserved in the Pakrac Town Museum, in the small »



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If you find yourself in Vrpolje, the birthplace of sculptor Ivan Meštrović, **make sure to visit the Memorial Gallery honouring this world-renowned artist, whose works can be seen in some of the biggest cities in the world.** You can also visit Nova Gradiška, the youngest town in Croatia, and its old town centre that has two churches, an old courthouse and a prison from the 18th century.



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palace Janković in the centre of town. If you decide to visit the museum, you can make your own *banovac* to take home with you as an original Pakrac souvenir.

The museum building in the small palace, next to the main palace and two smaller farm buildings, is part of the protected Janković complex from the first half of the 18th century. It is enclosed by a large courtyard, the must-see Pakrac promenade. Here you will

find one of the top three kissing spots in Pakrac. At least it says so on the notice boards you simply cannot pass without taking a selfie, either alone or with someone.

The Janković family left a deep impression in the neighbouring town of Lipik as well. The centuries-old Lipik gardens, a protected monument of landscape architecture, was once a playground for Countess Jelka Janković when she was a child, and





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so a hill, a bench and a pathway were named in her honour. The well-known Lipik thermal baths were built over the healing water springs within the park in 1886. The healing water spring is located 234 metres below ground and holds a steady temperature of 60 degrees Celsius.

One of the springs, Antun's or Count's spring, is one of the earliest thermal and mineral water springs drilled in this part of Europe, and it was all done by hand in 1870. A mere five years later, the mineral water was already being bottled. "Lipički studenac," as it was named, was the only domestic natural mineral water on the Croatian market until 1993.

Another thing you might not know about Lipik is that the Bentley, Lamborghini, McLaren, and Aston Martin DB10 cars, the latter famous for appearing in a James Bond movie, are all equipped with high-quality glass from the Lipik Glas factory, which also manufactures the glass stairs found in every Apple store. //

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6 Frontier watchtower (Graničarski čardak), Županja | ZVONIMIR TANOČKI

Football, History of the Frontier, and the Battle of Batina

Croatia is home to the runners-up in the FIFA World Cup and the Wimbledon winners, and these sports were first played in Croatia precisely in Slavonia. It was at the end of the 19th century in the town of Županja. The credit for starting a true sports tradition goes to nine Englishmen who decided to establish a tannin factory there in 1880. One of the men, Fredy Hepburn, married Katarina Horvatović, who became the first Slavonian lady from the country, a frequent guest in English high society.

Although a Slavonian town, Županja offers a unique ambiance of rural architecture. Here you will learn the word *ušoravanje*, which means the merger of smaller hamlets into a single whole. >>

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The most beautiful structure here is the frontier watchtower (*Graničarski čardak*) dating back to the 19th century, the only remaining monument on the river Sava from the time of the Military Frontier (*Vojna krajina*) and Ottoman rule. Today it houses the “Stjepan Gruber” Native Museum.

Another cultural monument is the former border-crossing station of the Frontier, or *štacija*. This is the birthplace of Petar Preradović, a famous Croatian poet, located in the village of Grabrovnica near Pitomača, which now serves as a Memorial Museum dedicated to the poet.



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If you ever find yourself in Slatina, visit one of the most beautiful museums in Slavonia, as it will tell you the thousand-year history of the town and the surrounding villages of Čadavica, Sopje, Voćin, Mikleuš and Nova Bukovica.

The village of Batina has a Memorial Complex “The Battle of Batina”, dedicated to one of the most difficult military operations conducted on the Danube during WWII. A monument was erected on the spot of the hardest battles, made by sculptor Antun Augustinčić.



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1 “Stjepan Gruber” Heritage Museum, Županja | SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 2, 3, 4 Heritag Museum, Slatina | SAŠA PJANIĆ
4 5 Memorial Complex “The Battle of Batina”, Batina | EFEKT MEDIA | 6 Sequoia, Slatina | BOJAN HARON MARKIČEVIĆ | 7, 8 Birth home of the poet Petar Preradović, Grabrovnica | SAŠA PJANIĆ





In addition to a crypt with the sculptor's remains, there is also a Memorial Centre with a permanent exhibition. The monument is the most beautiful viewpoint in this part of Baranja, overlooking the Danube and the intersection between Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. //

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Ivan Rakitić, Mario Mandžukić and Ivica Olić, silver medallists from the 2018 FIFA World Cup, received commemorative plaques in the form of stars in the centre of the region they came from, Slavonski Brod. Their teammate **Domagoj Vida** raises Black Slavonian pigs in his hometown of Donji Mihaljac, and **the 1998 World Cup top scorer, Davor Šuker**, was born in Osijek.



Full of



Surprises



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Papuk Nature Park

Did you know that Papuk and Psunj used to be islands in the ancient Pannonian Sea, and that Lake Sovsko is the only part of the sea that still remains? Papuk also has some interesting caves – the Uviraljka cave is an important winter hibernation spot for bats, and the Suhodolka cave is the deepest cave in continental Croatia, at 90 metres.

The people of Baranja are very proud of the Bansko brdo hill, although modest in size, reaching only 243 metres. The people of Syrmia, on the other hand, will tell you there is no mountain more beautiful than Fruška Gora. When you actually stop to think about all the mountains enclosing the Požega Valley, you would think this is the mountainous part of Croatia, rather than the heart of Slavonia. Požega Mountain, Papuk, Dilj Mountain, Krndija and Psunj challenge the preconceived notion that Slavonia is just a vast plain.

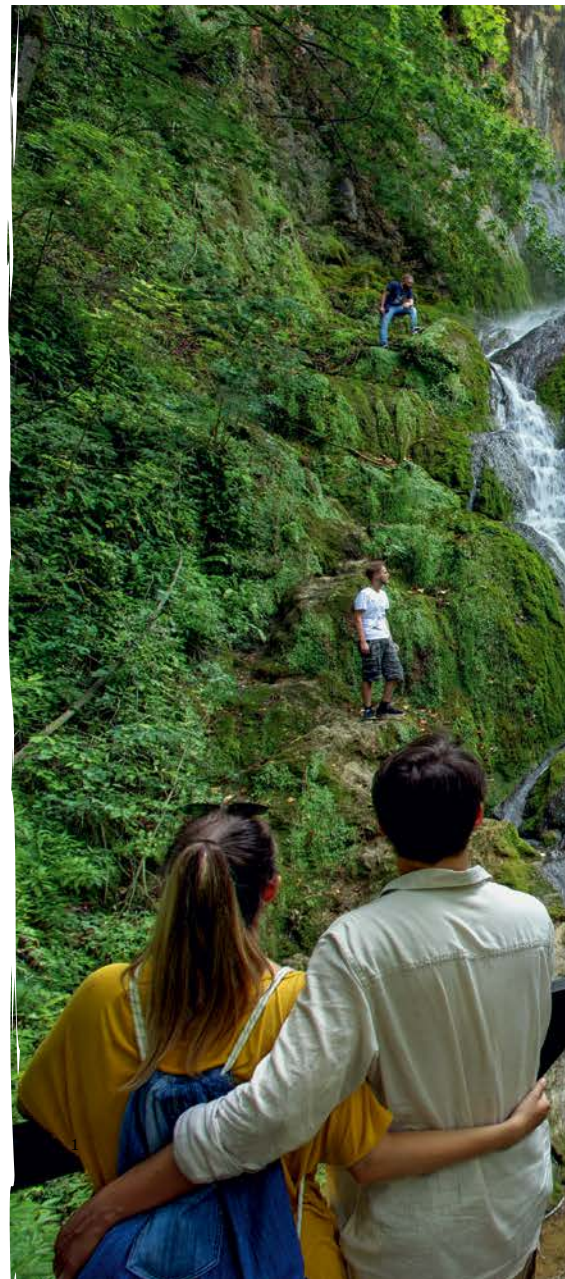
Even though Psunj takes the title of the highest Slavonian mountain at 985 metres, it was Papuk that gained nature park status in 1999, and became a UNESCO Geopark in 2015. This fairy-tale area spans over 336 square kilometres, 96 percent of which is covered by forests of 13 different types.



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1 Jankovac mountain lodge / ALAN ČAPLAR | 2 Entrance to Papuk Nature Park, Velika / ALAN ČAPLAR | 3 Ivuška Glava peak, Papuk / ALAN ČAPLAR | 4 Omanovac excursion site, Psunj / IGOR ŠELER | 5 Skakavac waterfall, Jankovac / SASA PJANIĆ | 6 Lake Sovsko, Čaglin / IGOR ŠELER | 7 Signpost at Duboka / ALAN ČAPLAR | 8 Geological natural monument Rupnica, UNESCO Global Geopark Papuk / SASA PJANIĆ



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9 Geological natural monument Rupnica
/ GORAN SALETTO

Its northern slopes belong to the Jankovac Forest Park, one of the most beautiful mountain valleys, surrounded by the mystical centuries-old beech forest. Today, it is a favourite hiking site, with a mountain lodge that can accommodate up to 60 visitors, educational trails, mountain streams and lakes, caves, over two thousand animal and plant species, and the picturesque Skakavac ("Grasshopper") waterfall plunging down a 36 m cliff into the Kovačica stream.

This part of Papuk impressed the nobleman Josip Janković from Voćin so much, that he not only decided to make it his home, but was also buried in a cave offering a spectacular view of the area. In his honour, the Count's Trail now leads through the most beautiful part of the forest park, passing by the mountain lodge, two man-made lakes, the Skakavac waterfall and Maksim's cave, complete with interpretation boards, wooden bridges and stairs.

Rupnica, a unique geological natural monument of volcanic origins, which is actually a natural mosaic of large rocks creating a stair-like formation, is located in the Northwest part of the Park. You can reach Rupnica from Voćin, which has a visitor centre and the main entrance to the Nature Park, or Velika, situated on the other side of the Park.

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Kopački rit Nature Park

Known as “the Amazon of Europe”, the ever-changing Kopački rit is Danube’s largest inner delta. This natural wetland reserve is situated between the Danube in the east and Drava in the south, and is one of the most well-preserved floodplains. It is the largest freshwater fish spawning ground in this part of the Danube river basin, and one of the largest fluvial and swamp plains in Europe.

It spans 231 square kilometres, around 70 square kilometres of which has been turned into a special zoological preserve. It is included in the inventory of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), it was included in the Wetlands of International Importance list under the Ramsar Convention, and it also forms a part of the cross-border Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube, placed under UNESCO protection.

“Kopački rit” stems from the Hungarian words kapocs and ret, which mean “clasp” and “meadow”, respectively. Just like a clasp,

the wooden bridges between the meadows of the wetland carve deep into Kopački rit, giving the visitors a unique experience of this natural phenomenon.

Rivers and flood waters shaped its unusual landscape, forming sand bars, river islands, and countless streams, which rare and endangered plant and animal species call their home. Over 280 bird species have been recorded here, 141 nesting regularly or intermit-

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Outside is Free

#outsideisfree

When in Slavonski Brod, be sure to visit the man-made lake Petnja, a fishing oasis on the southern slopes of Dilj Mountain. The lake is only seven kilometres away from the town, which makes it the perfect spot for local day-trippers, along with the hiking trails and water sports it offers. The nearby erosive canyon Pljuskara contains a few small waterfalls and caves, the most appealing one being a cave whose ceiling is covered with fossils from the era of the Pannonian Sea. >>



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tently. The white-tailed eagle can often be seen flying freely above the water.

The rich wildlife and beauty of Kopački rit can best be experienced from a tourist boat or canoe during the warmer months, accompanied by a guide. If you go by land, your best options are taking a ride on the tourist train, riding a bicycle or going on foot. The visitor centre at the entrance to the Park is a good place to eat and drink, as

well as the perfect starting point for exploring this unusual wetland world.

An equally interesting part of Kopački rit is the 19th-century Tikveš country estate, a complex also known as “Tito’s Castle”. This is where the Yugoslav statesmen King Alexander and Josip Broz – Tito used to rest after hunting in the local forests. The entire estate and forest are still as irresistible as ever.

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The vineyards of Dilj Mountain no longer surround only the old summer estates, such as the one that belonged to the Brlić family, where the Croatian author Ivana Brlić Mažuranić wrote her wonderful fairytales. People of Slavonski Brod built their summer houses and family homes here, expanding the town to the slopes of Dilj. In the vicinity, there is also Stribor's forest, a favourite excursion site containing the characters from Mažuranić's stories, and a mountain lodge in Popović forest.

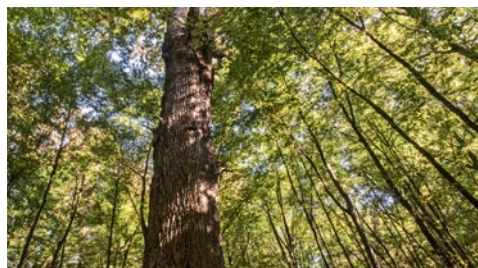
Ljeskove vode, an area with eight springs and streams and a man-made lake, is located about twenty kilometres north of Slavon-

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ski Brod. To the east, the Gajna grassland near the river Sava, with wetland flora and fauna, is still used for pasture of Podolian cattle, Posavina horses and Black Slavonian pigs, all indigenous Croatian species. This protected landscape, that has an educational trail and viewpoint, can be reached by a

cycling trail from the centre of Slavonski Brod. The nearby special ornithological reserve Bara Dvorina contains over 160 bird species and a man-made group of fish ponds Jelas, two of which are protected as special ornithological reserves, with over 230 bird species and the largest heron colony in Croatia.



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The "Drava Story" in Noskovci and the Kopački rit Nature Park dio are part of the cross-border **Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube**, placed under UNESCO protection because of its biodiversity.

1 Prašnik forest reserve, Stara Gradiška / NINA ĐURDEVIĆ | 2 Lonjsko Polje Nature Park / ZORAN JELAČA | 3 Black Slavonian pig, Gajna pasture, Oprisavci / SAŠA PJANIĆ
4 Podolian cow, Gajna pasture, Oprisavci / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 5 "Drava Story" (Dravska priča), visitor centre, Noskovci / TATJANA ARNOLD SABO | 6 Noskovci and Drava / IVAN DARKO GRLICA
7 Bird watching, Noskovci / IVAN DARKO GRLICA | 8 Purple heron / IVAN DARKO GRLICA





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Iva is another pasture and protected landscape in the Dragalić municipality, and further on – in the area of Stara Gradiška – is Prašnik, a special forest reserve and one of the last remaining rainforests of old Slavonian oak. There is also a protected centuries-old hornbeam forest halfway between Nova Gradiška and Okučani. Here you are already near the entrance to Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, the largest protected wetland in the entire Danube basin and the largest natural ornithology reserve and carp spawning ground in Europe.

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From the “Drava Story” to the Common Oak Forests

Walking through a forest is relaxing and boosts your energy levels, much like walking by a river – and if there is one thing that Slavonia abounds in, it forests and rivers. In the Information and education centre and hostel “Dravska priča” (The Drava Story) in the village of Noskovci near Čadavica in the northwest, you will re-discover all that nature has to offer. The world of owls, rich plant life,



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butterfly corner, the world of fish, amphibians and reptiles, a place to listen to birds singing, and the elf and fairy forests along the Drava are only a fraction of what awaits you here. The Centre and hostel are located in the renovated summer estate of Count Drašković, from the 19th century, in the very centre of the gardens, a monument of landscape architecture. The educational trail “Dravi u zagrljaj” (Hugging the Drava) will lead you right to the river bank, where you will find a rest area and bird-watching spot.

The wetlands along the Danube, Sava, Bosut and Spačva rivers in eastern Slavonia were once wild, impenetrable forests. Slavonian forests are widely known for impressive examples of the common oak. Spačva is one of these impressive forests, being the »



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largest entirely indigenous common oak forest, where some of the finest trees of this species can be found.

Inside the lush Spačva forest is the beautiful Virovi water system that is part of the Natura 2000 Ecological Network that connects EU member states. At just under two kilometres long and sixty metres wide, it encompasses a part of a small river of the same name and creates a typical Slavonian landscape. This unique oasis teems with various animal and plant species. It has never run dry thanks to a network of ground waters, and in a way represents the entrance to the peaceful oasis of Spačva. Here you will learn what true silence sounds like and become one with nature.

Make sure to visit the Museum of Forestry in Bošnjaci and take a ride in the eco-mobile around the old enclosed hunting ground Kunjevci, near Vinkovci, which belongs to the Croatian Forestry Agency.

“Tko je jedanput bio u toj našoj drevnoj šumi, s onim divnim stabarjem, spravnim, čistim i visokim, kao da je saliveno, taj je ne može nikad zaboravit” *(Just one visit to our ancient forest, with all its grand trees, upright, pure and tall, as if made by hand, is enough to never forget it)* – this is how Josip Kozarac, a Croatian author and forester, described Slavonian forests, and many nature lovers have been able to witness it themselves.

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1 Museum of Forestry, Bošnjaci | SAŠA PJANIĆ | 2 Fallow deer, Kunjevci | ZVONIMIR TANOCKI
3 Archers, Omanovac excursion site, Psunj | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 4 Duboka Adrenaline Park | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ

5 Tauber Rocks, Velika | SAŠA PJANIĆ | 6 Jankovac Forest Park, Papuk | ALAN ČAPLAR | 7 Omanovac excursion site, Psunj | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ





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At the Vrabac Aeroclub in Vinkovci, you can become an ultralight aircraft pilot in a single day and get a bird's eye view of Slavonia. Those who love heights will also enjoy flying an ultralight aircraft, paramotor or Cessna above Papuk. The first registered airfield in Slavonia for paragliders and hang gliders is located near the village of Velika, offering a unique experience of flying above a lush forest.

Earth and Air

Paragliders have found their favourite airfields in this part of Croatia, including Omanovac, an excursion site on Psunj Mountain above Pakrac, which offers one of the most spectacular views of Slavonia.



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It is uncertain whether a 159 kg catfish was the biggest fish ever caught in Slavonia, but the record-holder for Slavonia's hunting tourism is without a doubt the stag caught in the forests of Baranja that reached 253.26 CIC points.



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Hikers will enjoy the long and challenging trails – the wonderful circular tour “Velički visovi” on Papuk, and Sokoline, the first sport climbing spot in Slavonia. The Rose and Wine Road (*Cesta ruža i vina*) in Pleternica, or the “Sokol Trail” (*Staza sokola*) leading from Požega to the Sokolovac viewpoint on Požega Mountain, are fairly easy to master, regardless of your physical fitness.

In this part of Croatia fishing has traditionally been a favourite recreational activity. It offers unlimited options for rest and relaxation surrounded by nature – from individual visits to the lakes, rivers and streams to fun family vacations at the fishing ponds in Virovitica, Slavonski Brod, Pakrac, Lipik, Požega or Đakovo.

Hunters simply love Slavonia. Its dense forests have always been a hunting ground for noblemen, military commanders and statesmen, and this region of Croatia has remained a popular hunting tourism destination. »



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You do not have to be a fan of hunting and fishing to enjoy nature. By taking a walk on educational trail, visiting natural phenomena, archaeological sites and remnants of forts, going on a photo safari in the company of expert guides, or taking an off-road drive on the slopes of Papuk and Psunj in Baranja, you will discover some of Slavonia's best kept secrets.

Horse riding classes, therapeutic and recreational riding, and advanced riding tours are available everywhere from Lipik and Đakovo, Višnjica, Poljanci and Garčin, to Požega, Pleternica, Bilje, and Vinkovci. If you are feeling less adventurous, you can always opt for a simple carriage ride. You will not get much exercise from it, but it makes for a great experience. //

Sail down the Bosut and Spačva rivers in Nijemci on the "Sveta Katarina" river catamaran, and visit the largest watermill in Croatia, a ship mill on the river Drava in Osijek. Make sure to visit Križnica near Pitomača, a beautiful river island in the Drava meander.

Fire and water

Living near the river has its charms, and is reflected in the easy-going lifestyle and personality of Slavonians. The water soothes and heals, and travels through space and time, connecting cities and civilisations. Its banks make perfect promenades. They are favoured by poets and painters, nature lovers and recreationists, from runners and cyclists to horse riders.

1 Recreational horseback riding, Garčin / FILIP BEUSAN | 2 Campsite, Garčin / IGOR ŠELER | 3 Poloj beach, Slavonski Brod / NINA ĐURDEVIĆ

4 The spot where the Drava river flows into the Danube / DENIS DESPOT | 5 Boat ride, Danube / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 6 Watermill, Osijek / NINA ĐURDEVIĆ

7 Zlatna Greda, Kopački rit / FILIP BEUSAN | 8 Draž beach, Osijek / NINA ĐURDEVIĆ | 9 Nijemci / SAŠA PJANIĆ





Explore Slavonian towns and villages from a different perspective – take a ride in a canoe, kayak or boat down the Danube, the Drava, Sava or smaller Slavonian rivers, such as Bosut and Spačva. Their banks are a great choice for sunbathing in the summer, and the pleasant temperature of the water offers a much-needed refreshment. If you are more interested in a Robinson Crusoe-type vacation, you will probably opt for some secluded spot on a natural beach. But if you

are looking for fun and social activities, there are town beaches at the Poloj Sports and Recreation Centre in Slavonski Brod, the Copacabana Recreation Centre in Osijek, the Poloji bathing spot in Županja or the popular Vukovar river island to choose from.

Much like people, birds also like living near rivers, so Slavonia is a perfect habitat for them. If you want to explore this rich world, a bird-watching spot is your best starting point. In addition to bird watching as part of the “Drava Story” project in Noskovci, and a bird-watching spot in Borovo, one of the most interesting bird-watching spots is located on the “Let’s Go to Syrmia” (*Idemo u Srijem*) tourist route in the heart of the fields around the village of Nijemci. >>



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Bird watchers say that here, near the calm Bosut river, you can see more bird species in a single hour than you would in other places in days.

If you are looking for something completely different, you can visit the adrenaline park at the Zlatna Greda Eco Centre, located on a desolate stretch of land of the same name. Experience a true adventure in the heart of the

forest, take a kayak tour around the Kopački rit Nature park, or explore Baranja by bike instead of a car.

The biggest adrenaline junkies look forward to the Pannonian Challenge, the largest extreme sport and music event in Southeast Europe, held over five days at the end of spring on the Copacabana city beach in Osijek, nicknamed “Kopika”.

//

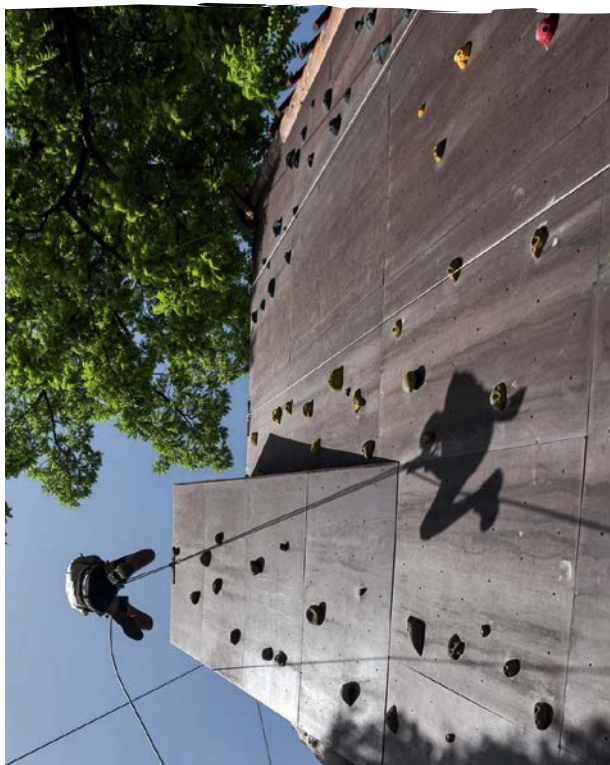
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*Belišće, the “European Town of Sport 2017” and “European Region of Sport 2018,” is the birthplace of **Matija Ljubek, two-time Olympic gold medallist in men’s kayak**, who began his training on the river Drava. The town’s sandy beach Bistrinci is also known for “bistrigin,” the local variation of “picigin,” a traditional ball game that originated from Split.*

1 Pannonian Challenge, Osijek | SAMIR KURTAGIĆ | 2 Poloj beach, Slavonski Brod | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 3 Adrenaline Park, Zlatna Greda wold | NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ

3





Danube, Drava, Sava, and a Bicycle

4 Beaver bike trail at Virovitica fish ponds / MARTIN ČOTAR



5 Zlatna greda, canoe ride / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 6 "Zlatni Lug" / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ
7 Cyclists, Požega / SINIŠA UŠTULICA

The EuroVelo 13 – the Iron Curtain Trail, or the “Drava Trail” (Dravska ruta), as it is locally known, passes through Slavonia. The 138 km stage of EuroVelo 6 – the Danube Route also passes through Slavonia, leading cyclists through some of the most picturesque places, such as Kopački rit, Osijek, Aljmaš, and the Erdut wine country, and downstream along the Danube, through Vukovar, Vučedol, and Ilok. It partly overlaps with two Slavonian cycling routes – the circular Syrmia cycling route and the Pannonian Peace Trail (*Panonska ruta mira*). The EuroVelo 13 and EuroVelo 6 are connected by the Amazon of Europe Bike Trail that encompasses natural sites in five countries.

The Sava Bike Route is a continuation of the EuroVelo 6, and the areas of Slavonski Brod and Nova Gradiška have over twenty other cycling routes collectively known as “Slavonia Bike”. Osijek has the highest number of bike paths in Croatia, which cover 47 kilometres, lead to other towns in the vicinity and connect to domestic and European corridors.

Slavonia is a great choice regardless of whether you are a professional or recreational cyclist. You can cycle anywhere – local bike paths pass through urban centres, untouched nature, and the Slavonian hillside. If you like to combine recreation with hedonistic pleasures, then the bike trails dotted with wine tasting rooms and restaurants are the perfect choice for you. From the plains to rugged terrain, from easy trails to the more challenging ones – in this part of Croatia there’s something for everyone.

If you decide to take a trip to Slavonia on two wheels, but are unsure whether you are entirely ready for the long road ahead of you, you should know that you can take your bicycle with you when you board any train travelling from Osijek to Zagreb.

A bicycle is a nice way to enjoy some recreation and spend an active holiday if you are a tourist, and a favourite means of transportation among Slavonians. It is intergenerational, and used for trips to the market, the store, for going to work, and visiting neighbours... Bicycles never go out of style here. //





Living Life "S"



lavonia style



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Relaxing in nature, the clean air, healthy food, an active holiday, customs that are easy to adopt, spending time with the locals... It all sounds like a very efficient anti-stress therapy. This is what life is like in Slavonian villages, something you will find plenty of in these fertile plains.

For the athletes and recreationists, there are activities such as hiking, running, cycling, horse riding... For the foodies, a vacation in the countryside is quite an experience. You will eat fresh, healthy, seasonal produce, guilt-free and with good appetite, as staying outdoors always has that effect on people. Wine lovers will discover their own little paradise, socialise with winemakers, share experienc-



2

es, learn about indigenous grape varieties, and participate in a tasting workshop in an authentic setting.

A New Dimension of Holiday

The Bizovačke toplice thermal spa, rich in salts and minerals, whose waters are warmer than any other thermal spring at 96 degrees, are a popular health and rehabilitation centre in Slavonia. While vacationing in Bizovac, visit the Olympics of Old Sports in the village of Brodanci and learn all about kandžijanje (whipcracking), banga (a game of hitting a ball with a paddle), čočak (a game involving throwing wooden planks), and šinter (a type of ball game).

1 A young woman (snaša) / CULSPERIENCE BY MIRKO CZUKOR
2, 6 Karanac village / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ | 3 A young woman (snaša) / SINIŠA UŠTULICA | 4 Stara Kapela / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 5 Suza, "Aszttalos keramika" ceramics studio / NINA ĐURĐEVIĆ





If you want to gain an insight into a traditional way of life, you can have that as well. You will hone your skills of making pickled vegetables or preserves and the tastiest cakes and pastries, such as the puff pastry “salenjaci,” you will decorate your first courgette, create your first goldwork, sing with the *tambura* players... Who knows, you might even discover some talents

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you did not know you had! One thing is for sure – you will get a good vacation, make some friends, gain a completely new experience, and, most importantly, recharge and prepare for whatever life holds in store for you.

From the west to the east of Slavonia, you will enjoy the expanse and beauty of the rural landscape, the educational trails, eco-ethno villages, the country estates and family farms, agricultural estates converted into tourist

attractions, rural hotels, ranches, family wineries, mountain lodges, hunting lodges... There is always plenty to do here!

The Garčin camp, the modern eco- and pet friendly camp sites in Požega and Velika, and the Kopačev and Suza camps in Baranja, are all great choices for those looking for some peace and quiet as well as a new experience and new dimension of a holiday. You will re-discover yourself and enjoy relaxing in unspoilt nature. //

Authentic, Genuine, Hospitable...



3

Anything that grows in the Višnjica Wold can be tasted at the restaurant found on the estate. This estate near Slatina holds the EDEN title of a European Destination of Excellence. The tamed plain between the hills of Papuk and river Drava offers everything you need to have a relaxing and active holiday. You can groom horses, go horseback riding, help out in the stables, feed the deer, ride a bike, walk the themed trails, drive around in a carriage, garden, or take part in a culinary or art workshop...

Situated halfway between Nova Gradiška and Slavonski Brod, the eco-ethno village Stara Kapela is a true find for any fan of rural tourism. Traditional Slavonian architecture, old chests, furniture, fabrics, and folk costumes will take you back in time, and the irresistible nature – with 13 kilometres of hiking and bike trails, dedicated rest stops and replicas of old watch-towers that serve as viewpoints – is simply waiting to be explored.



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Slavonian rural areas have to offer. If you take the Golden Thread Road (Cesta zlatne niti) from its centre, you can take in all the beauty of the surrounding villages: Štitar, Babina Greda, Kruševica, Cerna, Šiškovci, Gradište, Bošnjaci, Drenovci and Vrbanja. You will discover forgotten customs, an array of traditional wines and food, magnificent handiwork, and old crafts. But most importantly, you will spend some time with your hospitable hosts on their estates.

As you may have already noticed, there is no clear separation between urban and rural areas in Slavonia. Everything is intertwined and merges together, so the way of life or atmosphere in the centre of a town may actually seem more typical of the countryside. On such example is Županja on the Sava river bank, a town of unique rural architecture and a great starting point for exploring the best the

The Karanac ethno-village is inviting not only because of its exquisite flavours and good wines, but also because of its traditional way of life. You can go for a ride in a horse-drawn cart, sleep in authentic rooms overlooking chicken coops, take a walk down the "Street of Forgotten Time" (Ulica zaboravljenog vremena) and enjoy the peace and quiet of an authentic village in Baranja. //

*An island in the east of Slavonia is known for **the only preserved example of a horse-powered "dry" mill** (suvara in Croatian) in Southeast Europe. This world-class rarity and monument of the highest category was once an integral part of life in a Slavonian village.*

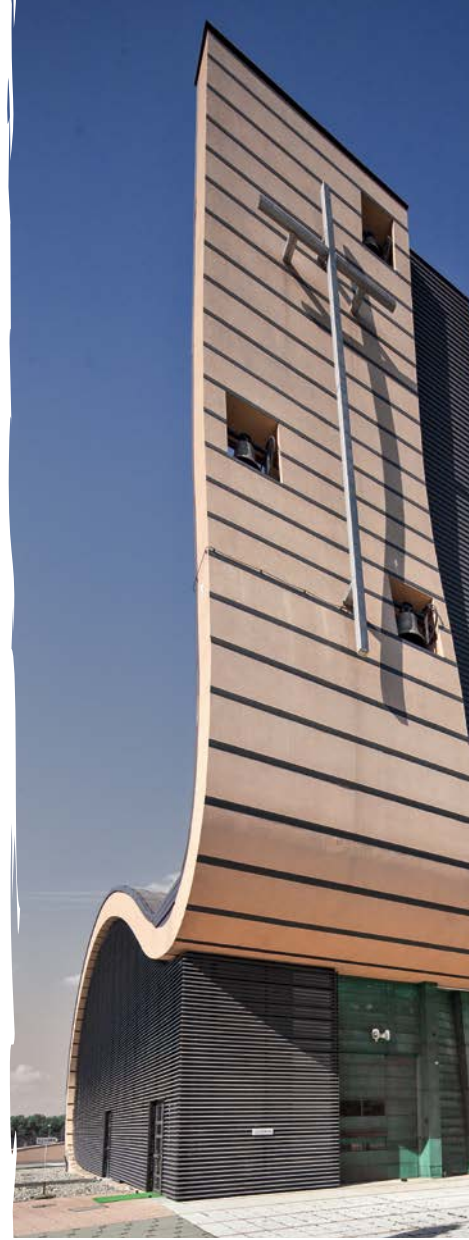
An Integral Part of Life

Only two years after a relief sculpture of the Madonna in Syracuse, Sicily cried for four days in 1953, the town of Pleternica held its first novena for the Our Lady of Tears, ending in a candlelight procession on the final night. Ever

since then, the nights of worship, filled with peace and blessings, have brought together worshippers from across the region. Fifty years after the first procession, Pleternica was named a Marian shrine of Our Lady of Tears.

Aljmaš has been an established Marian shrine since 1704, and receives over a hundred thousand pilgrims every year during the Assumption of Mary holiday. The modern-looking Church of Our Lady of Refuge on the Danube river bank, shaped like a swan, was built in the exact location of the old church that was completely destroyed during the Homeland War.

1 Barn, Oprisavci / SAŠA PJANIĆ | 2 Franciscan monastery, Cernik / ALEN VRLAŽIĆ | 3 Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Topolje / SERGIO GOBBO
4 Aljmaš / FILIP BEUSAN | 5 Our Lady of Tears shrine, Pleternica / FILIP BEUSAN | 6 Church of St. Nicholas, Pleternica / FILIP BEUSAN
7 Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Voćin / BOJAN HARON MARKIČEVIĆ
8 Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Voćin / SAŠA PJANIĆ



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inal forms throughout its long history, most of them dating back to medieval times. Churches in the villages of the Brodska Posavina region – Slavonski Kobaš, Bebrina, Dubočac and Nova Kapela – are notable examples of the Baroque and Rococo styles, the latter also being the style of the grand Church of St Peter in Cernik.

The piety and devotion of the Slavonian people is reflected not only in the rich religious heritage of the region, but also in its way of life and customs. The Easter and Christmas holiday seasons are particularly beautiful in this part of Croatia. During this time, you can enjoy the local folklore and cuisine in all their splendour, as religion in the rural parts of Slavonia is an integral part of everyday life. //

The Sanctuary of Mother of Good Hope in Šumanovci has also been called Our Hidden Lady of Šumanovci. Worshippers claim that for over 650 years miracles have taken place in this very spot, some of which became legend, such as the healing of a blind girl who washed her face with water from a well next to the sanctuary.

Ilača is to Slavonia what Lourdes is to France. Ever since a water spring suddenly appeared in 1865, followed by an apparition of the Madonna on the same night, thousands of pilgrims from Slavonia and Croatia came to this miraculous shrine.

Slavonia is full of signs of devotion and piety – along the fertile fields and country lanes, near rivers, on crossroads, in villages, remote cemeteries, centuries-old forests, etc. Churches in Eastern Slavonia have retained their orig-

The tiny Church of St Martin in the village of Lovčić near Slavonski Brod dates back to 1167; the Church of St Bartholomew in Novi Mikanovci in Eastern Slavonia is now known mostly for its leaning tower; the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Topolje is best known for not having a tower at all; and the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Voćin is known for family pilgrimages in August.



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