

Explore the roads!
Enjoy the journey, follow
your own path.
In Pakoštane, you can
never make the wrong turn.

Hear our stories!
Stop and simply listen
to the storytellers of
Pakoštane: knights,
the oracle, the squares,
fishermen, the stone walls...

Reveal the gardens!
Discover the green-blue
soul of the Pakoštane
region, which adds a
delicate touch to your
experiences.



PAKOŠTANE

Explore the roads!

Hear our stories!

Reveal the gardens!

ON THE SEA, BY THE LAKE



HISTORY

When searching for the origin or the emergence of a city or settlement, researchers are most often misled by just tracing the bare physical remains. This means that the search for answers regarding the creation of human settlements tends to revolve in closed circles of parts of residential units, temples or walls.

It was the social character of the people and their tendency to stop right here and make an encampment that led to the formation of a settlement. That is why settlements, even before their formation, had already been places where people used to come to. Some kind of magnetic force would always bring them back to the same places.

Let us go back for a moment to those who first used to stop here. What kind of natural feature, mound - ledge - headland - island - water feature - freshwater/saltwater, attracted man of that time to that exact place, after having walked dozens, perhaps hundreds of kilometres, and made him stop and say to himself:

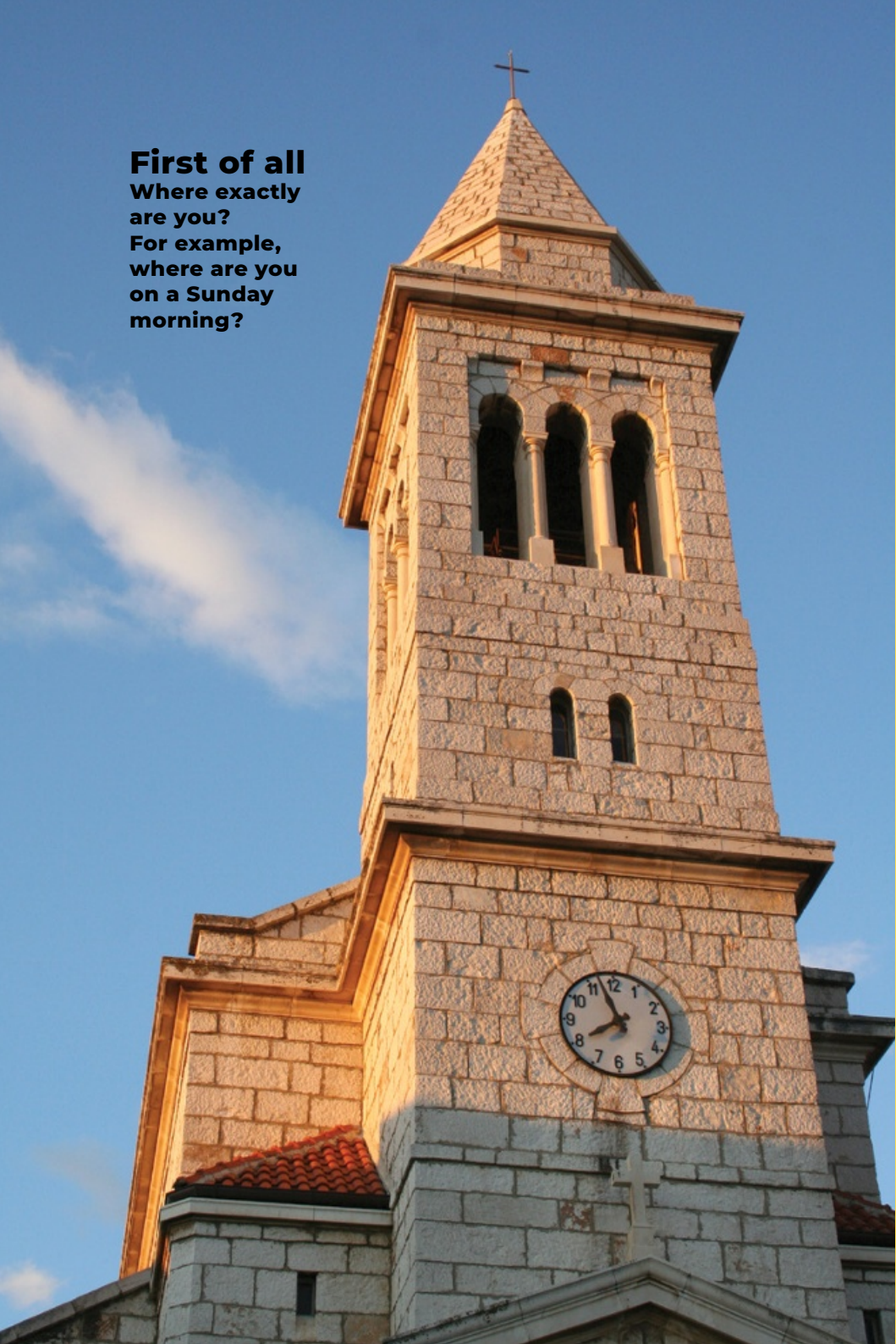
“This is it, this will be my home!”

This region, rich in both saltwater and freshwater features, a fertile hinterland, archipelagos with its islands and islets, springs and caves, slowed down the steps of various ancient tribes until they finally reached the isthmus between freshwater and saltwater where it contained the right features for them to stop and stay. Here, men could hunt, while women were able to raise their children in a natural and fertile environment. This is where you are caressed by the wind, the murmur of fresh water and salty waves, by the rustling of leaves and lake reeds, this is a place where all the opposites came together and harmoniously united.

This book, which will tell you about the diversity and beauty of the Pakoštane area, will also serve as proof that is not only about the passion of local patriots.



First of all
Where exactly
are you?
For example,
where are you
on a Sunday
morning?



Sunday morning...
The Mass is over...

The time in Pakoštane is Sunday before noon, and is divided into two periods - the period before Mass and the period after. Locals are strategically distributed around the local cafés, and gathering before Mass begins in the cafe OBALA where some have already attended the "small Mass". After leaving church, worshipers take up their new positions. Some of them take a stroll along the waterfront while others chat again in the cafés. The oldest local residents occupy the waterfront benches located between the waterfront and the cafés. Some cafés are reserved for the inveterate players of the *briškula* and *trešete* card games, whose eyes sometimes wander to a passing female. The biggest crowd during the Sunday morning rush is formed around the waterfront cafés: the Joko, Gabre and Pjaca. They are frequented by the youth and those who still feel young at heart. They are joined by a group of young mothers, most of whom prefer to enjoy a cup of coffee in the Port Café next to the beach where the children love to play while their mums can enjoy a macchiato in peace. Housewives are the only ones amongst the people of Pakoštane who, ignoring all the hubbub after Mass, go home, because someone has to make lunch! They just walk on past the others.

By noon, you won't find a soul
Everyone is having *lunch* and the city
streets have become empty.

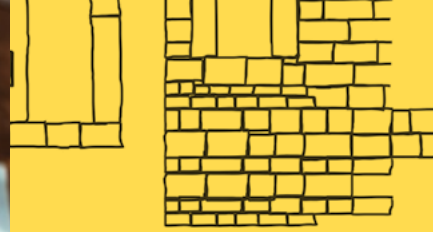
Dalmatian cafés have a special social and, at times, somewhat therapeutic role. These are the places where you can chat, share your worries and joys, make little jokes, while others discuss sport and politics, talk about what to cook and exchange recipes. There, people can discuss anything that annoys them; politicians, employers, low wages, banks and bankers, the local authorities or the country in general. After that, they go home feeling more relaxed and calm.

**BRIŠKULA
AND TREŠETA**

The most popular card games in Dalmatia, as well as in the municipality of Pakoštane.

MACCHIATO

A drink popular along the entire Dalmatian coast. The name is derived from an Italian word "macchia" which means "stain" and, according to many sources, originates from Zadar. It is coffee "stained" with a little milk, preparation of which requires skill. That is why there is often so much discussion about how to make a good macchiato.



We therefore advise everyone coming to Dalmatia to go in, or sit outside, a café. This is where you will feel the pulse of Dalmatia. If, even after a second cup of coffee, you come to the conclusion that you don't notice anything in particular, that you are only surrounded by people playing cards and drinking who sometimes raise their voices at each other or curse at something, and sometimes they don't even utter a word, then you are in the right place.

In the municipality of Pakoštane you are in the heart of Dalmatia. So put off your tour of the area until tomorrow. First of all, go for a cup of coffee and then, together with the locals, go to Mass. As you leave the church, listen to the bells and don't be afraid to ask one of the local elders to explain to you that particular sound they make. And when the older gentleman stops walking and starts talking about the fraternities ("skule"), be aware that your tour of the municipality of Pakoštane has just begun.

As with the rest of the coastal area, the Mediterranean lifestyle here is immediately recognisable. The square, with its church, streets, cafés and the beach. Everything is within reach, crowded together, entangled in a living hubbub echoing to the sound of church bells, café stories, the cheerful cries of children and the murmur of tourists.

There are only a few places that can be compared to Pakoštane in terms of unity and harmony among its population on all the important issues. For those of less importance, you will find the cafés and small groups chatting on the waterfront. People say that a foreigner will never be able to tell what binds the Dalmatian people together.





HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PAKOŠTANE

Before embarking on your adventure of getting to know the Pakoštane area, let us stop for a moment in the town of Pakoštane itself, at the place where everything began, in Bužak.

“Buža” is the core of the city, as well as its heart.

Each one of Pakoštane residents can trace their origins to at least one of the houses in Bužak. It is the place where the first inhabitants would gather around a fire and hide from invaders. The first settlement was established when they erected a defensive wall to protect the original 12 families who arrived in 1597. Then it continued over time, and one of the settlers from the Škilić family left a written account regarding his arrival, a Glagolitic inscription which is still visible today inscribed on a lintel in a house in Bužak. This small area, whose name exudes familiarity, embraces the cramped sleepy houses and exudes memories of ancient fireplaces. As soon as the first chimney in the village started to emit smoke, children holding branches of immortelle in their hands ran to fetch a

flame from this fire to take back to the fireplaces in their own families’ houses.

If you want to continue exploring the municipality of Pakoštane, you can do so by foot or by car. Whichever you choose, you will get to know, and warm to, the unique character of our region.

Many years ago, in the early hours of the morning with the Sun just rising, the inhabitants of Pakoštane used to go to their fields with their horse-drawn carriages and donkeys, leaving behind them the echoing clatter of hooves and a trail of fresh horse dung whose smell mixed with the aroma of freshly baked bread wafting from the bakeries.

Those whose past is presumably longer than their future gather daily on the pier where the ship “Vrgadina” berths. Their conversations usually start with **“Do you remember...?”**





FIELDS AND GARDENS

The words “field” and “garden” are words that, amongst the inhabitants of Pakoštane, always evoke maternal devotion. The locals have always had a strong bond with the land; it is the starting point of their history and existence. It is their nurturing mother. On the fertile fields near Lake Vrana, a long, evolving story of farming has been written. If it could be painted, it would show the lively, daily activities of people, donkeys and horse-drawn carts on their daily journey to the fields. In the early hours of the morning, all those who were able to work left the village, leaving only the older women and small children behind. It would also show the abundance of seasonal fruits in a palette of rainbow colours and golden crops of wheat and maize. Fruit trees were only planted along the wayside, and only a few trees were planted, but one can never forget *the taste of juicy vine-peaches* (“praska”), sweet warm figs grown along the edges of the field and small tasty mulberry fruits, nor the cool shade of the tree underneath which a meal was served. People did not leave the field until sunset; they lived there, mourned and rejoiced, made love and bore their children there. Land has always required hard work, good organisation and practicality. In return, it provided abundance, so the products of the Vrana region were supplied to many marketplaces in the Dalmatian cities and Zagreb. The women from Pakoštane used to sell their vegetables at the Šibenik marketplace. The mild climate allowed for up to three harvests per year which, among other things, contributed to the importance of the site.





On the islands, fruits from the field were exchanged for seafood. On the island of Vrgada, salted sardines or dried octopuses were usually traded for tomatoes. The fertile land and proximity to water were also the main reason for constant occupation of the Vrana region, as this provided food for armies.

Land has permanently marked both the region and its inhabitants.

The Vrana basin has not always been so favourable for agriculture. Before the completion of the Prosika Canal in 1770, it was a swampy and overgrown area, and very often ravaged by malaria, called "Clear Mud". The canal, which connects the lake to the sea, has improved the quality of the fields and made them easy to cultivate. Through several generations, various works have been carried out by members of the Borelli family, the then landowners in the Vrana region. The memory of traditional farming life comes vividly to life today in the tourist offer of the summer gastro and ethno festivals where you can learn about customs, get in touch with history and taste local dishes.

When tourism first started with a few campsites by the sea, the population of Pakoštane turned their attention

to this new economic avenue. However, their attachment to the land remained unchanged, turning their attention to their own home gardens - small but abundant farming oases. There is no family who is not devoted to their garden. At the beginning of spring, they can hardly wait to start preparing their gardens for planting, pruning stems, and beautifying their garden plots. That is why the first sound of spring in Pakoštane is not the sound of chirping swallows, but rather the sound of milling machines. The locals can hardly wait for this time of the year. There is creative restlessness in the air, everyone is eager to start; who will plant and sow first? In the cafes, along with playing card games, there is constant chatter about agriculture; what to plant, how and when? New expertise is exchanged and acquired. For them, one of the greatest pleasures is to look at their beautifully landscaped gardens, the fruits and vegetables growing in them, and already by the end of February and the beginning of March to pick the first horse bean. It's the pride of a hard-working housewife. The Pakoštane locals are simple people who love their land and their two bodies of water, who grew up from a small community in an old village where everything was close and intimate, shared both tears and laughter, and where the doors of their houses were never locked.





THE SEA

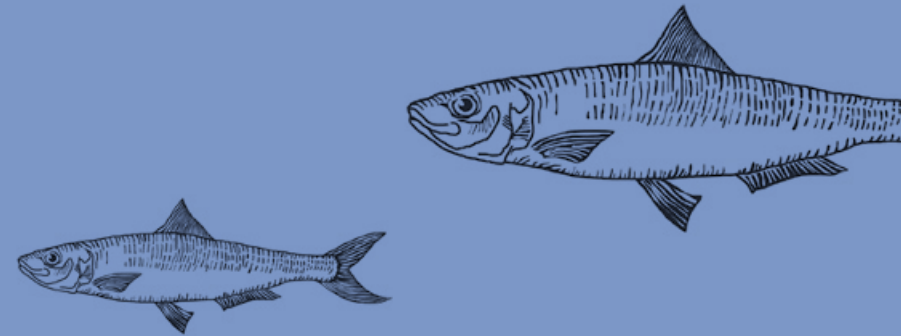
Swimming...

While swimming a relaxed breaststroke, with your heart and mind turned to the depths, you will notice the silhouettes of sunken ships beneath you.

Souls of sailors and their captains, merchants, and adventurers, entangled in the ropes where bowsprits and lateens were tied. Going deeper there are the galleys that were not destined to be embraced by Dalmatia.

While swimming backstroke, the sun dries your face, evaporating the sea water leaving traces of salt on your cheeks. The same salt over which wars were fought for centuries in this area. Salt being the commodity that was used to keep the fish fresh during their long journey to Venice, and the meat on its road journey to various metropolitan cities across Europe.

Swimming with flippers causes the sand to rise from the watery depths. Fine, loose, almost silver, resembling Swarovski crystals. In places where the erosion of the sea has washed away this submarine powder, rocky surfaces appear inhabited by sea stars, urchins and shells, organisms that testify the crystal clean sea.





ZRMANJA / KRKA WATERFALLS / PP TELAŠĆICA / NIN

ISLAND OF ST. JUŠTINA

By car...

When taking the car, you drive on well-maintained roads and highways that will take you around the municipality and to numerous destinations outside it. Large towns in the region pulsate loudly, so do the heartbeats of the stone settlements on islets and even smaller settlements located in the hinterland. Each of them tells the story of their origin, their history. Here, you can also hear the sound of the Krka waterfalls, admire the Plitvice lakes, of the Bjela, Krupa and Zrmanja rivers, and coming from the direction of the Kornati islands, but mostly from Velebit, you can see where the great mountain heart of Croatia beats.

Noble pen shell (Pinna nobilis)

The Noble pen shell is the largest bivalve in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea. Due to overfishing, its populations in many areas have been completely destroyed. That's why this clam is protected by law. Collecting, harvesting and trafficking these clams are strictly prohibited.

Underwater archaeological explorations carried out during the past few years have confirmed the nature and attractiveness of the wider area of the harbour, while the abundance of archaeological findings has led to many new conclusions. In 2004, the excellently preserved remains of a sunken ancient ship near the islet of Veliki Školj were partly explored.

By rowing a kayak or using a pedalo, you can reach the islet of St. Juština with its church carrying the same name. Next to it there is an old cemetery where you will find many ancient remains. The church was built in the 17th century on the foundations of an even older church. You can also easily reach the island of Veliki Školj, where the Liburnian fortress is located which, in the past, was used to control the passage of ships through the Pašman channel. You can also visit Babuljaš, a rocky islet with a small forest at its crest. Those who are perhaps a little more skilled and a bit more daring can swim to the islands. The islands of Veliki Školj, St. Juština and Babuljaš are called Faith, Hope and Love by the locals. You can row to any of the gentle bays which run close to Pakoštane and the town of Draga.

Pine trees along the beach

The older community in the district of Pakoštane still remembers the barren landscape of their homeland. Reforestation of this area only started in the 1960s. Reforestation is the result of joint efforts of cooperatives of that time and local people who volunteered to plant all the pine trees which, today, provide a pleasant shade and make the regional postcards look even more picturesque. These forest groves were conducive to the establishment of the first camps. Due to their picturesque look and pleasant shade they provided during the hot summer months, they presented one of the major factors in the early development of tourism.



^ VRGADA

KORNATI NATIONAL PARK >

The island of Vrgada can be reached by the “Vrgadinka” boat. It only takes half an hour to reach this oasis of tranquility, old stone houses and their courtyard gardens planted with Mediterranean vegetation - succulents, lavender and pomegranate trees, amongst others.

Excursion boats lined at the Pakoštane waterfront offer regular trips to the Kornati National Park, passing among 140 islands, islets and reefs. Those who want to visit the Kornati Islands on their own can take one of the boats there which are available to hire (rent-a-boat).

Wherever you go, you will find yourself engulfed in myths and legends, whether on land or on the islands and islets.

The municipality of Pakoštane traditionally turned to the fertile land of Lake Vrana. Agriculture is the hallmark of the inhabitants of the Pakoštane municipality.





SEA FISH OF THE PAKOŠTANE ARCHIPELAGO

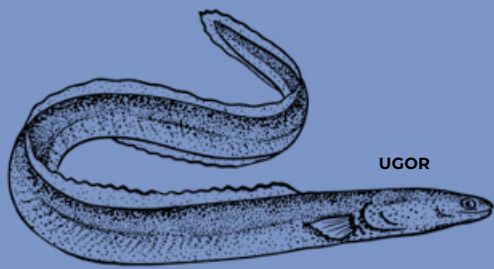
A swathe of blue below the horizon

Despite the fact that the Pakoštane region is located by the sea, in the immediate vicinity of the numerous islands, including the Kornati National Park, its inhabitants are not traditionally known as fishermen. They drew subsistence from the fertile soil in Vrana, but over the years, and with the development of tourism, they turned once again to the sea. Nowadays, they use several fishing methods. These include fishing with nets, fish traps, trawlers and gaffs, while fish farms have also been established. The sea in the Pakoštane area is abundant with fish. At greater depths noble fish are caught, which are usually served in taverns and restaurants in the region and further afield. These include sea bream, common pandora, gilt-poll, blacksmith, common two-banded sea bream and sharpsnout sea bream etc. Among these, annular sea bream, painted comber, salema porgy, flathead grey mullet and, very often, their predators, conger and octopus can also be found. Octopus, cuttlefish, eel, conger and curled octopus are caught by using spears or by the “lamplight fishing” method. The fishermen from Draga are well-known for lamplight fishing. Their traditional summer festival is named after the night fishing boat (bumbeta) – “Dragarske bumbete”.

The sea is not always particularly kind to the fishermen, and they often return with empty fishing nets. Or, as they put it themselves: if there aren't any fish, then you can always catch whelks and limpets. Served with a glass of wine, that'll do nicely!

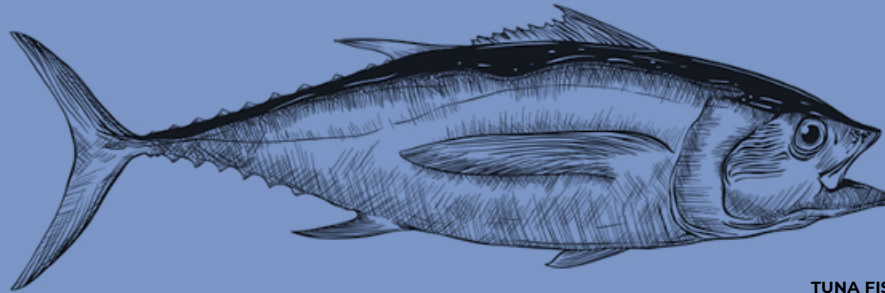
There can never be enough words to describe the sea, the fish and fishing, and the richness of life beneath its surface. To enjoy this blessing, you will have to go fishing or just visit some of the restaurants and taverns in Pakoštane. That way, you'll see everything.





UGOR

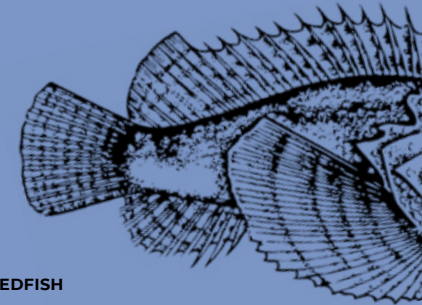
SEA BREAM



TUNA FISH



SARDINE



REDFISH

TUNA FISH

Tuna is a typical deep water fish, although sometimes it can also be found in shallow water. Being an extremely good swimmer and one of the fastest fish, it can reach speeds up to 70 km/h. Tuna can grow up to 10 feet in length. It has a huge, strong, spindle-shaped body with excellent hydrodynamic properties. While they usually swim below the surface, tunas can also be found at depths of up to 1000 m. Tunas feed on small fish and molluscs. By swimming fast, they can travel very long distances. Tuna is widespread in all sea areas except in the polar region.

SEA BREAM

Along with the gilt-poll and sea bass, this is the most sought-after fish in the Adriatic Sea. It owes its Croatian name, Zubatac to its prominent large canine teeth.

UGOR

Eel is a sea snake-like fish, with a long body. It's a predator that hunts at night.

OYSTERS

It has been considered a delicacy since ancient Roman times. Oyster meat is very nutritious, since it contains lots of protein, carbohydrate and vitamins. It tastes best in winter and is usually eaten raw with a few drops of lemon juice. It's renowned for its aphrodisiac qualities.

SEA ANEMONE

It can be found stuck to rocks or in the sand, alone or in a group, it feeds on plankton and small fish and very often can also be found in shoals. Sea anemones can be dangerous for swimmers, especially for nudists, because their stings cause intense pain with an immediate burning sensation.

GRILLED SARDINES

Remove the scales, remove the guts and wash the sardines. Place them on a board to drain well, arrange them in a dish and marinate with olive oil, crushed garlic and chopped parsley. In the meantime, prepare the grill, remove the sardines from the marinade and grill them for about 5 minutes on each. Grill until golden brown, then remove them from the grill, add salt and sprinkle with olive oil.

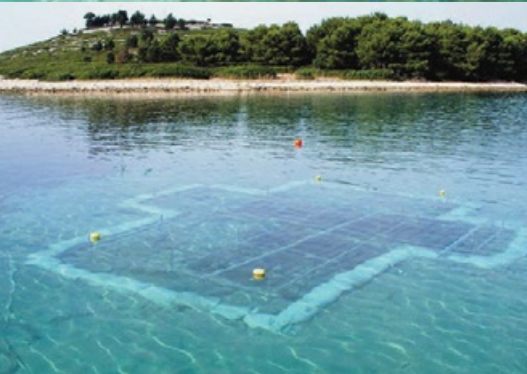
REDFISH STEW

Heat the oil and fry the onion, add chopped garlic, peeled and sliced tomatoes, and boil with a little bit of vinegar. Clean, wash and cut the redfish into pieces. Remove the head, season with salt, pepper, and fragrant herbs, mix with boiled vegetables and sprinkle with chopped parsley. Boil again, add wine and continue cooking for another 15 minutes. Reduce the heat and cook until the fish is tender. Serve with polenta (pura).

FISH FARMS

Closer to the open sea, in deep water

Close to the open sea numerous noble fish farms are located. The Pakoštane fish farm is the second largest sea bream and sea bass farm in Zadar County. The farm cages of fir are located south of Vrgada. Many years of dedicated work, with an annual cultivation of approximately 750 tons of fish, has proved a major success for the region overall, which has helped in the development of tourism. This is reflected too in the transformation of the local man, who previously who grew up and was raised on fertile land. A man who stepped into the sea after having realised that his source of subsistence has changed. It had taken off its earth-coloured apron and put on a turquoise blue one.



< THE REMAINS OF A SUNKEN ANCIENT
BOAT NEAR THE PAKOŠTANE COAST

FOLLOWING THE HISTORY TRAIL

BY THE SEA

Remnants of ancient civilisations

The remains of the Liburnia fortress on the Čelinka hill above Draga testify to the prehistoric populations of this area. Human skeletal remains from this archaeological site date from ancient times, but there are no records of any inhabitants living there in later periods. Dragas were founded at the turn of the 18th and 19th century by the locals of Pakoštane. The town area is made up of several nuclei located away from each other, a type of dispersed urbanisation.

The ancient Pakoštane harbour, at the southern end of the channel conceals the stories and destinies of sea voyages at that time. It served as a natural shelter for ships and sailors, providing water from the hinterland and communication with settlements in the interior. In 2004, the remains of a sunken ancient boat near the Pakoštane coast were partly explored. On the seabed ship ribs, planks and shells, fragments of ceramic vessels and a couple of coins between the ship ribs were found. The shipwreck probably occurred in the late 4th or early 5th century, and burn marks and broken planks testify to its extent. The remains of the ship that were washed up on the seashore sank into the sand.

In the past, the Pašman Channel, full of shallow spots with shifting sea currents and strong winds, was navigated by merchant and pirate ships. This is where the ship by which Pope Alexander arrived in Zadar in 1173 also sailed.

During a two-year exploration of the ancient sunken ship near Pakoštane, the preserved part of the ship's structure, at a length of eight meters, was fully explored. According to experts, the overall length of the ship could have been about fifteen meters.

< VIEW OF DRAGA FROM THE ČELNIKA HILL



< THE CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF HEALTH

Gradina na Vrgadi is a hill from where you can enjoy an enchanting view with the sound of the sea and seagulls. At the foot of the fortress, in the shallows of the Andrija bay, there used to be salt pans whose partition walls can still be seen today. There is also the pre-Romanesque Church of St. Andrija dating from the early 10th century, which is one of the oldest preserved churches in Croatia. On its altar, they say, stood the wooden statue of St. Andrew. According to legend, it was part of the bow of a Byzantine galley wrecked in a storm. The currents brought the statue to the shores of Vrgada, so the locals erected a church there and placed it on the altar. St Andrew on Vrgada is worshipped as a patron saint of fishermen.

The chapel of Our Lady of Health is part of the former manor house of the Damiani family and the only part of the building that remained intact. On the chapel's altar there is a painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Child, made in Byzantine style, decorated with silver relief and precious stones. According to locals it has miraculous powers. It is associated with the story about Count Damiani trying to leave Vrgada. He and his family tried to set sail, and they intended taking the painting with them but they tried on three occasions and were unsuccessful. Each time they had to give up leaving because a strong storm blew. He finally came to realise that Our Lady did not want to leave the island so he gifted it to the locals of Vrgada. Only then did he manage to sail away and Our Lady of Health became the patron saint of Vrgada. It is celebrated every year on 21 November.

< GRADINA NA VRGADI





^ PROSIKA

KAMENJAK VIEWPOINT >

THE LAKE

Swimming...

When swimming in the lake, you can witness how the once-malarial swamp was transformed into a nature park. You can feel how much harder it is to swim in freshwater because freshwater provides less buoyancy than the salt water, and the closer you get to Prosika, the more you can start to taste the salt in the water. When you step on the shore, anywhere around the lake, you will feel the pulse of ancient times and the pleasant aroma of grass. Moving on...

By foot or by bike...

You can walk or cycle around the lake. A picturesque itinerary will lead you along a well-kept path through coastal reeds and sedges, olive groves, aromatic grasses to a place where you can take a break in the shade of pine trees. You may also see a heron, an emblem of the lake. The path continues through rocky splendour up to Kamenjak. The best way to get there is by mountain bike. From the Kamenjak viewpoint, the open palm of the Pakoštane municipality can be seen in its entirety. The view extends even further, all the way to the islands of Murter, Kornati, Pašman and Ugljan, and to Zadar. The road around the lake is partly asphalted and partly tarmacked.





HARVESTING MEDICINAL HERBS

THE MEADOWS AROUND LAKE VRANA

Around Lake Vrana, in the fields and on the meadows, there is a wide variety of self-sown, medicinal plants. You will be able to sense their aroma while walking or cycling. Sometimes it is sharp, while at other times it is intoxicating and seductive. For generations, these valuable herbs have been harvested and used to make tea and other medicinal drinks. The fields on which they are harvested have always been known, on the upper side of the lake as well as on the lower part, where it is closer to the sea, and where Iva grass, yarrow, savoury thyme and immortelle are collected. By the southwestern part of the lake can be found sage, an extremely healthy plant.

THYME

Helps to manage respiratory disorders, and strengthens the stomach and nerves. Tea made from thyme has antibacterial and antispasmodic properties and relieves cramps. It is used to treat intestinal and stomach disorders as well as diarrhoea. It can also be used as a drink for treating irregular menstrual cycles. Used as a bath or poultice, it can be useful for treating skin diseases and nervous nausea.

Tea preparation

Unless otherwise indicated on the package, pour 2 dl of boiling water over a teaspoonful of the herb (or filter bag) and leave covered for 5 to 10 minutes. Strain and consume only as freshly brewed tea.

YARROW

Regulates and purifies the blood and helps with heart problems. Yarrow tea is recommended to drink for treating internal bleeding; bloody stools, nosebleeds or other types of wounds. It can also help with problems related to the menstrual cycle, both when abundant and sparse, and alleviates uterine cramps. Yarrow tea also has anti-inflammatory, bactericidal properties, and stimulates the formation and outflow of bile. It also stimulates the secretion of saliva, gastric juices and gastric acid. It is used as a diuretic, but is particularly useful for the treatment of high blood pressure.

Tea preparation

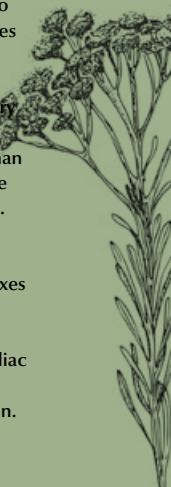
Unless otherwise indicated on the package, pour 2 dl of boiling water over a teaspoonful of the herb (or filter bag) and leave covered for 5 to 10 minutes. Strain and consume only as freshly brewed tea.

SATUREJA

Prepared as tea, it repels earthworms, stimulates sweating, treats renal conditions, calms nerves, and stimulates the sex drive. It is also used as a spice for various dishes.

IMMORTELLE

It has a beneficial effect on the formation and secretion of the bile, but also helps to control seizures. It increases gastric acid secretion and stimulates the liver. In the preparation of various tea mixtures, immortelle is added to improve the taste and sometimes its smell and appearance. Immortelle essential oil is more effective in treating inflammatory conditions than camomile and regenerates skin tissue better than lavender oil and helps to reduce the appearance of various scars. It stops bleeding and reduces itching in the wound healing process. It also purifies and relaxes both the body and the brain. In cardiac patients, immortelle activates the flow of subtle cardiac energy and helps with heart problems and vein inflammation.





It is widely used in the cosmetic industry for skin treatments, helping to maintain a youthful skin appearance, and in the manufacture of perfumes. Immortelle is called 'Dalmatian gold' because nowhere is it as rich in essence as in Dalmatia.

IVA GRASS

Iva grass is used for the treatment of digestive and respiratory diseases, even tuberculosis. It also helps with liver and gallbladder diseases by increasing the production of bile acid and its secretion. It can also help with stomach pains and stomach bloating. As a poultice, it is useful for healing superficial wounds. Very often it is used as a treatment after illness, during strenuous physical activity or when under stress.

SAGE

Sage is one of the most valuable medicinal herbs. There is an old saying, "Why should someone who grows sage in the garden die?" Due to its bactericidal properties, it treats most incidents of inflammation. It is especially good for the treatment of the respiratory tract, sore throats, tonsils, mucous membranes and coughs. Rinsing the mouth with sage protects the health of your teeth and prevents bad breath. Sage tea is also good for treating excessive sweating, e.g. in young people during puberty and also for women during the menopause. It also calms the nerves and relaxes the muscles so it should be used whenever you experience tingling muscles.

Tea preparation

Unless otherwise indicated on the package, pour 2 dl of boiling water over a teaspoonful of the herb (or filter bag) and leave covered for 5 to 10 minutes. Strain and consume only as freshly brewed tea.

ASPARAGUS

The area around Pakoštane and the old town of Vrana is overflowing with wild asparagus. Locals pick them because, in addition to being delicious, they speed up the recovery process after illness,

stimulates the liver and gallbladder function, and helps to cleanse the body. They also have a beneficial effect on blood vessels. It is harvested from spring until the beginning of summer. In Dalmatia, asparagus is served with hard-boiled eggs, cooked only briefly in water and seasoned with lemon and olive oil. A superb meal!

ST. JOHN'S WORT

St. John's wort is a lovely plant with bright yellow flowers named after the Greek sun God, Hyperion. Many ancient people have used it in rituals to celebrate the solstice. This herb, with its powerful health benefits, is harvested in full sun. In modern medicine, it is referred to as a powerful antidepressant.

HYPERICUM

An oil steeped in mythology which is made by mixing St. John's wort and olive oil in the correct ratio. To prepare the oil, the fresh flowers of St. John's wort are used, which are left overnight in order for insects to leave them and find a new home somewhere else. Put 100g of the flowers in a transparent jar, pour over a litre of cold-pressed olive oil and leave in the sun for 40 days. After that, strain through a gauze and keep in a sealed dark jar. Quality oil appears dark red in colour. There is hardly any household in Dalmatia which does not make its own cantarian oil. Because of its many healing properties, it has been used in folk medicine since ancient times. It is especially effective in healing wounds, cuts, burns, insect bites, as well as in strengthening hair. It is also effective against intestinal parasites, haemorrhoids, and in reducing urinary incontinence. In combination with other medicines, it is good for treating colds, coughs and asthma.

MIŠANCIJA

Dalmatian mix ("mišancija") is a mixture of wild edible herbs. It can be served both cooked and as a salad. It is a traditional food that people have lived on during times of hunger and famine.

This seemingly common, perhaps even plain herb is a source of substances for preserving health and beauty. It is harvested from spring to autumn, has a bitter taste which becomes even bitterer as the cold months approach. It contains several species of herb which are blended according to the season. Everything is in it, from nettle to asparagus; from dandelion, goat's beard, wild poppy, wild carrot, wild onions, dock leaves, radicchio, chervil, wild lettuce, chives, hubbub, and purslane to borecole. Due to the increased popularity of vegetarian nutrition, interest in this wild herbal mix has been on the increase as it is full of minerals and vitamins, especially vitamin C and carotene. This excellent antioxidant cleanses the body and has a beneficial effect on the liver.

WILD POPPY

There are no more beautiful meadows and fields than those which can be seen in the Lake Vrana area, particularly in May when they are decorated with poppies. In spring, their red, delicate flower heads represent a unique, wonderful floral decoration. It is better not to pick them because they are born to be free. By the time they flower, they offer their young, edible leaves which are a tasty source for spring mixtures. Unlike garden poppies, red poppies growing in the fields do not contain opium alkaloids.

CHICORY

Chicory loves the sun and is best suited for a sunny location with plenty of water, and as it tolerates lower temperatures, it can also be found in autumn mixtures. Its leaves are rich in vitamin A, potassium and magnesium. Not only can it be found as a wild solanaceous plant, it is also easy to grow.

CHERVIL

Chervil is a composite with beautiful, sky-blue flowers. Its edible leaves are harvested in spring, before flowering. It is rich in vitamin C and carotene, stimulates appetite and is beneficial for the gallbladder. Cooked in mildly

salted water and seasoned with olive oil, chervil is the most popular of all edible herbs and can be served with cooked potatoes and asparagus; it is widely consumed in the Pakoštane region.

FENUGREEK

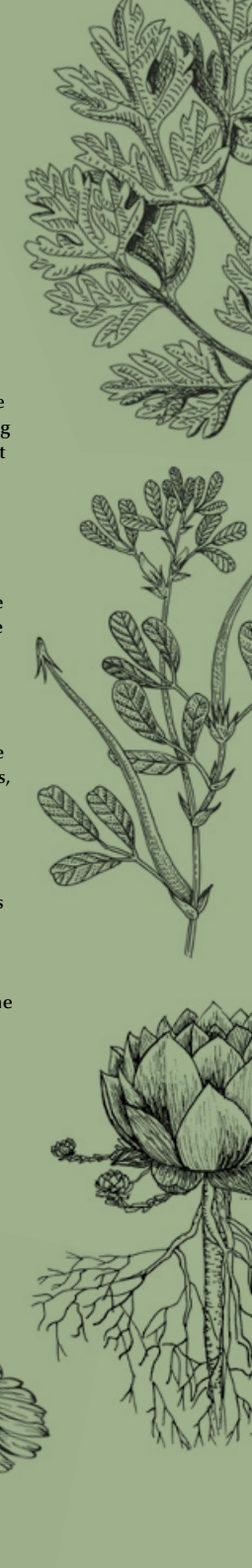
The young edible leaves of this herb are harvested in April and May. The seeds are used for preparing tea and help to reduce high levels of cholesterol and blood sugar. They are also known as Greek seeds. According to tradition, the Olympians in ancient Greece used to drink tea made of fenugreek seeds to increase their strength.

HOUSELEEK

This plant has been known since time immemorial. Allegedly, Charlemagne described it in his documents as "a plant which everyone must grow on the roofs of their houses", because it protects from the wind and lightning strikes. It is also used in folk medicine for treating ear infections, insect bites, bronchitis, skin and menstrual cycle problems.

CAMOMILE

Camomile is a herb whose properties are already known to everyone. It is recognised by its fragrant, tiny white-yellow flowers and can be found in all meadows in the Pakoštane municipality.





OLIVE GROWING

Divine nectar from a sacred wood

The high quality olive oil that can today be found all over the Pakoštane area is a result of the sharp increase in interest in the cultivation and sale of olives, which is a result of state funding provided after the Croatian War of Independence. Until then, olives were planted only in "poor soil", and then in the vineyards, while the fertile land was used for growing food. The most widespread domestic olive varieties, such as Orkula, Levantinka, Drobnica and Lastovka, have been joined by imported ones, such as Lecino, Pendolino and Frantoio amongst others. Beautiful, organised olive groves cover the whole region. The oldest of these are located in Draga - Modrave, the mother of all local olive groves, the root from which the "sticks", the young olive groves, were taken and planted all around the area. The amount of oil extracted from these centuries old olive trees is greater than that planted in the "thick soil" of the Lake Vrana region. Back in 1888, the Modrave oil won a gold medal in Paris. Traditionally, the darkest black and most juicy olives were roasted, while the oil was strained after 5 to 7 days storage in the sea. Today, there are disputes over the production of olive oil. One part of the population still advocate this process, by which the so-called "sweet" or mild olive oil is produced. This production process was abandoned in favour of direct processing which retains higher levels of oil, but the taste of the product is somewhat "harsher". This represents a confrontation between old and young olive growers who are eager to learn new skills and production techniques. It should be emphasised that storing olives in the sea was a necessity because the oil mill could not be reached as quickly as today.

The "Young Olive Oil Festival", which takes place in Maškovića Han, has also given a boost to the olive oil industry. By fostering the tradition of the olive oil industry, the festival aims to inform and educate olive oil producers about new trends in the production and processing of olives. It should be noted that there are more than 100,000 olive trees in the Pakoštane municipality and that there are only a few households which do not have their own olive tree. Many olive growers and olive oil manufacturers have been awarded prizes for their oil production.



VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Virgin olive oil is produced from the first pressing which is why its acidity, compared to extra virgin oil, is slightly higher. The fatty acid content does not exceed 2%. In contradiction to expert opinion, a good part of the population of Pakoštane still practises leaving olives in the sea. These are produced in smaller quantities which they keep for themselves because the traditional way of production carries the taste of childhood memories which is hard to resist. Although such oil ages faster, it is, as they say, "for their own pleasure."

EXTRA VIRGIN OIL

(Olio di oliva extravergine) is produced from the first pressing of healthy olives, whose fatty acid content does not exceed 0.8%. In order to meet the chemical parameters, the oil must also be organoleptically tested and may not have any non-specific aroma.

OLIVE OIL

It is probably the only oil that can be consumed immediately after being extracted from the olives; if properly stored, it will retain all the flavour, aroma and vitamins contained in the olives. Favourable climatic conditions contribute to the excellent quality of the oil produced in the Pakoštane region. Proper handling of the olive fruit in each part of the production process (from harvesting to pressing) is one of the key factors for the quality of the oil.

BUNJE IN MODRAVE

Traditional architecture of Dalmatia.



WINE GROWING One of the oldest traditions

Although wine growing is a traditional occupation in the region of Pakoštane, the production of top quality wines has only started recently. It has been given a boost by the continuous education of winemakers on winegrowing and wineries. The development of wineries has produced a few very fine wine producers. The municipality of Pakoštane encourages the creation of permanent vine plantations and the largest vineyards are located around Lake Vrana and in the area between the lake and the town of Biograd. Of the indigenous grape varieties, Maraština and Debit are cultivated while Plavina is grown as a black variety. Currently, a number of other Croatian grape varieties from other regions have been cultivated, such as Plavac Mali, Pošip, Babić as well as some French varieties, such as Merlot, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

Maraština is among the first of our wines to receive the label of protected designation of origin. It is an indigenous white grape variety, both in the region of coastal Croatia and in the region of Pakoštane. Due to its good fertility and ability to accumulate up to 24% of the sugar, this vine grape variety is highly valued by the wine producers in the region. *Maraština* is one of the most popular wine grape varieties.



FIGS The sweetest fruit of the Mediterranean

This is another mythical Mediterranean tree that can be found everywhere you go. It grows in the fields and meadows, in vineyards, in the olive groves, courtyards, on the streets, in the cracks of stone walls and among the old ruined buildings that have been abandoned by everyone except this tree. Unjustly neglected for years, it has nourished and sweetened over the centuries and has always been at the fingertips of pilgrims, adventurers, wanderers, tired travellers and field workers. The fig tree is a flower that grows inverted, unique in the world and its sweetest fruit. The Petrovka variety ripens during the homily on the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul in June. The inner part and skin of the black Petrovka is dark purple while the skin of the white Petrovka is a soft green with pink flesh. The most widespread fig variety is Bilica, with its sweet red flesh. After Assumption Day, the Zimica fig ripens, with its dark green skin and extremely red flesh. This fig is especially good for drying out. By the first autumn rains, the Lasatka fig ripens. The skin of this fig is slightly harder, soft green in colour, with pink meat and it is very good for drying out too. The richness and variety of these fruits can be best experienced on the 20th of August at the "Litnja pričinjaža" fig festival. Don't miss the chance to taste the food and drinks prepared with figs which are used in savoury dishes, fruit salads, delicacies, liqueurs, marmalades, and also to learn more about the traditional technique of drying them so that you can enjoy these fruits for even longer.

Petrova crnica

This is one of the oldest cultivated fruit trees and the fig tree was even found in the Garden of Eden. It is also mentioned in the Babylonian Scriptures. In 2009 BC, the Sumerians used figs as a medicine. It was the favourite fruit of Cleopatra and athletes at the ancient Olympic where it was used as a medal. The fig is an inverted flower with its real fruit being the seed.





FOLLOWING THE HISTORY TRAIL

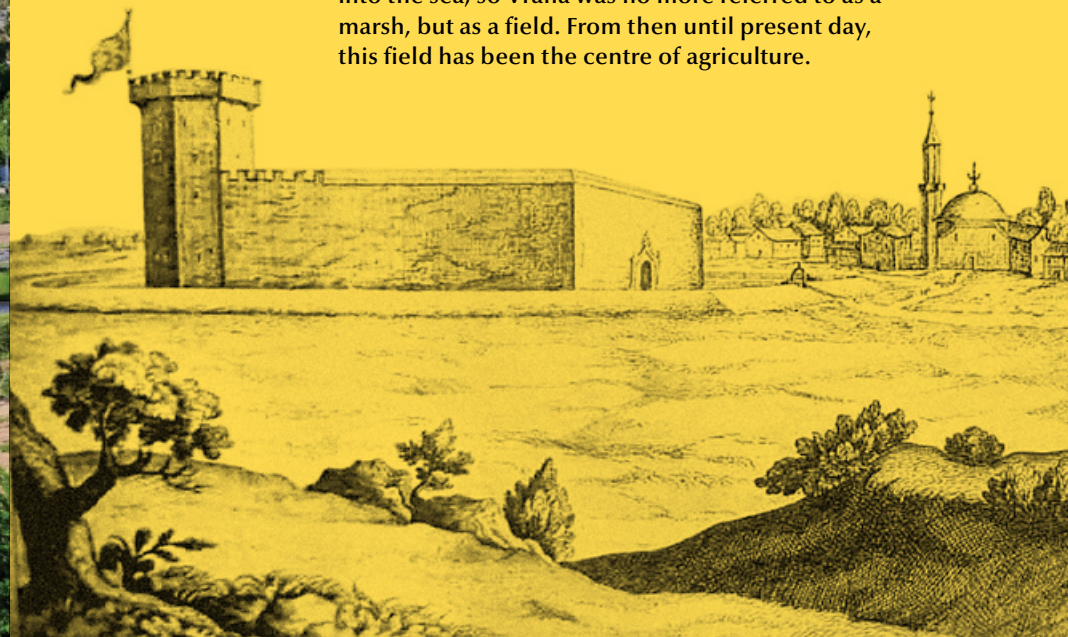
BY THE LAKE

Remnants of ancient civilisations

The history of Vrana begins with Rome, the remains of Roman villas, roads, an aqueduct that provided water to the city of Zadar, as well as its *numerous villas rusticas*. During the reign of the national rulers, the region of Vrana was surrounded by the royal towns of Nin, Biograd, Knin and Šibenik. During parliament sessions, the Croatian nobles used to stay in their estates located there.

Vrana is also well known for the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller, and the birthplace of the famous Renaissance painter Francesco Laurana and his brother, the famous architect Luciano Laurana. At the time of the Ottoman invasions, it was the westernmost Turkish fortress. A remnant of that historical period is the Maškovića Han, the largest monument of civil Islamic architecture in Europe.

With the end of the Ottoman invasions, the importance of the Vrana region increased, and with the arrival of the Venetian family, Borelli, the marshes were drained and the channel was dredged from the lake to the sea. The Prosika channel enabled the rapid discharge of lake water into the sea, so Vrana was no more referred to as a marsh, but as a field. From then until present day, this field has been the centre of agriculture.





< CRKVINE

^ PROSIKA

< OLD TOWN
OF VRANA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ITINERARY FROM PAKOŠTANE TO VRANA

Since Roman times, there has been a road leading by the channel, along the fields and water bird habitats, to the settlement of Vrana. Right next to there are archeological remains revealing the rich history of the area. The first archaeological site along the road that leads to Vrana is Crkvina, where excavations at the church of St. Mary revealed what was most likely to be the foundations of a Roman villa from around 800 AD, during the reign of Duke Branimir. In the 17th century it was demolished by the Venetians in order to prevent the Ottomans from gaining a foothold at the frontier. Around the church, 98 graves have been excavated so far, with about 500 skeletons dating from the 11th to the 16th century. In one of the graves Byzantine coins were found. Along the road there are also the remains of one of the five old watermills that were once driven by water coming from the Lake Vrana aqueduct, but are now disused. The road leading from Crkvine to Vrana, which the locals call Gaz (from the verb "gaziti" - "to tread"), was built along the route once used by the Romans, following the route of the old Roman road. At the top of the road there is the old town of Vrana (Gradina), the former centre of social life in Vrana. It was a medieval small town that was considered one of the *most cheerful places in Dalmatia*. In the 12th century, Vrana became the property of the Templar Knights, gifted directly by the Pope. After the suppression of the Templar order, it passed into the ownership of the Knights Hospitaller.

PROSIKA

Prosiika is a sea channel connecting Lake Vrana with the sea. On the southernmost part of the lake along the channel, there is a small harbour with a fishing hut dating from the 19th century. A short walk in a northerly direction will take you to a bird-watching platform with a view across the entire lake. If you head south, then you will reach Jugovir, a small town named after the southern wind that causes the sea to rise and blows in the direction of the lake. There is also a renovated Borelli fisherman's cottage from the 18th century.



< PEĆINA WATER SPRING

FOLLOWING THE HISTORY TRAIL

IN THE HINTERLAND

Remnants of ancient civilisations

Above Gradina there is a small village called Pećina with its two fresh water springs: the Biba and Subiba. These were one of the three sources leading to the Roman aqueduct, through which water was transferred to the city of Zadar. It was built around 100 AD, during the reign of Emperor Trajan. At the time, the spring was dedicated to nymphs, mythical creatures, protectors of water. The village is named after Archduke Karl Stipan by the personal dispensation of His Imperial Highness in 1899. It offers a magnificent view of the old medieval town of Gradina, which dominates the panorama with the strength and secrecy of its stone remnants. About 50 metres south of Gradina there is the Maškovića Han. Its location was probably determined by the availability of water which is important for the Islamic world. From the Pećine water source, water flows freely down to the north side of the Maškovića Han, from which it is distributed by a series of stone water channels. The same path will take you to the very edge of the town of Vrana where you can find the remains of wooden ramparts and small mosaic stone cubes. This indicates that under the deposited soil there is probably a historic city. Only the tower remains from the recognisable traces of the former city. Being the farthest and most isolated spot, they call it "Vran Samograd".

MULBERRY

There used to be a mulberry tree growing in every courtyard. It was the result of a major campaign aimed at fostering silkworm farming. The project has disappeared with time, but the taste of ripe mulberry still lingers and takes you back to your childhood.



< MAŠKOVIĆA HAN



VRANA, TEMPLARS, HOSPITALLERS

Vrana, once considered one of the most cheerful places in Dalmatia

Despite their busy social life, some cities have not been fortunate enough to last continuously for two or three thousand years like Zadar. Nowadays, only a few know that they have ever existed. Such was the fate of the small town of Vrana on the shores of Lake Vrana. It was a medieval town that was considered to be the most cheerful place in Dalmatia. There, a Benedictine monastery was built which later became a possession of the Knights Templar for many years. After the fall of Benedictine monasticism, the Templars took over control of it as a monastery with papal exemption, i.e. from foreign authorities.

The reason for the arrival of the Templars in Vrana can be found in connection with the policy of the papacy of that time and their concerns for the conquest of the Holy Land. Located on important thoroughfares, both coastal and inland, Vrana was used as a supply hub and to bring reinforcements to the Crusaders.

After the fall of the Templar order, their possessions were handed over to the Hospitallers. We can talk about the Hospitallers being in Vrana since 1312, when the Prior of Vrana became the main prior of the Hospitallers over all of Croatia. The Hospitaller Order was founded first as a devout brotherhood and subsequently became a knightly order. Among those who played an important role in Croatian history were: Marko Talovac, the prior of Vrana, Ban of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia; Ivan Talovac, the prior of Dalmatia and Croatia; Bartol Berislavić, the prior of Vrana, and Petar Berislavić, the prior of Vrana, Ban of Croatia and bishop of Veszprém. The above-mentioned priors were particularly prominent in the battles against the Ottomans. At the time of the Ottoman invasions, Vrana became an important stronghold of the Republic of Venice.

< THE DAYS OF THE KNIGHTS
OF VRANA





< FRANJO LAURANA
PORTRAIT BUST OF
PRINCESS

< LUCIANO LAURANA
PALAZZO DUCALE,
URBINO

< FORTRESS VRANA

^ THE DAYS OF THE KNIGHTS OF VRANA

The history of Vrana is turbulent. In the past, many of its inhabitants left for Venice. Over time, a colony of Vrana refugees became established there, mostly in the eastern part of the city of Castello. These were sailors and *barkarioli*, and among them were also craftsmen and priests. The Vrana family line is still alive today. If it wasn't for some of the more famous people born in Vrana, then it probably wouldn't be remembered. All of these people lived in the 15th century and had various professions. One of them was admiral Ivan Vrana, the other was the sculptor Franjo Laurana, creator of the beautiful female stone bust sculptures, and the third was Luciano Laurana, an architect.

They have left a permanent memorial to this small Dalmatian town, the ruins of which are now covered with maquis. At the beginning of the 1970s, they were still visible, but the inhabitants of neighbouring villages and towns used them as building materials and eventually devastated the site.

THE DAYS OF THE KNIGHTS OF VRANA

A popular event organised each summer by the Pakoštane municipality shows the Turkish conquest of Mašković Han and its liberation by the Knights Templar and the Croatian army of that period.



FISH FROM LAKE VRANA

A FRESHWATER IDYLL

Always gravitating towards Lake Vrana, long before its proclamation as a nature park, the locals of the Pakoštane region lived off agriculture and fishing. The decision to make part of the lake a bird reserve resulted in a restriction on fishing activities on the lake. Today, fishing is allowed only in certain areas. As an indigenous species, eel have been thriving in the lake since ancient times, forming the basis of nutrition, and nowadays it is strictly protected. Given that lake water is mixed with sea water, both freshwater and marine fish can be found in the lake. Among the freshwater ones, only eel and the freshwater blenny are autochthonous, which means that the lake is their natural habitat. Other fish species e.g. carp, Prussian carp, catfish, pike and mosquitofish, were introduced into the lake, either on purpose or by accident. The most numerous amphibians protected by law which live in the lake are: the marsh frog, tree frog, the moor frog and the common toad. Carp is one of the most important and delicious reasons why fishermen visit Lake Vrana. Because of the brackish water, the quality of the carp's meat is very high and it is considered the most delicious carp in the whole of Europe.



EEL

Eel is a snake-shaped fish inhabiting Lake Vrana. It has always played a significant role in the population's nutrition.

GREY MULLET

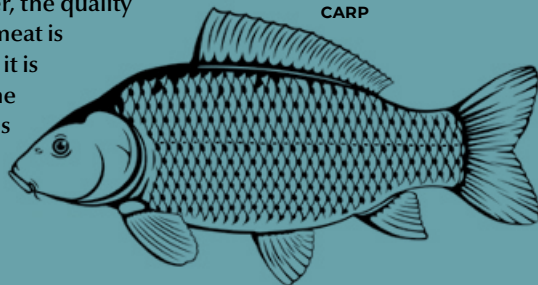
The brackish water near Prosika also brings sea fish to the lake, above all, the grey mullet.

CARP

Although relatively shallow, Lake Vrana hides valuable fish capital in its depths. Most of all, it includes carp which prefers thickets and muddy beds.



GREY MULLET



CARP

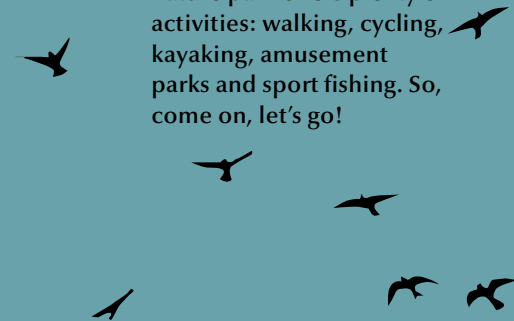


THE LAKE VRANA NATURE PARK

AN ORNITHOLOGICAL PARADISE

In ancient times it was called "Vedro blato", today it is known as "Lake Vrana", an area which presents a wide range of cultural and historical sights dating back to 2000 BC. The Lake Vrana Nature Park conceals a number of mysteries and is the source of many new scientific discoveries on which researchers from various scientific fields have been working. With its freshwater springs and an array of biodiversity, it is one of the few, almost untouched, natural habitats for waterfowl. In 1983, the north-western part of the lake was declared a special ornithological reserve. It is characterised by the richness and diversity of its fauna, particularly birds. In the bird nesting season, 102 bird species nest in the reserve with its tall reeds providing an ideal shelter for their hatchlings and nestlings.

For those who really enjoy active holidays, the nature park offers plenty of activities: walking, cycling, kayaking, amusement parks and sport fishing. So, come on, let's go!



THE ORNITHOLOGICAL TRAIL

THROUGH THE HEART OF A BIRD PARADISE

Due to the dense reeds and floodplains which attract various bird species, a small area of Lake Vrana was declared an ornithological reserve, and a little later, the entire Lake Vrana with its coastal shoreline became a nature park. The largest part of the bird reserve is covered by dense reeds. Such conditions are ideal for a large number of birds for nesting, as well as for finding shelter and food there. Inaccessible from land, water and air, they are protected from predators, and the shallow water of the lake provides enough small fish, frogs and insects for food. As the seasons change, so does the reed, but it always continues to be a safe haven for birds. If you are very patient and calm, you might have the honour of getting a glimpse of the most famous inhabitants of the nature park; the heron and the pygmy cormorant. The best time of day to do this is in the morning and in late afternoon before sunset. They are not famous because they like showing off, but rather because they are very shy and secretive.

If you decide to take the 600m long boarded educational trail, be sure to take some binoculars with you. These can be rented at the information desk. In the period from August to October, when it is used as a base for bird ringing, the ornithological station is a true paradise for birdwatchers and bird-researchers. Amongst the reeds, special, fine nets are stretched out into which birds can easily be caught without getting hurt. Bird ringers then release the birds from the net and place light aluminum rings on their legs, containing specific data on the ringing, which travels with the bird wherever it flies. In this way, they record and get an overview of their migration routes.

In winter, 87 species of wintering birds shelter from the biting cold winds on Lake Vrana, while on sunny days up to 100,000 birds can be seen on the open water across the lake, enjoying the mild climate and abundant food.

During the autumn and winter migrations, more than 140 different species of migratory bird stop here for food and rest.

Summer ornithological camps have regularly been organised on Lake Vrana since 2001.

A stroll along a few hundred metres on the boarded trail through the Vrana Lake bird sanctuary will without doubt leave you with unforgettable memories, especially if you go there when they are bird ringing.



MOUNTAIN TRAILS

A VIEW FROM ABOVE

If you climb to the summit, you will be able to see the entire area of the nature park and beyond to the sea with just a single glance. This inevitably entails taking the route to the Kamenjak viewpoint. If you get tired, you can take a seat on one of the stone benches along the route and enjoy the landscape where you will also find interesting information on the educational boards installed along the route. There is also a souvenir shop and a tasting room where you can enjoy light refreshments or enjoy various types of homemade cheeses and wines. Look around and explore this wide and varied area, let your gaze wander and you will be able to see the lake, the sea and the islands all the way across to Kornati. It takes about two hours to complete the circular hiking route. It starts at the Kamenjak viewpoint, passes through the Mernjača canyon to the Bašinka port, then through the Orlja Draga canyon and back to the Kamenjak viewpoint. Take a walk and enjoy another area of outstanding natural beauty.



CYCLE ROUTES / Cheerfully, by bike

It is also possible to cycle through the nature park. To this end, a number of cycling routes have been adapted with various levels of difficulty, and types of ascent. The most famous is the cycling route around Lake Vrana, where you can cycle by the reed beds, olive groves, pine trees, thickets and brambles, and enjoy the intoxicating fragrance of herbs.

KAYAKING / Connecting with nature

A single or double kayak can be hired at the information centre at the port of Prosika. You can then let yourself be lulled by the warm embrace and silence of nature, where all you can hear are the drops of water dripping from your oars as you cross the lake, the sound of birds singing and the rustling of the reeds. You can also stop and take a moment to fish from the kayak or sit and take in the beautiful watery scenery. Or, you can just row and enjoy the action of rowing the kayak.

ADVENTURE PARK / Put your skills to the test

In the thick pine tree forest next to the bird reserve, there is an adventure park for children of all ages, offering various challenges: rock climbing, balancing, walking and zip-lining, adventures that they will remember for years to come. And there's certainly a lot of fun to be had too. It is an opportunity to test your skills or to learn new ones.

ELECTRIC TRAIN / Getting closer to the destination

There is also an electric pleasure train connecting Pakoštane and Vrana. It leaves from Pakoštane and stops at the Crkvine and Mašković Han information centres.



MAŠKOVIĆA HAN

TURKISH CARAVANSERAI

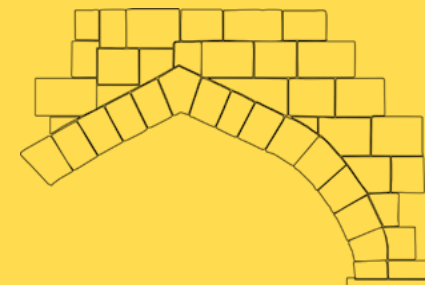
The westernmost monument to Turkish secular architecture, the Maškovića Han in Vrana, was conceived as an inn, resort and as a residence. According to legend, Jusuf Mašković, an impoverished young man, worked for the Nadin Beširagić-beg and one day found himself in Sarajevo. From there, he accidentally arrived at Constantinople, where he used his acumen and artistry to become a high dignitary in Porta. The original idea of Jusuf Mašković was to build a final retreat for his days of retirement in the region he originated from. But that never happened. Jusufpaša Mašković was executed in 1645 by order of the sultan. The reason for the sultan's action against his close associate is not entirely clear. According to one source, Jusuf Mašković did not bring his sovereign enough prize money from the Ottoman crusades. The second one suggests that the reason for it was solely for constructing the Maškovića Han using the money from the Sultan's own treasury, and according to the third reason, the Sultan punished Mašković for the leniency that he displayed towards the captured soldiers. So Maškovića Han remained unfinished, and after the liberation of Vrana from the Ottomans, the victorious Republic of Venice, together with other lands, has given it under a fief to the Borelli family. Until recently, this lonely, deserted building stood as a reminder of the fate of its builder and the ancient conquests that never spared Vrana.



Finally, the building was renovated and finished using funds provided by the EU under the IPA 2009 program for Croatia. It was the first project for which the Croatian Ministry of Culture received funds from the EU. The main concept of the project was to revitalise the infrastructure needed for the economic recovery of the area. Today, Maškovića Han is an elegant building which includes a hotel, restaurant, collection of local archaeological remains and space for various events, gatherings, and shops. What remained from the time of the Ottomans are the bows which were once used by the Islamic horse-archers and now the Turkish food served in the restaurant.

Sultan Ibrahim, first the mentor, later the executioner of Jusuf Mašković. Historians believe that Jusuf Mašković is originally from the Maškov family that lived in Pakoštane. It is not known how he started his service for the local Beširagić bey of Nadin, but it appears most likely out of necessity. In the Turkish army, he built up an enviable career, right up to his death at the end of the Cretan wars.

MAŠKOVIĆA HAN is one of the westernmost buildings of the former Ottoman Empire.





PAKOŠTANE BEACHES

SAND, SHORE, AND STONE

The sea around Pakoštane is clean, punctuated with islands that hide secrets from the past in its depths. The shore is playful and rich in all kinds of beaches, from sandy to rocky, sunny to those offering pleasant shade under the tall pine trees.

The **Janice** Sandy beach is located in the very centre of Pakoštane. Its coastal part is of shingle and paved. In the summer months, it is full of swimmers, and filled with the sound of children's laughter and joy. Not far from the beach there is the island of St. Juština with its small church. Those who are more inclined and bolder can swim to the island. The island of St. Juština is one of the most recognisable symbols of Pakoštane. Beneath the surface, between the settlement and the islet, lie the remains of a pier built of large stone blocks to protect the area from the southerly winds.

The Janice beach stretches out in the direction of Drage along a pebbled coastline with quiet coves which are ideal places for those who wish to avoid the summer crowds.

Ideal for families with small children is the **Punta** beach with its sandy seabed. The coastal part is partly paved and bordered by pine and tamarisk trees.

The **Bužakovina** beach also has everything you need for a comfortable stay; shallow waters, dense, loose sand and a coastal area covered with trees.

Pilatuša is a beach where you will find everything in one place; sand, gravel, stone, bays and the shade of pine trees.

Drage abounds in beautiful bays with crystal clear water that is ideal for swimming and diving. In most spots they are bordered by dense pine forests. **Porat** is a large pebbly beach with natural shade offered by the town of Draga. It is equipped with showers, sun loungers, parasols, pedalos and other entertainment facilities. There is also a parking lot nearby.



^ PILATUŠA BEACH
^ PUNTA BEACH

Vrgada abounds in bays and coves, shingly and sandy, with a clear blue sea and pine forests. The most famous beach is **Podbrizi**, with its fine golden sand, clear sea water and the loudest choir of crickets in the area. If you find their chirp too loud then have a little understanding because that's how the males call to attract female crickets and these happen to choose the loudest singer. Love is in the air.

The main beach of Lake Vrana is situated within the campsite by the lake. The coastal part is covered with pine forests in front of which, in the direction of the lake, extends a wide grassy area, all the way to the shingle beach at the edge of the lake. Amongst the shallow water cliffs, on the margins of the beach, grow reed and sedge. The lake water is warm and slightly cloudy. This is mainly due to the types of fish residing in it and their nutrition.



^ PODBRIZI BEACH

Pine trees provide shelter along the entire Pakoštane region coastline and offer a pleasant shade during the hot summer months. They are the result of afforestation in the early 1960s. Pine trees brought shade, the fragrance of resin and summer, and the first campsites.

SEA URCHIN

Sea urchins live on the rocky and sandy sea floor and among the beds of flowering marine plants. They are a sign of a clean sea.

SQUID

A common squid can grow from 30 to 40 cm in length, although its maximum length is usually between 15 and 25 cm. Males are generally larger than females

and grow faster. It has a relatively large head with 8 arms, each with two rows of tentacles. In the middle of the head, there is a beak similar to that of a parrot with which it crushes its prey. The locals' favourite activity is to go squid fishing. Squid are caught from early autumn to winter. Traditionally, a squid event is held in December with the winner being the fisherman who catches the largest squid.

VENUS SHELL

In Croatia, this shell has many different names, some of them being "Prnjavica", "Kućica", "Dondola", and "Grop". It measures between 3 and 4 cm and takes at least two years to grow.

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN PAKOŠTANE

The tourist accommodation in Pakoštane includes campsites, rooms, apartments, holiday homes and a hotel. The offer is varied in all categories, depending on whether you want to stay by the sea or the lake, closer to the city centre, by the pool or somewhere further away from the beach in the peace and tranquility of the hinterland.

CRICKET

The cricket is the loudest and most persistent summer singer. Its appearance and colour are completely adapted to the bark of the tree, so it is almost imperceptible. During the day, crickets hide under the leaves, feeding themselves with the juices they sip from the young plants. Only the male cricket sings which is how he attracts a female.

PAKOŠTANE BRIDES

Today, some 40 women from various parts of the world live in Pakoštane. After getting married, they stayed here. During off-peak seasons, many inhabitants of Pakoštane, as employees of the Club Méditerranée, worked in other countries where the club has similar camps. That is where they met their future wives. Brides have come from all over the world: from the Ivory Coast, Chad, Egypt, Madagascar, Greece and Morocco amongst others. Their children carry with them all the rich diversity of cultural and racial heritage, thus creating a lively multicultural scene in the very heart of Dalmatia. The French language, which is spoken fluently by a large number of the inhabitants of Pakoštane, is also one of the things that has resulted from the work and cooperation with Club Méditerranée.

THE HERITAGE HOTEL, MAŠKOVIĆ HAN

It is located in the renovated building of the historic Han, under the Vrana fortress. It consists of 14 double rooms and 2 deluxe suites. The same building houses an archaeological collection and a restaurant with a rich offer of dishes prepared from fresh ingredients which are sourced from local family farms.



PINE BEACH CAMP



KOZARICA CAMP



CRKIVINE CAMP




CAMPING

HOLIDAYS CLOSER TO NATURE
The long coastline stretching along the Pakoštane municipality has contributed to the establishment of campsites for which it is now famed for, amongst other things. Club Méditerranée is the pioneer of camping and tourism in the Pakoštane region. It has created numerous jobs for the local population and influenced the life of the village and its inhabitants. The Pine Beach Camp followed the tradition of the Club Méditerranée, and complemented the traditional accommodation of straw bungalows with modern mobile homes situated in the forest next to the bay. A ten-minute walk along the sea from the centre of Pakoštane leads to the Kozarica campsite, located by the beach in a dense pinewood forest. In 2013, it was selected as one of the best campsites on the coast. A unique location on Lake Vrana is the renovated Crkvine campsite. Before the Croatian War of Independence, it was known throughout Europe for its favourable accommodation and fishing on the lake. Next to it, there is a bird reserve with a number of bird species providing morning song. Every year, a number of small private campsites spring up across the entire region, located near the most beautiful beaches in picturesque surroundings offering comfortable accommodation and a view of the sea. Private accommodation is also available in the hinterland, where there is a whole range of rooms, apartments and holiday homes located in a quiet and peaceful area.



Explore the roads!



**Enjoy the journey,
follow your own
path. In Pakoštane,
you can never
make the wrong
turn.**

Outdoor activities

The Pakoštane landscape is diverse, huddled around two bodies of water; the lake and the sea. Exciting, simple, and beautiful. Let this rich environment embrace you and welcome you to enjoy it.

THE MTB TRAIL AROUND LAKE VRANA

The MTB Vrana Lake Marathon is a unique cycle race held in Croatia since the cycle trail, which runs through the nature park and bird reserve, offers a beautiful view of the lake, reed thickets, and all the bird species which inhabit it. The MTB Marathon is divided into two categories: sports and recreational, and at the end of the marathon a cultural and entertainment program is held.

PAKOŠTANE TRAIL

You can also get to know the Pakoštane area by simply running through it. Along the way, you'll come across many interesting amenities and meet cordial hosts, learn about numerous diverse trails, and enjoy magnificent views. The trail consists of two races; one longer and another which is shorter and more recreational. The longer race connects the fresh water with the salt water, thus connecting the two coasts because it passes by the lake and the sea, which makes it unique in Croatia. For the younger ones there is the "Mali trk" race which is organised around the centre of Pakoštane.

LET'S VISIT VRANA

This is an open invitation for hikers, walkers, nature lovers and active holidaymakers to come and enjoy the hiking trail named after the fortress. The trail passes by Mašković Han, the Templar fortress, water source, and up around the forts and peaks above Vrana from where the view stretches out in front of you, across Lake Vrana to the sea and all the way across to the Kornati archipelago.





Reveal the gardens!

Discover the green-blue soul of the Pakoštane region, which adds a delicate touch to your experiences.



Tastes of the Pakoštane region
Increasingly rich cultural, ethno and gastronomic events held in Pakoštane embody the stories, aromas and flavours of the region, and above all, the spirit of the Pakoštane locals who create and shape them. They are an opportunity to get acquainted with the customs, people and secrets of Pakoštane home cooking.

EASTER BREAKFAST

The beginning of the tourist season is marked by the event "Uskršnja marenja" ("Easter breakfast") on the Pakoštane waterfront. Taste some of the healthy homemade products: boiled eggs, frittata, young pancetta, artisan cheeses, scones and spring sprouts: asparagus, radishes, eggplant and lettuce. For the children, there are creative activities and petting farms with domestic animals (lambs, rabbits, chickens and ducklings).

MAYDAY BITE

This is a sports and gastronomy event. As part of the event "Prvosvibanjski zalogaj", ("The May Day Bite"), Labour Day is celebrated with a free brunch and a cycle race traditionally organised by the BBK Pakoštane cycle club. Children and adults consequently have the opportunity to cycle through the beauty of the local landscape combining both the sea and the lake. Creative workshops are held for the younger ones.

MALI KRIŽI MALO BIŽI

Peas are traditionally prepared in Pakoštane for the local feast "Križe" (Ascension Day), and "Mali križi" (Feast of Corpus Christi). There you can enjoy various dishes with peas as the focus prepared by the housewives of Pakoštane (peas with artichokes, pâté, beef, veal, lamb, and prosciutto). The whole event is accompanied by pleasant a cappella singing groups which introduce you to some great summer events.





MATERINE UŽANCE

This event is traditionally held in Bužak, the location where the first inhabitants of Pakoštane arrived. This is a time when customs and traditions are renewed, and home-cooked dishes are prepared. It is a day of flavours and tastes, a day of colourful folk costumes and handicrafts, a day of music and wine. Visit the Materine užance event, and walk the old, cobbled streets, among the walls of times long past and experience the dishes our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers used to make, both sweet and savoury: “čučke”, gnocchi, “kunjke”, boiled octopus, pršut (smoked ham), cheese, sugar almonds, “mimice”, “fritule” and “kroštule” (traditional desserts).

DRAGARSKJE BUMBETE

Dragarska Bumbeta is the name of the festival which is traditionally held in Drage, which in the summer nights, under the lights of small fishing boats (bumbeta) the richness of local cuisine and old crafts are revealed. Along the main bay and promenade in Drage, locals bring out tables, serve dishes and present their handicrafts. The Dalmatian a capella singing groups can be heard late into the night. Each part of the municipality of Pakoštane has something authentic to show you, so does Drage, a story of how the fishermen from Pakoštane cannot be compared to those from Drage, that they are “not fit to even lick their boots”. If they could talk, the fishing boats would tell you their own story about it. In any case, it's an event you can't miss. The simplicity and kindness of the locals is something you will never forget.

DANI O POMIDORA

Can you imagine summer without tomatoes and the intoxicating aroma of salsa? You can't. That's why “Dan o' pamidora” is celebrated to pay tribute to this important and healthy vegetable. Fresh, boiled, processed, dried, sweetened and salted tomatoes are the theme of the event. Pasta sauces made with fresh tomatoes are amongst some of the most favourite dishes enjoyed all over the world. At this event full of colour, taste and aromas, you can enjoy the food, the beauty of the arrangements and learn more about the traditional production of fresh and dried tomatoes.

“Kunšerva” (tomato concentrate) was made by Pakoštane housewives for generations. They traded it for seafood, which was then in short supply in Pakoštane because the population was mostly engaged in farming. The trade in these items was usually carried out at Vrgada, where fish, octopus and salted sardines were exchanged for agricultural products.

LITNJA PRIČINJOŽA

With its origins and flavour, fig is a fruit of paradise. It's at its sweetest in the peak summer. Fig trees are abundant in their fruits and have always provided a source of relief to numerous travellers and passers-by. The fig was used in cooking but it was also dried for future consumption. When the summer is over and only memories remain, a dry fig is a healthy sweet snack and provides a reminder of those warmer months in the year. In honour of the fig, the “Litnja pričinjaža” event is held in Pakoštane, where the many faces of this paradise fruit can be seen. Numerous exhibitors will show you how it can be used for preparing various dishes: savoury dishes, desserts, marmalades, fruit salads and liqueurs. You will once again be impressed by the colourful spirit of the people of Pakoštane, their folk costumes, the value and dexterity of their skilled hands which create these delicious dishes. You will also get to know the technique of drying figs in the traditional way, if you have not yet done so, you will certainly fall in love with the “Litnja pričinjaža” festival.

S OKUSOM MORA I ZRNOM SOLI

How to get to know all “sea pleasures” if not through their smells and tastes. At the event “S okusom mora i zrnomo soli” hardworking hosts and local fishermen will prepare for you various local specialties; fish, shellfish and sea molluscs, in salads, in brodettes, cooked, fried and baked. You will be introduced to traditional fishing tools and the old technique of salting sardines. You will find out how people lived by the sea and from the sea, and for a moment you will be a part of that seaside bustle with a grain of salt, divine sea flavors, human chatter, and laughter.

MIRISI DALMACIJE

This long-standing summer festival opens a treasure chest featuring medicinal, aromatic, and spicy herbs. You would be right in saying that it's intoxicating. Here, you can learn about the use of herbs in cooking, cosmetics, and medicine, about the preparation of tinctures, creams, balms, teas, and macerates. All this imbibed with the fluttering fragrances of laurel, lavender, immortelle, rosemary, thyme, mint, coriander, calendula, and basil.





Hear our stories!

Stop and simply listen to the storytellers of Pakoštane: knights, the oracle, the squares, fishermen, the stone walls...



Cultural and historical heritage

Everywhere in the Pakoštane district, on the sea and in the fields of Vrana, you can hear echoes of the past. It comes alive during the summer festivals in which you can participate yourself. You can almost feel the past, its heroes and famous battles. History happening right before your very eyes.

THE DAYS OF THE KNIGHTS OF VRANA

The Days of the Knights of Vrana evoke the medieval history of Vrana and the Templars, a rich and influential monastic knightly order that inhabited Vrana at that time. Historical stories, knightly virtues and the skill of fencing are presented every year in August by members of the "Vranski vitezovi" association with guest groups staging games during the day and battles at night. You can also witness scenes from the Middle Ages: horsemen, lone riders, and fairy dances. This event is growing in popularity across regional borders and is joined by associations and organisations from other parts of Croatia. The whole event is complemented by an ethnological and gastronomic offer. If you don't come and see the Days of the Knights of Vrana then you will miss one of the greatest folk games in modern Croatia.

NAVAL NIGHT BATTLE

As part of the Days of the Knights of Vrana festival, you can also attend the medieval battle at sea. On a quiet evening, a Turkish fleet of vessels and sailing boats slowly enters the port of Pakoštane with the aim of taking it. But soon the locals react and defend their town. Flaming arrows fly everywhere, you can hear the shouts and noise from ships, cannons firing, and catapults try to repel the Ottomans. A night of fire and noise ends with a triumphant celebration by the locals accompanied by fireworks as you watch the enemy fleet melt away and flee southwards. This is an opportunity to feel the pulse and force of ancient battles without being in any danger yourself.





SKULE

One of the peculiarities of Pakoštane are the numerous fraternities or, as they call them here, "skule".

They were born out of the need for mutual assistance and in the tradition of Christian fraternity and solidarity. Perhaps it is precisely the close historical circumstances and living conditions that have resulted in such homogeneous relationships within the village. "It all started with the support provided in the event of death", explain elderly female locals, so that "someone is there to carry you on your last trip on earth", to help and support the family. Consequently, the custom evolved where the community would join together and pay for the costs of funerals and masses and offer other types of assistance, provided by the membership fees of these associations (skula). The first fraternity to evolve was that of St. Roch. Today, there are numerous women's sororities and men's fraternities. In addition to the St. Roch fraternity, there are also the Fraternity of St. John, St. Ante, St. Justina and the Fraternity of Souls in Purgatory. The sororities are: the Heart of Mary (young women), the Heart of Jesus (unmarried women), Our Lady of the Rosary and, the youngest one, the St. Luca Sorority. Our Lady of the Rosary is the largest one and has about 150 members. Each sorority or fraternity has its own banner which is raised during the procession. The list with the names of sororities and fraternities can be found on one of the three bells that can be heard all over the area. Amongst themselves, the ' members of fraternizes and sororities refer to each other as "brother" and "sister". Brotherhood is passed from father to son or from grandfather to grandson, and the sisterhood from mother-in-law to bride.

CHURCHES IN PAKOŠTANE

Bells are rung for births, weddings, and deaths and on all public holidays...

The Church of the Lord's Ascension is located on the main square in the centre of Pakoštane. It was built according to the design of the architect Ćiril Iveković in 1906, and made from local stone. It contains the remains of the old church of St. Michael. The church has three naves with a sacristy and six altars. On the main altar there is an image of the Ascension of the Lord and a tabernacle. The bell tower has three bells, on one of them the lyrics of the Croatian national anthem "Our Beautiful Homeland" are embossed.

The Parish Church of St. Antun Padovanski in Drage was built in 1979 and it was completely furnished in 1986. It is a single-nave church with a vestry and has a stone altar according to the regiment, a stone Ambon, a stone baptistery (Viseslav type), a stone sprinkler, Stations of the Cross, a metal sanctuary and a bell tower with two bells.



The Parish Church of St. Three in Vrgada was completed in 1687. According to Bianchi, the church first had a main altar made of wood with two gilded columns. Since this fell into ruin in the mid-19th century, it was replaced by new, marble columns and a tabernacle. In the church there are two smaller, side marble altars: the altar of Souls from Purgatory with an oil painting on the right, and the altar of Our Lady of Luzari, with a wooden statue on the left. The builders of the new church are unknown.



The Chapel of Our Lady of Health on Vrgada is located in the castle of the noble family Damiani, who were the owners of Vrgada in the 18th and 19th centuries. It contains a valuable painting of Our Lady with a Child in Byzantine style encased in a silver frame, a painting that, according to legend, did not want to leave with the Damiani family when they left the island.

The Church of St. Andrew is located on Vrgada in the Pržina bay at the foot of the hill on which can be found the remains of an early Byzantine fortress. This early Christian church has been completely renovated. It is estimated that it was built in the 6th century.



The Church of Justina stands on the island of the same name facing Pakoštane and was built in 1794 on the foundations of an older church. Near the church of St. Justina there is an old cemetery.

The Church of Nediljice is located in Vrana. On the votive feast of the early Christian martyr St. Nediljica, on the first Sunday in July, thousands of worshippers from the entire archdiocese of Zadar make a pilgrimage. The central mass held at the outer altar in the olive grove next to the church is regularly led by high church dignitaries, along with several priests.

The Church of St. Mihovil in Vrana is an old and famous single-nave church with a vestry, next to which is a cemetery.

On the Templar Gradina there are remains of the **Gothic church of St. Catherine** from the 14th century.

The Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is located in Vrana. In it are preserved parts of the triptych of the old altar, a stone altar and a bell tower with two bells.

CHURCH BELL AT NOON

Today, it is a well-known fact that church bells ring at noon, but it has its own story. When news of the Christian army's victory over the Ottomans, under the leadership of Sibirjanin Janko and Capistrano, reached the then Pope in Rome, he ordered all the bells to be rung in his name and glory. This practice remains a part of the Christian religious ritual to this day.





WINDS IN THE PAKOŠTANE REGION **Let's spin the wind rose**

SIROCCO The sirocco is a wind characteristic for the Adriatic Sea which blows in a southeasterly to southerly direction. It develops slowly and blows at an even speed, but it can also reach hurricane strength. The waves then charge towards the shore and dramatically break onto the rocks and waterfront. But the strongest winds are out on the high seas. The Adriatic sirocco, which blows through the Zadar Channel, helps with navigation in a northerly direction along the coast. It is usually a warm wind, carries moisture and can affect the mood.

BORA The bora, which blows from the northeast, is a wind with strong gusts which can reach speeds in excess of 100 km/h. In the Zadar region, it is considerably stronger than the sirocco. This mainly affects the northern part of the Zadar plateau and the Velebit coast. There are several points where the Velebit Bora, with its cold air descending down the mountain towards the warm sea picks up strength particularly at Privlaka, between the mainland and the island of Vir, in Fortica, between the mainland and the island of Pag, at Pag Gate, and even further north, around Karlobag and in the Senj Gate. In the Pakostane district, the bora arrives weekend after its rampage through the Velebit channel and the Zadar hinterland.

MISTRAL The summer mistral wind, called by the locals "zmorac", blows from the sea, from a southwesterly direction. It starts blowing at about 10 am, and at about 2 pm the mistral reaches its height and subsides before sunset, at about 6 pm. The mistral significantly relieves the oppressive summer heat and brings fine weather with it. As far as coastal navigation is concerned it is almost as good as the sirocco. Other kinds of winds are not so common.

LEVANAT is a cold winter wind which blows from an easterly to north-easterly direction. It is just as cold as the tramontana, a wind of stormy character that usually turns into an actual storm. The lebić and garbun blow from a southwesterly direction and quickly stir the sea and paralyse navigation. Fortunately, they don't last for long.

THE MISTRAL on the Pakoštane coast blows mostly from a northwesterly direction, eventually backing to the west to north-west. During the day, it often changes its direction to the right, i.e. it follows the Sun. It is followed by cumulus clouds, which is a sign of fine weather.

BONACA Calm sea, no wind. A tourist blessing for the municipality of Pakoštane.

LEBIĆ The lebić wind can blow at hurricane strength, but, fortunately, they only last for a very short time.

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