



Surrounding



Zagreb

THE CAPITAL OF CROATIA



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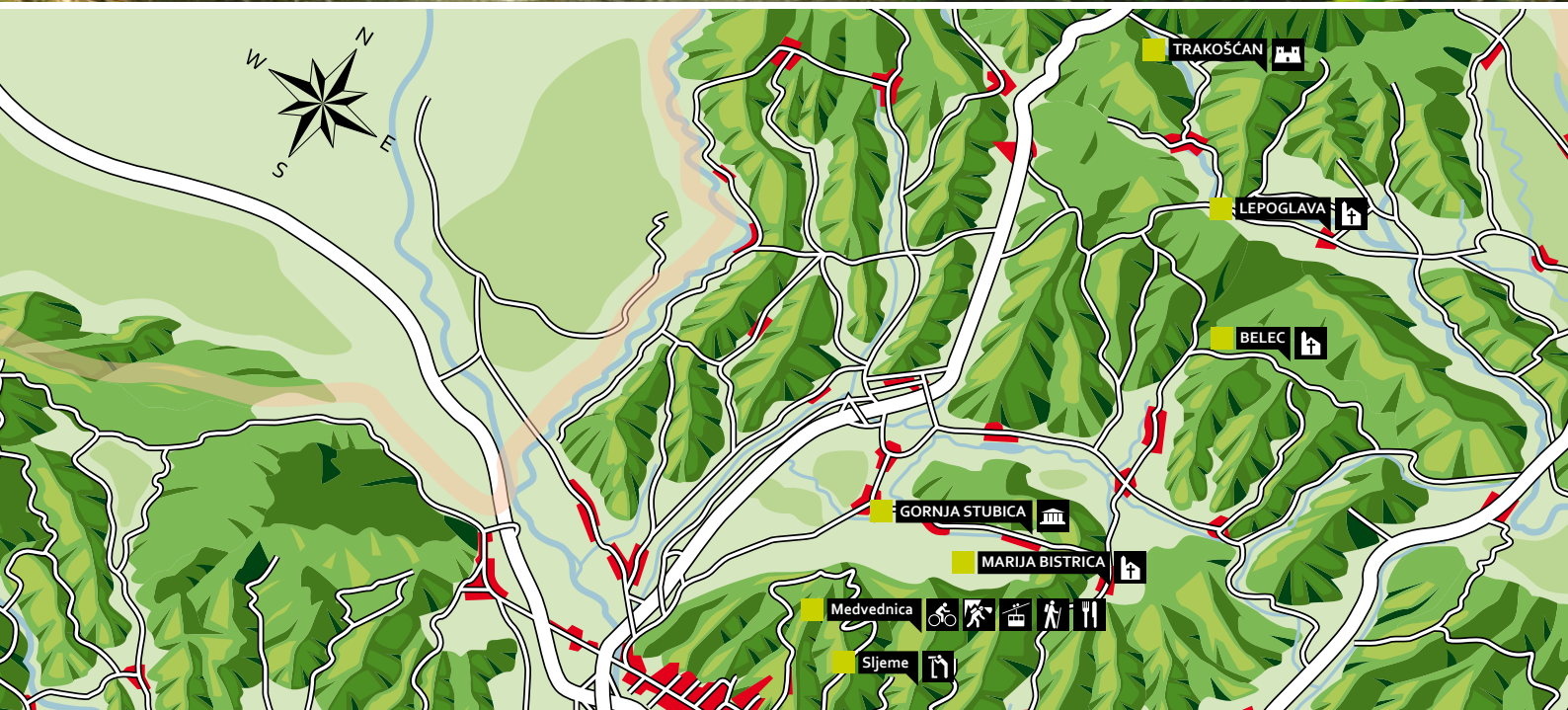
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North

Medvednica
Gornja Stubica
Marija Bistrica
Belec
Lepoglava
Trakošćan

Mount Medvednica is both a protected nature reserve and a favourite hiking and picnic spot for Zagreb folk. Beyond its northern slopes lies the Zagorje region, known for its rippling hills, romantic castles and unspoilt rural culture.





Medvednica

6 The forested slopes of Mount Medvednica (often referred to by the name of its summit, Sljeme) provide a retreat into nature a tram ride away from the heart of the city. Hikers can choose among well-marked paths leading to mountain lodges ("planinarski dom") serving cheap, fresh and hearty food. Medvednica Nature Park is a haven for

plant and animal species, cultural and geological rarities. For example, the Veternica cave lies in a 10km² karst landscape rich in rock formations. The main cavern is over 2km long, the first 380m of which are open to the public. Here you can see the bones of a cave bear and visit (and even adopt) the current inhabitants, bats.

Or, visit the Zrinski silver mines, worked from the 16th century when Count Petar Zrinski was awarded the right to mine for precious metals here. After two centuries of mining, some people say the system of caves extends all the way to Gornji Grad in the centre of Zagreb.

www.pp-medvednica.hr

Grah

7 For hundreds of weekend hikers, a bowl of steaming grah is the reward for a three-hour round trip to Sljeme's summit. Grah is a bean stew flavoured with smoked meat, and may be served with a sausage, or even a tasty dollop of sauerkraut. It's tasty, warming, possibly even healthy and goes down a treat with a cold beer.





Gornja Stubica

Gornja or "Upper" Stubica has a quiet village feel and hilly panoramas. For most Croatians, the name is synonymous with Matija Gubec, leader of the 16th century peasant revolts. For his pains, Gubec was captured, carted off to Zagreb, mocked with a hot iron crown and unceremoniously quartered. An old linden tree,

which stands by a lovely old wooden house (today a pub), is the only living witness of Gubec's times. Nearby, the rather lovely Oršić palace has a collection telling the story of Gubec and of life in Zagorje.

www.mdc.hr/msb





Marija Bistrica

Marija Bistrica is one of the best-loved Marian shrines in Croatia, attracting thousands of pilgrims each year. It's an attractive little town in spectacular countryside, and the pilgrim Church of St Mary of the Snows, set on the cobbled main square, is truly striking. The site is dedicated

to the Virgin Mary because of a miraculous black wooden statue of the Madonna and Child dating back to the 15th century. A parish priest, fearing invasion by the ever-nearing Turks, hid the statue but died before revealing the secret place. Decades later, the statue revealed itself by

emitting light. The statue was once more hidden and revealed again in the 17th century, and has been revered ever since, not least because of its supposed healing powers.

www.info-marija-bistrica.hr

Gingerbread hearts

The bright red hearts ("licitar") you'll see at religious sites and souvenir shops are traditional decorations and gifts of the Zagreb and Zagarje regions. You'll see the place you visited inscribed in icing sugar, or perhaps a message of love, wisdom or commemoration. They're often given as a token of affection that is, at least in theory, edible. You simply can't go wrong!





Belec

Tucked away beneath the Ivanščica mountain, the tiny village of Belec hides a sumptuous example of sacral architecture: the Church of St. Mary of the Snows. Surrounded by walls to fend off Ottoman incursions, the interior is magnificently ornate, rich in 18th century frescos by local master Ivan Ranger, and a stupendous

ensemble of gilded altars executed by Graz-based sculptor Josip Schokotnigg. Recently restored, this masterpiece of the Croatian baroque is well worth visiting.

Lepoglava

Another very important religious site, Lepoglava was settled by Pauline monks in the 14th century. The order not only built a splendid church and monastery, they also did much to support education, medicine, art and culture. By decree of Emperor Joseph II, the Pauline order was abolished and the monks left Lepoglava in 1786. In 1854, the monastery

became a prison. While Croatia's central penitentiary is still housed in the newer wings, in 2001 the monastery buildings were restored to the Church. The prison itself is also darkly notable for incarcerating political prisoners including Josip Broz Tito and Franjo Tuđman.

www.lepoglava-info.hr

Lepoglava lace

Lacemaking was among the crafts introduced to Lepoglava by the Pauline monks, and today the town is one of the centres of lace in Croatia, with established schools and workshops and an international festival of lace held every year. The award-winning Lepoglava lace is made on bobbins, while the equally famous lace from Pag island is needlepoint, and Hvar island lace is made from agave fibres.





Trakošćan

When people say Zagorje is a land of fairytale castles, Trakošćan is probably what they have in mind. A white huddle of towers and battlements perched above a lake, surrounded by hills and forests, Trakošćan possesses a spectacular beauty. It developed from its initial use as a defensive lookout in the 13th century into the

residence of the Drašković family, who expanded the fortress in a romantic style in the 19th century. The well-preserved castle is home to a museum on four floors, with rooms representing various styles of interior decoration.

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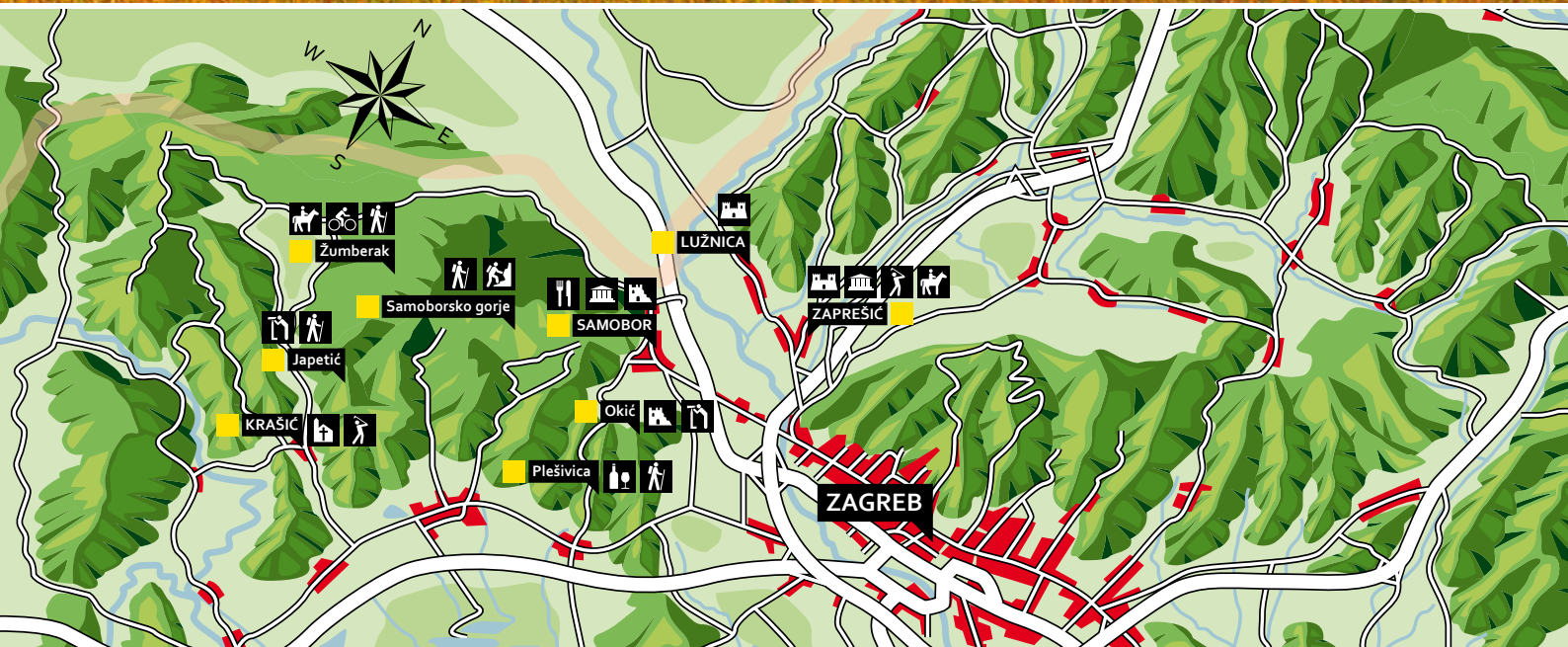
www.trakoscan.hr



West

Zaprešić
Lužnica Palace
Samobor
Samoborsko gorje
Plešivica
Žumberak

Immediately west of Zagreb lies a charming area of bustling market towns and former aristocratic estates. Looming in the distance, the little-travelled highlands of the Žumberak provide plenty in the way of off-the-beaten-track magic.





Zaprešić

The town of Zaprešić will forever be associated with Count Josip Jelačić (1801–1859), who led the movement for Croatian self-government in 1848 and retreated to his estate near Zaprešić in the years that followed. Jelačić's former palace at

Novi Dvori is still undergoing long-term restoration, but the surrounding park is full of surprises. A half-timbered granary now provides an atmospheric home to the Matija Skurjeni Gallery, honouring the locally born, self-taught artist whose

scenes of village life possess a surreal, dream-like quality. Look out too for the spindly spires of the Jelačić family mausoleum, a Neo-gothic delight designed by the architect of Zagreb cathedral, Hermann Bollé. With plenty of forest paths and a driving

range for golfers, Novi Dvori has bags of recreational potential.

www.muzej-matija-skurjeni.hr
www.zapresic.hr





Lužnica Palace

Rising above the cornfields just east of Zaprešić, Lužnica Palace is an outstandingly handsome example of an 18th century aristocratic residence, its decorous turrets giving it the appearance of a French chateau. Owned by a succession of noble families, the palace was in 1925 presented to the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, who now

use it as a centre for spiritual contemplation and prayer. The palace's landscaped park has been lovingly restored to its nineteenth-century state, and is open to all-comers on Sunday afternoons. Famous for its stately oak trees, the park is also rich in natural herbs - which are used by the Sisters to make liqueurs.

www.luznica.hr





Samobor

Located at the foot of green hills beside the burbling Gradna stream, Samobor is one of northern Croatia's best-preserved country towns, and receives a steady stream of day-trippers from Zagreb as a result. Many visitors gravitate towards the café-filled main square to sink their teeth into Samoborske



kremešnite, the custard-coloured cream pastries made by all the local bakeries. Fans of arts and crafts will find a wealth of things to see in Samobor. The career of one of Croatia's most enjoyable modern artists is celebrated at the Zlatko Prica Gallery. With ground-breaking photography at Foto Galerija Lang, and

colourful folk costumes at the Town Museum, there's a lot to take in. It's the perfect spot for a woodland stroll, too, with paths leading up to the hillside park of Anindol before darting through the forest towards the dramatic ruins of Samobor's 13th-century castle.





One of the best times to visit Samobor is during the carnival season, when parades and masked revels light up the town on the weekend preceding Shrove Tuesday.



Samobor specialties

Samobor is famous throughout Croatia for two culinary curiosities, both of which are thought to date back to the short period of French occupation at the start of the 19th century. Most famous of these is Bermet (the local version of "Vermouth"), a fortified wine flavoured with citrus fruits and aromatic herbs, most notably wormwood. Less of an acquired taste is Muštarda, a rich brown mustard with a strong fruity tang. Both Bermet and Muštarda have been made by the Filipec family for generations, and can be purchased from their shop just off the town square.

www.samobor.hr
www.tz-samobor.hr





Samoborsko gorje

Immediately west of Samobor rise the Samoborsko gorje or "The Samobor Hills", a small group of heavily forested, smooth-topped mountains that make ideal day-trip targets for the recreational hiker. Highest point of the Samoborsko gorje is the 879m Japetić, a 2-hour walk

from Šoićeva kuća, a popular restaurant and recreation spot. Marking the south-eastern extent of the range is the steep-sided summit of Okić, crowned by the ruins of one of Croatia's most forbidding medieval fortresses. Lying on the flanks of Okić, the Etno-kuća pod

Okićem ("Ethno-house below Mt Okić"), is a privately-owned museum displaying traditional furnishings and costumes in a restored village house.

www.etno-kuca.hr





Plešivica

Spread across the southern limbs of the Samoborsko gorje, the straggling village of Plešivica occupies a beautiful landscape of undulating hills ribboned with vineyards. Alongside excellent Pinots, Chardonnays and Rieslings, the area is also renowned for its Portugizac, a fruity

red wine that - rather like Beaujolais - is best drunk when young. The arrival of the new Portugizac in October is a major cause for local celebration. Many of Plešivica's vine-growing families offer the chance to taste their wines, often accompanied by cold

cuts of meat and cheese. The Plešivica Wine Roads brochure, available from the Zagreb County Tourist Board, will provide you with all the relevant addresses.

www.tzzz.hr





Žumberak

Of the many unspoiled highland regions within day-trip distance of Zagreb, Žumberak is among the most alluring. In many ways an extension of the Samoborsko gorje, the Žumberak consists of a succession of high ridges, narrow valleys and isolated villages filled with corn-

drying barns and piles of chopped firewood. Touring the Žumberak's windy roads, you are far more likely to come across farmers' tractors than family cars.

Much of the range falls under the protection of the Žumberak Nature Park, whose headquarters in

the village of Slani Dol, just west of Samobor, can provide information on hiking and mountain-biking opportunities.

www.pp-zumberak-samoborsko-gorje.hr

Krašić

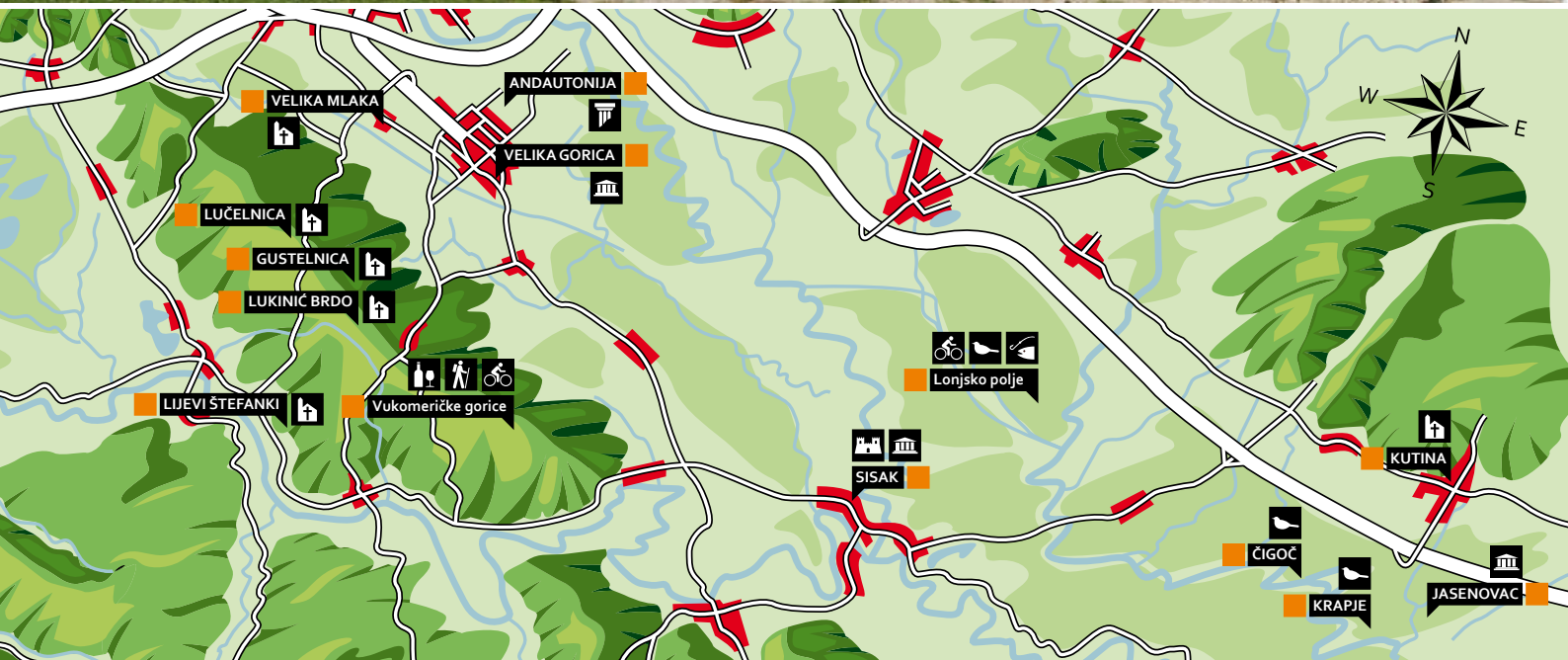
Krašić was the home village of Alojzije Stepinac (1898-1960), the Archbishop of Zagreb who was imprisoned by the communists after 1945 and became a symbol of spiritual resistance to the regime. A small memorial museum covers the main points of his life story in accessible style.



South East

Andautonija
Vukomeričke gorice
Velika Mlaka
Sisak
Lonjsko polje
Jasenovac

Venturing south of Zagreb can seem like a voyage into the heart of Croatian history. Roman relics and medieval remains are thick on the ground, although it is the wealth of nineteenth-century wooden architecture that gives the area its unique flavour.





Andautonia

The sleepy village of Ščitarjevo sits on top of the former Roman town of Andautonia, a first-century settlement that prospered from its position on the Sava valley trade routes. The site of the archeological excavations is now an attractive public

park, where visitors can stroll along smoothly paved Roman streets, or examine the under-floor heating system of the former municipal bathhouse. Every year in late April the Days Of Andautonia celebrates the region's Roman heritage with experimental

archeology workshops, stalls selling Roman-era food and drink, and Roman-themed games for children.

www.andautonia.com





Vukomeričke gorice

A wealth of traditional wooden architecture can be found in the Vukomeričke gorice hills just southwest of Velika Gorica. Characterized by ridge-top villages, beech forests and vineyards, the hills provide the perfect rural antidote to big-town bustle.

Twenty-five kilometres out from Velika Gorica is the village of Lučelnica, where the Holy Trinity Chapel (kapela Presvetog Trojstva), dating from 1935, boasts a charming shingled clock tower and an interior paved with huge oak cubes. Further over to the

west is Gustelnica, where the Chapel of St Anthony (kapela Sv. Antuna) is one of the most attractive of the region's churches, its late nineteenth-century porch held up by forked wooden pillars that look like enormous rakes. South of

here at Lukinić Brdo, the early twentieth-century Church of St John the Baptist (Crkva svetog Ivana Krstitelja) is a tribute to the craftsmanship of local woodworkers, its porch beams carved into swirling arabesques. Most rustic-looking of the region's





Velika Mlaka

One of Croatia's best-known examples of traditional timber architecture is the Church of St Barbara in the village of Velika Mlaka, a few kilometres south of Zagreb. Constructed from huge oak beams in the late 17th century, the church interior was beautifully decorated by local painters in

the 19th century. Almost every inch of the interior is covered with panels illustrating scenes from the life of St Barbara, portraits of saints, and ebullient floral motifs.

www.tzvg.hr

timber masterpieces is the hilltop Chapel of St George (kapela Sv. Jurja) in the village of Lijevi Štefanki, its rippling shingle-covered roof topped off by a big cast-iron cockerel. Built in 1677, it was moved on rollers to its current location a quarter of a century later. The chapel is so

small that its rear walls were fitted with large removable flaps, opened on Sundays so that services could be followed by those left outside.





Sisak

The town of Sisak has a historical pedigree second to none, having served the Romans as the river port of Siscia and subsequently playing a crucial role in the defence of Central Europe against the Ottoman Turks. There is an absorbing display of antiquities in the town

museum, and exposed fragments of Roman-period wall in front of the parish church. Historical exhibitions are also held in the imposing triple-towered fortress that dominates the confluence of the Sava and Kupa rivers. It was under the walls of the castle that a combined

force of Croats, Slovenes and Austrians decisively defeated a numerically superior army of Turks on June 22 1593, frustrating Ottoman plans for further conquests in Europe.

www.sisakturist.com





Lonjsko polje

Made up of meadows, marshes and oxbow lakes stretching along the eastern bank of the River Sava, Lonjsko polje is Croatia's largest area of protected wetland. It is also a treasure trove of traditional wooden architecture, its villages filled with picturesque timber

houses – many of them covered in vines or decorated with hanging baskets. Settlements on either side of the Sava are connected by archaic chain-operated ferries known as *skele*, which shuttle from one bank to the other as soon as a few cars arrive. The Lonjsko polje is prone

to seasonal flooding, when the Sava bursts its banks and turns local pastures into swamps. As a result the region is home to a rich diversity of wildlife, including over 250 bird species. The area is perfect for cycling, and there are plenty of bike-friendly bed and breakfasts

– many of which occupy traditional timber houses – along the way. The Lonjsko Polje Nature Park has information centres in both Čigoč, a village famous for its population of migrating storks, and Krapje, which boasts the best stock of well-preserved





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timber houses. Both of these villages serve as trail heads for nature walks, which take visitors along the dykes and through the forests of the Lonjsko polje's unique landscape. Also accessible from Krapje is the Krapje Đol ornithological

reserve, one of Europe's most important nesting grounds for spoonbills.

www.pp-lonjsko-polje.hr

White storks

From April to late August the Lonjsko polje becomes home to a third of Croatia's entire population of white storks. Attracted by the rich variety of insects, frogs and fish, an estimated 500 pairs of storks come here to feed and hatch their young, before migrating to their wintering grounds in Africa. Most famous of the stork villages is Čigoč, where hardly a single chimney stack or telegraph pole remains uncovered by the creatures and their nests.

45

www.turizam-smz.hr





Jasenovac

One of Croatia's most important World War II memorial sites lies just south of the Lonjsko polje, near the quiet riverside town of Jasenovac. It was here that an estimated 70,000 Serbs, Gypsies, Jews and Croatian antifascists were murdered in

the labour camp established by the pro-Nazi Ustaša regime between 1941 and 1945. An imaginative multimedia display tells the story of the camp through a mixture of photographs, old newsreels, and filmed interviews with survivors. Towering over the

meadows where the camp buildings once stood is a graceful modern memorial known as the Stone Flower, providing a focus for reflection and remembrance.

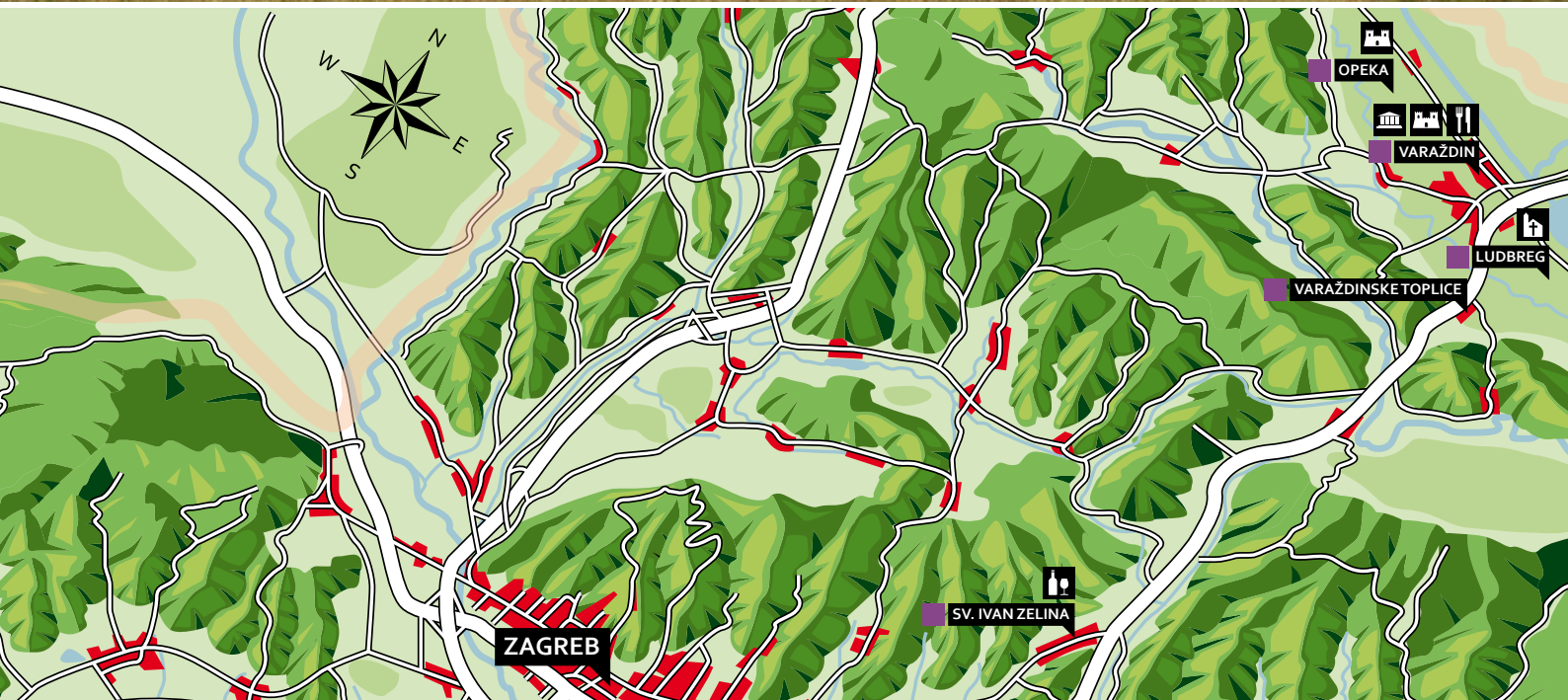
www.jusp-jasenovac.hr



East

Wine roads around Sveti Ivan Zelina Varaždin Ludbreg Opeka

The lovely baroque town of Varaždin is one of the highlights of inland Croatia. Yet more surprises await those who venture into the surrounding countryside.





Wine roads around Sveti Ivan Zelina

Families from the hills around Sveti Ivan Zelina have been tending vineyards for generations. Wines from this region (including local grape variety Kraljevina Zelina) are



currently enjoying a growing reputation, and many local vintners are opening up their cellars to offer wine-tasting opportunities to tourists. Call into the town museum in Zelina for a map of the wine route, or go where the road takes you following the brown signs. If you'd like a more

formal tasting with food laid on, contact the tourist board who will help you find a host.

www.tzzz.hr





Varaždin

One of the best-preserved Baroque cities in central Europe, Varaždin boasts a neat pedestrianized centre whose streets are lined with pastel-coloured palaces and fine churches. The city served as Croatia's capital for a brief period in the 18th century, which explains why so many

aristocratic families built their opulent town houses here. Standing in verdant parkland beside the city centre is the castle, an imposing reminder of the days when Varaždin was a frontier town defending northern Croatia from the Ottoman Turks. Comprising sturdy medieval towers and



a galleried Renaissance courtyard, the castle provides a suitably atmospheric home to the historical collections of the Municipal Museum. On the other side of the drawbridge from the castle, the Baroque Sermage Palace hosts the Gallery of Old and Contemporary Masters.





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Varaždin's other major museum is the Entomological Museum or "World of Insects", which has a fine collection of butterflies and models showing the secret life of insects. Lovers of horticultural spectacle

should be sure to visit the city's cemetery, transformed into an ornamental park by green-fingered cemetery keeper Hermann Haller in 1906. Featuring box hedge and cedar trimmed into a series of flowing shapes, it

is a unique example of how garden design and graveyard sanctity can be successfully combined.

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www.tourism-varazdin.hr





Ludbreg

Ludbreg became a place of pilgrimage by papal decree in 1513. A priest performing mass experienced a moment of doubt that the bread and wine really represented the body and blood of Christ. To his wonder the wine turned to blood, and to this day it is kept in the Church of the Holy Trinity, in a golden reliquary bequeathed by

Countess Batthany, whose family mansion is among the architectural highlights of this pleasant rural town. Masses of pilgrims visit Ludbreg on Sundays at the end of August and beginning of September, when a colourful fair takes place.

www.tz-ludbreg.hr

Opeka

Nesting in hills north of Varaždin is the green oasis of Opeka, a nineteenth-century arboretum that ranks as one of the most important botanical gardens in the country. It was founded by the Bombelles family in the style of an English park, and has outlived their Baroque palace which sadly lies in ruins. The arboretum has

hundreds of species from all over the world, including rare and exotic varieties. The nearby town of Vinica is known for its spring water and wine – enjoy a drop of whichever you please!

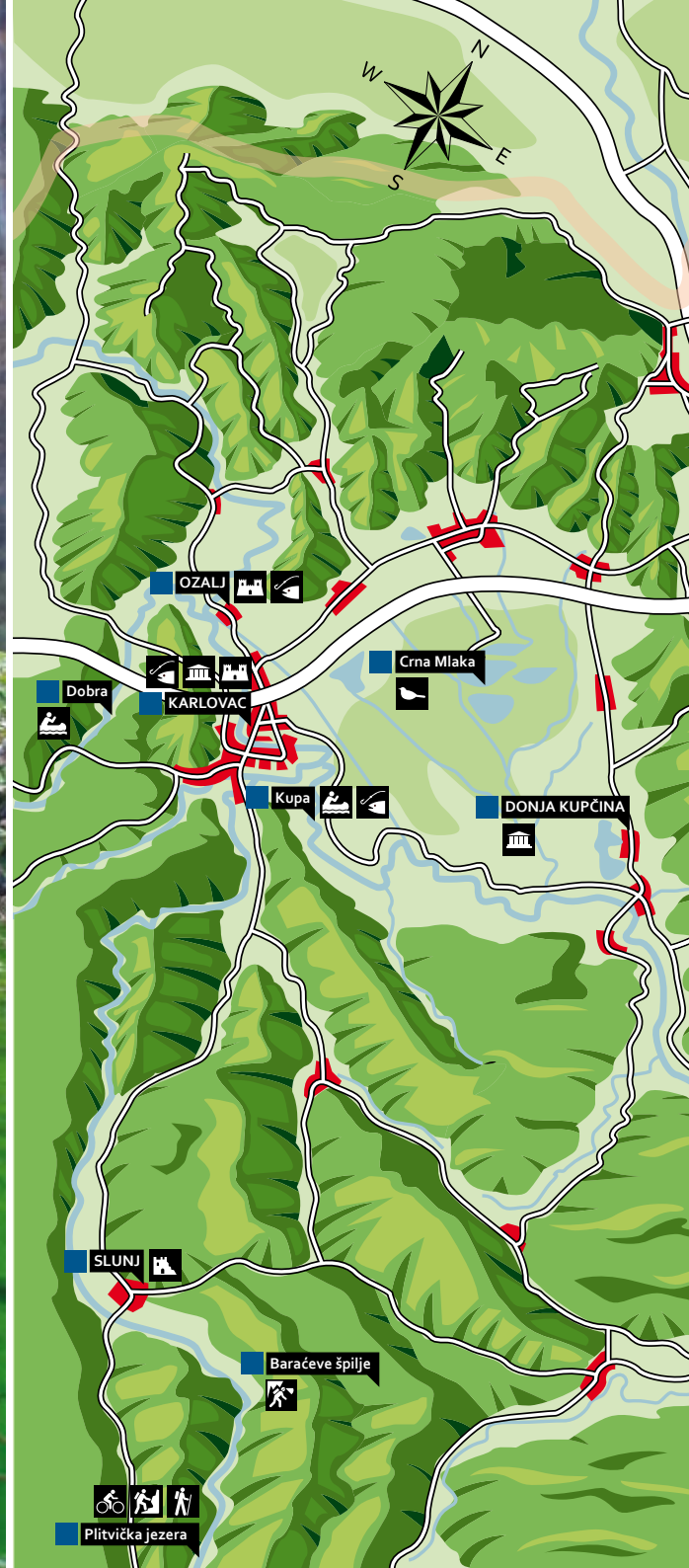
www.dvorci.hr



South

Karlovac
Donja Kupčina
Ozalj
Slunj
Plitvice National Park
Barač Caves

Rivers, lakes and waterfalls are among the main attractions south-west of Zagreb, with the Plitvice National Park ranking among the natural wonders of Europe. A healthy sprinkling of historic towns and castles ensures that there's plenty to see on the way there.





Karlovac



Situated at the confluence of three rivers, Karlovac was founded in the late 16th century by Archduke Karl of Styria to defend Central Europe from the Ottoman Turks. Although the city walls were largely demolished long ago, the municipal park still follows the star-shaped pattern of

the original fortifications. A short stroll from the centre, the grassy banks of the river Korana provide the perfect opportunity to sunbathe – or to feed the local swans.

Black storks in Crna Mlaka

Lying just off the main Zagreb-Karlovac highway is Crna Mlaka (literally “Black Marsh”), an area of forested wetland rich in bird life. It is a particularly valued habitat of the elusive black stork – which, unlike the more common white stork, is extremely sensitive to human disruption and only nests in the security of isolated forests.

www.karlovac-touristinfo.hr

www.tzzz.hr





Donja Kupčina

Many of the villages west of Zagreb preserve tumbledown wooden farmhouses, and some of the best examples are preserved at the village of Donja Kupčina, just southeast of Karlovac. A small museum of local heritage (Zavičajni muzej) contains a lovingly-preserved group of nineteenth-century farm

buildings clustered around a glade. A collection of locally-made linen and hand-embroidered costumes adds colour to the display.

www.tzzz.hr

Ozalj

Northwest of Karlovac, the country town of Ozalj is dominated by its stout castle, perched high above the winding Kupa river. Long associated with two of Croatia's greatest noble families, the Zrinskis and the Frankopans, the castle museum pays eloquent tribute to the courtly culture of

Ozalj's 17th century heyday. Also looking rather like a medieval castle is the Munjara, a playfully Neo-gothic hydroelectric plant built on the Kupa river in 1908. The Munjara's Austrian built turbines, installed in 1926, are still in working order.

www.ozalj-tz.hr





Slunj

If you're travelling from Zagreb towards the Plitvice Lakes then consider a stop-off in Slunj, a hillside-hugging town positioned high above the Korana river. Down by the river's edge is the suburb of Rastoke, where the tumbling waters of the Slunjčica stream have been harnessed to

power a cluster of watermills. There is a fascinating maze of man-made channels and wooden bridges to explore, while locally-caught trout is available in waterside restaurants.

www.tz-slunj.hr

Rafting

Many of Croatia's most exciting white-water rafting destinations are to be found in the vicinity of Karlovac. Nearest at hand is the River Mrežnica, with several stretches of rapids hemmed in by forested hills. Another exciting prospect is the River Korana, which emerges from the northernmost of the Plitvice Lakes before flowing through a dramatic sequence of canyons. Slightly further afield is the Kupa, which rushes its way between the lofty peaks of the Gorski kotar hills.

www.tzkz.hr





Plitvice National Park

66 Croatia's largest protected area and one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country, the Plitvice National Park embraces the kind of landscape unique enough to stick in a visitor's memory for a lifetime. At its heart is a string of turquoise lakes, each fed by a sequence

of terraced waterfalls. These cascades were created over several millennia by a water-borne limestone sediment known as travertine, picked up by mountain rivers and deposited downstream to form a sequence of natural dams. The process is still very much ongoing, and silvery-

grey travertine can be seen coating the pebbles and plant stalks of Plitvice's lakes. The rush and thunder of the rapids contrast markedly with the untroubled calm of the larger lakes, although the silence is frequently broken by the sound of happily croaking frogs. Above the lakes lie

forests thick with fir and beech, an ideal habitat for deer, wolves, lynx and brown bears. The park is very well organized for visitors, with a clearly signposted network of footpaths running alongside the lakes and wooden walkways spanning some

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Barač Caves

East of the Plitvice Lakes lies an area of porous limestone riddled with caves. Most accessible of these is the Barač Caves (Baraćeve špilje), where visitors can take a 40-minute guided tour through a dramatic subterranean landscape of stalagmites and stalagmites.

The caves are a popular nesting area for bats – indeed a huge pile of accumulated bat guano is one of the cave's more offbeat attractions.

of the rapids. The entrance ticket includes free travel both on boats that traverse Plitvice's largest lake, and the road train that runs along the eastern side of the park, connecting the two main entrances.

www.np-plitvicka-jezera.hr

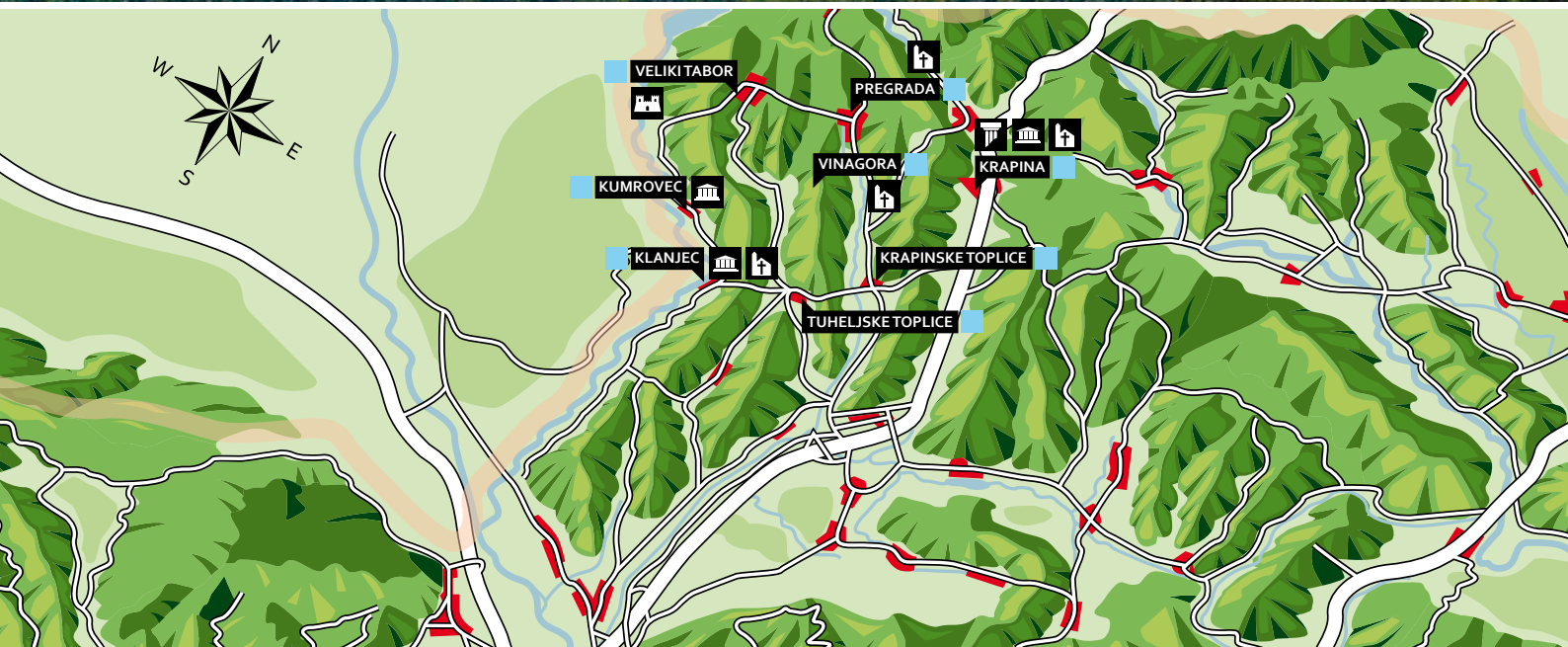
www.baraceve-spilje.hr



North West

Krapina
Veliki Tabor
Kumrovec
Klanjec
Pregrada
Vinagora

A tour of the western Zagorje takes in an undulating landscape of lush green hills, their summits sprinkled with a picture-postcard collection of vineyards, churches and castles.





Krapina

Spread below an attractive ensemble of pudding-shaped hills, the regional capital of Krapina is famous for being the home of Krapina Man, a Neanderthal who lived and hunted here some thirty millennia ago. Prehistoric remains were first discovered at Hušnjakovo just outside town by Dragutin Gorjanović

Kramberger in 1899, making Krapina one of the richest Neanderthal sites in Europe. A multi-media display at the excavation site throws fascinating light on Neanderthal lifestyles. Objects found here suggest that they lived in extended family groups and used stone tools to hunt large mammals.

Sitting resplendently on Trški vrh hill over on the opposite side of town, the Church of St Mary is one of the Zagorje's most popular pilgrimage sites. It was built in 1750 to honour a miracle-working statue of St Mary, brought here from the Holy Land by a local pilgrim in 1669. Surrounded

by a ring of arcades, the church features sumptuous ceiling paintings by Anton Lerchinger, and a splendid collection of altars courtesy of the Austrian sculptor Filip Jakob Straub and the Slovene Anton Mersi.

www.mhz.hr

www.tzkzz.hr





Veliki Tabor

74 With huge barrel-shaped bastions sprouting skywards from a green ridge, the castle of Veliki Tabor serves as something of a visual trademark for the whole Zagorje region. Built in the early 16th century when the Ottoman threat was at its height, the castle was adapted for residential purposes during more peaceful times, when Renaissance-style arcades

were added to the inner courtyard. A museum in the central keep displays artefacts unearthed during the castle's restoration, alongside fine Renaissance furnishings. Veliki Tabor hosts the traditional Tabor Film Festival, dedicated to short films.

www.velikitabor.com

Veronica of Desinić

75 Visitors to Veliki Tabor are frequently regaled with the 16th century tale of Veronica of Desinić, the local girl who caught the roving eye of young nobleman Friedrich of Celje. Friedrich was already married to a member of the powerful Frankopan family, and his infatuation with Veronica caused consternation on all sides. According to legend, Friedrich's father Count Hermann of Celje had the couple locked up in separate castles. The unfortunate Veronica was subsequently executed as a witch, and her body was bricked into Veliki Tabor's walls - where it can still be heard moaning on moonlit nights. In a playfully ghoulish tribute to the tragic heroine, prize-winning films at the Tabor Film Festival receive an award known as 'Veronica's Skull'.

www.taborfilmfestival.com





Kumrovec

One of the Zagorje's most popular destinations for a family day-out is Kumrovec, a traditional agricultural village whose buildings have been restored to form the "Old Village" Museum (Muzej "Staro selo"). Essentially an open-air ethnographic collection, the museum contains an attractive cluster

of nineteenth-century thatched cottages, many of which contain the everyday furnishings and agricultural tools that their former inhabitants would have used. Many of the houses display traditional village crafts, ranging from the embroidered textiles made by Zagorje womenfolk to the

brightly coloured gingerbread hearts baked by the village confectioner. Artisans are frequently on hand to demonstrate local crafts, and you can try your own hand on the potter's wheel.

www.mss.mhz.hr

Josip Broz Tito

Kumrovec is also famous as the birthplace of Josip Broz (1892–1980), the Croatian communist who – under his adopted party codename of "Tito" – led Yugoslavia's antifascist resistance movement during World War II and became the founder of the post-war Yugoslav federation. The house where Tito grew up is situated inside the Kumrovec Museum Village and contains mementoes of his career.





Klanjec

Lying in a bowl between hills, the small town of Klanjec spreads below the black-and-white chequered belfry of its seventeenth-century Franciscan church. The church originally served as the mausoleum of the powerful Erdödy family, and a fine pair of Erdödy sarcophagi have been recently restored and

put on display in a specially built vault. The burial casket of Emerik Erdödy, mounted on kneeling stags, is one of the most striking examples of Baroque funerary art in Central Europe. Opposite the church is a gallery honouring Klanjec-born sculptor Antun Augustinčić (1900-1979),

who studied in Zagreb and Paris before going on to become one of the most in-demand public artists of the era. Highlight of the exhibition is a cast of the monumental equestrian statue entitled *Peace* - the original stands outside the United Nations building in New York. Augustinčić

himself is buried in the garden, with a touching sculpture of a wounded soldier marking the spot.

www.klanjec.hr
www.gaa.mhz.hr





Pregrada

Nestling beneath hills north of Krapinske Toplice, the small town of Pregrada is dwarfed by the twin towers of its parish church. Often called the "Zagorje Cathedral" due to its large size, the church contains a sonorous organ which was intended for the cathedral in Zagreb but was

rejected on the grounds that it wasn't quite loud enough for a big-city cathedral. Locals pour into town during the last weekend in September for the Branje grozdja (grape harvest), a rural fair featuring folk songs and dances.

www.pregrada.hr

Vinagora

For one of the best views in the region head for the tiny village of Vinagora just west of Pregrada, where the Pilgrimage Church of St. Mary squats picturesquely on a green hill. Originally fortified to withstand enemy attacks and now surrounded by a ring of arcades, the church

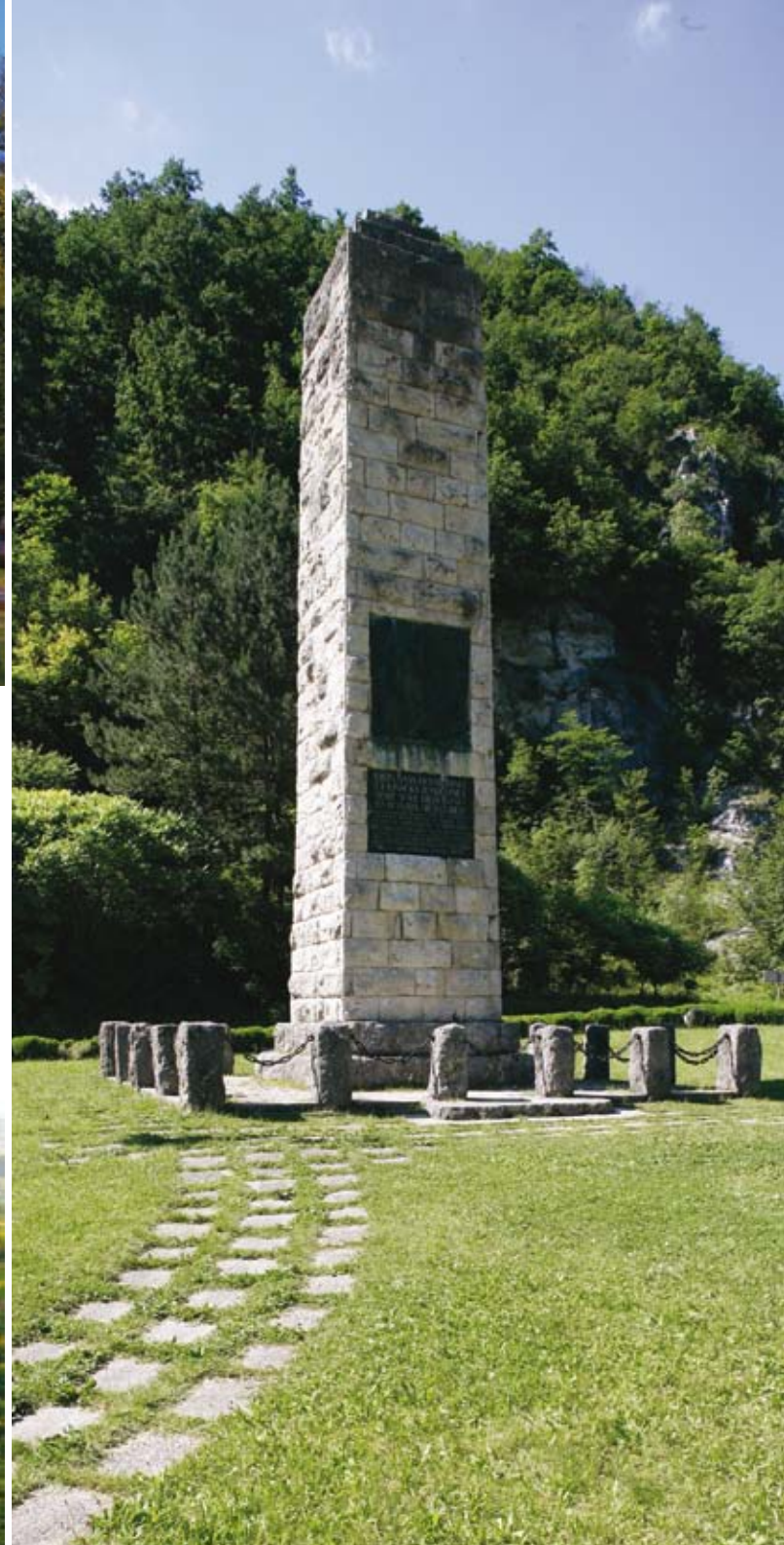
commands an excellent panorama of the Zagorje's rippling landscape.






The Croatian National Anthem

Right beside the Terme Tuhelj spa resort is the Mihanović Palace, an eighteenth-century stately home named after the poet and diplomat Antun Mihanović (1796-1861), who - as brother of the lady of the house, Countess Brigljević - was a frequent guest. Mihanović's love of the Zagorje landscape served as the inspiration behind his *Lijepa Naša* ("Our Beautiful Homeland"), the song that became Croatia's National Anthem.





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