

A TRIP TO THE PAST

Claustra Alpium Iuliarum
- a wall that connects



CAI - CLAUSTRA ALPIUM IULIARUM

By exploring this unique nature,
discover an interesting history

The great empires of ancient civilizations encompassed vast expanses and their survival depended on the quality of the defensive systems that kept them safe from their enemies. The outer border of the Roman Empire, called limes, was protected by long walls from the invasions of barbarian tribes. The most well-known from the golden age of ancient Rome are Hadrian's Wall in present-day Britain and the Danube limes.

In the 3rd century AD, when the power of the Roman Empire began to decline and the borders were increasingly difficult to protect against enemy incursions, an additional internal defence and surveillance system was built with a total length of 130 kilometres (with some interruptions). *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* is just one of the many names of the defence system, and it was first mentioned by the ancient historian *Ammianus Marcellinus*. Along the coastal area of ancient *Tarsatica*, a military detachment headquarters was built. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the fortifications and walls of the former *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* defence system were abandoned and forgotten, just like ancient *Tarsatica*.

Traces of solid, rugged fortlets and walls defending the heart of the Roman civilization are still present in the area that stretches from modern Rijeka to the mountains of the Slovenian Alps. Through forests and thick vegetation, between settlements and modern roads, one can find a total of 30 kilometres of visible walls with towers, as well as traces of forts and fortlets. Getting to know this ancient defence system includes discovering unforgettable landscapes and possibilities that will delight nature, hiking, biking and outdoor activity enthusiasts.

The defensive walls of the late Roman Empire connect Mediterranean and Alpine Europe with the characteristic locations, towns and landscapes of Central Europe. Today, 20 locations with traces of the CAI can be explored. We present the entire cultural route through three distinct geographical areas. The northwest and central part are located in Slovenia, and cover the area from the base of the Julian Alps in the north-western part, to the area south of Ljubljana in the central part. The southern part consists of locations in the Kvarner region of Croatia.



CAI - NORTHERN PART SLOVENIA

Central Slovenia Goriška (Gorizia)

North-western Clastra – the Alps, mountain roads and cold winters

It is well known that everyone who loves hiking will find a lot of pleasure in Slovenia. If you are one of them, ask yourself whether you want to find anything more than nature and even history on your expeditions? Would you like to bring a bit of mystery into your hiking trip and ask yourself whether the rock you see is natural or a trace of an ancient civilization?

The mountains are wonderful and mystical in themselves, but once you realize that the defence system started in their clearings many centuries ago, it just adds an additional element of curiosity. The northernmost known traces of the *Clastra Alpium Iuliarum* are in Zarakovec, but if you want to let your imagination go wild, let us tell you that it is assumed that there are still undiscovered defensive walls.

In addition to the undiscovered structures and imagined worlds of ancient civilizations, this region also harbours preserved real structures. For example, the Ajdovski zid (Ajdovski Wall) is almost seven kilometres long, and if you walk its entire length, you'll find visible traces of at least 35 towers.

Locations of the CAI in the northern part:

- 20 ZARAKOVEC
- 19 VRATA
- 18 AJDOVŠČINA
- 17 HRUŠICA
- 16 LANIŠČE
- 15 BRST NEAR MARTINJ HRIB
- 14 AJDOVSKI ZID



CAI - NORTHERN PART

19 VRATA



17 HRUŠICA



14 AJDOVSKI ZID



18 AJDOVŠČINA



16 LANIŠČE



THE DEFENCE SYSTEM PROTECTED THE ROMAN ROADS

The ancient Romans built quality roads, with bridges and tunnels, which connected the entire Empire. Many of these roads passed through or next to the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* system and some of its fortlets protected the Roman roads. Most of the construction work was done by soldiers. Most often, they travelled on foot, with an average of 30 kilometres per day. Rest and overnight stations, as well as relay stations, were located along the roads. Those who travelled by horse could change their horse at these stations. The Romans were well-aware of the importance of maintaining such a high standard of infrastructure. Today, we may travel faster and more comfortably, but we still have stations for rest and refuelling next to our other modern roads.



CAI - CENTRAL PART SLOVENIA

Central Slovenia
Southwestern Slovenia
Primorsko-notranjska
(Littoral-Inner Carniola)

Central Claustra – streams, wetlands
and forest roads

To the east of the mountains was the ancient *Emona*, on the site of present-day Ljubljana. Part of the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* defence system controlled the roads from *Emona* to the west and protected the wider area of the Ljubljansko barje (Ljubljana Marshes). Then, a series of barriers extends from the hills and across the valleys in areas that boast views of unforgettable landscapes and picturesque villages.

In some locations, only modest remains of the former defence system can be found, but archaeologists have discovered much more below today's surface. Traces of fortlets and towers can be found around trees and along forest edges, almost hidden, sometimes making it difficult to distinguish them from the natural rocky landscape.

Here, nature fits in perfectly with stories from the distant past. As well as exploring the traces of walls and towers that defended the late Roman Empire, you will find streams, wetlands and unique ecosystems.

Locations of the CAI in the central part:

- 13 POKOJIŠČE
- 12 RAKITNA
- 11 SELO PRI ROBU
- 10 GRADIŠČE NEAR ROB
- 9 NOVI POT
- 8 TABRŠČE
- 7 BENETE

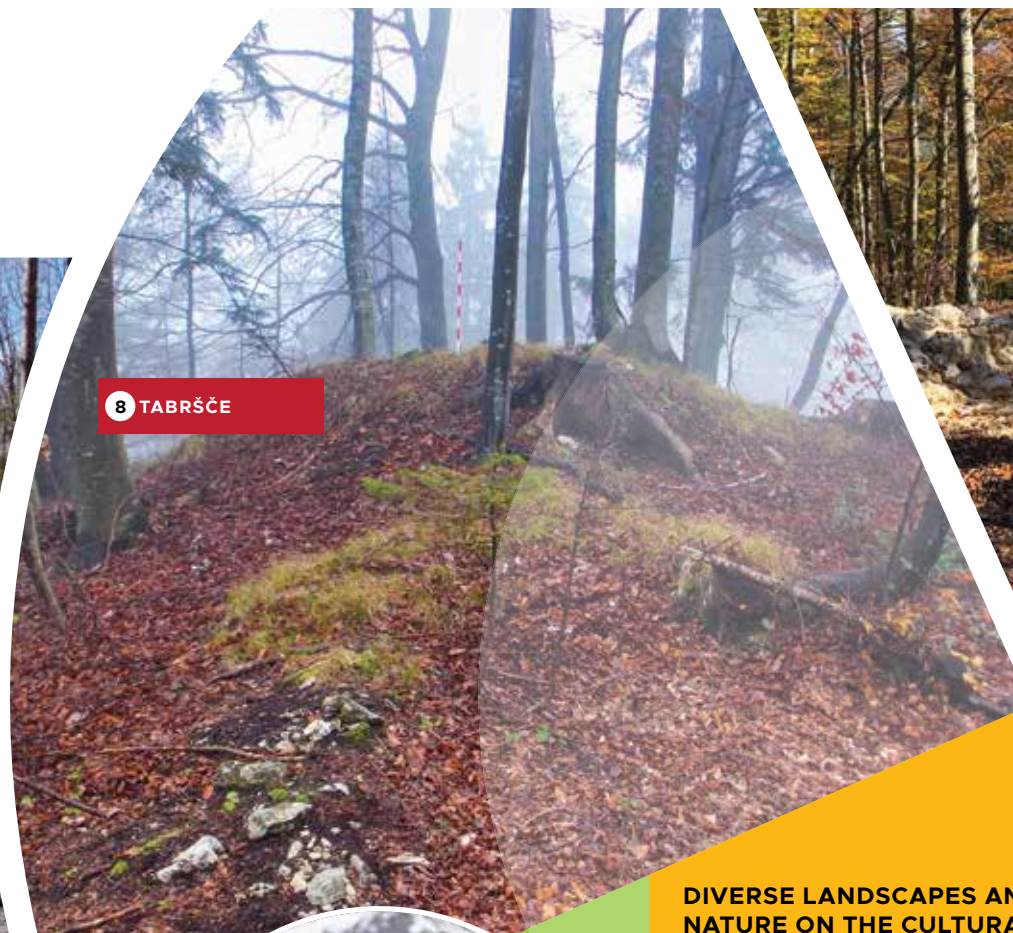


CAI - CENTRAL PART

9 NOVI POT



8 TABRŠČE



7 BENETE



10 GRADIŠČE NEAR ROB

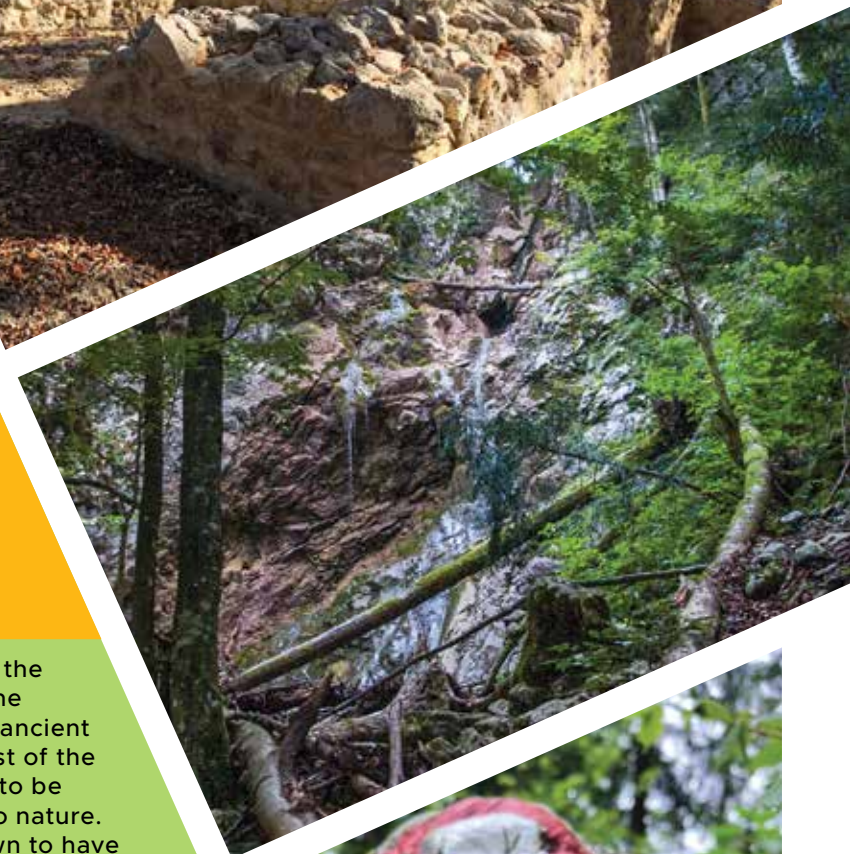


12 RAKITNA



DIVERSE LANDSCAPES AND NATURE ON THE CULTURAL ROUTE

As we discover the history of the former defence system and the preserved traces of what the ancient people constructed here, most of the stories and points of interest to be discovered here are related to nature. The ancient Romans are known to have used the natural potential of the terrain on which they built their defence system. The constructed walls and towers were merely an addition to the natural mountain slopes, rocks and canyons. Some of the locations of the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* system in the central region are adjacent to the Ljubljansko barje (Ljubljana Marshes) area, a UNESCO-protected wetland area with exceptional flora and fauna. Attractive paths along the traces of the ancient walls are complemented by streams and waterfalls such as the Lehnjakov slap (Lehnjak Waterfall) or the Kobilji curek stream.



CAI - SOUTHERN PART CROATIA

Gorski Kotar Primorje (Croatian Littoral)

Southern Clastra - view of the Adriatic Sea

The southern part of the *Clastra Alpium Iuliarum* system covers the area of the Croatian Kvarner region. Mountains and islands, cities and beaches can be found here, in a small area, within distances not exceeding 50 kilometres, adding an intriguing mysterious touch to the Roman heritage. The Roman *Tarsatica* remained abandoned and the City of Rijeka slowly began to evolve into its present form from medieval times. Those who built it were little aware of the ancient history that lay beneath them and the discovery of Roman remains, many of which are part of the Roman defence system, extends the visible history of the city further into the past. Going from the city towards nature, five other locations make up the long defence chain puzzle in this southern part of the system. This is a route that presents itself as an ideal location for a one-day hiking trip when visiting Rijeka.

Although they are close to modern busy roads, getting to specific locations merely requires walking through nature and an easy climb. At each location, you will encounter unique views in an environment of diverse vegetation that will vary depending on the proximity of the sea or the mountains.

Locations of the CAI in the southern part:

- 6 PREZID
- 5 GRADINA ABOVE PASJAK
- 4 STUDENA
- 3 JELENJE ON GROBNIČKO POLJE
- 2 SOLIN
- 1 RIJEKA



CAI - SOUTHERN PART

6 PREZID

2 SOLIN

1 RIJEKA

4 STUDENA

2 SOLIN

3 JELENJE ON
GROBNIČKO POLJE

RIJEKA - STARTING POINT OF THE ROUTE AND THE CENTRE OF KVARNER

Rijeka, the city located on the foundations of ancient *Tarsatica*, is the 2020 European Capital of Culture. It is a city with exceptional cultural heritage and extremely interesting stories related to the development of its industry and port, but also social events in its more recent history. The archaeological remains of the principium, the headquarters of the military command, can be seen within Rijeka's old town and a wealth of information can be found in the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral. Stories and interesting facts about the natural heritage of the area along the cultural route can be explored at the Rijeka Museum of Natural History.





www.claustra.org



The Claustra app
is available on
Google Play and the
AppStore

Claustra info points:

- Pomorski i povijesni muzej
Hrvatskog primorja Rijeka
(Maritime and History Museum
of the Croatian Littoral),
- Prirodoslovni muzej Rijeka
(Natural History Museum Rijeka)
- Moja Ljubljana,
Kulturni center Vrhnika
(Ljubljana River Exhibition,
Vrhnika Cultural Centre)
- TIC Vrhnika
(Vrhnika Tourist
Information Centre)

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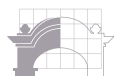
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PRIRODOSLOVNI
MUZEJ RIJEKA
NATURAL HISTORY
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County of Primorska-Goranska



KVARNER
Diversity is beautiful



HRVATSKI
RESTAURATORSKI
ZAVOD