

Discover

the authenticity of Brda

An old Slovenian saying goes that every village has its own voice. And you will discover this in Brda. Each village is its own story, authentic in its essence, rich in its cultural heritage. The resilience of the local environment, the desire to survive and to

stand out from the crowd of equals has shaped the Brda landscape into a paradise for seekers of unique and unforgettable experiences. From lovers of audiovisual culture, architectural heritage, literature, etc., Brda has something for everyone.

Dobrovo • Fojana • Medana • Ceglo • Biljana • Višnjevik • Gredič • Gradno

Šmartno • Vipolže • Kozana • Cerovo



Dobrovo, named after the hollow oak tree, has over time become the centre point of all 44 picturesque villages in Brda. It is also the venue of the traditional **Cherry Festival** in June. The renaissance **Dobrovo Castle**, which dates back to around 1600, is the king of the village. It was probably fortified during the Second Venetian Wars between 1615 and 1617. Its characteristic appearance is given by the



four corner towers, which offer a beautiful view of the surrounding area. The last and most famous owner of the castle was **Count Silverio de Baguer**. After the **Second World War**, the castle was used as a guest house for the allied military administration, and after 1947 it became a so-called common property of the people. In the 1970s its management was taken over by the **Gorizia Museum**. The restoration of the castle began four decades ago, and it reopened after the end of the War of Independence in 1991. At the Dobrovo Castle you will be inspired by the **Zoran**



Musič Gallery and the exhibition of his graphic art – permanent exhibition *Where Worlds Meet*. Brda and Life on the Border, which tells the intimate stories of people, their language, and the narratives of everyday objects that bear witness to life in the Brda region, a region divided by borders yet connected by love, memory, and culture. If you love natural heritage, you'll also be captivated by the **Kožbanjšček Gorge Experience Centre** with VR headset. In the castle hall, you will be drawn to illuminated panels featuring maps of the Brda region dating from the 16th century onward, as well as a video presentation titled "The Story of Rebula". Here you'll also find the castle's prestigious **De Baguer Wine Cellar**, and you can enjoy a



meal at the castle restaurant. The magnificent **Knights' Hall** occasionally hosts various events and gatherings, and the castle courtyard takes on a special atmosphere during the traditional **Cherry Festival** on the first weekend in June. Founded in 1957, **Klet Brda** is 100% owned by 300 cooperative farmers, who



also awarded by the Association of Italian UNESCO Clubs. It is also worth mentioning the **4th Biljana Camp** in 1869, which spread the name of Biljana far and wide. In **Višnjevik**, one of the few villages without its own church, you will learn all about **Rebula**, which was first mentioned in written sources as early as 1336. This noble vine in the Brda "opoka" soil produces a special harmonious wine, in which Brda



hospitality and love of tradition are cut. Višnjevik has also become widely known as the venue for the **Rebula** and **Olive Oil Festival**, which the locals have traditionally organised for two decades, attracting Rebula enthusiasts from near and far to the village. Just a stone's throw away from Višnjevik, famous in the Middle Ages for the lords of Višnjevik and for **Rittersberg**, the oldest mansion in Brda, is the hidden village of **Gradno** with an extraordinary treasure. Next to the **Church of St. George**, where the Stations of the Cross were painted by the world-famous painter **Zoran Musič**, and part of the painting is the work of the painter and graphic artist **Lojze Spacal**, we can find the oldest olive tree in Brda and a beautiful example of a restored



countries, including across the border, indulge in the spirit of Brda and translate it into their artwork. Medana was, along with Biljana and Sveti Križ, a kind of Christian centre. Especially at "Rožnica", the feast of the Ascension of the Virgin Mary on 15 August, many Brda people gather in the village to join the traditional procession with the 450 kg golden statue of the Virgin Mary, and after the procession they stay up late into the night to share wine and seasonal snacks. From Medana, you can look into neighbouring **Fojana**, which, along with the villages of **Podsobotin** and **Kojsko**, boasts two churches. Here, the renowned Slovenian composer **Radó Simoniti** developed his musical skills.



The Brda region had a brick workshop in the Roman times. It was located in **Ceglo**, where today you will find the **Gredič Manor**, as well as a trio of winemakers (**Marjan Simičič, Dolfo** and **Movka**). Wines from Brda winemakers are ranked among the very best by renowned food and wine magazines and critics around the world. They have received significant recognition and high ratings from renowned wine critics and publications such as **James Suckling, Wine Enthusiast, Gambero Rosso, Wine&Spirits Magazine, Decanter, Falstaff** and others. Brda has also been visited several times by the internationally renowned wine critic **James Suckling**.

The picturesque walled village of **Šmartno**, with its five preserved towers, can be seen from everywhere in Brda, perched like an eagle's nest on a remarkably scenic hill. Between 16th and the second half of 18th century, Šmartno was an important **strategic defence post** incorporated in the system of fortifications and never taken by the Venetians. The border was defended by contract soldiers coming from far away; many were of **Uskok (Croatian)** origin. The wall between the **seven towers** was built in a way that the passages were spacious enough to allow movement of soldiers in different directions. It seems that the **settlement had a drawbridge in front of the entrance** and was surrounded by a **deep moat**. Military origin of the village is also testified by a church bell tower and by both

1857 with the motif of the Holy Three Kings. The Baroque church has three marble altars, with a particularly rich main altar. The **presbytery** and the **Stations of the Cross** were painted by **Tone Kralj**, and the white marble pulpit on the right side of the nave is an exceptional work. There you can see a traditional wine cellar, an exhibition on the development of **Brda House** from prehistoric times to the present day with a film showing Brda and life in Brda in the mid-20th century. Otherwise, the ground floor takes us back in time a few decades. The medieval village is the backdrop for two important events: the largest single gastronomic festival on Brda soil, **Brda and Wine in April**, and **St. Martin's Feast** in November. In Šmartno, you can also visit one of the stalls selling Brda products throughout the year.

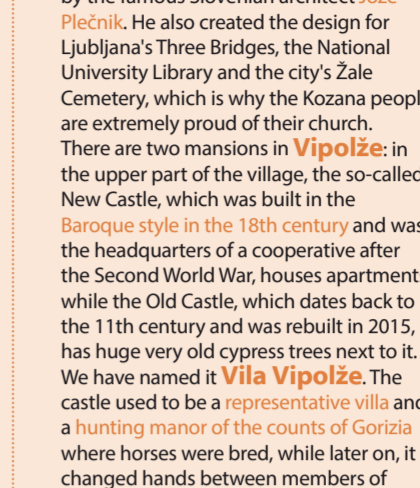


squares - upper and lower square - which were intended for gathering of soldiers in case of an enemy assault through the main entrance. An architectural jewel, a cultural monument, unique as a whole and in many details, it takes its name from the **Church of St. Martin**, the largest church in Brda, with a bell tower which was once a fortification tower. It houses a bell from

Kozana is located on the road between Šmartno and Vipolže, surrounded by numerous vineyards and orchards, where sweet grapes and various types of extremely tasty fruit ripen. It is in Kozana that we find the westernmost signature of a giant of Slovenian architecture: the design for the restoration of the bell tower of **St. Hieronymus** was contributed

by the famous Slovenian architect **Jozef Plečnik**. He also created the design for Ljubljana's Three Bridges, the National University Library and the city's Zale Cemetery, which is why the Kozana people are extremely proud of their church. There are two mansions in **Vipolže**: in the upper part of the village, the so-called **New Castle**, which was built in the **Baroque style in the 18th century** and was the headquarters of a cooperative after the Second World War, houses apartments, while the **Old Castle**, which dates back to the 11th century and was rebuilt in 2015, has huge very old cypress trees next to it. We have named it **Vila Vipolže**. The castle used to be a **representative villa** and a **hunting manor of the counts of Gorizia** where horses were bred, while later on, it changed hands between members of

Herberstein, della Torre, Attens Petzenstein and **Teufelbach families**. The building was rebuilt several times, in 17th century into a Renaissance villa in the Venetian style. During **World War I**, the castle was used as a military hospital while in 1948 it was damaged in a **large fire**. It is one of the most beautiful examples of castle architecture in Slovenia built between Renaissance and Baroque. Today, it is used for business meetings, weddings and private parties. Vila Vipolže is also a cultural centre with a rich programme. In Vipolže there is the only **preserved water mill** that still operated in 1990s and the village is also known for **rosolj multilits** that were found there. In addition to a covered four-lane bowling court, a cycling track, and a fitness centre, there are also soccer fields where the local soccer club trains. Many sport events also take place here. The Brda people are considered very



Mirko Brezavčev, was also from Gorizia Cerovo. His life and antifascist movement can be seen in the youth film "Crni bratje" (Black Brethren).

Did you know that, even before the First World War, the Kozana women were already selling fruit in the towns and resorts of Austria, and their husbands were sending them fruit daily by train from Gorizia? The money was brought home at the end of the season, sometime around 16 August, which is why this day still has a special significance among the Kozana people. To this day, they still organise a "cockler dance".

sports: they have won high medals in many high-level competitions, from bowling, volleyball, shooting, majorette and twirling, to cycling, etckolesarstva itd. **Cerovo** stretches from the village of Hum to Vipolže. The upper part of **Gornje Cerovo** was mentioned in 1205, when the Cerovo lords had their own manor in front of the **Church of St. Nicholas**. **Dolnje Cerovo** is known for the thick chain around the **Church of St. Lenart**. It tells about the vow of a farmer who, with his oxen transported wine, stuck his cart in the mud somewhere along the way, and in gratitude for his return he had a chain forged with the year 1859. In front of the main altar of the **Church of St. Lenart** in Cerovo, architects discovered the remains of an older Romanesque church. This discovery is the first and very important discovery in our area, since there are no other remnants of Romanesque churches in the Brda region. Archaeologists also found pottery, partially preserved vessels, parts of frescoes, medieval coins and metal items. One of the youngest victims of Italian fascism in the Primorska region,

Interesting facts



Did you know that Brda also has a leaning tower? It is located in Fojana. It is the Church of the Holy Spirit on the Lake, located in the cemetery in Fojana, and the legend holds that it lies above a cave or lake. The bell tower is collapsing due to the creeping terrain, which partly confirms the above-mentioned hypothesis.



like to be called "Heroes of the Vineyards" for their hard work and bravery in Brda's characteristic terraces. The cellar is considered the largest cooperative cellar in Slovenia! A special experience will surely be a walk through **Biljana**, a village near Dobrovo, where in the centre you will find the Gothic Church of **St. Michael** and the so-called **Doršče** - a 13th century manor house with the oldest cellar in the world. Before World War I, the building housed the **Austrian army**, and during the war it was a military hospital. The restoration of the cellar was



dry wall made of local sandstone. We can rightfully say that **Medana** is the cultural capital of the Brda region. The poets **Alojz Gradnik**, whose sculpture created by artist **Jakov Brdar**, protects the entrance of the Dobrovo Primary School, and **Lučvik Zorzuti**, grew up here. Contemporary Slovenian artists, and not only Slovenian artists, are also looking for inspiration between the walls of the wineries here! This is where the **Art Circle** initiative was born, a cultural embassy project in which artists from many



Brda is not only a paradise for picturesque views and culinary experiences, but also an ideal destination for cycling races. We have hosted Italy's most prestigious cycling race, the **Giro d'Italia**, on several occasions, and footage from our region has been seen by millions of viewers around the world. Experience the **Giro d'Italia** routes in Brda!

Neblo • Brezovk • Golo brdo • Slapnik • Vrhovlje pri Kožbani



The village of **Neblo** in the lower Brda region is made up of several hamlets, a characteristic feature of the places that were part of the **Venetian Republic**. Their **Church of St. Nicholas** from the second half of the 15th century is a kind of hamlet. The church, which also has a small square with a water fountain, has a Gothic presbytery, a Gothic portal in the facade and Baroque furnishings. The Venetian

Krčnik is about 5 metres long and one-metre-wide natural stone bridge, which is smoothly rounded due to the grinding of the water over the gorges of the **Kožbanjšček** stream. The gorge is are about 40 metres long, six metres deep and between half and six metres wide. Although water has shaped it over millions of years, legend has it that it is entirely the work of the Devil. In a



camp. This is how this natural pearl got its name - **Krčnik** ("krč" means "cramp"). Nevertheless, **Krčnik** is one of the most beautiful sights of its kind in Slovenia and is accessible in all seasons. Also popular are the nearby **Kotline**, three pools formed by the **Kožbanjšček** stream overcoming a rock face more than 10 metres high. This is where the youth of Brda find a place to cool off in the summer.

come here. The old houses in **Golo Brdo** show the great architectural influence of nearby **Veneto** and **Friuli**, while archaeological finds of ceramics testify to the ancient and prehistoric settlement of the hill. If **Kojsko** boasts the oldest wing altar, the **Church of St. Andrew** boasts the oldest frescoes in the Brda area. The presbytery and the triumphal wall are painted with them. Other scenes include scenes from the life of the Holy Family and depictions of saints and apostles. Particularly interesting are the images of angels with various instruments from the time when the frescoes were painted in the second half of the 15th century. The church stands above the village and belongs to the coastal type, which has a so-called **shed** in front of the entrance - a covered space and a bell tower with spindles. In the past, it was covered with stone tiles - "škije".

Kojsko • Sabotin • Vrhovlje pri Kojskem



On the hill above **Kojsko**, you will find a real jewel in the **Church of the Holy Cross** - a 500-year-old Gothic wing altar made in the Villach carving workshop. The path to the church is surrounded by the chapels of the Stations of the Cross. It is the only **outdoor Stations of the Cross** in Brda. **Sveti Križ** was once a famous pilgrimage site. People used to pilgrimage here from **Carinthia, Friuli, Gorizia, Vipava** and **Posočje**, but today it is mainly an interesting tourist spot with a magnificent 360° view. Even the King of Italy is said to have viewed the battle positions on Sabotin from **Sveti Križ** above Kojsko during the battles of the **Isonzo Front**. The strategic importance of the town in World War I is also reflected in the preserved 300-metre tunnel of the narrow-gauge railway "Na kalehni". The **Church of the Assumption**



of the **Virgin Mary**, rebuilt in the Baroque style in the second half of the 18th century, is also interesting: only the presbytery remains late Gothic. Unfortunately, you can only see a few remains of the once beautiful and largest **castle in Brda**, which was the focal point of Gorizia's cultural life in the 18th century and, as the seat of the judicial power, shared justice with almost the whole of Brda. Before World War I, **Kojsko** was the economic and cultural centre of Brda. Just along the road you can see a monument to **Srečko Kumar**, a famous choirmaster and music teacher. In 1879, the first wine tasting, exhibition and evaluation took place in the town, and every year the feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated with a procession. **Sabotin** hill is the witness of the irrationality of war.



The spirit of WWI accompanies you at every step, because the hill is covered with trenches and underground tunnels, now cleaned up and prepared for viewing. Over a century ago, a network of caves was dug by people from 22 different nations. The caverns at the former Yugoslav guardhouse have been cleaned and made ready for viewing. The guardhouse houses a visitor centre and an information point, where you can find more information about Sabotin's features and history. There is also a museum collection dedicated to the First World War, the Isonzo Front and the Slovenian War of Independence. The World War I memorial is also one of the most botanically diverse areas in Slovenia, with a huge variety of bird species.



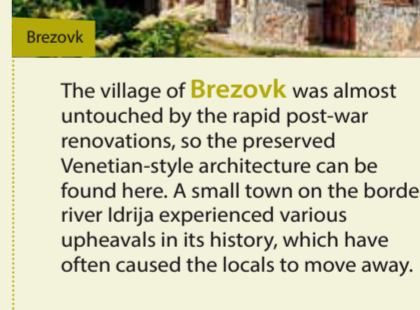
of the **Virgin Mary** on a lookout hill, where a **chapel service** is held on Divine Mercy Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter). In the past, the fair's vendors sold typical cakes, and old and young, from near and far, gathered together.



golden altar was built in the 17th century and traces of frescoes were found during probing. The nearby archaeological site of **Borg** proves the importance of the area in antiquity: there was a **Roman pottery workshop** in Neblo. North of Neblo we reach **Hruševlje**. In Hruševlje, the local farmers were once the so-called "koloni" of the landlord **de Onesti**, and later of the **Jakončič family**. The Gothic church of **St. Margaret** with its open roof and ornamented plan, wooden altar and wooden sculptures of **St. Sebastian, St. Margaret** and **St. Rochus** are also very interesting. Another interesting feature is the two-arch stone bridge to **Slavče**, on which a stone sculpture of **Janez Nepomuk** is located. On the pedestal you can admire a unique signpost: a fish with an outstretched forefinger in shallow relief and the inscription **Belo-Slavče** from 1903. The memorial at **Pistemel** commemorates the arson that burnt 22 people during World War II.



ravine, a young man was challenged by a devil to bring him gold from the depths of the sea. The devil was so angered by this that he rushed with his horse to **Kožbanjšček**. The water boiled, the rocks began to crack and melt, and a stone bridge was built across the stream. Another legend has it that young boys from the **Kožbanjšček** corner used to prove their courage to each other by jumping off the bridge into the water. Among them is the mayor's son, who drowned after jumping into a pool and getting a

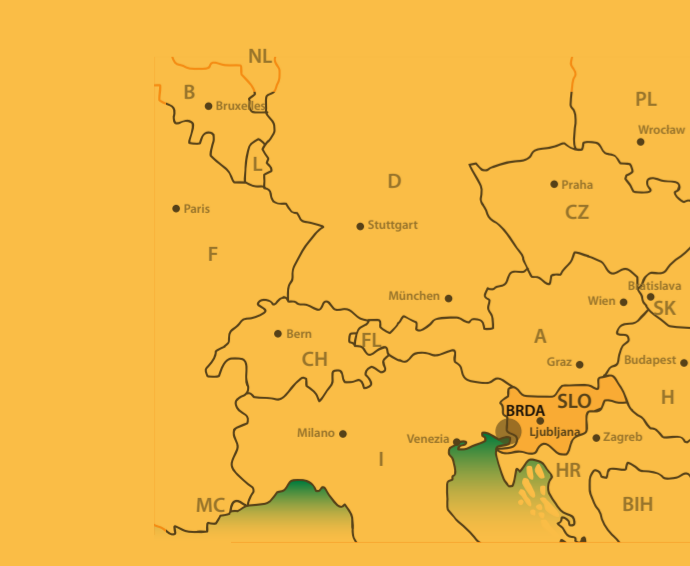


The village of **Brezovk** was almost untouched by the rapid post-war renovations, so the preserved Venetian-style architecture can be found here. A small town on the border river **Idrija** experienced various upheavals in its history, which have often caused the locals to move away.

Gonjače - 360° around Brda



In good weather, the best place to start your tour of Brda is right here - at the **lookout tower in Gonjače**, where you can see all around: Brda, Julian and Carnic Alps, Dolomites, Friuli Venetia Giulia, Gulf of Trieste, Karst, Vipava Valley and **Tmovski gozd** forest. Next to it is a memorial to the 315 victims of World War II, the work of sculptor **Janez Boljka**.



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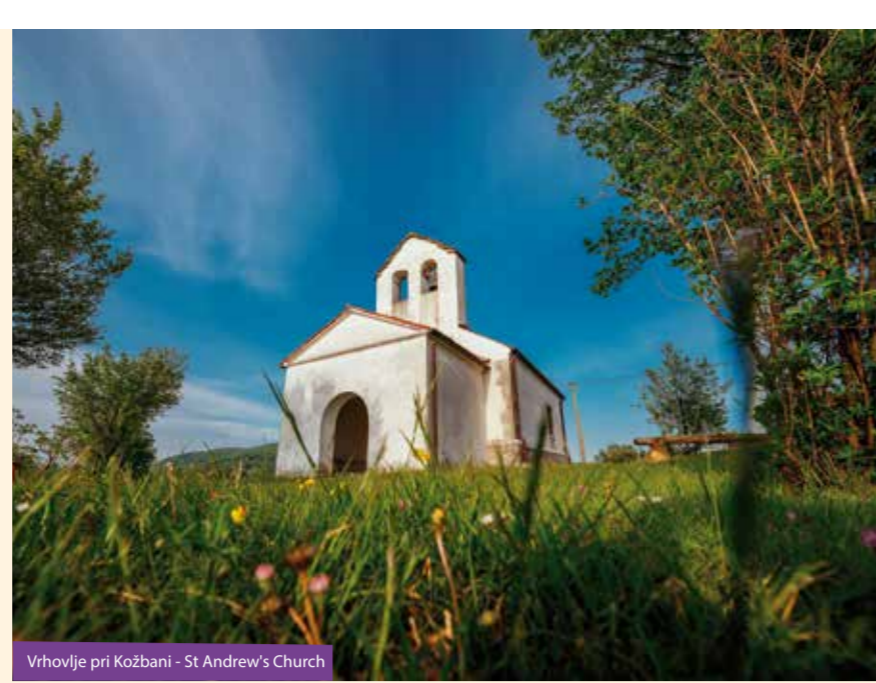
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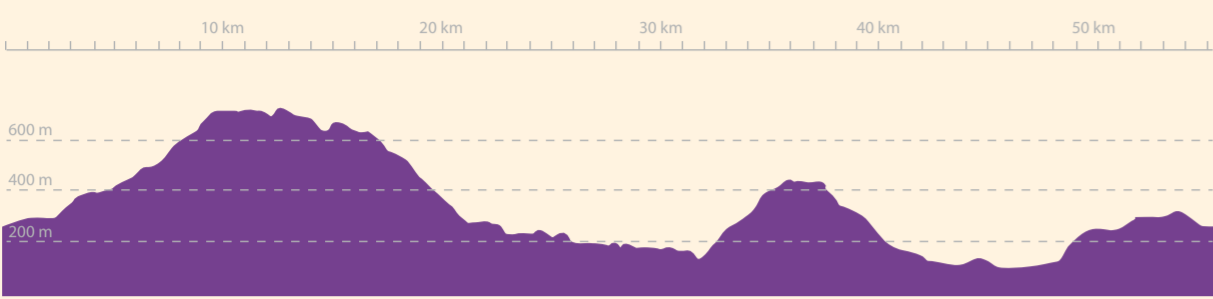
"OLIVE TREE" Cycling Route

55 km

From the medieval village of Šmartno, we climb through the village of Imenje to Gonjače and Vrhovlje pri Kojškem. Over the Korada hill reach the villages of Lig and Britof, and then continue along the Idrija River to Golo Brdo, where you need to climb again to the villages of Senik and Vrhovlje pri Kozbani. Pass through the village of Kozbana and descend to the Krčnik Nature Monument, Kotline and the village of Pristavo. At the hamlet of Peterel, continue past the village of Neblo to the village of Drnovk, where you begin the final climb to Šmartno via Vedrijan.



Vrhovlje pri Kozbani - St. Andrew's Church



BIKE TIME

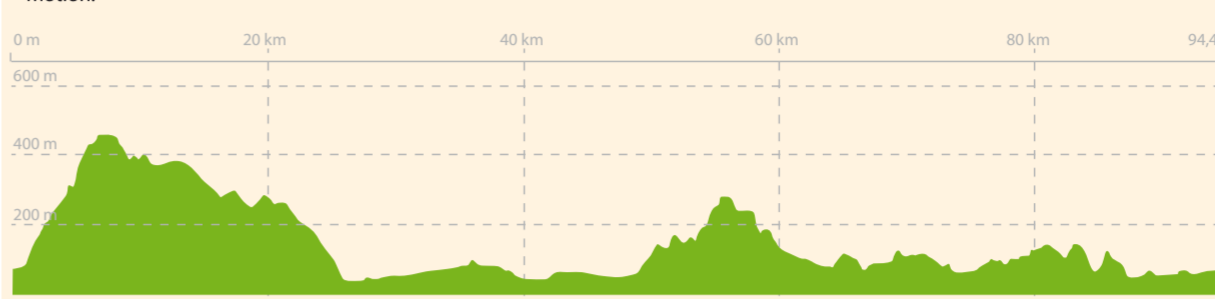
93 km

The "Bike Time" cycling route connects Brda, the Vipava Valley, and the Karst, weaving together scenic views, cultural heritage, and authentic experiences along the way. In Brda, it passes by Villa Vipolže, the medieval village of Šmartno, and the observation tower in Gonjače; in the Vipava Valley, it passes by Rihemberk Castle, the village of Pedrovo, and Nova Gorica with its Europe Square; and in the Karst, it climbs to Cerje and continues past Miren Castle. The winding route invites you to stop and indulge in local flavours.

Bike Time is experiencing the landscape in motion.



Rihemberk Castle, Brnik



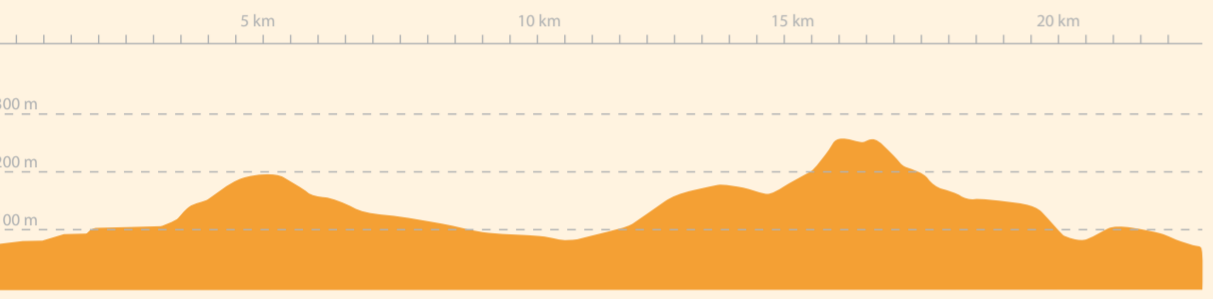
"KHAKI" Cycling Route

23 km

Starting in the village of Hum, you first descend to the village of Podsabotin, which flourished with the construction of the so-called Osimo Road along the slopes of Sabotin. The trail then leads across the border to the village of Pevma and the village of Oslavje, with its famous channel house dedicated to Italian soldiers killed in the fighting on the Isonzo Front. From here climb to Števerjan, the central village of Brda in the Italian part of Brda, and then return to the Slovenian side of the border via Valerišče, where you follow the valley of the Birša stream in Dolnje Cerovo and climb to the villages of Snežatno and Hum.



Dolnje Cerovo - St. Nicholas Church



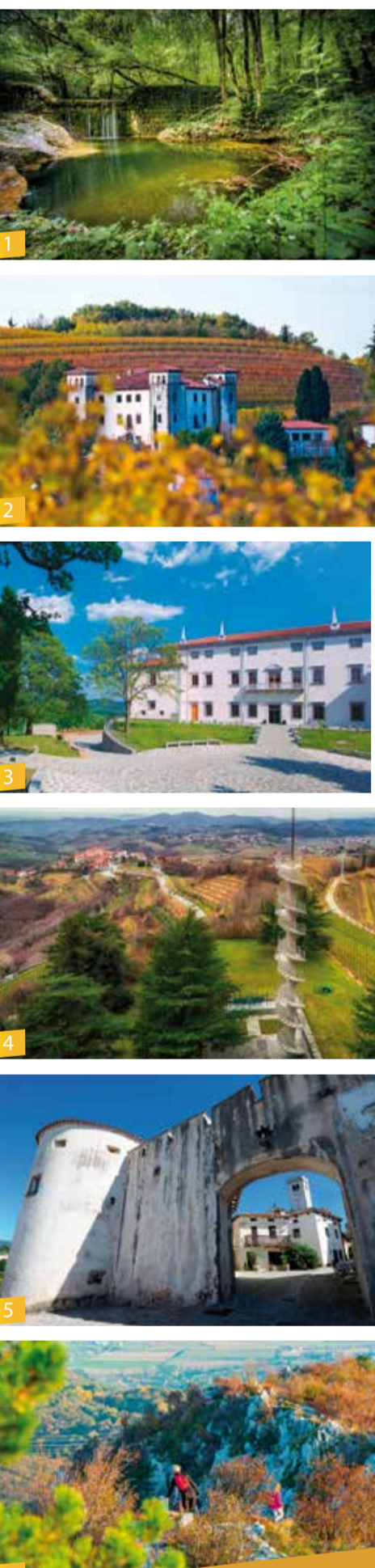
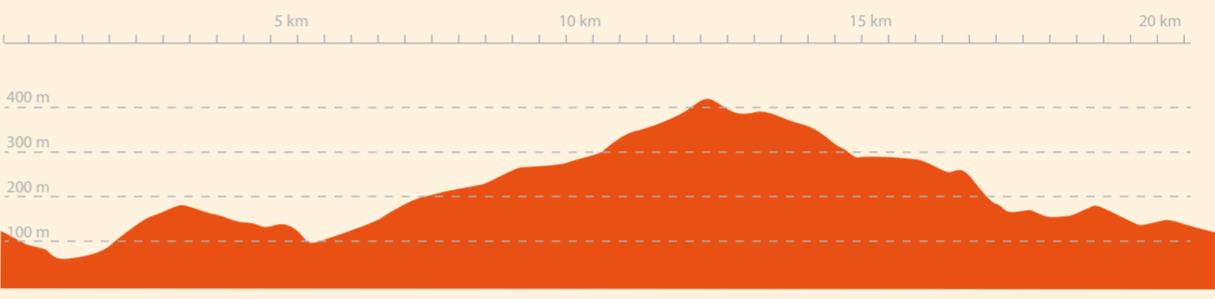
"PEACH" Cycling Route

21 km

From Dobrovo, ascend to Medana and then through the village of Ceglo, past Gređič, to Vipolže. Then turn in the direction of Kozana and later turn towards the village of Šmartno. Continue driving through Gonjače to the turnoff, where you turn towards Vrhovlje pri Kojškem and continue climbing to the foot of Korada. Then turn left towards the villages of Krasnó and Višnjevnik. Once you leave Višnjevnik, it's just a downhill to Drnovk and then a short drive to the starting point, Dobrovo.



Medana



Key to symbols

- 1 Krčnik, Kotline
- 2 Dobrovo Castle
- 3 Vila Vipolže
- 4 Lookout tower Gonjače
- 5 Šmartno
- 6 Sabotin
- Khaki cycling route
- Peach cycling route
- Olive Tree cycling route
- R2 cycling route (Dobrovo–Nova Gorica)
- Cycling route BIKE TIME
- Cycling route JULJANA TRAIL
- Tourist information centre
- Info board
- Church, chapel or roadside shrine
- Hospitality offer
- Drinking water

