

A description of the Camino Krk pilgrimage route

Introduction: About Camino

Camino de Santiago or the Way of St James is about 800-kilometre long pilgrimage route, walked by more than 300,000 pilgrims each year. It was named The Main Street of Europe by the Council of Europe in 1987, while the Spanish and French parts of the route leading to Galicia's capital Santiago de Compostela were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1993. The network of St James's ways that lead to one of the world's major pilgrimage centres housing the relics of St James the Apostle stretches across Europe and is marked by a stylised scallop shell as the saint's primary attribute. In Croatia, ever since 1203, the brotherhoods of St James have been extending organised help to the pilgrims on their hiking ventures. Today's Brotherhood of St James, seated in Samobor, has preserved this valuable tradition, and is a member of the Confraternity of St James in Santiago de Compostela, a central association gathering other eponymous associations and fraternities from all over the globe. It was precisely in cooperation with the Croatian Brotherhood in 2019 that the marking of Croatia's official Camino route started alongside the medieval pilgrim paths of the island of Krk, with the aim of making it a part of the European network of pilgrim routes of St James. Camino Krk is just a little over 150-kilometre long circular route across the island, following the infrastructure of the existing hiking (and cycling) trails. It starts in the island's centre - the town of Krk, or to be precise at the Krk Cathedral, and ends, symbolically, at the Parish Church of St James the Apostle in the village of Kornić. The Krk route is divided into seven pilgrimage chapters or seven days needed to truly experience the island's historical, cultural and religious heritage woven into the unique natural and urban setting.

Chapter/day one: Krk - Brzac

First chapter summary:

- The Camino Krk route starts from the town of Krk, the island's centre, with the first day featuring a 23-kilometre long walk through its surrounding villages, from Vrh through the Šotovento area, Skrbčići and Pinezići all the way to the village of Brzac. Aside from the stunning nature, pilgrims will have the opportunity to admire the island's impressive historical, cultural and religious heritage. The pilgrimage starts at the heart of the Krk's old town, boasting a complex of the Cathedral and the dual Church of St Quirinus and St Margaret by Kamplin Square as a prime example of the island's religious architecture. After visiting the Frankopan Castle, the Krk residence of the noble family of historical relevance for the country, the old town alleys pass by the Krk Island Maritime Heritage Interpretation Centre and lead all the way to the Upper Town Gate that guards two valuable complexes, the Franciscan Monastery and the Benedictine Convent, along with Our Lady of Good Health - the town's first Romanesque church. In addition to these religious buildings, the view of the town walls enveloping almost the entire old town is simply astounding. One of Krk's most beautiful streets running alongside the walls of the Benedictine Convent descends towards Vela placa, the town's main square surrounded

by numerous landmarks, mostly from the Antiquity period. The walking route continues by the town's waterfront and its western part, past Bor Campsite, before heading towards Vrh through numerous olive groves. After seeing the remains of the Church of St Mary, the next pilgrimage point is the so-called Salatići Castle, from where the path runs by the Kimpi and Kaštel fields and reaches Vrh, a village dominated by the Parish Church of St Michael the Archangel, before taking us further to the neighbouring Skrbčiči and Pinezići. Passing through Šotovento, a fertile wooded part of the island that covers the area around St Fusca Cove, walkers will be drawn to the remains of the Kambun settlement, while the first day's tour ends with a visit to Vela Jana Cove and the village of Brzac.

Chapter/day two: Brzac – Malinska

Second chapter summary:

- Day two of the pilgrimage includes a 22.9-kilometre long walk from the village of Brzac to Glavotok, still in the Šotovento area, before heading to Dubašnica. Passing through several authentic island villages, this part of the route ends in Malinska, the centre of the Malinska-Dubašnica Municipality. After leaving Brzac, the path heads towards Glavotok, a hamlet first mentioned as a summer residence (with a chapel) of the Frankopan Counts of Krk. In the 15th century the chapel was donated to the Franciscans, who built a monastery and later a church on the estate. The dense forests surrounding Glavotok lead to the Church of St Chrysogonus above Čavlana Cove, a true gem of the island's Romanesque architecture. Later on, pilgrims will come across the island's biggest and oldest oak tree. A stroll by the sea and partly through the forest leads to the viewpoint in the Fumak area, followed by the village of Porat developed around the Franciscan monastery - a complex comprising a museum, an olive mill (called *toš* by the locals) and a collection of church artwork and exhibits testifying to the religious, cultural and economic heritage of the Third Order Franciscans in Porat. The monastery's Glagolitic lapidarium houses copies of Croatia's oldest and most important Glagolitic inscriptions. On the way through Dubašnica walkers will see the Old Cemetery of St Apollinaire with an impressive stone bell tower. The path further leads through several villages, from Sveti Anton and Milovčiči to Kremenčići with the Chapel of St Andrew, the oldest preserved chapel in the area. The Camino story's second chapter ends in Malinska.

Chapter/day three: Malinska – Omišalj

Chapter three summary:

- On days three, the pilgrimage resumes along a 19-kilometre long route from the heart of Malinska to the northern part of the island, west of Kijac and through Njivice, to Omišalj as the final destination. To reach Kijac Cove, we will take a nice stroll through the Paradise Trail seaside promenade. Upon arrival to Njivice, we will visit the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary built in the early 20th century in the place of earlier religious buildings. In the ancient era, this tame area known as Poje was home to

a rustic villa, a large farming estate on which an early Christian church was later built. The path leads us further north to the Mohorov site with the remains of another late Antiquity dwelling. A stroll towards Sepen Cove, south-west of the town of Omišalj, will take us to the remains of the Roman town of Fulfinum from the first half of the 1st century and to a valuable monumental early Christian church with a cross-shaped layout, belonging to a late Antiquity necropolis at the Mirine site, built in the early 5th century. The path through the woods to an elevated site above Omišalj Bay leads us to Fortičina, where the ruins of a medieval castle and a late Antiquity fortress with a cistern were found. Descending to the coast by Pesja Cove, we will reach our next destination – Dubec Park, a landscape architecture site from the first half of the 20th century. Upon entering the very heart of Omišalj, pilgrims will be drawn to the picturesque Church of St Helen and the Romanesque Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Chapter/day four: Omišalj – Čižići

Fourth chapter summary:

– On day four, the pilgrimage section follows a 21.4-kilometre-long, northernmost route from the centre of Omišalj to Čižići. It starts from the viewpoint of Dubec Park, Omišalj's green oasis, with a nearby single-nave Romanesque church dedicated to St Anthony of Padua. A pleasant walk to the northern tip of the island continues near a scattered village and the coast, i.e. the coves of Večja, Martinj and Lučica. Passing along the southern edge of Omišalj Campsite, the route reaches the intersection for Rijeka Airport and climbs up through sparse vegetation to the Krk Bridge, very close to the barren islet of Sveti Marko. At this point, the pilgrimage route descends to Voz Cove and the Vošćica peninsula where you can see the foundations of an ancient building and the Maltempo Fort, built by the Venetians to control maritime traffic in the channel of Tihi kanal. In an elevated area known as Kapelica, located between the coves of Voz and Peškera, i.e. Cape Bejavec and Tihi kanal, walkers will find a watchtower and the remains of a long building with a side entrance. Close by is also an eco-friendly immortelle field. A long walk along the rocky north-eastern coast by the Vinodol Channel will take you to Slivanjska Cove, boasting one of the most beautiful sandy beaches on the island. Biserujka Cave, situated right in between the cove and the village of Rudine, is known for a vast array of cave decorations – calcite speleothems, especially columns and stalactites. In the Municipality of Dobrinj, the pilgrimage route passes through Rudine and a woody area in the direction of Čižići. The last section of day four will bring you to the remains of St Peter's Church.

Chapter/day five: Čižići – Vrbnik

Fifth chapter summary:

- Along the 21.6-kilometre route, the pilgrimage continues from Čižići via Soline and a woody inland area to the villages of Dobrinj and Sv. Vid Dobrinjski. It ends in Vrbnik, which you will reach from Risika. A coastal promenade connects Čižići with the

neighbouring village of Soline, both situated in the shallow and warm Soline Cove. Between them lies Meline, a coastal area known for black medicinal mud. On the sheltered hill above Soline, one of the oldest settlements of the Dobrinj area, walkers will find a single-nave Romanesque church of Ss Philip and James. The route then climbs up through thick woods towards Dobrinj, the centre of the eponymous municipality, adorned by the St Steven's Parish Church. Both its name and the name of the settlement were first mentioned in the oldest Croatian document written in the Glagolitic script, the Deed of Donation by Glorious Dragoslav from 1100. A prominent Baroque bell tower and the Holy Trinity Church are located not far from the parish church, where the old cemetery lies. After visiting Dobrinj and a short walk by the side of the road, the next pilgrimage point is located at the entrance to the nearby village of Sveti Vid Dobrinjski. This single-nave and single-apse church dedicated to St Vitus is unique for its massive stone bell tower built in front of the entrance façade some time later. Farther ahead are the remains of Dolovo (or Dolova), an abandoned village between Kras and Gostinjac. The route continues in the direction of south-east, taking you to the Vrbnik Municipality and Gradec, a castle hidden in the forest also known as Fort Rovoznik, the first estate of the Krk's noble family of Frankopan. From the pleasant village of Risika, the route diverges to the coast again, where, in the middle of a small peninsula in St Marek's Cove, you will find the remains of St Mark's Church. Passing along the coast and through the forest, it leads all the way to Vrbnik, the most picturesque island settlement located above the sea, at the very top of a steep cliff. According to many, Vrbnik is extremely significant as the birthplace of the Glagolitic script – it is right here, in the Vrbnik's Glagolitic scriptorium, that the majority of Glagolitic manuscripts preserved to this day were written. The Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary dominates its old town, which boasts many other religious buildings as well as noteworthy sites such as Klančić, the narrowest street in the world, the Vitezić's family library, or the remains of medieval walls – one of many traces left in Vrbnik by the Krk's noble family of Frankopan. The next section will take you to the Vrbnik's port and a small church dedicated to St John the Baptist, while walking towards the Vrbnik Field you will discover another interesting site – the remains of St Maurus' Church.

Chapter/day six: Vrbnik – Baška

Sixth chapter summary:

– On day six, the walk continues through the Vrbnik Field on a 23.3-kilometre-long section from Vrbnik to Baška. The field is widely known as the place where precious vines have been grown for more than a hundred years now. The route will then take you to the source of Vela Rika and the nearby climbing sites of Portafortuna and Belove stene in the Baška Municipality, an area perfect for a wide range of outdoor activities. Nearby you will also find an impressive landscape with dry stone walls ('gromača') leading to the so-called Moon Plateau. This otherworldly place is the most famous local site due to its barren landscape without any shade, resembling a rocky desert or the Moon's surface. North of the Moon Plateau you will find Kuntrep Ornithological Reserve stretching from Cape Glavine to Mala Luka Cove – the oldest ornithological reserve in the world, where griffon vultures are taken care of. The Moon Plateau is connected to

Baška by the Path to the Moon. Its first section goes through the woods and takes you to the Church of St John the Baptist, patron saint of the parish and the Baška Municipality. The Path to the Moon continues downhill towards the centre of the village, boasting another three significant religious buildings: the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity, the Church of St Anthony of Padua, and St Mark's Chapel, underneath which lie the remains of a monumental Early Christian basilica and a baptistery. Given that the Glagolitic script is one of the symbols of the Baška area, make sure to take the Baška Glagolitic Trail featuring 34 stone sculptures of the Glagolitic alphabet, erected on attractive sites in Baška, Jurandvor, Batomalj and Draga Baščanska.

Chapter/day seven: Baška – Kornić

Seventh chapter summary:

On day seven, a 21.4-kilometre-long section will take walkers from Baška via Jurandvor, Batomalj and Punat to the final destination – Kornić. Following the sculptures along the Baška Glagolitic Trail you will arrive in Jurandvor, one of the most famous sites on the island. What made it famous was an artefact found in 1851 in the abbey complex of St Lucy. It is a stone slab of the altar partition known as the Baška Tablet, one of the oldest historical monuments of the Croatian history, i.e. literacy and sovereignty. The route continues to the west and takes you to Batomalj. Above the village, you will find not only the largest diocesan Marian shrine, but also one of the oldest Croatian shrines. The next climb towards the south-western plateau brings you up to a restored 'mrgar' called Lipica and a road with sparse roadside vegetation leading to Obzova and Veli vrh. From there you will be able to see the islet of Košljun, and Kornić, pilgrimage points along the way. Along the path to Punat, the centre of the eponymous municipality, you will see the Stations of the Cross. The Toš Gallery and Stari Toš Olive Growing Interpretation Centre are well worth visiting, along with the Parish Church of the Holy Trinity and two votive churches dedicated to St Rocco (at the main square) and St Nicholas in Buka. Located at the heart of the picturesque bay of Puntarska draga, the islet of Košljun is a true spiritual oasis, covering only 0.072 square kilometres and welcoming pilgrims that come here by boat every day. A thick forest of centuries-old holm oak and black ash trees hides a Franciscan monastery with a lavish Renaissance church dedicated to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A museum with a rich holding of ethnographic, archaeological and religious artefacts, and a library with more than 30,000 books also make part of the monastery. On the way to the last pilgrimage point, walkers will get to know another two attractions: the archaeological site in Kanajt and the remains of a trefoil Romanesque church dedicated to St Donatus. The Camino Krk route ends in the town of Krk area, with the last pilgrimage point being the Parish Church of St James the Apostle.