



**Zelingrad**, the medieval guardian of paths, is located on the north-eastern slopes of Medvednica, in the heart of Zelinska gora. The exact date of its erection is not known, but its first mention dates back to 1295, when it was home to the castellan and the royal command. Throughout history it has had many owners and many different names, and since 1635 it has been described as a ruin. Today we can see the remains of the fortified towers from the front and back



side of the city, the area of the outer yard, and the residential complex of the city with a water cistern in the inner part of the city.

**Jastrebarsko** is not only famous for its excellent wine (*Plešivička wine road*), but also for its potable water springs, which are today an economic symbol of Sveta Jana. The old and rich thermal spring in the village of Svetojanske Toplice has long shown that this area is very rich in high quality water. Due to its balanced mineral composition and supreme quality, *Jana* spring water has found itself among the world's most esteemed waters and has achieved tremendous success. But that is not the only notable water in Sveta Jana. Above the village of Lanišće there is a very popular spring of healthy, potable water, which according to folklore has properties that make it an aphrodisiac.



The **prehistoric site in Budinjak** (10th – 6th century B.C.) is one of the most significant archaeological sites in Croatia, and remains fully preserved to this day. Together with the site from Roman times in the nearby Bratelji (1st – 2nd century), it forms part of an archaeological park which people can walk through by following the *Staza kneževa* (*Princes' Path*). Remains of a prince and princess were found in one *tumulus* (burial mound) along with valuable



funeral items, including a very complex bronze helmet created by a smelter from the Iron Age. Every future excavation of a helmet of that type, regardless of where it is found in Europe, shall bear the name Budinjak.

At the beginning of the 20th century **stone fossils of a prehistoric elephant** from the *Deinotherium giganteum* Kaup family were found not far from the church in Marija Gorica. Even though only a couple of teeth, tusks and bone fragments were found, this discovery stirred great public and professional interest, especially because it is the only site of this kind in Croatia. The remains of the prehistoric elephant shed new light onto the prehistoric settlement of this area, and the municipality of Marija Gorica has preserved this memory by giving the prehistoric elephant a place on the municipal emblem.



The rivulet **Slapnica** was named after numerous waterfalls that make it the most beautiful mountain rivulet in this part of Croatia. Its spring is in the northernmost part of the Municipality of Krašić, under the Gornja Vas settlement. Slapnice Canyon, protected since 1964, is protected land with a 10 km long valley spreading from the foot of the Žumberak Mountain under Gornje Vasi up to Medven Draga, where Slapnica flows into the Kupčina rivulet. *Vranjački* and *Brisalo* waterfalls, *Vranjačka* cave, i.e. *Zidane pećine*, and *Dragan's Mill* enhance the charm of this protected landscape.



## BASIC INFORMATION

**SURFACE AREA:** 3,078 km<sup>2</sup> (1.188 sq mi) | **POPULATION (2011.):** 317,642  
**POPULATION DENSITY:** 100/km<sup>2</sup> | **TOWNS:** 9 | **DISTRICTS:** 25  
**GRADOVI:** Dugo Selo, Ivanić-Grad, Jastrebarsko, Samobor, Sveta Nedelja, Sveti Ivan Zelina, Velika Gorica, Vrbovec, Zaprešić  
**DISTRICTS:** Bedenica, Bistra, Brckovljani, Brdovec, Dubrava, Dubravica, Farkaševac, Gradec, Jakovlje, Klinča Sela, Kloštar Ivanić, Krašić, Kravarsko, Križ, Luka, Marija Gorica, Orle, Pisarovina, Pokupsko, Preseka, Pušća, Rakovec, Rugvica, Stupnik, Žumberak

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# The Green Ring of Zagreb







# ZAGREB COUNTY

*Zagreb County, or ‘the Green Ring of Zagreb’ as some people call it, lies in the central part of Northwest Croatia. It is the sixth largest and second most populated Croatian county. In terms of its economic potential, today it is one of the fastest growing Croatian regions, and because of its rich history, tradition, culture, preserved nature, cuisine and colourful landscape, it is a particularly attractive tourist destination. The county encircling the Croatian capital manages to successfully unite contemporary urbanism while still preserving traditional folk customs and values.*

The area encompassing the current Zagreb County has been valued since prehistoric times as a very pleasant place to live in, which is why it has been continuously inhabited since the Palaeolithic era.

As one of the oldest Croatian counties, Zagreb County was founded in 1094, the same year the Diocese of Zagreb was established. Throughout its centuries-old history Zagreb County has been one of the largest counties, both in terms of surface area and number of inhabitants.

Owing to its natural position, for centuries it has been a junction and intersection of roads linking Western and Southeast Europe. In the 16th century Zagreb County was at the border of European civilisation, and by the end of the 18th century it was the border area between Central Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Its rapid and persistent development started in the mid-19th century. After the construction of railways and modern roads towards the Adriatic Sea and Central and Western Europe, Zagreb became one of the most important traffic intersections of Southeast Europe, which prompted the fast economic development of the county.

Zagreb County has a very rich heritage and beautiful natural scenery (with a large number of protected natural areas, two nature parks — Medvednica and Žumberak – Samobor Highlands, and the unique ornithological reserve Crna Mlaka). Forests and hills are interwoven with numerous hiking, walking and cycling paths. There is also the renovated St Barbara mine in Rude with its educational trail and Grgos Cave (a protected geomorphological natural monument) in the village of Otruševac.

Hikers, outdoor enthusiasts, and nature lovers can find refreshments in numerous restaurants and well equipped mountain lodges.

Weekend visitors can choose from more than 40 resorts and family agro-touristic homesteads, along with three wine roads — Plešivica, Zelina, and the Samobor wine road. With *Portugizec Plešivica* and the *Kingdom of Zelina* as the most popular wine brands of Zagreb County, the wine routes offer a wide choice of other wine varieties (Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Pinot Noir, and Frankovka).

Dairy lovers can visit cheese roads in the Zagreb region that include 12 mini cheese factories in the county and city of Zagreb.

# T H E G R E E N R I N G O F

This area has a very rich cultural and historical heritage. Centuries of creative construction have created numerous monuments as a reminiscence of its rich past: castles, hillforts, manors, wooden religious heritage, among others. Many stories and legends of the period still attract visitors.

Those who are fond of wooden architecture will surely want to visit the “wooden beauties of Turopolje” — unique examples of sacred architecture. The most attractive are the chapel of St Barbara in Velika Mlaka, and a beautiful example of autochthonous secular architecture, the Modić-Bedeković manor.

The valuable archaeological site, Andautonia, is located in Ščitarjevo near Velika Gorica. In the 1st c. A.D. it was the seat of the Illyrian tribe of Andautonians and the ancient Roman province, *Pannonia Superior*. The storybook landscapes, especially in the western part of the county, are embellished by a number of castles that proudly stand as reminders of the glorious past. The Jelačić Curia Nova is a unique example of an integral manorial estate with farm buildings that is preserved even today. There are also various religious edifices, and a special tourist attraction is the memorial room of the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac in Krašić.

The cultural offer of Zagreb County is diverse and rich. Numerous festivals and events organised throughout the year, nearly three hundred of them, attract tourists from surrounding areas, but also from neighbouring countries (the Samobor Carnival, St George’s Day in Turopolje, Jelačić Days, the International Knights Tournament of the Knights of Zelingrad, the Bučijada Pumpkin Festival, the Kajkavian Music Festival “Our Dear Kaj”, “What our Ancestors Ate” Food Festival, Jaska Wine Festival, Autumn in Dugo Selo, and many others).

With its exceptionally rich food and wine culture, and offering many cultural, sports and leisure activities, Zagreb County is an ideal destination to suit every taste. A confirmation of this is a recommendation by the Association of Croatian Travel Agencies (UHPA) who chose Zagreb County as a recommended domestic destination for the year 2014/2015.

One of the symbols and the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions Samobor in Croatia and abroad is certainly



its typical vanilla and custard cream cake, the **kremšnita**. It is a dessert that makes everyone

want to come back, and visiting Samobor without tasting the delicious yellow cream between two layers of puff pastry is like not visiting Samobor at all. It is even worth standing in line to buy! There are several recipes for this cake, but the *Samobor kremšnita* is unique because of the way it is prepared. It is also the only cake of this kind that is served warm.



**Naftalan oil** with its healing properties is a true rarity, and has been found only in two places in the whole world — Ivanić-Grad is one of them, and the only one in Europe. Naftalan is classified as a natural therapeutic agent that has always been used in health protection and disease prevention, but also for treatment. The famous explorer Marco Polo wrote one of the first records on the healing properties of naftalan. After the discovery of naftalan and thermal mineral water in Ivanić Grad, a modern sanatorium was built, unique in Europe and the world, for the treatment of skin and rheumatic diseases, but also for medical rehabilitation.



The **Sveta Nedelja Lakes** alongside the Sava River are very attractive and contribute more and more to the development of fishing tourism and excursions due to their developed network of bike paths. The first four-star autocamp in Zagreb County is located on Rakitje Lake, with 50 lots, four modern bungalows, a restaurant, a wellness centre, and a wine cellar.



# Z A G R E B

The **wooden chapel of St Barbara** in Velika Mlaka is the most attractive and most representative example of wooden sacral architecture in Croatia. It was built in 1642 and has been reconstructed on several occasions. It is richly decorated. The straight ceiling divided into fields is painted with floral motives, while the wooden panel inside the church is painted with ornaments, bouquets of flowers in vases and images of saints, the most interesting of which, from an iconographic point of view, is St Wilgefortis (Kümmernis).

**Milka Trnina**, one of the greatest opera singers in the history of opera, was born in Vežišće (Križ Municipality). She began her career in Zagreb in 1882, but not finding suitable roles, she left to gather experience and fame abroad. She worked in Leipzig, Graz, Bremen, and Munich, where she received the honorary title of Royal Bavarian Chamber Singer. She performed throughout Europe and the USA, where she spent some time teaching singing in New York. She was the first singer to perform *Tosca* in London’s Covent Garden and New York’s Metropolitan Opera, and according to Puccini himself, her interpretation of the opera was unsurpassed. In 1906, at the height of fame, she stopped performing.

The **Donja Kupčina Heritage Museum** is located in the village bearing the same name and is one of the biggest open-air museums in Croatia. It was built in a



planned and systematic manner in the middle of the 20th century by relocating five buildings from different villages in Donja Kupčina to the museum grounds. The museum has great cultural and historical value because it represents domestic and farm structures typical of village life, but also notable examples of the vernacular architecture of Pokuplje, Turopolje and Hrvatska Posavina.



**Marija Jurić Zagorka**, Croatian writer and the first professional female journalist was born in 1873 in the village of Negovec (near Vrbovec). She initiated and edited *Ženski list* (*The Women’s Magazine*), the first

Croatian magazine for women. She fought against social discrimination, Magyarisation and Germanisation, and also for women’s rights. She wrote novels for a wide public in which she intertwined elements of love stories with those of national history. Her most famous works include *Grička vještica* (*The Witch of Grič*) — a series of seven novels, *Kći Lotrščaka* (*Daughter of the Lotrščak*) and the first Croatian crime novel, *Kneginja iz Petrinjske ulice* (*The Princess from Petrinjska Street*).

The **Jelačić Curia Nova estate of Count Josip Jelačić** (Zaprešić) is an important cultural and historical monument. It is valuable because the complex has been preserved in its entirety — the lord’s castle with adjacent buildings, Chapel of St Joseph, family tomb, and all on an estate spreading over 20.5 ha. The first mention of the castle in documents dates from the end of the 16th century, with count Jelačić purchasing it in 1852. He expanded and redecorated the old castle, adding an alley leading to the castle and building the Chapel of St Joseph in the park. The tomb was built later by the most esteemed architect of the time, Herman Bollé. Next to the castle there is a thresher from the 18th century, the oldest preserved structure of this kind in Croatia, and a three story granary.

The **church of St Martin** on Martin breg (Dugo Selo) dates back to 1209. It was built in the Baroque-Gothic style. Today it is in ruins, with archaeological excavations underway as well as plans to revitalise the cultural and sacral object. The stylised metal “Feet of St Martin” were placed on the old church of St Martin. In 2007, Dugo Selo was officially included in the international route book starting from the French city of Tours, and it became a member of the International Association of Admirers of the Heritage of St Martin.

