

KRALJ EVICA

where the waves whisper tales of nobility



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a noble past

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Come, see,
taste, listen



Welcome to Kraljevica

In the place where the Mediterranean reaches deep into the European mainland, steeped in history lies our region of Kraljevica. It is like a necklace of the Croatian Littoral! Three jewels gleam within it: the noble past, the maritime heritage and the local way of life, reflected in six settlements, six pearls: Bakarac, Križišće, Mali Dol, Veli Dol, Šmrika and Kraljevica.

This brochure has been designed to be a gracious host, sharing the best stories and guiding dear guests to uncover the richness of our heritage, creating unique experiences. It invites you to explore the places where maritime and land routes meet, to discover the residences of once-powerful nobles, and to visit historic seaports where history was made.

Surrender to the small yet great beauties of this land and, through the hospitality of our people, experience the rhythm of life in our seaside villages.

Let us embark on this inspiring journey!

Where will this brochure take you

- **step** into a noble past and **learn** about the Zrinski and Frankopan families, aristocrats of European stature who were raised and lived by the motto *He who fears death is not worthy of life*
- **dive** into the heritage born of the sea and **discover** why sailors are said to eat bread with seven crusts, why the oldest shipyard on the Adriatic was founded right here, and what links Edmund Halley, the scientist after whom Halley's Comet is named, to Kraljevica
- **stroll** along the sea, **feel** it, **meet** the local people and their customs, taste their food, **explore** their spiritual heritage
- **come, see, taste, walk, savour** and **listen, indulge** in routes, trails, promenades and explorations, events and activities and **discover** for yourself why the Kraljevica region is truly a necklace of shining pearls of the Littoral



Step into a noble past

They had two residences in Kraljevica. They held power in their hands – political, military, economic. They minted their own money. They held their own army. They had power – so great that, in the end, they paid for it with their lives.

This is the story of two noble families who produced generations of extraordinary, brave and wise people. They were raised under the motto *He who fears death is not worthy of life!*

Who were they? And why did they leave so many traces here, in Kraljevica?

The Zrinski and Frankopan families

They were two of the most powerful Croatian medieval noble families with an influence of European proportions. The family was united by the marriage of Ana Katarina Frankopan and Petar Zrinski in 1641. Their power was rooted in land ownership, as the following rule applied in the Middle Ages: *He who has land, has power!* In addition to numerous properties stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the border with today's Hungary, they built their own ports on islands and the coast, through which they traded salt, iron, wood, grain and other goods from their properties.

One of these ports is Kraljevica. They built two residences here: a noble town called Zrinski Old Town and a summer residence called Nova Kraljevica Castle.

The Zrinski and Frankopan families managed their properties wisely and understood the importance of transport infrastructure, diverting existing traffic routes and opening new roads through their own properties. In the 16th century, they had warm, fireplace-heated rooms decorated with mirrors, carpets and paintings. They enjoyed the benefits of steam baths. When dining, they used gold and silver utensils. The family silver was branded with noble coats of arms. They created libraries and opened cabinets of miracles – prestigious collections of exotic, rare and precious items that they would acquire on trips or buy from other nobles.

Why did they build two residences precisely in Kraljevica?

Kraljevica was inherited by a young couple

Marquess Ana Katarina Frankopan and Count Petar Zrinski were married in 1641. They inherited Zrinski Old Town after eight years of marriage. It was an important town and property because Kraljevica is land closest to the island of Krk from which the Frankopan family originates. In addition, Kraljevica is a superbly sheltered, accessible port. From here, safe trade and traffic towards the mainland was possible, and this was perfectly suited to the trading spirit of the Zrinskis and Frankopans. The young spouses upgraded and expanded the existing 15th-century structure, breathing into the Zrinski Old Town a then-contemporary Baroque spirit, in step with European artistic trends of the time.

Two hundred years later, in the 19th century, the former utility buildings of the Zrinski Old Town were replaced by middle-class houses, their facades becoming an integral part of Kraljevica's town centre as it appears today.



How was life in a noble town? Both hard and easy.

What comprises the Zrinski noble town

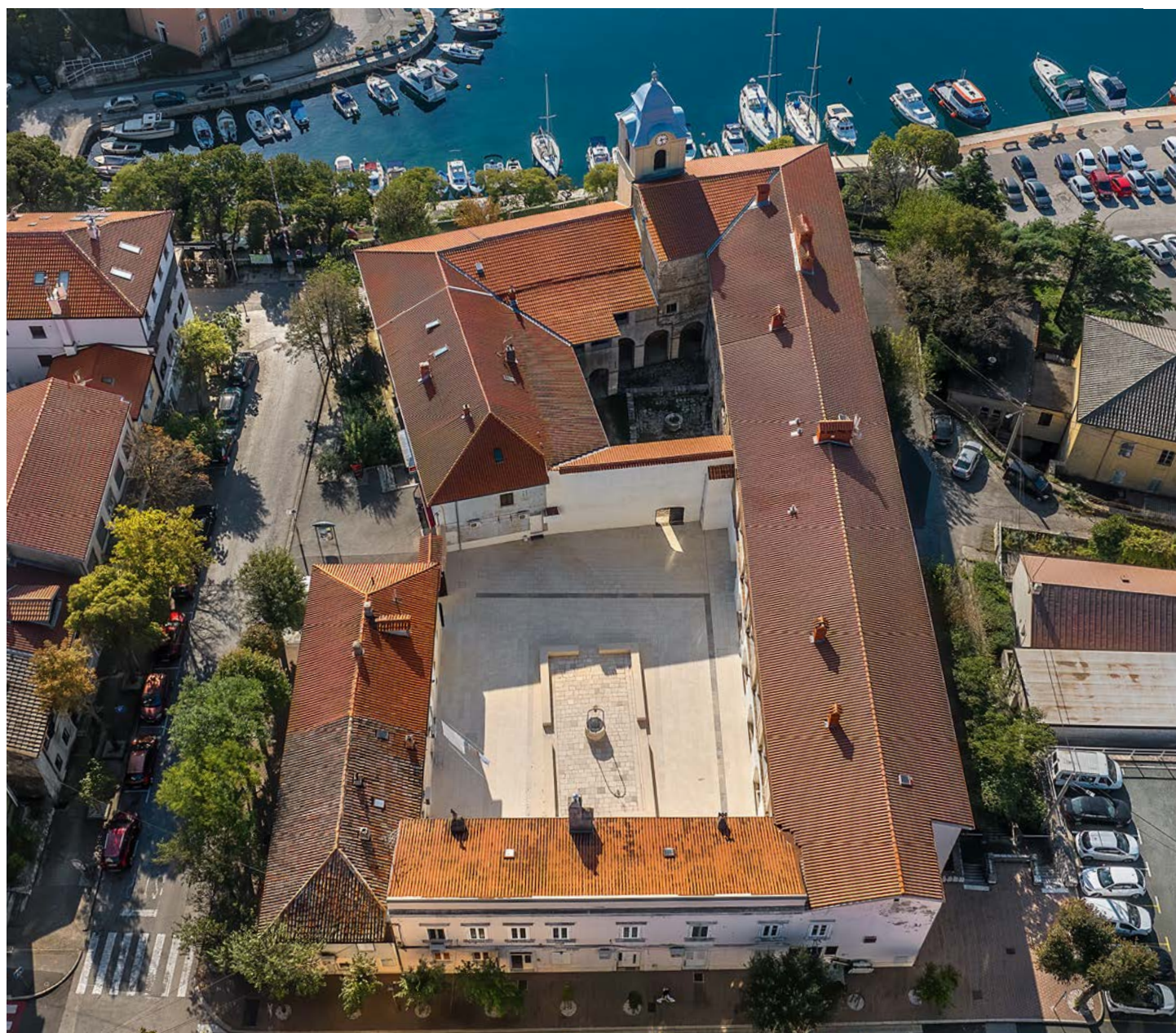
In the 17th century, the Zrinski Old Town was a true example of a feudal noble estate, complete with a defensive tower and a range of economic and auxiliary buildings. It had a storage room and servants' quarters. The town also had its own

church, built on the foundations of an earlier chapel. The noble family lived in an apartment called *palas*. The complex consisted of as many as ninety rooms that stretched over two floors.

Let us explore it together!

You will easily notice the older part of the town – the Lower Castle. It has recognisable fortification features: defensive walls and a defensive tower with a courtyard. In the courtyard you can find a water tank with the coat of arms of the Zrinski family, the inscription CPAZ and the record of the year 1651.

The Upper Castle is a newer part of the town, which was renovated by Ana Katarina and Petar in the Baroque style. Its splendid atrium continues to impress today, serving as a noble historical stage for cultural events in the summer months.



A grain of salt like a grain of gold

In the past, salt was often called white gold. It was a food preserver during the medieval war campaigns when the key was having a well-fed army. It was also necessary for sheep, which made up a large part of the economy in feudalism – without salt, which they had to lick every day in order to ingest the necessary minerals, their survival and livestock production would not have been possible.

The Frankopans owned salt pans in shallow bays on the island of Krk. They shipped the salt to Kraljevica and stored it.

The salt trade brought substantial income to the Zrinski and Frankopan families, which Petar would later use to finance the construction of a new residence, the Nova Kraljevica Castle, which he affectionately called *Our Kraljevica*.

Our Kraljevica



Only 550 metres away from the Old Town, right by the shoreline, Petar began building a luxurious Baroque castle in 1651, designed in the latest fashion of the time, for himself and his family. The castle was built from the ground up, and the construction was a *grand and demanding*



Did you know?

From the 16th to the 18th century, in what is today the church of St. Nicholas, there was a salt warehouse. From there, salt travelled to Hungary in caravans.

undertaking, wrote Petar Zrinski in 1653. Petar followed the architectural trends of the nobility of the time, where the grandeur of the building and the finesse of its decoration reflected the owner's social status.

Nova Kraljevica Castle originally consisted of a basement, ground floor and first floor. It was 44 metres long, 36 metres wide and 9 metres high, with sixty-eight rooms. It is bordered by four large round towers at the corners, each with six windows, while the luxurious inner courtyard is decorated with a beautiful stone well in the shape of a crown with the family coats of arms. The wall surrounding the castle was 88 metres long and 66 metres wide, and the courtyard was accessed through two luxurious gates. Later the owners, Jesuits, in the 19th century added a second floor.

According to the records, the interior of the castle also exuded luxury. The main salon was decorated with gilded leather wallpaper. The rooms were heated by marble fireplaces, one of which is still preserved. The floors were laid with marble mosaics, and the skirting was black and white marble. The castle also had a special room called the *Museum*, intended for the preservation of the rich family heritage.

Did you know?

In feudal times, it was customary for wealthy people all over Europe to create private collections of exotic items that they brought back from trips or received from other powerful people. These collections are considered the forerunner of the museum and we call them cabinets of miracles. The Museum in the Nova Kraljevica Castle is one of the earliest in Croatia.



Five and a half centuries of noble past

You can best experience the story of the Frankopans by following their castles and fortifications, and right here in the Nova Kraljevica Castle is the starting point of the cultural-tourist route The Routes of the Frankopans. If you follow The Routes of the Frankopans, you will learn how people lived, built, what they ate, what was the fashion

and status of women, how political alliances were formed and how the national identity was shaped. The itinerary includes seventeen forts, old towns and castles, and three sacral complexes, on the island of Krk, in the area of Vinodol, and in Gorski Kotar.



The first stop of the living heritage walk

When you step into the castle, a luxurious rectangular courtyard will open in front of you, bordered by elegant columns with Ionic and Tuscan capitals. Walking along the courtyard floors, laid with original grey and white stone slabs, it is easy to go back in time and imagine the footsteps of his first courtiers, Ana Katarina and Petar. In the corridors on the first floor, you will notice stone niches. They once housed precious marble sculptures.

If you go to the western tower, you will come to the area of the **Visitor Centre Kraljevica**, dominated by a huge marble fireplace taken from the representative chambers of Petar Zrinski. This is the very heart of the noble family's home and, through the centre's exhibits, you can immerse yourself in their past through film, words and images.



A few historical highlights.

A place of love, intrigue and faith



It is the year 1669. Right here, in the castle chapel of the Nova Kraljevica Castle, in front of the statue of Our Lady, Petar Zrinski and his brother-in-law Fran Krsto Frankopan vowed to *free their homeland from foreign rule!* Thus began the Zrinski-Frankopan Conspiracy.

It ended with their execution two years later. You will learn about the reasons, values and circumstances in which the conspiracy took place, political intrigues, and the Frankopan women at the **Interpretation Centre** within the **Nova Kraljevica Castle**. Now meet the main characters of the unfortunate conspiracy.



A woman with a mission: noblewoman, poet, diplomat

In the 17th century, it was quite common to marry at the age of sixteen. This is exactly how old Ana Katarina was when she married Petar Zrinski in 1641. Their lives unfolded in uncertain times, Petar was often at war, especially with the Turks, so Katarina took on the management of finances and estates alongside raising their children. As a determined and strong household head, she *demande*d that every settlement maintain order and cleanliness, that garbage be disposed of in a designated place outside the town, that water cisterns be regularly cleaned and kept covered. Ana Katarina was truly an ambassador in every sense of the word! She maintained diplomatic ties with the Venetian Republic, the French Embassy in Vienna and representatives of the Polish court. In addition

to Croatian, she spoke German, Italian, Hungarian and Latin. She was also the author of the prayer book *Putni tovaruš* (Travel Companion), a miniature pocket-sized volume, which she completed in 1660, combining popular piety with elements of Baroque literature, considered one of the most important works of the Croatian Baroque.



A nobleman of sword and verse

Petar Zrinski strongly advocated for the sovereignty of the Croatian people and this cost him his life. He came from a family that for centuries produced prominent politicians and brave warlords, and he took the title of ban in 1665. He was educated in military sciences and artillery in Zagreb, Austria and Hungary. However, Petar was a poet at heart. His quill was like a sword, sharp and proud. He criticised political affairs, openly spoke out in defence of Croatian sovereignty, and wrote gently and sensually to his wife. Thus, from prison, the night before his execution, he would begin his farewell letter to Ana Katarina with the words: *My dear sweetheart...*

He who dies honourably, lives forever

He who dies honourably, lives forever, wrote Fran Krsto Frankopan, Croatian warlord and poet, brother of Ana Katarina Frankopan, in the poem Call to Arms. This wake-up call glorifies a proud and honest life, without fear or bowing your head, even at the cost of life.

The verses proved prophetic: as punishment for opposing Habsburg rule, he was sentenced to death as a conspirator, together with Petar Zrinski, and executed in 1671 in Wiener Neustadt. He was twenty-eight years old.



A time so cruel, spiteful and vile

In the mid-17th century, the aspirations of the Habsburgs towards the creation of a strong absolutist state were clear to the Croatian nobility. The sovereignty of the Croatian nobility and Croatian territory was further threatened by conflicts with the Ottoman army. In such circumstances, Petar Zrinski's brother, Nikola, launched an anti-Austrian conspiracy in 1664, led by Petar Zrinski after his death. He was joined by the brother of his wife Ana Katarina, Fran Krsto Frankopan. Although they both had enough money and political connections to continue living with their families elsewhere in Europe, they did not do so. They were arrested in Vienna, and in April 1671 they were executed by beheading. All their estates were confiscated, and chroniclers recorded that from the Nova Kraljevica Castle *windowpanes were torn out, keyholes removed from doors, and marble tiles pried from the floors, and that beautiful paintings and carpets were stolen, along with nine marble statues, seven of which depicted Roman emperors and two Ethiopians. Also taken were the Zrinski family coat of arms, four black marble tables, one brass and several majolica stoves.* The official estimate of the confiscated property is a staggering 1.5 million forints.

After her husband and brother were executed, Ana Katarina fell ill and died in a state of mental anguish, while Fran Krsto Frankopan's wife passed away in a monastery in Rome. As Fran Krsto Frankopan was the last male member of the lineage, his death ended the history of the family, and Kraljevica came under the administration of the Austrian Military Chamber.

The spirit of the Frankopans lives on

Although the Zrinskis and Frankopans ended tragically, their story did not end. In the stone walls of the residences, in the architecture, symbols, historical records and customs, lives the spirit of the two families that shaped Croatian history.

Today, their legacy is preserved by curious travellers, artists, curators, children and residents of the area. Kraljevica, the starting point of **the cultural-tourist route The Routes of the Frankopans**, is a space of collective memory and inspiration with a noble legacy.



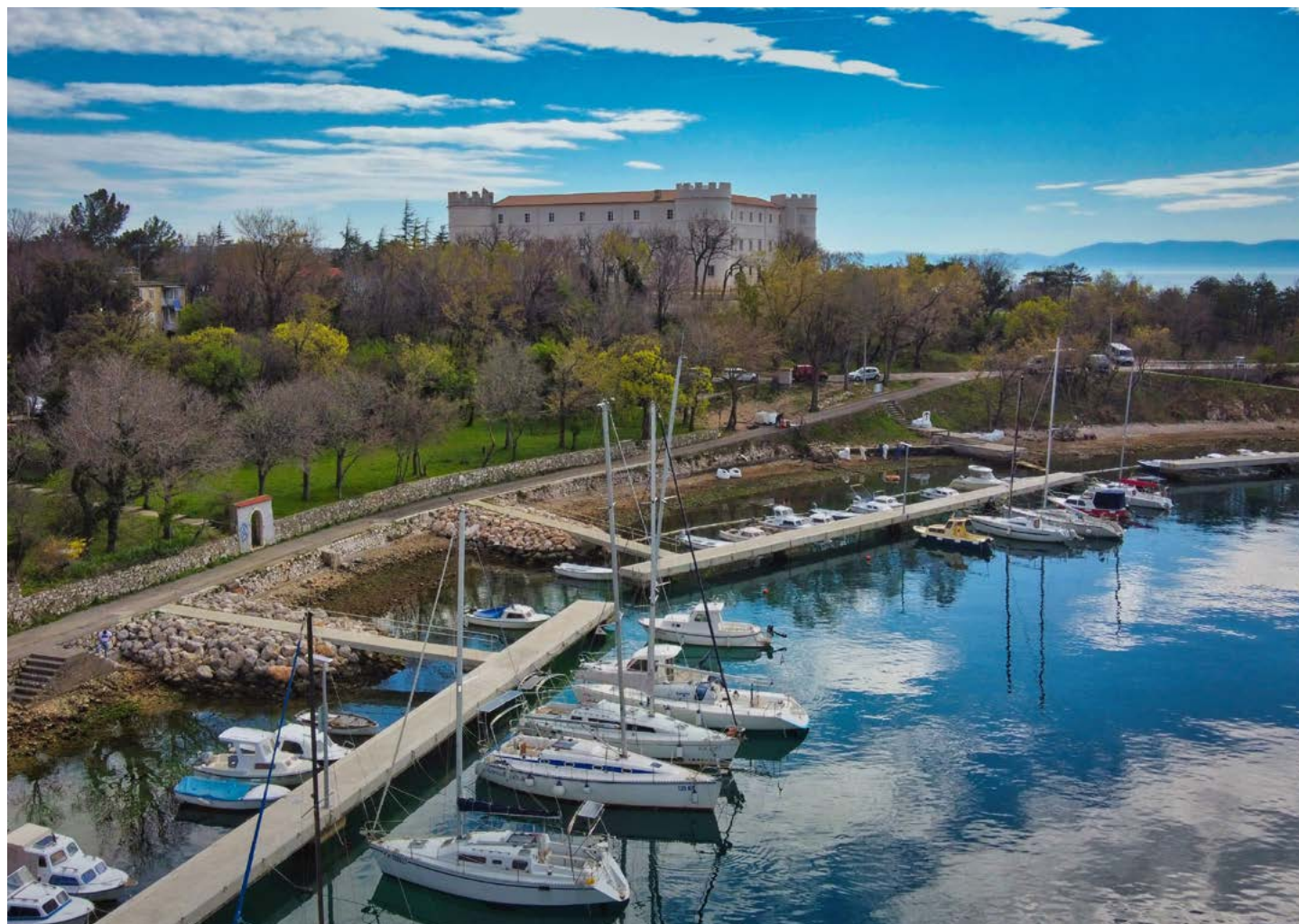
Dive into the heritage of the sea

Love towards the sea has marked Kraljevica for centuries, and its development is inseparable from the development of shipbuilding, seamanship and fishing. Did you know that the Habsburgs built an arsenal and shipyard in Kraljevica, which is also the oldest shipyard on the eastern coast of the Adriatic? Did you know that the local fishermen developed a unique technique for fishing bluefin tuna back in the 16th century?

The maritime heritage of Kraljevica is full of interesting facts: find out what *tunere* are and why they resemble diving platforms, and why local residents refer to tuna simply as fish, while all other fish are referred to by their specific names. Discover why sailors are said to eat *bread with seven crusts* and what links Edmund Halley, the scientist after whom Halley's Comet is named, and Kraljevica.

To sail is necessary

Nestled in the embrace of the Bay of Bakar, Kraljevica has lived with and from the sea since ancient times. Behind it lies a mountainous, forested landscape – once difficult to access and only partially passable. The coastline in front of Kraljevica is naturally indented, with a series of small coves where ships and boats could take shelter from enemies and adverse weather. Since Roman times, these waters have been traversed by ships, so although small, Kraljevica has held significant economic importance since antiquity.







Its very name speaks clearly of that legacy. Let us hear the story of how it came to be.

How did Kraljevica get its name

It appears that Kraljevica owes its name to a feudal duty (today known as customs) called *portorium*. Historian Kobler explains that ships have safely docked here since the 15th century, easily unloading goods (especially salt, iron and timber), which were then further transported overland, and the *portorium* tax was collected and sent to the court of the Hungarian king. Through time, the term *portorium* evolved into names like Portum Re, Portus Regium, Porto Re, and Portore, all of which translate to royal port.

The first written mention of the name *Portore* dates back to 1443, while *Portus regius* appears in 1525. A 1605 document mentions two merchants purchasing corn and rye in the port of Kraljevica, marking the first known use of its Croatian name. And since maritime rules dictate that every true port must have a lighthouse, Kraljevica has one, too.

And then there was light at Cape Oštro

A lighthouse is often simply called *light*. For a ship at sea, the light of the lighthouse means a path to the safety of the port – to people, to life. For those standing on the pier and watching it sail away, it is a point of return, a symbol of reunion. Kraljevica's light is called *Lanterna*. Located on Cape Oštro, it was built from hewn stone during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as part of the maritime lighting system guiding ships towards Rijeka. Standing 15 metres tall, *Lanterna* first shone on 18 August 1872, fuelled by petroleum. Today, the lantern on Cape Oštro is a protected cultural good.

But is Oštro sharp? Or is it soft? The word *oštro* means sharp in Croatian. It is a green, forested cape sheltered from the wind and surrounded by the blue sea. Here you will find the favourite beaches of locals and visitors, as well as several small, secluded coves. The beauty of Oštro was recognised in late 19th century by the gentlemen from Vienna and Pest, receiving special awards at exhibitions in 1894 and 1896.



Did you know?

At the bottom of the sea near the Oštro peninsula lies a bronze statue of St. Nicholas, about 70 centimetres tall. Though small in size, it carries great meaning for sailors, fishermen and seafarers! This saint is believed to be their protector. Every year, divers make a pilgrimage or, rather, dive into this underwater sanctuary.



The fishermen shouted: *Tira, tira!*

When they spotted a school of tuna from the top of wooden watchtowers with ladders, 14 to 16 metres high and tilted above the sea at an angle of 75°, the fishermen would cry out: *Tira, tira!* At this signal, sailors on shore and in boats would close off the entrance by pulling in a semi-circular net. This unique, centuries-old tuna fishing technique marked the life of Bakarac from the time of the Zrinskis and Frankopans all the way to 1977, when the *tunere* were used for the last time. Such was the importance of tuna fishing in this area that the word fish locally referred only to tuna, while all other fish species were simply called by their names. According to records from 1883, the average annual catch was 125 tonnes, of which 40 tonnes were exported. The tuna fishing season lasted from mid-April to the end of September. The fish was immediately sent to Rijeka, and five ships were permanently employed to transport tuna to

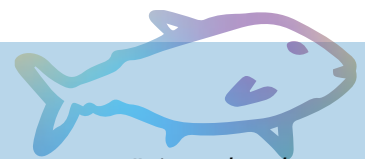
Venice. The locals did not eat the tuna fresh, but preserved it in salt or oil.

Throughout history, *tunere* became vital for local employment. This was particularly evident during times of social and economic hardship. Every local, from the earliest age, gained experience and trained as a fisherman by climbing the *tunere* and helping catch tuna, regardless of what they would do later in life.

Today, three *tunere* still stand in Bakarac. Every year, the *Tira, tira* tuna festival is held in honour of this unique technique of tuna fishing, with *Mića tira*, a children's version, organised for the little ones.



Did you know?



"They eat bread with seven crusts" is a local proverb referring to the hard and painstaking work of sailors, fishermen and seafarers. They are far from home and family, exposed to rough weather, with uncertain outcomes. But those who wait for them also eat bread with seven crusts. In their absence, wives, mothers and daughters take on all duties. The place they depart from and return to is the pier – locally called mul. At the centre of Kraljevica's pier, a wind rose is carved into the stone, inscribed with: Teški, Gorki, Križ, Svakom, Onom, Ludom, Pomorcu, Mornaru.

(Heavy, Bitter, Cross, to Each, and Every, Mad, Sailor, Seaman)

Three centuries of shipbuilding and innovation

Following its noble past, Kraljevica's development was defined by the construction of its port and shipyard. The first Austrian warship was built here in 1764, the frigate Aurora, followed by the first wooden steam-powered warship in 1835/36, Maria Anna, which was also the first steamship ever built on the Adriatic. The first steel vessel for the needs of the Navy was created in Kraljevica in 1902, and the first ship entirely constructed using welding technology on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, a small tanker called Caprag, was launched into the sea in 1955. The shipyard also marked recent history, the 1970s. Kraljevica produced the first Adriatic cruise ships, using a technique that joined steel hulls with aluminium superstructures. In 2010, the icebreaker Bella Desgagnes, a passenger-cargo ship built for extreme conditions was launched here, and it still sails along the Canadian province of Quebec.

The shipyard in Kraljevica ceased operations in 2012 when the premises and facilities were

transferred to a private company that continues to build, repair and modify ships. The models of ships and shipbuilding tools from the shipyard have been declared cultural heritage. Model ships and shipbuilding tools have been declared a cultural good. In honour of the area's maritime, fishing and shipbuilding heritage, the **Small Museum of Fishing and Shipbuilding Kraljevica** was opened within the Nova Kraljevica Castle. Visit it and learn all about life with the sea, because here we reveal only a glimpse of what awaits you there.

Did you know?

Škver is the local word for shipyard. It comes from the Venetian squero, which itself derives from the Greek exarion = fireplace, building site.



The oldest shipyard on the eastern Adriatic coast

At the start of 1703, at the invitation of the Vienna Court, Edmund Halley, English naval captain, navigation expert, mathematician and astronomer, after whom Halley's Comet was named, arrived in Kvarner. He was invited to explore and suggest the ideal location to build a port and shipyard. He found it in the Bay of Bakar. So, in the summer of 1729, Charles VI, father of Maria Theresa, began the construction of the port and shipyard of Kraljevica. In 1764, Maria Theresa proclaimed Kraljevica an Austrian naval port. Her son Joseph II wrote

of Kraljevica: *It is truly a beautiful, one might say magnificent port. Nature has given it every advantage. It has fortresses for the garrison and the commander. Any warship can safely dock here along the shore without the slightest danger, as there is enough water and depth.* During the monarchical administration, the Kraljevica shipyard built destroyers, torpedo boats, minelayers, submarines, water carriers and tugboats for the Austro-Hungarian Navy, and repaired ships from the merchant fleet as well.

The rise of shipbuilding in Kraljevica

The boom took place in the 19th century, when the English Pritchard brothers arrived in Kraljevica. In addition to steamships for the military, they also built long-distance merchant sailing ships. In modern terms, we might say that the Pritchard brothers knew full well not to put all their eggs in one basket, so they developed both naval and commercial fleets.

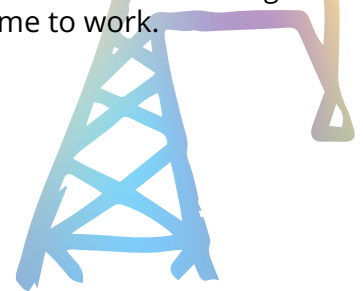


What was life like for local workers at the shipyard?

Life in and with the shipyard, women in the shipyard

The shipyard fed families and was the cornerstone of survival for this region throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Both men and women worked there. In addition to participating in the construction of ships, women also did invisible work – preparing food, cleaning and tidying up. Those who stayed at home would prepare meals for their husbands in

a *gamelica* – a three-tiered metal lunch box. Those who had a *gamelica* could enjoy a small feast, as each tier of the *gamelica* had its own purpose: the first one was for soup, then came the main dish, and finally the side dish. Whoever had a *gamelica* carried the taste of home to work.



Josip Broz Tito – the most famous employee of the Kraljevica shipyard

Between the two World Wars, the shipyard fell on hard times. From employing over a thousand workers, the number dropped to barely one hundred and fifty. Among them was the future statesman and politician, later President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz, who started working at the shipyard in 1925. A few months later, he led a strike

of one hundred and thirty-five shipyard employees who had not been paid salaries for seven weeks. He advocated for the socialisation of the shipyard as the only viable solution to overcome the crisis. In the end, the workers received just two weeks' worth of back pay, and Tito was dismissed as the strike's organiser.



Did you know?

Kraljevica boasts a craft beer that celebrates its heritage! **Škveranka** is a blonde ale, created as an homage to the women who dedicated their lives to the shipyard. **Gajetanska** is a classic seasonal IPA, named after the beloved and well-known rock called Gajetanska grota, near Carovo Cove, a favourite summer swimming spot for the youth, and a winter haven for diving birds. Both Škveranka and Gajetanska are unpasteurised and unfiltered craft beers, and you can only drink them in Kraljevica.

Take a stroll along the coast and meet the coastal folk

Kraljevica lies *by the sea*, which is the literal meaning of the region's Croatian name, Primorje. In this narrow strip of coastline between the sea of Bakar Bay and the rocky hinterland, you will find a small-scale Mediterranean. The people of this region are

known as *Primorci* – coastal folk. They grow olives, almonds and figs. They earned their livelihoods through seafaring and fishing, while their awe and respect for the sea and the bura wind were tempered by prayers to patron saints.

Take a walk with us, discover our region and meet our people!

Where sea meets land

Because of its geostrategic features, our region has been a vital traffic artery since prehistoric times. Above the nearby Bakarac, next to Šmrika, stands the Gradac Castle, dating back to the Bronze Age. Three Roman milestones have also been found here. These were part of a long system of fortifications and walls called the Liburnian Limes – a border zone that separated the Roman Empire on the west from barbarian territories on the east. Even today, Kraljevica holds a strategically

important transport position. It lies 158 kilometres from Zagreb, 139 kilometres from Ljubljana, 94 kilometres from Trieste and 259 kilometres from Venice.

Carolina Road, the first road connection between the Adriatic and the Pannonian region, built in the 18th century, begins right here, and the traffic significance of modern Kraljevica is further confirmed by the Krk Bridge, a record-breaking feat of architecture in its time.



Krk Bridge

This reinforced concrete bridge, 1430 metres long, connects the island of Krk – the cradle of the Frankopan noble family – with the mainland near Kraljevica. When it opened in 1980, it boasted the longest concrete arch in the world, spanning 390

metres, beating the previous record of the Sydney Bridge by 85 metres. On the Krk Bridge, the fierce bura wind bares its teeth. When it rages, gusting at hurricane speeds of up to 150 km/h, all traffic must fall silent – until the bura does too.

It's not just wind, it's bura

They don't call it wind, they call it *bura*. Legend has it that Bura was a beautiful but haughty young woman. She rejected all suitors and, because of her arrogance, she was banished to the underworld. From there, she sighs, sending out cold gusts of dry wind that chill a person to the bone. For centuries, bura has been nature's own purifier, refrigerator and antiseptic. Meat and fish dried in the bura stay safe from spoilage, a local variety of kale called *broskva* gets softened by its icy winter bite, and laundry dried in the bura's breath carry the scent of health. Bura opened the way for health tourism in Kraljevica.



Open-air aromatherapy

Kraljevica's climatic and healing benefits were recognised at the very start of the 20th century. In 1904, Count Olschbauer built the luxurious Art Nouveau hotel Liburnia, which housed a sanatorium. It is thanks to the restorative powers of the bura, the sun and the sea that Kraljevica has cultivated its reputation as a health and wellness destination since the early 1900s. We like to say that in Kraljevica, you can enjoy open-air aromatherapy. We suggest pairing fresh air with a walk, and discovering the hidden treasures of Kraljevica's karst landscape.

Did you know?

Grabrova Cove, situated right beside the bridge connecting the mainland with the island of Krk, captivated the English nobleman Alexander Scott with its beauty at the beginning of the 19th century. He purchased an estate there, built a family summer residence and chose it as his permanent home. Scott spent a fortune on beautifying and greening the bay. In 1967, a now-iconic tourist resort was built, named Uvala Scott – after the mysterious Englishman – and its architecture is reminiscent of a seaside town.



Let us explore the world of karst and water!

Karst and water: springs, washing sites, cisterns

Kraljevica and its settlements Šmrika, Bakarac and Križišće lie within a karst limestone landscape. Here, water is a treasure. The village of Šmrika is known for its *kalci*, circular reservoirs of rainwater for household use, built into natural depressions in the karst. They were lined with dry-stone walls to keep the water clean, and accessed via stone steps. Water was drawn from the *kalci* with barrels, and carried into homes where it was kept in clay pots.

In Križišće, Mali and Veli Dol, and Bakarac, there are freshwater springs that accumulated water in stone basins. These springs enabled the construction of a local water supply system in 1905. Along the coastline, where these springs flowed into the sea, *perila* – traditional communal wash sites – were built from stone blocks. Here, women would wash laundry by beating it with wooden paddles. Clothes were then spread over shrubs or laid out on rocks to dry, ideally in the bura wind.

And how did you get water in the town?

Cisterns – the lifeline of the coast

In coastal areas without springs, water was a precious commodity. On the rugged karst terrain, people survived thanks to *šterne* – stone rainwater cisterns, symbols of ingenuity and survival.

The first cistern in Kraljevica was built in 1651, inside the Lower Castle of the Zrinski Old Town. That same year, the Nova Kraljevica Castle was built, with its atrium housing a large cistern adorned with the coats of arms of the Zrinski and Frankopan families. Another cistern was constructed in 1764 within the Upper Castle of the Zrinski Old Town, to meet military needs. A special place in the life of the town was held by the public cistern, or *pučka šterna* in Banj, built in 1887 by a local resident, Mato Valjato.

Cisterns were built by master stonemasons known as *kavaduri*, who would dig a pit in the ground and line it with stone, clay and reddish ore to make it watertight. Water was drawn from the mouth of the cistern, above which stood an iron arch with a pulley – often decorated with floral motifs, a rooster, a weathervane or a family emblem.



Did you know?

To keep the water in the cisterns clean, people would add lime, salt, or even place an eel-like fish called *ugor* inside, as it was believed to aid in purifying the water.



In the shelter of faith

Life in a coastal village once meant that men would leave for the sea. The elderly, women and children remained on shore. Life was harder then, but the community was more connected. People gathered in *oštarije* (taverns) and *place* (markets), and carnival traditions were part of the annual rituals. On Sundays, for a bit of leisure, people played bocce, cards or marbles. The demanding, day-to-day life on the barren land was encouraged by devotion, prayers and vows to patrons and protectors.



Get to know the beliefs, church customs and sacral heritage of Kraljevica and its surroundings.

A church of Papal grace

The church of Saint Nicholas is an integral part of the Zrinski Old Town, and it was built on the site of a small chapel dating back to the year 586. It is especially revered for its altarpiece of Saint Nicholas, which was granted a special papal indulgence in 1795 by Pope Pius VI, offering full remission of sins to anyone who visits the sanctuary on the feast day of St. Nicholas.

The hymn to Saint Nicholas is sung in the church on the feast day of this saint, the patron saint of Kraljevica. It is sung during Mass, artistically composed, hallowed by tradition.



Did you know?

It is said that the statue of the Virgin Mary in the church of St. Nicholas, which is shown only on special occasions, was found by sailors in the middle of the sea. They brought it aboard, and soon after, a storm struck. Frightened, they vowed to donate it to the church closest to the land where they would be saved. That church was in Kraljevica.

Hymn to Saint Nicholas

*To Saint Nicholas
This feast day is given,
He who, upon this earth,
Wore the crown of heaven.*

*In his youthful days,
In the church he stayed,
And with great joy in his heart
At midday he prayed.*

*He knelt down and pleaded
And signed o'er the sea,
And lo! a quiet wonder,
Stilled the waves would be.*

*So, sailors, turn to him
Entrust him with your plea,
May he grant you mercy,
Bless your voyage at sea.*

*Once, when setting sail,
Over the blue seas
He journeyed to Jerusalem
To fulfil his vow in peace.*

*The sea started rolling,
Winds lashed down from the shore,
The ship could not hold steady
Battered by the roar.*

*But our beloved Nicholas
Through his holy might
Kept all the sailors safe
Within God's guiding light.*

*Let us bow to God above
With our eternal trust,
And you, dear Saint Nicholas,
Be a guide for us!*



What you are now, we once were. What we are now, you shall become.

This *memento mori* saying is carved into a stone plaque on the Chapel of St. Catherine at Kalvarija, the local cemetery, as an existential reflection on the transience of life and the inevitability of death. Kalvarija is located on Kavranić and emerged during the golden age of Kraljevica's shipbuilding, when the town's population rapidly grew. From

here, you are treated to beautiful views of Cres, Krk and Učka. Local lore tells of three crosses that once stood nearby, secured by chains to withstand the force of the bura wind. There are more stories, so here are a few that are passed down from generation to generation.

A coat for a saint, honey for a chapel

Around the year 1800, a wealthy merchant arrived in Šmrika and spent the night at the home of a local man, Antun Čabrijan. Upon leaving, the merchant forgot his new sailor coat. Knowing that the merchant was unlikely to return, Antun sold the coat for eight forints – a considerable sum at the time.

But being an honourable man, he did not want to keep the money for himself. Instead, he used it to build a small chapel, in which he placed an image of St. Anthony the Hermit – his baptismal patron.

The very next year, bees swarmed right next to the saint's image in the chapel. Again, Antun did not take the honey for himself, but he sold it and used the proceeds to expand the chapel into a church bearing the name of St. Anthony.

A church built with a stone thrown for freedom

Between Bakarac and Križišće stands the Church of the Holy Trinity. Not much is known about its origin, but the legend of its construction is known.

Legend has it that the Tatars, after defeating the Hungarian-Croatian king Bela IV, received the news of the death of their supreme leader – the Khan. Most of the army withdrew, and a smaller part continued its campaigns. When they reached the Grobnik Field near Kraljevica, they were met by determined and brave women who defended themselves by throwing stones at the army. After defeating the Tatars, the women carried the very same stones on their heads to this site and laid them into the foundations of the Church of the Holy Trinity.

Today, this church opens its doors only three times a year: on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, the Feast of Saint Roch, and the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

If you want to further explore the sacral monuments of this area, you can also visit the Church of St. Peter in Bakarac and the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Križišće.



What and how do Primorje folk cook

The traditional local cuisine is a sum of what people managed to cultivate and their way of life. In winter, to keep the body warm, people ate hearty stews, stirred together in a single pot. For festive days, meat was cooked under the bell, a cast-iron dome called *peka*, buried in embers. Later on, when going to work at the shipyard, lunch from home was carried in a small metal container called *gamelica*.

Let us dive deeper!

Dining with the Frankopans

Medieval society was obsessed with food. It was held in high regard, primarily because food was difficult and painstaking to produce. Food was also a status symbol. Hunting and game meat were a privilege of the nobility, while most people subsisted on cereals, bread and porridges. Through their network of forts and castles, the princes of Zrinski and Frankopan maintained trade ties with Europe, exchanged chefs and acquired spices.

Spices of the court kitchen

Cinnamon, pepper, cloves, nuts – all used abundantly. Sweets were made from whatever was available (walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, dried fruits), and the main sweetener was honey.

Sugar was highly prized and very expensive, so it was only available to the wealthy. It was often offered as gift or bribe to those in power. Salt, essential for preserving and storing food, ranked among the rarest and most expensive seasonings. Another prized ingredient was rose water, obtained by soaking rose petals.

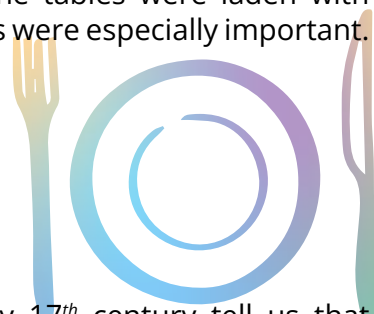
And how did the common folk eat?

Dining with the people

Ordinary people ate simply. 'No waste' was implied. Microlocality and seasonality as well. People ate what grew in their gardens and when it was in season. Food was stored by drying, salting or pickling. Generations were raised on *maneštra*, a thick coastal-style stew. Whatever was in season went into the pot: vegetables, some beans, and perhaps a bit of meat or crust of aged cheese.

Another beloved dish was *broskva na padelu*: a local variety of kale, boiled and then briefly tossed in a pan with olive oil.

Among fishermen, it was like this: small blue fish was salted, and tuna was sold. In the kitchens of the Frankopan nobility, they would eat according to the standards of medieval court cuisine. Its motto was *always more*, so the tables were laden with game and meats. Spices were especially important.



Records from the early 17th century tell us that from Frankopan forts in the Littoral, there were shipments of around twenty barrels of marinated fish and fifty to a hundred barrels of tuna. They also transported as many as two hundred bundles of dried octopus, sixty to eighty barrels of pickled octopus, as well as squid and five to ten loads of oysters.



Did you know?

In Šmrika, you will find a farm of indigenous Primorje–Dinaric donkeys – loyal companions who have helped the people of this rugged region for centuries. Today, you can taste and buy healthy, medicinal donkey milk here. Children can try donkey riding, and the whole family can take part in feeding and grooming the animals, while discovering something interesting along the way.

Mendulača, and if there is nothing else – dried figs

The traditional dessert of Kraljevica is *mendulača* – a rolled pastry filled with almonds (*mendule*). Hand-kneaded dough is stuffed with a mixture of ground almonds, sugar and lemon zest. The 'no waste' rule applies here too! The almond peels were used for tea, and a few dried figs were added for better flavour.

Figs, in fact, are the favourite fruit of this region. In the past, locals would trade dried figs for potatoes or beans, crops that did not thrive in the Kraljevica region. Today, you will often be warmly offered a handful of dried figs by someone from Kraljevica. Be sure to try them!

Recipe for mendulača

For the dough, prepare 20 g of fresh yeast (or 7 g of dry yeast), 1 tablespoon of sugar, 150 ml of milk and 5 tablespoons of flour. Then add 4 egg yolks, 4 tablespoons of sugar, a pinch of salt, 600 g of flour, 250 g of margarine or butter and 30-40 g of fat (about 2 tablespoons). For the filling, prepare 200 ml of hot milk, 400 g of ground almonds, 300 g of sugar, the zest and juice of one lemon, 40 g of butter, 50-100 g of raisins, 2-3 tablespoons of rum, a pinch of salt and vanilla. Add the yeast, 1 tablespoon of sugar and 5 tablespoons of flour to the lukewarm milk and leave to rise. In a bowl, mix the egg yolks, 4 tablespoons of sugar and a little salt. Add the risen yeast, then stir in the flour, margarine or butter and lard. Knead the dough and leave to rise. For the filling, pour hot milk over the ground almonds, sugar, a little salt, butter, lemon zest and juice, raisins, rum and vanilla and mix everything well. Fill the dough with the filling and shape the loaves. Brush with milk or egg yolk before baking. Bake for 15 minutes at 150 °C, then another 15-20 minutes at 180 °C. When they are baked, brush with a „drink“ of water and sugar in the same ratio with a little rum while still hot.



Frankopan Cake

In the 17th century cookbook *Granat-Appfel*, there is a recipe for Frankopan Cake. It was discovered by ethnologist Nives Rittig-Beljak. Given the time of its origin, it is assumed the cake was made with a type of shortcrust or puff pastry, less perishable because it does not contain eggs. The filling was almond cream, frangipane, with a lot of spices (cinnamon,

cloves, raisins and similar). The proportions of the ingredients are unknown, and the original recipe also used lard and tallow, fats which are out of use in today's confectionery.

A modern interpretation of the Frankopan Cake has become the sweet trademark of the cultural-tourist route *The Routes of the Frankopans*.

Come, see, taste, listen

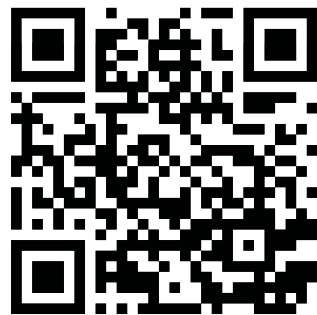
And now it's your turn, dear friends! You are invited to explore and experience the heritage of our region, in all its rich variety. We wish you calm seas and a safe journey!



Browse landmarks of our past and present



Enjoy events that nurture our heritage



Discover outdoor activities in the area



Taste the flavours and dishes of our region



Visit our beaches



Discover Kraljevica and its pearls with our tourist map



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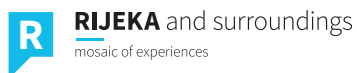
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