

THE CULTURAL PATH

1 Museum of Underwater Activities

The museum will take you back in time to show you the lives of the early divers and submariners as well as the mysterious underwater world, in which work, exploration and amusement present an equally dangerous and demanding challenge.



2 Herman Pečarič Gallery

The gallery boasts an interesting collection of paintings, drawings and graphics that the artist bequeathed to the town of Piran, where he spent a great part of his life. In Slovene graphic arts circles, Pečarič is recognised as a painter devoted to motifs from Istria.

3 Sergei Mašera Maritime Museum

Explore the historic roots of maritime activities in the region and their ties with the local economy. You will be fascinated by the famous model ships built by Gabriel Gruber ranging from galleons to large sailing boats, or by the various navigational instruments and sailor's uniforms. The museum also manages a collection showcasing the life of salt pan workers as well as the development of salt making, the most important industry in the history of Piran. There is a famous saying »Piran xe foto de sal« (Piran was founded on salt).



4 Magical World of Shells

Here, you can admire the shell of the world's biggest snail and take a look at the snail shells so rare that only chiefs of faraway islands were allowed to carry them, or why snail shells are considered the Slovenian pearls. You can also see the shells of various clams with amazing patterns and various pearls.



5 Tartini Square

The place where Tartini Square is located today was once a small harbour for fishing boats. However, at the beginning of the 19th century, the area was filled in with sand and the new platform was soon surrounded by all of the most important municipal institutions and turned into an open market. The square was named after a famous local, the violin virtuoso and composer, Giuseppe Tartini (1692 – 1770). Wondering why the square has the shape of an ellipse? Because between 1912 and 1953, there was a tramline connecting the town with the neighbouring Portoróz and Lucija, and the square served as a turnaround point for the tram. The present oval-shaped platform was designed by architect Boris Podrecca.

6 Tartini Monument

In 1892, upon the 200th anniversary of the birth of the composer, the people of Piran wanted to erect a monument to honour his memory, but due to the works being protracted, Piran had to wait until 1896 for the larger-than-life bronze statue of the virtuoso to finally be mounted on a high pedestal. The statue is the work of the Venetian sculptor Antonio dal Zotto.



7 Tartini's Birth House

A new memorial room has been arranged in the house in which Tartini was born where valuable exhibits, such as the musician's violin, his death mask and his letters are on display. Inside you can also see the interior of the Vedute Hall which features many interesting wall paintings.

8 Town Hall

At the end of the 13th century, the Venetians built the Town Hall building outside the town walls as they existed at that time. It was constructed in the Roman-Gothic style with a façade full of immured coats of arms and inscriptions. At the end of the 19th century, the new Town Hall was built on Tartini Square. Its most distinctive feature is the immured stone statue of a lion holding an open book, a memento of the Venetian Serenissima Republic and the previous town hall building. On the first

THE RELIGIOUS PATH

1 Church of St Rocco

The church is dedicated to St Rocco, who on his way to Rome helped people suffering from plague, fell ill himself and became an invoker against infectious diseases.

2 Church of St Peter

This church, built in the spirit of Classicism, was designed by the Trieste architect Pietro Nobili and finished in 1818. It stands right where a smaller Romanesque church had been built in the 13th century when it was still outside the town walls. Above the entrance, there is a relief depicting the delivery of the Keys to St Peter.



3 St Francis's Church

In front of the church there is a small square, formerly used as a cemetery. The construction of the church building reaches back to the 14th century, whereas the Baroque renovation in the 18th and 19th centuries brought the church its present appearance. St. Francis's Church is known for a small Renaissance shrine by Vittore Carpaccio, a beautiful pulpit, several altars and paintings by Venetian artists from the 17th and 18th centuries. Under the church, there are several tombs, one of which also belongs to the Tartini family.



4 Minorite Monastery of St Francis and the Cloister

The Minorite Monastery of St Francis was probably founded before 1301, when the Greyfriars began to build a church. The monastery keeps a great collection of music literature and some of the books in its library date back to the 15th century. There are still Franciscans living in the monastery to this day. They take care of the monastery church and offer pastoral care. As far as acoustics are concerned, the cloister has little competition in Slovenia. Thus, it has been a popular venue for various musical events for many years and regularly hosts Piran Music Evenings and the Tartini Festival. From the cloister, there is an entrance to the Pinacotheca where paintings by Venetian artists are put on display.



5 Former Church of St Catherine of Alexandria

Right next to the entrance to the Minorite Monastery, there once stood the Church of St Catherine of Alexandria, the oldest building in today's monastery complex. Three tombs belonging to important personalities from Piran are located here, and one of them is believed to belong to the Brotherhood of St Catherine.

6 The Church of Our Lady of the Snows

This small church from the 15th century was built as a private chapel for a rich lady from Piran. Above the entrance, there is a painting of Our Lady of the Snows, which depicts the miraculous August snowfall in Rome and thus gives the church its name. In the 17th century, when the object was given a Baroque-style renovation, precious oil paintings were preserved together with fretted frames.

7 Church of Our Lady of Consolation

The Baroque church dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation was built right where the Church of St Michael had stood before. Next to the altar there is a Byzantine painting of Mary with a child. The church also boasts paintings depicting different scenes from the legend of St Augustine, wall intarsia and fretted frames.

8 St George's Cathedral

St George's Cathedral, overlooking Piran from the hill above the town centre and offering a view over three countries, is the largest church building in town. It was named after St George, the town's patron saint who is thought to have saved Piran when it was hit by a violent storm. In the 14th century, the church was built to its present size, whereas the Baroque renovation in the 17th century gave the building its present appearance. The interior of the church boasts an organ, two sculptures of St George, a richly ornamented suspended wood ceiling and wall paintings influenced by the Venetian school.

St George's Church Bell Tower

The bell tower was completed during a period of Venetian influence in Piran (17th century) and is a smaller scale copy of the San Marco Campanile in Venice. 146 steps lead to the top of the 47.2 metre bell tower that houses four bells and is capped with a pyramidal spire, at the top of which sits a weathervane in the form of the Archangel Michael. Climb the tower and admire the breathtaking view of the town and its surroundings.

Parish Museum of St George

The ground floor of the sacristy hosts an exhibition of various religious objects and dishes belonging to the church. Under the nave, the remains of buildings from Ancient Rome and the Early Middle Ages, and Romanesque and Gothic art were found. Among the exhibits, there is also a wooden model probably representing St George's church in its Gothic era and before the thorough renovation that gave the building its Baroque appearance.



9 The Baptistry of St John the Baptist

The baptistry has an octagonal shape and represents the most important monument in the complex. It boasts a large medieval crucifix from the 14th century and a Roman sarcophagus converted into a baptismal font.

10 Our Lady of Health Church

This church was first mentioned in the 13th century as the Church of St Clement, the patron saint of sailors. In the 17th century, after the plague epidemic, the church was renamed the Our Lady of Health Church.

11 St Stephen's Church and Jewish Square

This church is among the oldest in Piran and as early as the 13th century, it was a meeting place for Piran's dignitaries. According to some sources, the church had first been built as a synagogue. The stone staircase behind the main altar leads to the attic formerly belonging to the Brotherhood of a Happy Last Hour. The Jewish Square was built based on the Venetian Ghetto. One of the three atriums once had a large underwater fountain which gathered rain water from the nearby roofs. Today a large, eight-sided plate of Austro-Hungarian stone stands in place, along with the four smaller, pierced plates through which the water poured into the fountain. It was all made by the famous sculptor of Piran, Janez Lenassi.

12 Church of St Bernardino

The remains of the former monastery comprise a well-preserved and eminent bell tower, the church presbytery and the retaining wall complete with arches. The monastery and the church date back to the 15th century and are dedicated to St Bernardino of Siena. Activities in the monastery ended in the 19th century and the Austrian military later used the complex as a stronghold, from which soldiers defended the bay. Later, the building was the seat of the tax administration as well as the customs office.



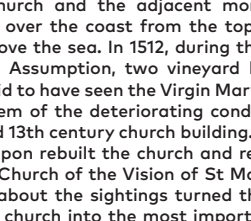
13 Holy Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, Portoróz

This parish church was consecrated in 1894. It's a modern building, boasting a cross and a roof profile that are reminiscent of a ship and thus gives the church its name. In the 17th century, when the object was given an altar sculpture made of baked clay, vividly coloured stained glass and oil paintings depicting the Way of the Cross.



14 Church of the Vision of St Mary and the monastery, Strunjan

The church and the adjacent monastery watch over the coast from the top of the hill above the sea. In 1512, during the night of the Assumption, two vineyard keepers from Piran and Strunjan were descending the path to the church into the most important sacred path in Istria. Today, Mary's Ascension is commemorated by a procession of boats from Piran and Strunjan. The monastery was built by the Franciscans in 1907 and governed by them until 2014, in order to accommodate and tend to the pilgrims.



THE HISTORY PATH

1 Tartini Square

The place where Tartini Square is located today was once a small harbour for fishing boats. However, at the beginning of the 19th century, the area was filled in with sand and the new platform was soon surrounded by all of the most important municipal institutions and turned into an open market. The square was named after a famous local, the violin virtuoso and composer, Giuseppe Tartini (1692 – 1770). Wondering why the square has the shape of an ellipse? Because between 1912 and 1953, there was a tramline connecting the town with the neighbouring Portoróz and Lucija, and the square served as a turnaround point for the tram. The present oval-shaped platform was designed by architect Boris Podrecca.



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A new memorial room has been arranged in the house in which Tartini was born where valuable exhibits, such as the musician's violin, his death mask and his letters are on display. Make sure you don't miss out on the Vedute Hall which features many interesting wall paintings.

4 Court Palace

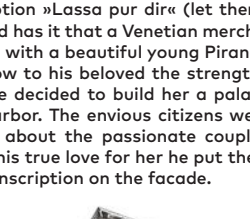
The Court Palace is located right where the so-called Fontik, a former grain and flour warehouse had been built in the 14th century. In the 16th century, a local pawnshop was attached to the complex and later turned into a district court, a function it fulfils to this day.

5 Town Hall

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6 Venetian House

One of the most famous buildings on Tartini Square is the breathtaking Venetian House, the most beautiful example of Venetian Gothic architecture in Piran. The building, which is known as Benečanka among the locals, astonishes with its well-designed architectural elements, rich stone ornaments and the Gothic corner balcony. Between the second-floor windows facing the square, there is an immured stone relief with the inscription »Lassa pur dir« (let them talk). Legend has it that a Venetian merchant fell in love with a beautiful young Piranese girl, so he showed his beloved the strength of his love he decided to build her a palace near the harbor. The envious citizens were gossiping about the passionate couple so to show his true love for her he put the significant inscription on the façade.



7 Church of St Peter

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8 City Walls

The city walls of Piran were mentioned as early as the 7th century when they were built around the old city core in Punta. Since then the city has grown towards Mandrač, including more and more quarters that were originally formed outside of the walls. Due to the growth of the city and in order to protect it from enemy attacks, two additional parts of the wall were built,

including several defence towers. Its largest preserved section known as Mogorin holds an incredible historical value.

9 City Gates

Seven gates that used to be the entrances to the city remain preserved in Piran: The Milje Gate (9A), the Dolfin Gate (9B), the Field Gate (9C), the Baroque Gate of St. George (9D), the Morčana Gate (9E), the First Raspor Gate (9F) and the Second Raspor Gate (9G).

The Milje Gate (9A) is among the oldest preserved gates in the city. The Dolfin Gate (9B) is the nicest Gothic gate in the city, and dates back to the 15th century when the mayor of the city at the time, Dolfin, had them made. They are easily recognised by a crest depicting three dolphins.



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13 Mediadiom Pyrhani

Are you interested in the history of Piran, do you want to know more about the reason for its distinctive shape? Wonder who influenced the town the most or why an Italian name exists alongside the Slovene one? Visit the multimedia museum and cultural centre Mediadiom Pyrhani, where cutting-edge technology will help you discover the rich history and cultural development of the town in the most entertaining ways.

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16 Cape Madonna

The Madonna Cape is the most western part of the Piran peninsula. The deepest part of the Slovenian sea is only 300m away and 38m deep.

17 Lighthouse

The stone lighthouse building was said to be one of the core parts of the old city walls from the 17th century. The fortress later became a lighthouse when a red light was mounted on top of it, which is commemorated on a stone plaque indicating the year 1872. In the 19th century, a home for the lighthouse keeper was also built in the fortress.

18 Our Lady of Health Church

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19 1st of May Square

1st of May Square was originally called Start trg (The Old Square) or Piazza Vecchia, as it once was the main square and many of Piran's main streets lead towards it. In the middle of the square there is a stone reservoir for rain water which was built after a severe drought in the 18th century. The gutters of nearby houses were connected to the reservoir. The water seeped through the stone which cleaned it and was then gathered in a large fountain. It was pumped up with a manual water pump which remains preserved to this day. Two statues adorn the entrance to the square, Justice and Law.

THE SALT PATH

1 Sečovlje Salina Nature Park

The reserve is the biggest wetland on the coastline. In the northern part of the reserve called Lera, people harvest salt using a 700 year old method – they use wooden tools and look after the so-called petola, the base of the salt pans that functions as a sio filter. That ensures that the salt doesn't mix with silt from the sea, and allows it to remain white and clean. The quality of the salt and salt flower, a very thin, topmost layer in the ponds is famous and cherished all over the world. Meanwhile, the abandoned southern part of the reserve called Fontanigle features many unique sights – birds, vast fields of halophytes and over 100 abandoned and demolished buildings that were once used by workers in the salt industry, which contribute to the charm of the Sečovlje salt pans. The reserve became a habitat for various animals and plants.



2 Museum of Salt Making

The museum consists of a salt-making house which hosts an exhibition, a salt pond and its associated canal that provides it with sea water. The house represents the living space of a family in the salt-making industry, a ground floor warehouse where the salt was stored and a restored traditional wood burning oven.



3 Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida

Thalasso Spa Lepa Vida is a unique open field spa in the midst of the saltponds, offering various treatments using natural products (salt mud, brine and sea water) acquired within the Sečovlje Salina Nature Reserve

4 Forma viva – an open air sculpture exhibition

The open air sculpture exhibition was started by Slovenian artists Jakob Savinšek and Janez Lenassi in 1961. It has now been open for almost 60 years, during which the masters from more than 30 different countries have contributed more than 130 stone sculptures. The exhibition is surrounded by the indigenous olive trees of Piran and features a breath-taking view over Portoróz Bay and its surroundings.

5 Handbag Museum Portoróz

The museum boasts many extraordinary exhibits, including a collection of handbags that belonged to famous and influential ladies and the gallery shop.

20 St Stephen's Church and Jewish Square

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The Jewish Square was built based on the Venetian Ghetto. One of the three atriums once had a large underwater fountain which gathered rain water from the nearby roofs. Today a large, eight-sided plate of white stone stands in its place, along with the four smaller, pierced plates through which the water poured into the fountain. It was all made by the famous sculptor of Piran, Janez Lenassi.

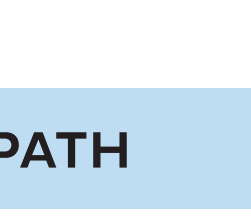


21 Fishermen's market and the pillory

One of the few remaining stone pillories in Slovenia remains on the Fishermen's market, next to a dolphin-shaped fountain. The latter is a replica, while the original fountain is on display in the multimedia centre Mediadiom Pyrhani.

22 Stone flag poles

The stone flag poles were made in the 15th century and today mark the entrance to Tartini Square. They were originally located in front of the old town hall. One of them depicts the winged lion of St Mark while the other shows St George, the protector of the city, on his horse.



6 Valeta Tunnel

Parenzana – The path of friendship and good health follows the old, 123km long, narrow gauge train track, which connects Trst and Poreč and the inland cities of the Istrian peninsula. The path offers many sports activities and brings together people who enjoy walking, running or cycling. The path takes you through cities and villages, sometimes following the coastline right by the sea, other times leading you through vineyards and olive tree plantations, short and well-maintained tunnels and into valleys and hills. All the tunnels are still well-preserved, the most famous one among them being the Valeta Tunnel, a 550m long tunnel that connects Strunjan and Portoróz.



7 Strunjan Nature Park

The park is a wide expanse of nature which has been protected and ranges over two reserves – Strunjan Nature Reserve and Stijža Nature Reserve. It also features the Avenue of Pines, which is known as a monument shaped by nature.

8 Salt-pan Houses

The first house has been converted into a visitor centre and was once used as a salt warehouse on the ground floor and housing for workers on the first floor. The second house is still used by the workers as a place to live.



9 Stjuža Lagoon

Stjuža is the only sea lagoon in Slovenia that is considered salt wetland. The name is derived from the Italian expression »chiuso« – closed. These days the bay is separated from the sea by a bund, leaving a canal as the only connection between the sea and the lagoon. The bund has become home to many varied species of water birds due to the abundance of food, good shelter and shallow water.

Strunjan salt pans form a part of the Strunjan-Stjuža Nature Reserve. They are known as the smallest and the most northerly salt pans in the Mediterranean. They can be found in the area of the Portoróz Bay and its surroundings.

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11 Church of the Vision of St Mary and the monastery, Strunjan

The church and the adjacent monastery watch over the coast from the top of the hill above the sea. In 1512, during the night of the Assumption, two vineyard keepers are said to have seen the Virgin Mary warning them of the deteriorating condition of the old 13th century church building. People thereupon rebuilt the church and renamed it the Church of the Vision of St Mary. The story about the sightings turned the path to the church into the most important sacred path in Istria. Today, Mary's Ascension is commemorated by a procession of boats from Piran and Strunjan. The monastery was built by the Franciscans in 1907 and governed by them until 2014, in order to accommodate and tend to the pilgrims.



12 Strunjan cross

From as far back as the 1600 there has been a stone cross on the cape behind the church. The cross is not only a sign that shows that there is a Marian shrine nearby but it also warns sailors that the mainland is near. This point offers a lovely view over the coast below the cliff, and of the Gulf of Trieste, and if the weather is nice, you can see all the way to Triglav.



Boškarin – the cattle of Istria

Boškarin are the indigenous cattle of Istria, boasting a lean, muscular body, white or slightly grey fur and two horns in the shape of a harp. Fully grown animals weigh between 1100 and 1300 kg. They have been a very important aid to the farmers of Istria and adapted to hard work at the farm, as they easily survive in the Istrian area.



1 Church of St Blaise and the Bell Tower, Padna

This is the only church in Slovenia dedicated to St Blaise, the patron saint of the village. This Baroque-style building boasts a marble altar with a wooden statue of St Blaise. Its stone bell tower is 26.5 metres high and was built by the people of Padna. The tower is believed to have funded the project by selling chard (a leafy green vegetable popular in Mediterranean cuisine).

2 Božidar Jakac Gallery, Padna

Božidar Jakac is a famous Slovenian painter and graphic artist who spent a part of his life in Padna. The gallery is situated in a renovated building that used to be an Italian school. Inside, his paintings and woodcuts are permanently on display.

3 The House of Kapelouča, Nova vas nad Dragonjo

The House of Kapelouča is a village museum in Nova vas nad Dragonjo, named after the last owner of the house, Anđeka Kapelouča. The house is narrow and made of stone and it houses an ethnological collection of objects used in everyday life.

4 Church of Our Lady of the Rosary and the Bell Tower, Nova vas nad Dragonjo

In the 16th century, the church was mentioned under the name »S. Mari(n)a(e) della Villa Morta«, which supports the theory that the village was deserted after the plague. In the 18th century, the church was given its modern appearance with an enlarged single nave. At the end of the 19th century, the villagers built a mighty bell tower crowned by a statue of St Joseph. According to oral tradition, the villagers earned the money for the project by selling Istrian garlic.

Cultural Treasures of PIRAN

