



CISTERCIAN WAY

Discover the rich cultural heritage left behind by the Cistercian monks of Stična throughout the centuries!



Cistercian
landscapes
connecting Europe



Foreword

Since 2019, the Slovene Museum of Christianity has been involved as a partner in the European Cisterciapes (Cistercian landscapes connecting Europe) project. Under the Cistercian landscapes connecting Europe project, the cultural landscape of the Cistercians has been explored, content into the joint database contributed, a contemporary interactive exhibition on the cultural landscape of the Cistercians set up and the Cistercian Way that this publication will take you through established.

The key objective of all project partners is to obtain The European Heritage Label which will undoubtedly contribute to an even greater global visibility of the Slovenian Museum of Christianity housed in one part of the ancient Stična Abbey.

By opening the Cistercian Way for hikers, the interactive exhibition on the cultural landscape of the Cistercian is being spread to the nearby and distant surroundings of the Monastery of Stična. At several locations within the Municipality of Ivančna Gorica, you will be able to learn how the Cistercian monks of Stična have transformed the landscape throughout the centuries.

Nataša Polajnar Frelj, M.A., Director of the Slovene Museum of Christianity.

Interactive exhibition entitled The Cultural Landscape of the Cistercians at the SMC

Learn about the cultural landscape of the Cistercians of Stična also at the contemporary interactive exhibition displayed at the Slovene Museum of Christianity (SMC). The 2D model containing AV/VR applications facilitates learning about the former economic activities of the Monastery of Stična in its wider sphere of influence by using a tablet or your smartphone. 35 elements of the cultural landscape are presented in total. The application allows you to also learn about the cultural landscape of sixteen other Cistercian monasteries in Europe that have joined the Cisterciapes Projects as partners.



The Cistercian Way

The Cistercian Way is a more than 6300 kilometres long global hiking trail connecting the monastic landscapes of six European countries. The Way takes hikers into a pristine wilderness, cultural landscape, and in the midst of cultural heritage.

As part of the Cisterscapes project, 17 partners from five countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovenia) have thoroughly examined and explored the traces left behind by the Cistercians' activities in the cultural landscape throughout the centuries. Their economic activity primarily left a mark on the surrounding area of their resident monasteries. The Cistercian Way is oriented towards the cradle of the Cistercian monastic order, Cîteaux in Burgundy.



The Cistercian Way runs along existing hiking trails connecting 17 Cistercian monastic landscapes and does not have its own marker. In their surroundings, you can embark on a short detours and use information signboards to learn about the impact of the Cistercians on the local landscape.

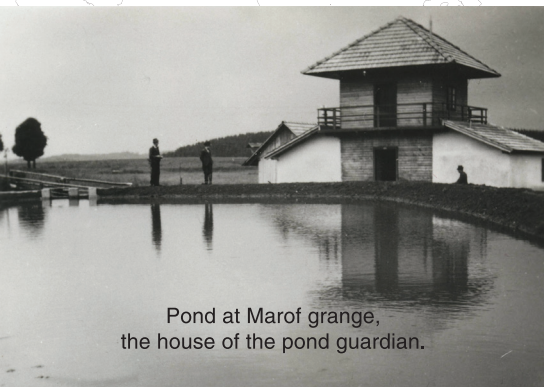
Cisterscapes
Trail
Portal :



The Stična Cistercian Abbey

The Stična Cistercian Abbey

In 1136, the Patriarch of Aquileia Pellegrinus I. signed the founding charter of the Stična Cistercian monastery which became a daughter monastery of Rein in Styria. The first monks had already arrived four years prior to make all the necessary arrangements and build everything required for the operation of the monastery. Mary's Church was completed and consecrated in 1156. In 1784 the monastery was disbanded as part of the many reforms of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II. Until the end of the 19th century, the monastic buildings were used for other purposes. In 1898, the monastery returned to life and continues to be the oldest still functioning monastery in Slovenia and the only Cistercian monastery in our country. After its founding, the monastery became an important religious, economic, and cultural hub of the then Carniola. The Cistercian monks namely introduced numerous new soil cultivation practices and significantly contributed to the economic development of the surrounding area. As early as the 12th century, an important manuscript workshop, where many manuscripts were produced, was in operation at the monastery. This is also where one of the oldest known examples of written Slovenian, the Stična Manuscript, was produced in the 15th century. The monastery and church are nowadays protected as historic buildings of national importance in addition to the monastery constituting an important religious and cultural hub.



Pond at Marof grange,
the house of the pond guardian.

Traces left behind by the Cistercians

**»Bernardus valles, montes
Benedictus amabat.«
Bernard loved the valleys,
Benedict the mountains.**

The adage above is backed up also by the case of Stična, where the Cistercians constructed the monastery at the widening of the Stična Brook Valley and benefited from its hydropower. There was a mill inside the monastic complex whose wheels were powered by the water from a man-made canal. As many as seven monastic mills operated in the Valley of the Stična Brook, regulated in several areas. Nowadays, an admittedly newer mill wheel can only be seen at the Malnarček Mill. Therefore, milling used to be the main economic activity of the Stična Abbey. One of the largest and most beautiful mills - the Andrejka's - towers over the Krka River close to Zagradec. Ponds also constituted an important element of the Cistercian landscape in the past. They were used to keep fish as the monks used to be subjected to stricter rules in the past and were restricted from consuming meat of four-legged animals. These were called 'bajer'. The largest were located in Marof and close to the village of Veliko Črnelo. The ponds are no longer used and are now dry. Viticulture constituted another agricultural activity undertaken by the Cistercian monks in Stična. The traditional name of the Nograd slope (stemming from 'vinograd' - vineyard) dominating the area close to the monastery reminds us thereof. Extensive vineyards were cultivated by the monastery on the Trška Gora slope close to Novo mesto. The area is still called Bajnof after the Weinhof (Wine Court) Mansion constructed by the Stična monks. Rich trade ties between Ebrach and the daughter monastery of Stična, the Cistercian monks from Ebrach are credited with importing the Silvaner vine variety from Stična to Germany. By constructing chapels of ease, the monks also shaped the landscape in its religious and cultural aspects.

Half-day loop trail to Pristava and Gradišče

From the Stična Abbey, the trail takes you along the Stična Brook Valley. In the past, its hydropower powered the water wheels of as many as seven mills owned by the monastery. The Middle mill is nowadays a beautifully restored house, whereas the Malnarček Mill is the only one still boasting a preserved water wheel. At this point, you can take a detour and visit the legendary Francis' Spring said to possess healing properties. The trail then ascends to Metnaj and further on to Pristava where you can visit the small Church of St. Lambert. The following and final point of the half-day loop trail is the small Church of St. Nicholas on Gradišče, which affords a beautiful view of the Stična Plain. After that, you descend to the Stična Abbey.

Map of
the hiking
trail:

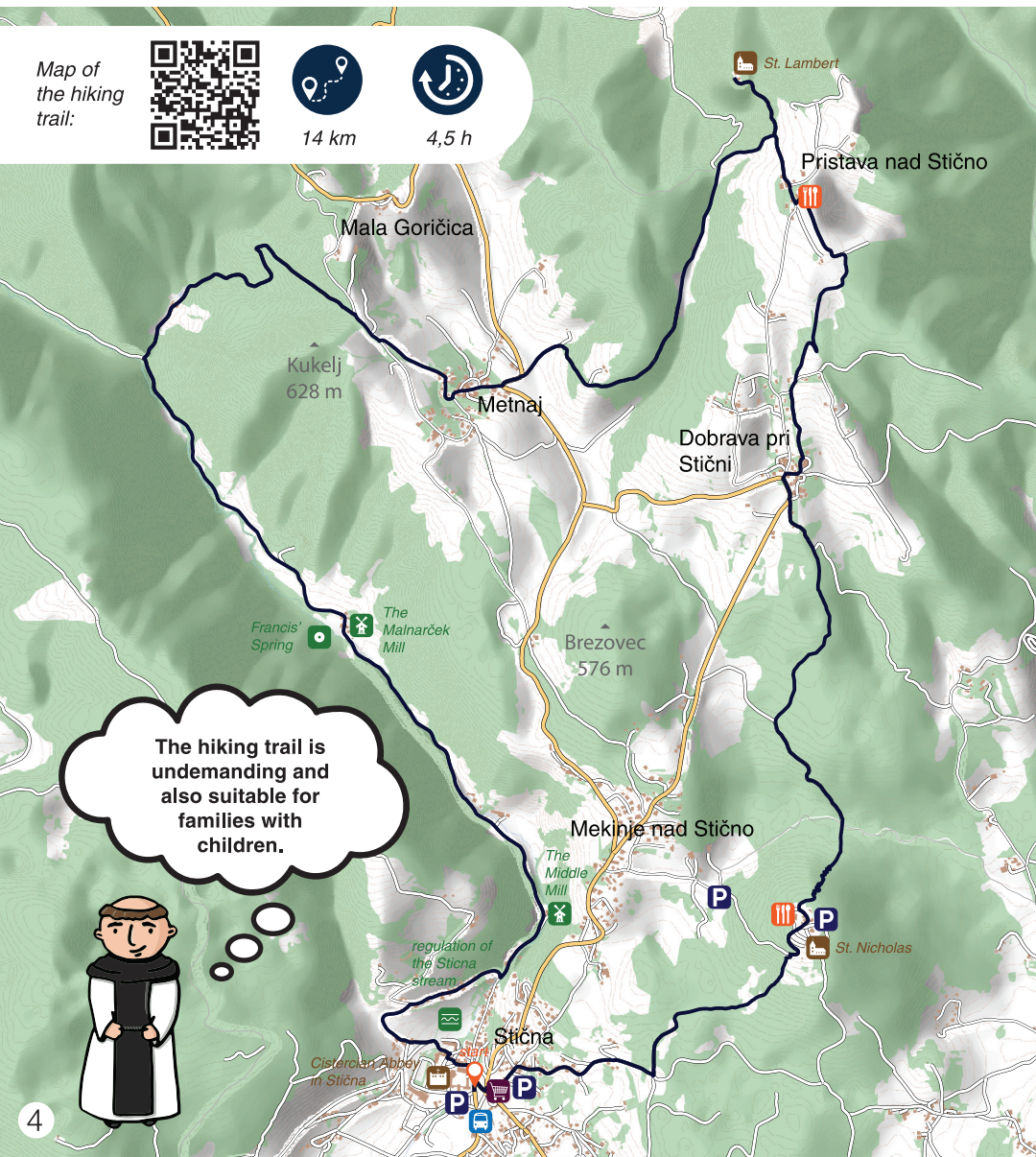


14 km



4,5 h

The hiking trail is undemanding and also suitable for families with children.



The Middle Mill

Milling was the most important activity in the Stična monastic estate. The Middle Mill was the largest of the seven mills located in the Stična Brook Valley to the north of the monastery. It was first mentioned in the 16th century in the land registers of the Stična Monastery. The mill was also drawn on the 1784–1785 Inner Austria Josephine Cadastre. After the dissolution of the monastery in the middle of the 19th century, the mill was bought from the Religious Fund by Nace Lampret. A new owner bought the mill in a very poor state in 1999 and restored it beautifully. The mill house is built on 3 metres deep foundations all the way down to the bedrock. Four apertures where the mill wheels were located are visible at the back. Above the house is an embankment, along which water flowed to the mill, powering four wheels and stamp mills with six stamp mill holders. The rectangular two-storey building of the former mill now serves as a residential house. The Romanesque portal was still preserved in the basement before the renovation. Apart from the wooden landing, no other traces of the mill remained in the house. 1741 is visible on the façade of the beautifully restored building.

The Middle Mill



The Malnarček Mill and Francis' Spring in the Stična Brook Valley

The Malnarček Mill is the only mill along the Stična Brook with a more recently made metal wheel. There is also a movable water trough along which water flows thereon. The mill was first mentioned in the 16th century in the land registers of the Stična Monastery. The mill was also drawn on the 1784–1785 Inner Austria Josephine Cadastre. The interior of the mill is partially preserved. On the southern side of the complex, there is a residential part, whereas the northern part used to serve as a mill powerful enough to power four wheels. A copy of the stone slab which once stood by the Francis spring can be seen on the eastern side of the mill facing the road.



The natural Francis' spring in the Stična Brook Valley is one of many feeding the brook bed and was already known in the 16th century. Lay-brothers came to the spring to fetch water and carried it to the Stična monastery. The Francis' spring is well known among the locals. It is believed that its water had healing powers. People used to come here to wash their eyes as its water is supposed to have a beneficial effect on the health of the vision. In the 16th century, it was fixed with a stone slab erected by lay-brother Frančišek (Francis). The years 1547-1597 are carved in the stone, marking the 50th anniversary of the monk's stay in the monastery of Stična. The stone slab was later taken to the monastery where it is now kept in the Slovene Museum of Christianity. In 2017, the locals reopened the dry spring and did landscaping. A copy of the stone slab which once stood by the spring is now located at the Malnarček Mill.

Church of St. Lambert

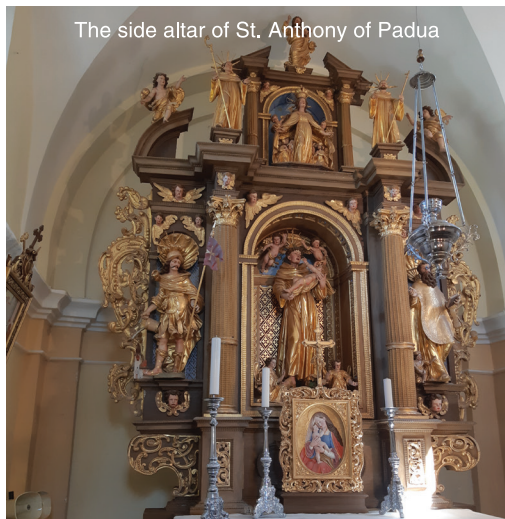
The late Gothic church of St. Lambert in Pristava was first mentioned in documents dating to 1643. On the northern wall of the presbytery an almost illegible inscription mentioning 1497 as the year of its consecration used to be visible. The current church dates to the end of the 15th century, but a castle chapel had almost certainly occupied the site before that. It is said that, next to the present church, to the northwest, there are overgrown ruins of the former Virida Visconti Castle. Virida was the wife of the Austrian Duke Leopold III. After his death, Virida withdrew to Pristava, where she lived until her death (around 1407–1408). She was a major benefactress of the Stična Monastery and was buried there in honour of her donations. The church and the ruins of Virida's castle are also mentioned by Valvasor in the 17th century. The church has a rectangular nave, an entryway, and an octagonal presbytery with a bell tower on the north side. The main altar is dedicated to St. Lambert whereas the two side altars to St. Barbara and St. James of Compostela. The presbytery has a tierceron vault with figural and pyramidal consoles. The keystones are shaped in circles, stars and shields. The Baroque altar dates to the end of the 17th century.



The Church of St. Lambert

Church of St. Nicholas

The church was first mentioned in 1250 when, after several years of a dispute between the Monastery of Stična and the priest of Šentvid pri Stični, it was awarded to the Monastery by the Patriarch of Aquileia, Bertold of Merania, in exchange for the Abbot Konrad relinquishing six farms to the Parish of Šentvid pri Stični. In the first quarter of the 17th century, the Stična Abbot Jakob Reinprecht had the old Romanesque church thoroughly rebuilt in Baroque style and a new altar of St. Ann erected.

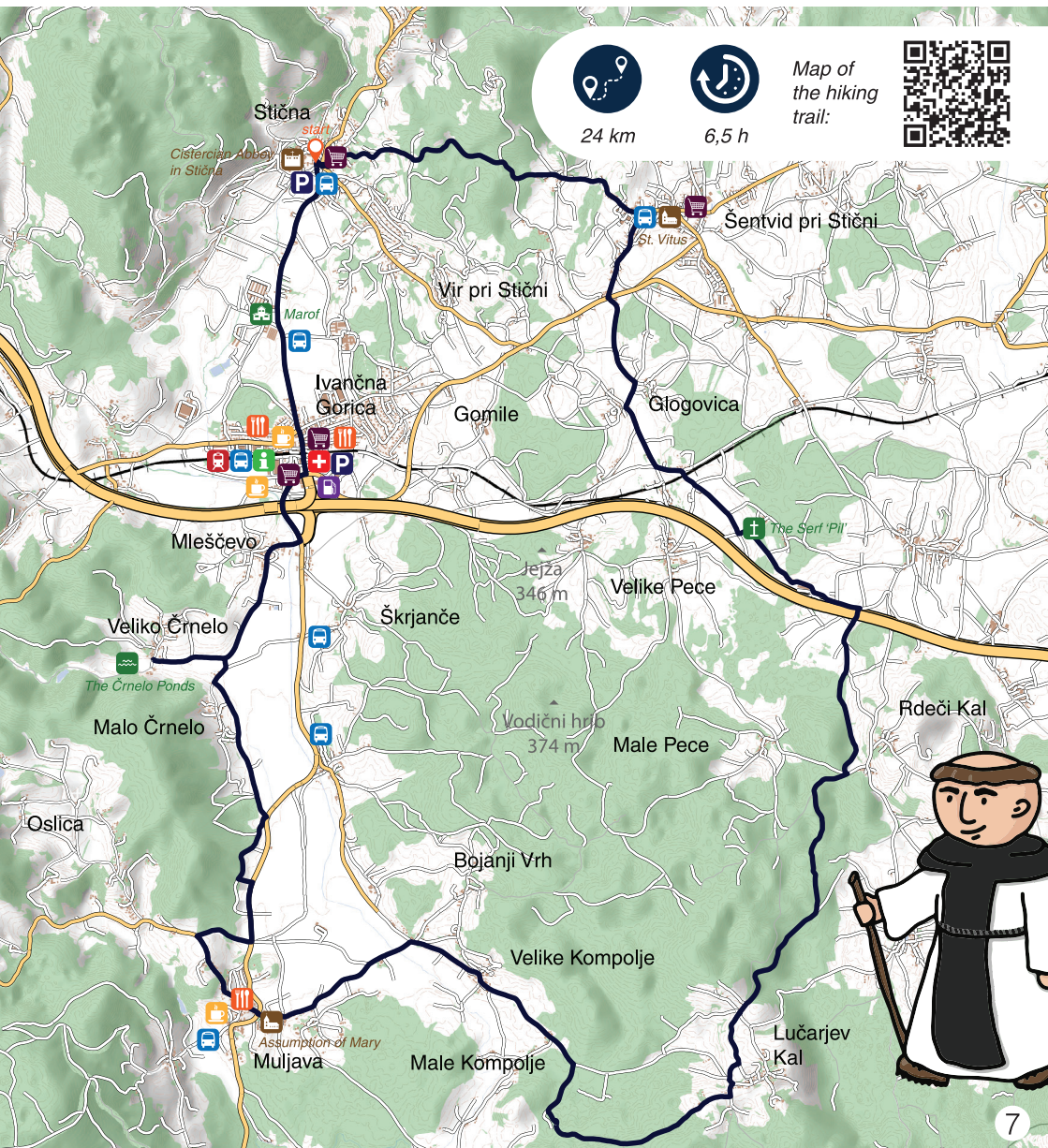


The side altar of St. Anthony of Padua

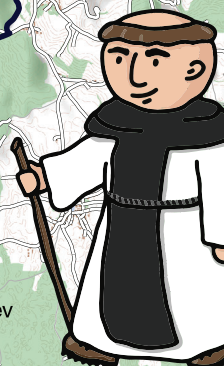
The church was most likely vaulted and the presbytery thoroughly rebuilt. In 1675, the Stična Abbot Maximilian Motoch had the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua added, an altar erected inside and consecrated. A new main altar of St. Nicholas was erected in 1705 during the tenure of the Abbot Anton Gallenfels, whose coat-of-arms is visible in the central part of the altar (next to the coat-of-arms of the Monastery of Stična) and distinguished by two ascending unicorns. A new extension in the form of a sacristy was added in 1849. In 1930, the church obtained a new altar, the altar of St. Lucia, which replaced the older one, dedicated to St. Ann, new Stations of the Cross and flooring. Statues from the altar of St. Anne is on display in the Slovene Museum of Christianity.

Full-day loop trail to Šentvid pri Stični and Muljava

Below the scope of Gradišče, walk along the forest trail taking you to Šentvid pri Stični where the Church of St. Vitus, which is even older than the Stična Basilica, is located. The next point is the Serf 'Pil' (column shrine) indicating the route in the midst of fertile croplands. Along forest trails, you end up in Muljava containing one of the gems of sacral art in Slovenia, the Church of the Assumption of Mary. The remains of the Črnelo Ponds once used by the monks to keep fish are still clearly visible near Veliko Črnelo to this day. When you return to Stična, you can also spend some time at the once large monastic grange in Marof.



Map of the hiking trail:



Church of St. Vitus was first mentioned in 1136 in connection with a deed of gift to the Stična Abbey. Chronicler Pavel Pucelj states that the first monks from Rein arrived to Šentvid as early as 1132 to oversee the construction of the monastery.

The church is of Romanesque origin and is older than Stična's basilica. Its exact history, however, is unknown. Šentvid was one of the largest pre-parishes. In 1389, it was incorporated into the Stična Monastery, together with its 80 chapels.

The old Romanesque church is preserved in the southern and northern naves, while its eastern and western parts were later redesigned and extended. The original flat Romanesque ceiling was replaced by a more recent vault. The Stična abbot Jakob Reinprecht baroquised the church in the 17th century. His coat of arms above the entranceway serves to remind us of his efforts. The entranceway is supported by a Romanesque pillar with a capital dating to the 12th century, which was also brought from the monastery, where it had most likely occupied the chapter house, during the renovations of the church.

A stone column shrine stands in a field northeast of the Velike Pece village. The locals know it as a plague column or a column shrine because it was supposedly erected by the serves of the Stična Abbey along the former main path from Rdeči Kal past Male Pece and Velike Pece to Stična. The stone column shrine with cut edges has a rectangular housing with four semicircular niches. At the top of it there is a pyramidal roof with a cross. In the shallow niches, there are depictions of the Crucified, Saint Vitus, Saint Gregory and the Mother of God. Today, the paintings are restored and painted on stone. It is assumed that the original images were painted on wood or sheet metal and placed in the niches. There are two inscriptions on the column: 1720 on the front side and the IHS monogram on the back side.



Church of St. Vitus in Šentvid



The Church of the Assumption of Mary in Muljava

The Church of the Assumption of Mary is a medieval single-naved chapel of ease. The interior is richly decorated with frescoes painted by Johannes of Ljubljana in 1456. Johannes of Ljubljana also painted a part of the cloister of the Stična Monastery and many chapels of ease in the Stična canonical territory, suggesting that the Monastery was an important patron of his.

The frescoes of the Church of the Assumption of Mary are notably well-preserved in the presbytery and on the triumphal arch. They are thematically related to the scenes from the life of the Virgin, Jesus' childhood and his Passion. Johannes' inscription on the triumphal arch indicates that the frescoes are to be credited to Ulrich, the then abbot of Stična, and the noble Lord of Turjak, Albert of Auersperg.

During archaeological excavations, it was discovered that the first church built on this site had been a Romanesque building with semi-circular apse which was later replaced by a rather long Gothic presbytery. The old church had to give way to the new Gothic building in 15th century. An inspection under the roof revealed that there are even older decorative paintings under the frescoes of Johannes of Ljubljana which can be dated back to the first half of the 15th century. In the 17th century, the bell tower was rebuilt, new bells were bought, and the interior was embellished with a new Baroque altar which is considered one of the richest and most beautiful Early-Baroque altars in Slovenia. It was made in 1674 by Jernej Plumberger from Ljubljana and gilded and painted by Jakob Mönhardt and Anton Schernautsch from Višnja Gora. The altar was commissioned by the Stična Abbot Maximilian Motoh.



The frescoes of the Church of the Assumption of Mary are notably well-preserved in the presbytery and on the triumphal arch.



Frescoes painted by Johannes of Ljubljana in the Church of the Assumption of Mary in Muljava

In the vicinity of the village Veliko Črnelo there used to be three monastic ponds. According to folk tradition, the brook bed and ponds were set up by Stična monks. The Črnelo ponds are one of the four major pond systems located in the close vicinity of the monastery that served to supply the monastery with fish. According to locals, the ponds were dug by the monks in the 18th century. The brook bed of Mali breg was moved lower to the south where the brook was dammed and three overflow ponds were dug. The dam of one of them is still visible. After the dissolution of the monastery the ponds were filled up because as much land as possible was required by the local population for cultivation and mowing purposes. In the 1950s, the Zvezda Črnelo football club was founded in Črnelo. As no one wanted to provide it with land for their football field, it was set up at the former site of one of the ponds. Since the ground was swampy, there was no harm, no foul.



Former Črnelo Ponds

Marof is the largest grange of Stična Abbey, located only 1 kilometre away from the monastery. It is also the only grange with preserved commercial facilities. The Marof Mansion probably dates to the 18th century. After World War II, the building was nationalised. There were prisons here during World War II, and a primary school for a few years after the war. The ceramic tiles on the ground floor, the likes of which can also be seen in the refectory of the Stična Monastery, are still preserved. On the landing of the first floor, red square brick pave stones, the likes of which can also be found on the first floor of the monastery's Old Prelature, supposedly dating to the 18th century are visible. To the south of the Marof Mansion there is a large U-shaped building which served as stables which were probably built in the 18th century. After the resettlement of the monastery in the 20th century, the stables were used for cattle breeding. Milk was brought to the monastery's dairy and cheese factory. There was also a butcher's shop in the monastery. Nowadays, the former stables serve as a multi-apartment building. The Josephine Military Cadastre shows that four larger fish-farming ponds also formed part of the Marof grange. In order to supply the ponds with water, the monks of Stična moved the entire course of the Stična Brook to the west side of the valley where the grange was located. After the dissolution of the monastery in 1784, the ponds were abandoned. The Stična monks restored them again in the late 1920s. Carp and trout were mainly farmed here. Fish were fed with meat processing waste from the Stična's butcher's shop. After World War II, they were gradually abandoned again.



Ponds in Marof estate in the late 1920s.



Ponds in Marof estate in the late 1920s.

The Stična-Kostanjevica na Krki section of the Cistercian Way

The Southern Route of the international Cistercian Way begins in Kostanjevica na Krki and winds to Stična in the direction of the French Cîteaux. After crossing the border between Slovenia and Austria, it visits the monastic landscapes in Rein and Zwettl, lingers in Vyšší Brod in the Czech Republic before merging with the Central Route in Plasy.

The Kostanjevica na Krki-Stična section of the international Cistercian Way can be walked in either direction. Along the way, there are numerous traces left behind by the Cistercian monks. In addition to the monastic grange at Marof, the Črnelo Ponds and Church of the Assumption of Mary in Muljava, dotted along the full-day circular trail, the Andrejka's Mill close to Zagradec, the medieval village on the Globodol karst field and the wine-growing area of Bajnof on Trška Gora including the Church of the Nativity of Mary form part of the Stična monastic landscape. Within the Kostanjevica na Krki monastic landscape, the trail winds past the Monastic House in Novo mesto and the pilgrimage church of Our Lady of Consolation all the way to the former Cistercian monastery in Kostanjevica na Krki nowadays housing the Božidar Jakac Gallery. Numerous cultural and historical sights are dotted along the way: The Homestead of the author Josip Jurčič in Muljava, the picturesque Žužemberk Castle, the historical city of Novo mesto, the floating Otočec Castle and the mystical Pleterje Charterhouse.



111,5 km

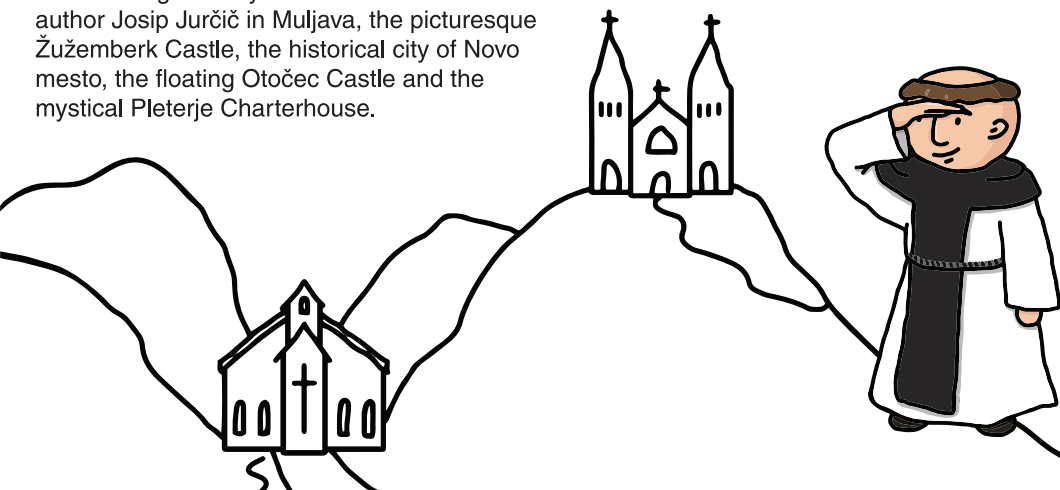


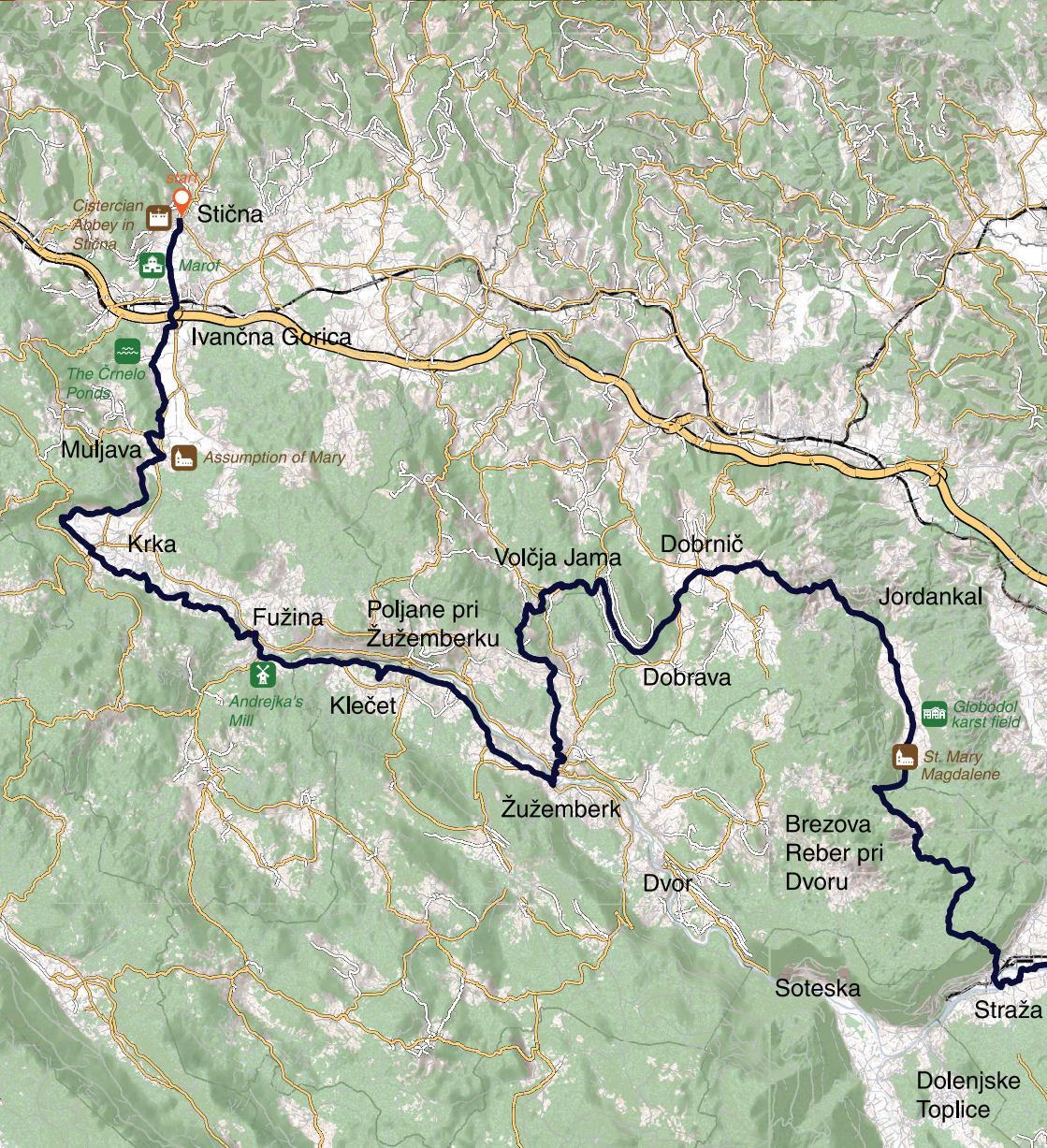
4-5 dni

Map of
the hiking
trail:



Over the flat Stična Field, it descends in Muljava to the source of the Krka River, where the interesting Krka Cave (Krška jama) can also be found. The trail then follows the flow of the Krka River calling for taking a dip in the summer heat and takes you all the way to Žužemberk. From Žužemberk, it ascends to the hilly area of Suha Krajina, a karst area adorned by perfectly rounded sinkholes. Several vineyard cottages dotting the Lisec slope area also offer another refreshment, with noble wines. The Globodol karst field is a typical karst field described in school textbooks. Before descending to the Krka River, the trail winds through a magnificent ancient forest. Afterwards, the meanders of Krka take it to Novo mesto, from where it ascends to one of the most beautiful vistas in the Dolenjska region - Trška Gora. It crosses the Krka River at Otočec, where man and nature have created an exquisite background in the form of a small castle on a small river island. This is followed by jumping over the hills of Dolenjska all the way to Kostanjevica na Krki.







The diversity of the landscape along the two monasteries is surprising.

Andrejka's Mill

Milling was the most important activity in the Stična Abbey estate. The largest mills were located along the river Krka, the largest watercourse on the Stična estate. The Andrejka's or Mevec Mill along with a large homestead give evidence that this was once a successful activity which generated a good income for the millers notwithstanding all their hard work. The mill is already mentioned in land registers dating back to the 16th century and is also recorded in the Josephine Cadastre at the end of the 18th century. It operated until 1966.

The large facility contains six spindle apertures in its lower part. Six troughs run along the mill through which water flowed in, powering the millstones and stamp mills. An old stone staircase leads from the ground floor, where the mill was located, onto the first floor, where the miller and his family used to stay. The lower part of the building is older, original, while the upper floor was built onto at a later date. The remaining buildings were built later higher on the hill. The subsequently constructed residential house was connected to the mill building via a small arched bridge.



Medieval villages on the Globodol karst field

Gorenji, Srednji and Dolenji Globodol can be found on the remote Globodol karst field surrounded by low hills, covered with forests, on all sides. The entire valley is rather isolated from transport links; however, the structure and design of all three villages make a deliberate settlement of the karst field likely. The stone one-storey houses have been erected perpendicularly to the central village path. Wooden farm buildings lengthwise dot the narrow and long plots behind the houses. This is a typical second half of the 12th century village structure. Roadside villages consist of stone one-storey houses sometimes mixed with wooden ones. The entire appearance of the villages is complemented by wooden farm buildings. Granaries, barns, and hayracks represent the development of architecture of their kind in the Dolenjska region. Farmland is divided into lengthy and narrow plots, perpendicularly to the central village path where roadside homesteads are located.



Globodol karst field



The Bajnof wine-growing area

Bajnof close to the city of Novo mesto was the largest wine-growing area owned by the Monastery of Stična. The estate was assigned to the monastery as early as upon its founding. The area was an autonomous office centred around the Bajnof Mansion. The scope of wine-growing at the Bajnof estate is partly visible from the oldest preserved land registers of Stična dating back to the 16th century that continuously mention the transport of wine and must. The office was led by only the most competent monks. In 1643, Bajnof encompassed more than 200 farms, 18 lodgers, and 3 mills. Throughout the entire history of the Monastery of Stična, wine-growing has constituted a very important economic activity. Bajnof represented the main wine-growing estate whose importance is also demonstrated by the fact that it was an autonomous office with its own management. The wine-growing tradition of Bajnof and its wine cellar have survived to this day.



Bajnof



The Church of the Nativity of Mary

The Church of the Nativity of Mary is located at a vantage point on Trška Gora, a wine-growing hill rising above Novo mesto, originally occupied by a shrine and, later on, by a chapel. Ever since the founding of the Monastery of Stična, the monks possessed its own vineyards, granges, and wine cellars on Trška Gora. They understandably took very good care of the location, especially as it was used as a pilgrimage site by their subjects. The Church of the Nativity of Mary was constructed by including elements of Mannerist architecture by the great Baroque constructor, the Stična Abbot Jakob Reinprecht, in 1621. His work was immortalised by means of his coat-of-arms on the church façade. The chancel (presbytery) contains a golden 17th century altar, consecrated to Mary. The side altars were consecrated to St. Margaret and the Holy Trinity. In 1756, the Chapel of St. Isidore, the patron saint of farmers, was added to the church on its northern side. Its interior is fully vaulted. The church always acted as a pilgrimage centre where people commended themselves to Mary. Many votive images or tablets used by the pious to thank Mary for their received mercies thus accumulated around the church. In 1785, all images and expressions of gratitude had to be removed at the imperial command. In the external shed under the belfry, there used to be two altars used for saying mass whenever Trška Gora was too crowded with pilgrims to accommodate them all in the church.

In 1928, frescoes made by Filip pl. Grebbin in 1760 were found in the chapel during the painting of the church. They have been since restored and adorn the church once again.



Cistercian Way

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