



KARLOVAC

City of meetings



See You in Karlovac!



Mayor Damir Jelić opens the Film Festival



The Katzler Pavilion on the Promenade

KARLOVAC City of meetings

Karlovac is known as the city of four rivers, the city of parks, the city of the Star Fortress, the city of beer. It is situated at the junction of the lowland and mountainous regions of Croatia in the "soft underbelly" of the central part of the country between Slovenia on the west and Bosnia and Hercegovina on the east. It is one of the rare cities in the world that sits at the confluence of four rivers: the Kupa, the Korana, the Dobra, and the Mrežnica.

The reason for the city's location was military and defensive. Construction of the fortified city began in 1579, when the border of the Ottoman Empire shifted to the west to the Kupa and Korana Rivers to the detriment of the Habsburg Empire. At that time, Croatia was called, with some justification, "the bulwark of Christianity" and Karlovac "the bulwark of Croatia". The Karlovac Civil Guard, established after the Homeland War as a ceremonial unit, stirs the memory of the city's glorious military past.

Until the second half of the 19th century, the Kupa River and the Karolina, Jozefina and Lujzijana Roads were the main commercial routes between the breadbasket of Slavonia and the ports of the Croatian Primorje. This is commemorated on the historic roads that link Karlovac with the Adriatic by the stone monuments in the "roundabouts" in Korzo and Dubovac. The milestone on Korzo was put in place during the construction of the Jozefina Road (completed in 1779), and the obelisk on Dubovac at the junction of the Karolina (1728) and Lujzijana (1811) Roads in 2005.

Besides Croats, the first residents of Karlovac, officers and soldiers, were Slovenians, Austrians, and Germans. Later settlers included Serbs, Jews, Czechs, Italians, Hungarians, and Russians, many of them traders, craftsmen, engineers, teachers, and artists. Karlovac became a "Europe in miniature", and the mixed population fashioned a special vocabulary of a Karlovac "urban nobility". On the boundary of culture and gastronomy the city offers a harmonious mixture of various culinary styles.

Today, Karlovac is accessible to Europe via modern roads, and it is well-known for its cultural events, such as the Karlovac Beer Days, the Four Rivers Ethno-Jazz and Jazz Festival, the Youth Film Review, the Four Rivers Film Festival, the International Folklore Review, the Winter Art Colony (ZILIK), and the ArtiKa Festival of Entertainment. Among religious believers the city is known for gatherings at the National Shrine of St. Joseph and Shrine of the Virgin Mary in Kamensko.



Musicians



Salonsko kolo







City of history and culture

KARLOVAC



Traces of the early settlement of Karlovac date from the 3rd century B.C. A defensive tower, known as *Branič kula*, which was erected in the 12th century in the medieval citadel of Dubovac on the site of a prehistoric settlement, is today a scenic overlook with an exhibition stage. At the foot of Dubovac is the National Shrine of St. Joseph.

The first known city plan of Karlovac has immortalized the beginning of its construction, on 13 July 1579. Karlovac was named for the Habsburg Archduke Charles II, who instigated its construction, which was centered on a star-shaped fortress. That fortress – now known simply as *Zvijezda* (Star) – contains the original core of the old town with its central market and regular network of streets. The surrounding trench works were converted into parks in the 19th century.

The defensive layout of Karlovac fulfilled its task – the city did not fall to the Ottomans. In the most recent war enemy forces were halted at the outlying village of Turanj. Since 2002, a unique collection of weapons of the Homeland War in Croatia has been on display at the scene of the greatest battles, which saved the city of Karlovac. The collection has been viewed by 100,000 visitors.



Franciscan
monastery and
a concert in the
Church of the
Holy Trinity



Remains of the Chapel of St. Joseph



Exhibits in the City Museum



As a consequence of the development of commerce and crafts in the 17th century, the city began to outgrow the fortress. For the next two centuries it enjoyed the "golden age" of its economic rise and acquired the privilege of a Free Royal City in 1781.

The oldest non-military building in the Renaissance-Baroque *Zvijezda* is the Church of the Holy Trinity, which with the Franciscan monastery comprises one architectural entity. It has been designated a national cultural monument. The monastery contains a valuable collection of sacred art. In nearby Kamensko there is a Paulist monastery with the Church of St. Mary of the Snows, established in 1404.

In 1804, the people of Karlovac erected what has become the oldest music school in Croatia. The city was also home to the first Croatian choral society, "Zora" (1858); the *ban* and writer Ivan Mažuranić, who wrote his most important works here; the best Croatian painter of the 19th century, Vjekoslav Karas; and the famous scientist Nikola Tesla, who graduated from high school in nearby Rakovac.

Today, the *Zorin Dom* Municipal Theater, the "Ivan Goran Kovačić" library, the "Vjekoslav Karas" gallery, but also civic centers, such as MUZA and the youth centers in Grabrik and Gaza, are the center of a diverse cultural life.



Collection of Weapons of the Homeland War in Turanj





Zvezda dressed in green



Magnolias blooming in Modrušan Park



Children's playground at Vunsko Field



A peacock in the Vrbanić Gardens



Marmont's Alley



Roundabout in Dubovac



A flowerery facade



Pleasant conversations



KARLOVAC

City of parks

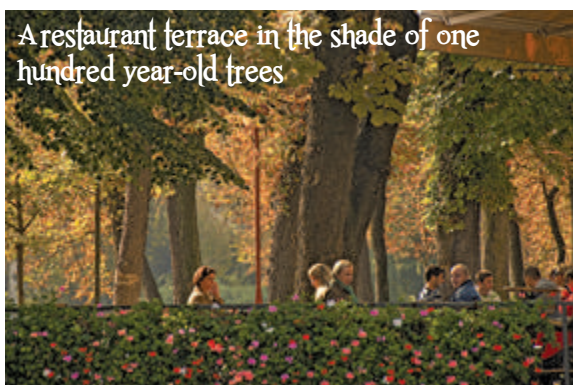
In terms of its surface area, Karlovac has the largest proportion of parks of any city in Croatia. The first plantings were part of the renovation of the Karlovac fortress and first mentioned in 1752. Lines of trees along the former fortress trenches comprise a "green bulwark" for the old city center, while maintaining its original star-shaped Renaissance appearance.

The oldest preserved horticultural area is Marmont's Alley in Dubovac. This monument to park architecture dates from 1809, when 112 maple trees were planted along the Lujzijana Road. The line of trees was named for Napoleon's marshal, August Marmont, head of the Illyria Province. Today, Marmont's Alley has 101 trees, 36 of which are original and now more than 200 years old and reaching a diameter of one and a half meters and a height of 33 meters. The Society for City Beautification, which was active from 1886 to 1907, cultivated many trees and parks, which even today adorn the city, including the five rows of wild chestnut trees along the Dr. Franjo Tudman Walking Area (the popular Promenade), which extends along the "spine" of the city, from Radić Street to the *Zorin Dom* Municipal Theater. In the fall the Promenade provides a special charm to strollers when it is covered by a carpet woven of multicolored autumn leaves.

The Vrbanić Gardens, which were designed in 1895 along the Korana River, make a wonderful green oasis. The gardens are protected as a monument to garden architecture, while their shady paths and benches are favorite walking and rest areas. Not far away is Vunsko Field with its newly renovated playground that is a popular gathering place for children, who enjoy playing games unfettered in the green surroundings.

In the vicinity of Vrbanić Gardens, the Forestry School, and the building of Croatia Forests is the Arboretum, since 1986 a dendrological nature park with more than 1,000 seedlings, trees, and decorative shrubs. Modrušan Park next to the Edison Theater was planted between the two world wars. The magnolias that bloom here in the early spring bring restful sights to strollers.

The parks and flower gardens (with more than 80,000 flowers) are a heritage that residents of Karlovac nurture with pride, skill, and care, and that others enjoy them is evident by the many awards they have received, among them the "Green Flower" of the Croatian Tourist Board for the best kept city in continental Croatia in 2010.



A restaurant terrace in the shade of one hundred year-old trees



Arboretum



Walking path along the Kupa

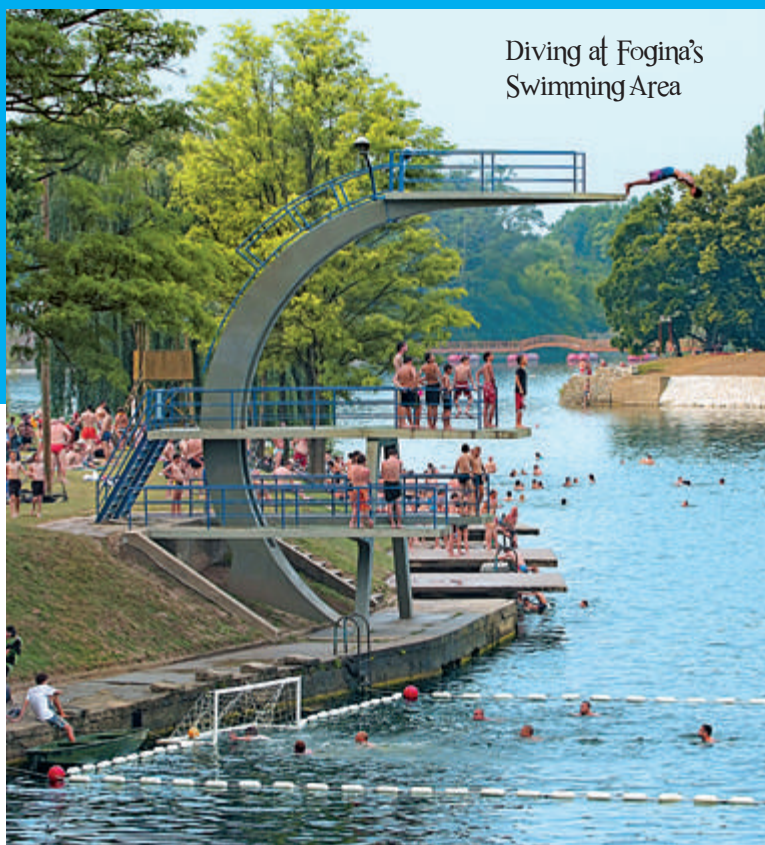
Four rivers, one city

KARLOVAC

Karlovac is inspired by rivers, their beauty and power, and by the cultural-historical heritage that flows along their banks. The most momentous events have played out on the banks of the Kupa and Korana Rivers, and today they provide the stages for popular performances and artistic presentations.

The reason that Karlovac was founded at the confluence of the Kupa and Korana Rivers was a military-strategic one. As the city expanded, it incorporated two more rivers – the Mrežnica and the Dobra – and Karlovac then became a city of many bridges. There are seven of them in the center of town and as many again in the suburbs. The river with the most bridges is also the largest – the Kupa, on which the bulk of the grain trade toward the Croatian Primorje “flowed” until the second half of the 19th century.

Since then, the residents of Karlovac have been connected more to the Korana, whose temperature can reach 24° C in the summer. One analysis in 1870 confirmed both the medicinal qualities of the river and the local saying, “The Korana increases the strength of men and refreshes the beauty of women.” Since that time, the beaches of the Korana have been the favorite bathing areas, and the hotel opened at the Municipal Swimming Area in 1897 was even visited by the “crowned heads” of Europe. In 2011, the Croatian Tourist Board proclaimed Fogina’s Swimming Area the most beautiful river beach in Croatia.



Diving at Fogina's Swimming Area



The Korana is home to many swans



Fishing on the Korana



From the beach to the River Cinema



Old boats on the Korana

The Korana below the falls – to the joy of many, especially children – a refuge for numerous swans, some of which permanently reside in Karlovac. The banks of the Korana are the one of the longest, most beautiful and most visited of the city's walking areas, and three years ago its charm was enhanced by a new, romantic wooden pontoon bridge. But it is still easiest to reach the green-draped beaches by a pleasant boat ride.

Boats for rowing are one of the frequent images of Karlovac, mostly on the Kupa River and even though the municipal rowing club is named "Korana". The first rowing regatta was held in 1897. Beginning in 1998, a marathon from Hrnetić to the Rowing Club in Dubovac has been held every summer.

The four rivers of Karlovac are also an attractive destination for solitary fishermen and painters and photographers. A visit to these waters is ideal for rest and relaxation, and it also inspires creativity. The rivers of Karlovac are a most beautiful invitation to a traveler who wants to stop and enjoy himself.

The green valley of the Dobra



Rowers on the Kupa



Summer joy on the Korana



Swimming area on the Mreznica



Bridges on the Korana





Birthday Ball

International Folklore Festival



St. John's Day bonfires on the Kupa River



Film Festival

Karlovac – the green heart of Croatia





City of events

KARLOVAC

In May, the medieval citadel of Dubovac above Karlovac is the perfect setting for the Fair of Lords, a performance that vividly brings to life the gathering of the residents of the Royal District of Dubovac of the 16th century. The Fair, which has been held since 2005, returns to the setting and spirit of Renaissance life, but also to the battles with the Ottomans. It is a special experience to dance with a Dubovac lord, or even to be "put to death" beneath the executioner's axe.

On the eve of St. John's Day, 23 June, thousands of people anxiously await downstream from the Kupa Bridge for the lighting of two large St. John's Day bonfires. Karlovac is the only city in Croatia that for centuries has kept the tradition of the ceremonial lighting of fires that announce the arrival of summer; the oldest record of this is from 1779. The bonfires were once lit along the Kupa in Gaza, but since the 19th century they have also been on the opposite bank in Banija. These two neighborhoods compete in the size and beauty of their bonfires, the luxuriousness of their fireworks, and in the richness of their performances.

On 13 July, the Day of the City of Karlovac, the city is host to the International Folklore Festival, which brings together ensembles from around the world. The seven-day festival has been held since 1998 and has been included in the CIOFF program under the sponsorship of UNESCO. The festival opens with a parade and appearance by the participants at the Šanac Recreation Area.

For the last two years, on the birthday of Karlovac, the central square in the historic center of *Zvijezda* is the formal stage for the Birthday Ball. In honor of the beloved city, as many couples as there are candles on the city's birthday cake dance to the rhythm of a waltz.

At the end of summer, a fifth river abundantly flows through Karlovac – a river of beer. The Karlovac Beer Days have been held since 1984. They are the largest beer event in Croatia. Over ten days more than 150,000 beer lovers visit the city. They are announced by a procession through the city streets led by a wagon with a beer barrel. During the event, the lively small city entertains with many programs, a handicraft exhibition, a selection of outstanding beer, and famous Karlovac pretzels.

Since 2007, Karlovac has been the host of the Youth Film Review in June. One year later, the city achieved international recognition with the start of the Four Rivers Film Festival. The "Festival in Yellow" offers an opportunity to film lovers enjoy the best high school films.





Horseback riding in the parks



Taking a break from bicycling by reading



Long walks are the most beautiful



A grassy beach at Fogina's Swimming Area



A trampoline on the Korana



Swimming marathon on the Kupa



A modern exercise area for all generations



Fishing on the Korana

KARLOVAC City for an active vacation

In addition to the cultural-historical attractions of Karlovac and the banks of the rivers, numerous pleasant walking paths lead through the centuries-old parks and forested hills. It is nicest to walk, or even ride, through the lines of trees of the old city center of *Zvijezda*, the Arboretum, and the Vrbanić Gardens along the Korana. It is also enjoyable to walk from the Kupa River to the citadel of Dubovac and also to the Anzić villa at Borlin and the mouth of the Korana at the Kupa River at Vodostaj.

The Kozjača training course leads to a suburban forest of the same name, while there is also a mountain course to the southwestern hills for Nordic walking, from Martinščak and Vinica, via Kalvarija, all the way to Zadobarje. As a rule, the mountain shelters at Vinica, Kalvarija, and Priselci are open on weekends from spring to autumn.

Karlovac and its surrounding area offers hundreds of kilometers of bicycling routes. The city has a network of bicycle lanes and one can also tour the older towns (Dubovac, Novigrad on the Dobra River), country manors, monasteries (Kamensko, Svetice), and churches by riding primarily on local roads. For the most part, the routes are not too demanding and they are followed by the river valleys, fishing areas on the river banks, and the clearings at Vučjak and Zadobarje.

The meadows along the Korana River are an oasis for recreational and therapeutic horseback riding. There is also riding at the Karlovac Horse Club and at the Fany Horse Club in Vukmanički Cerovac. Karlovac is also among the most attractive fishing destinations in Croatia. The "Korana" Sport Fishing Club looks after the waters of the four rivers, the Šumbar creek and fish-pond, and the stocking of fish. The richness of the pure waters has been rewarded by the large number of fish species.

Although it is enjoyable to swim in the waters of Karlovac's four rivers, the largest summer swimming area also offers other challenges for an active vacation and fun. This offer includes the first registered and best river beach in Croatia, Fogina's Swimming Area on the Korana River. Here you can play water polo, picigin, and beach volleyball. A favorite place is the modern recreational exercise area, and kids also enjoy the trampoline.

The main city attractions are accessible by walking paths, and for people with disabilities, a specially designed ramp and elevator give them the opportunity to enjoy the charms of the Korana in the hot summer months at Fogina's Swimming Area.

Active since they were young



Skating through a park



Karlovac Beer Days

City for enjoyment

KARLOVAC

One can say this about Karlovac: *It is a city on a human scale.* Not too big, not too small, rich antiquities, but open to the modern, imbued with culture and filled with green and by its rivers, close to the metropolis of Zagreb, but also within reach of the sea, a perfect place for a harmonious life and creativity.

Such a city is pleasant for everyone: for children and teenagers, families, and the elderly, but also those with special needs. Karlovac is a city open to knowledge, and it especially recognizes and appreciates young people who come to school here. Today, the junior college educates almost 2,000 students, and the secondary schools also offer attractive programs.

Young people are increasingly breathing life into the historic center of the city – *Zvijezda*. In the last 10 years, after the planned renovation of the military barracks, educational facilities were opened that exude the spirit of a new era. Young people are also giving their stamp of approval to the cultural events for which Karlovac is becoming known and recognized far and wide. One such event in 2011 was the "River Cinema", a summer cinema at Fogina's Swimming Area that thrilled many viewers.

The former large military garrison, and then the grain trade and rich exhibitions, contributed to the opening of the famous Karlovac restaurants and cafes. From the 19th century until today, numerous cafes, bars, and night clubs are continuing the tradition of social life, from early in the morning to late at night, with a glass of beer or wine, or even a cup of coffee.

The favorite gathering places are Papa's Bar, the café at the *Zorin Dom* Theater, *Cohiba*, *Crni mačak* (Black Cat), *Mods*, *River Pub*, *D Klub*, *Slap*, and *ZUM*. From early spring until late autumn guests can enjoy the terraces of the restaurants, especially those in the shade of the trees in the parks and along the peaceful river banks. It is a real blessing to socialize with a favorite drink and to relax in a harmonious atmosphere, and where food is offered – to try the tasty offerings.

You will find excellently prepared meals in the old town restaurants and cafes, but also in modern restaurants and pizzerias, such as *Pod starimi krovovi* (Under Old Roofs), *Kvaka*, *Mirna*, *Tiffany Pizzeria*, *Rialto*, and the *Pod Švarčom* brewery. Vegetarian meals are available, and the pastry shops also have a good reputation.



The Fair of Lords



"Ježeva kućica" (The Hedgehog's House) at the Zorin Dom Municipal Theater



Fišjada – a competition for preparing fish paprikash



A Karlovac café



Parks are an ideal place to relax



Four River Film Festival

See you in Karlovac!





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