

DOLENJSKA/Slovenija/Kolesarska in pohodniška karta

Med dolensjkimi griči, slabo uro vožnje po avtocesti od Ljubljane in Zagreba, slabi dve uri od morja in Alp leži Novo mesto. A v objemu reke Krke leži ležerno le na panoramskih fotografijah. Glavno mesto Dolenjske namreč raste, se razvija, išče nove priložnosti, predvsem pa svojim prebivalcem ponuja prijazno okolje za življenje in delo. Novo mesto je edinstveno v Evropi po svojem halštatskem obdobju, ko je bilo eno najbogatejših mest tistega časa, danes pa je to območje z daleč največjim evropskim najdiščem železnodobnih situl in steklenih jagod. Danes je Novo mesto edinstveno z eno najmočnejših industrij v Evropi in kljub le 37000 prebivalcem velja za prestolnico slovenskega izvoznega gospodarstva. Obenem je nesporna prestolnica slovenskega kolesarstva in se ponaša z unikatnim vrhunskim športnim objektom s pokrito kolesarsko stezo in atletsko dvorano. Za dolenske kraje je značilna tudi bogata kulturna dediščina in če prištejemo še lepo, neokrnjeno naravo in vrhunsko kulinariko, je Dolenjska najboljši možni primer Slovenije kot zelene, trajnostne, inovativne, ustvarjalne, butične in gastronske destinacije.

V neposredni bližini mestnega jedra se lahko ob reki Krki sprehodimo do dveh mestnih gozdov - Portovald in Ragov log, nekaj kilometrov nižje ob reki pa stoji edini otoški grad v Sloveniji – grad Otočec, ki je danes preurejen v luksuzni hotel in restavracijo. Ne smemo pozabiti na gričevnato dolensko pokrajino. Na Marofu, ob mestnem središču lahko obiskovalci uživajo v sprehodu po znamenitem Kettejevem drevoredu, na vrhu tega griča pa se nahaja tudi osrednje arheološko najdišče, v bližini katerega je v prihodnjih letih načrtovan interaktiven arheološki park. Prisojna pobočja Trške gore so posojena z vinogradi in zidanicami, kjer se obiskovalci lahko ob kozarčku cvička in domačih dobrot prepričajo o pregovorni gostoljubnosti Dolenjcev, zidaniški turizem pa postaja vse bolj prepoznaven tudi zunaj meja Slovenije. Najvišja točka Dolenjske je Trdinov vrh (1178m) na Gorjancih, po kateri se razprostirajo prostrani bukovi gozdovi, ohranjena pa sta tudi dva pragozdna ostanka na Ravnih gori in Trdinovem vrhu. Na poti do priljubljene pohodniške postojanke na Gospodični, se lahko planinci okrepcajo tudi v istoimenskem izviru, ki naj bi po legendi imel zdravilno in pomlajevalno moč.

Dolenski kraji niso prezasedeni, so pristni, prisrčni in za turiste še neraziskani.

DOLENJSKA/Slovenia/Cycling and hiking trail map

Novo mesto lies in the midst of the hilly countryside of Dolenjska; it takes less than an hour on the motorway to reach Ljubljana or Zagreb and just under two hours to the seaside or the Alps. Although the town seems to laze in the embrace of the Krka River, it is only the case in panoramic photographs. In fact, the capital of Dolenjska is constantly growing, developing, seeking new opportunities and, above all, offering its inhabitants a friendly environment for living and working. Novo mesto is unique in Europe for its Hallstatt period, when it was one of the richest towns of the time; today it is the largest archaeological site for Iron-Age situlae and glass beads. Novo mesto currently has one of the most powerful industries in Europe and, despite only having 37,000 inhabitants, is considered the main hub of Slovenian export economy. It is also the undisputed capital of Slovenian cycling and boasts a top-notch sports facility with a covered cycle track and an athletics hall – velodrome. The Dolenjska region is also characterized by rich cultural heritage, and if you add the beautiful, unspoiled nature and superb cuisine into the mix, Dolenjska becomes the best possible example of Slovenia as a green, sustainable, innovative, creative and gastronomic tourist destination.

In the immediate vicinity of the town centre, you can walk along the Krka to two wooded areas, Portoval and Ragov log, while a few kilometres down the river stands the only island castle in Slovenia, Otočec castle, which is now a luxury hotel and restaurant. Let's not forget about the hilly landscape of

the Dolenjska region. At Marof, near the town centre, visitors can enjoy a stroll through the famous Kette Avenue, and at the top of this hill lies a central archaeological site in the vicinity of which an interactive archaeological park is planned in the coming years. The south-facing slopes of Trška gora are dotted with vineyards and vineyard cottages, where visitors can experience the proverbial hospitality of the locals by trying a glass of the local wine – Cviček and home-made delicacies; tourism in vineyard cottages is becoming increasingly well-known beyond the borders of Slovenia. The highest peak in Dolenjska is Trdinov vrh (1178 m) in the Gorjanci hills, which is covered with vast expanses of beech woodland including two virgin forest remnants that have been preserved on Ravna gora and Trdinov vrh. On the way to a popular hiking lodge on Gospodična, the hikers can take a refreshing sip from a spring of the same name, which is said to have healing and rejuvenating powers.

The towns and villages of Dolenjska are not crowded, are genuine, welcoming and underexplored in terms of tourism.