



**Vinkovci**

*Laced with gold*

CITY OF VINKOVCI  
TOURIST BOARD

Trg bana Josipa Šokčevića 4  
32 100 Vinkovci  
phone: +385 32 334 653  
info@visitvinkovci.com

[visitvinkovci.com](http://visitvinkovci.com)

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**VINKOVCI**

## HISTORY

The story of Vinkovci or the continuity of life in this area began **more than 8000 years** ago. There is no doubt that people lived in this area as early as during the New Stone Age or **Neolithic**. Numerous archaeological evidence of the **Starčevo and Sopot cultures** (at the same time eponyms of the sites) have been found in this area which prove that.

During the **Roman Empire**, in the province of Secunda or Sirmium Pannonia (comprising present-day Syrmia, most of Slavonia, part of southern Posavlje and present-day Baranja), one of the most



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significant cities was **Cibale**. The area covered by the Cibalae trenches corresponds to the central parts of present-day Vinkovci - **the main square of Vinkovci** and **the Main Park** lie at the centre of the former Roman Cibalae.

**Two Roman emperors**, brothers **Valentinian** and **Valens** were born in Cibalae. They are also the only Roman emperors born on the territory of present-day Croatia. This information is not unknown, but the details of their life and rule are not widely known - **there are many stories intertwined with myths** and different versions of events that cannot with certainty be determined. However, precisely these stories, along with the known facts, have formed a solid foundation for the development of a new manifestation - **the Roman Days**.

In the Middle Ages, the town Vinkovci was not called Vinkovci but **St. Elijah**, and it was only in the modern age that the present name of the town on the Bosut River prevailed. It was named after the patron saint St. Elijah, the original Hungarian form being **Szentillye**, and the Croatian version being **Ilinci**. It is not just that the newer name **Vinkovci** suppressed and replaced the older, Ilinci, those are actually two different settlements that had lived side by side for a while, and then the older and more important one was extinguished and the younger and smaller one gradually strengthened and grew. Nowadays, on the **feast of St. Elijah on 20 July, the Town Festival** with different entertainment activities is **celebrated**.





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## WHAT TO VISIT

In the heart of Vinkovci, not far from the famous Vinkovci lamp, there is the central town park whose view is dominated by the **impressive museum building**. The late Baroque building was built in the 1780s for the purposes of the command of the 7th Brod Military Frontier Regiment, and in 1952 a permanent exhibition of the museum was placed there, with **exhibits from prehistoric times until 1945**. Today, within the complex Heritage Museum there are **Archeological, Ethnological, Historical and Gallery Departments** with valuable and rich material from Vinkovci and other areas, and you can also see a **hologram display of Ban Šokčević**.

**Krnjaš** is a famous Vinkovci toponym, a part of Vinkovci located on the higher bank of the Bosut River, and the last street in Vinkovci **inhabited by Šokci**. Krnjaš is the most important place for yet another reason – it is a crucial alley of Vinkovci literature - because **Josip and Ivan Kozarac**, as well as **Joza Ivakić**, were born there. Krnjaš is even today characterized by military border architecture with traditional Slavonian gables on houses, once inhabited by old Šokci families from Vinkovci, who were mostly farmers. With the aforementioned **specific architecture and greenery of the Bosut banks**, this is a part of the city that is equally beautiful to walk around at any time of the year.

The most famous love story from Vinkovci is that of the “**Šokci Romeo and Juliet**” - **Marija and Ivan Kozarac**. It is a story about forbidden, never realised love of two young people who grew up together in the settlement of Krnjaš, by the banks of the Bosut River. Their love was impossible for many reasons - they were blood relatives (third cousins), but also Ivan's poverty and incurable disease, tuberculosis, from which he suffered (and prematurely died) posed no less of a problem. The most famous love poem devoted to Marija is “**Milov'o sam garave i plave**”, (“I have caressed brunettes and blondes”), which has become a folk classic of this region and an **eternal testimony of platonic love**. In honour of that love, a **monument to Marija and Ivan Kozarac** was erected on the banks of the Bosut River in Krnjaš in 2016, with the two of them sitting on a bench and holding hands, which was unthinkable during their lifetime.

**The apple** is one of the symbols of Vinkovci - a symbol that unites **health, lasting prosperity and longevity**, which is quite suitable for a city that, among other things, has the reputation of being a settlement with the longest continuity of life in Europe of about 8000 years. The apple as a symbol was not picked randomly. At the edge of the town there is **Borincli**, an orchard that was **the largest apple plantation** in Europe in the 1970s. This whole region is abundantly planted with apples and other fruits, and the apple has thus become a symbol of the festival “**Vinkovačke jeseni**” (Vinkovci Autumn) - the oldest and most significant cultural



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and artistic manifestation of this region. It is an event that strives for the permanent affirmation of original **cultural and artistic folklore**, created out of a desire to show the richness of Slavonian tradition, the beauty of Slavonian folk costumes and customs and to preserve musical heritage. Vinkovačke jeseni is an event that celebrates **the cheerful spirit and strength of the local man**, who works hard but can also rejoice, dance and sing. **The ceremonial procession with horsemen, Lipizzaner horses and decorated carriages, folklore evenings, and Šokački divani** (Šokci chats) are just a part of a rich program that takes place all over the town during the festival and attracts visitors from the whole country and beyond.

The official slogan of the Vukovar-Srijem County **“interwoven with gold threads”** beautifully emphasizes gold as a link connecting specific location and customs - **the Slavonian breadbasket, fields of corn, sunflowers and rapeseed, the richness of apples and decorative squashes as symbols of Slavonia**. Life imbued with gold is also reflected in being interwoven with manifestations the town of Vinkovci provides for its inhabitants and guests throughout the year. From **Carnival horse-riding, Carnival, Puppet Spring, Health Fair and Festival of the Actors in the spring to Roman Days and Vinkovačko ljeto** (Vinkovci Summer) with **Hang Loose Rockabilly Festival**, during the summer months **Vinkovačke jeseni** takes you into the autumn season, while in December you can experience real glitter during **Advent in Vinkovci and Rock Marinfest**.

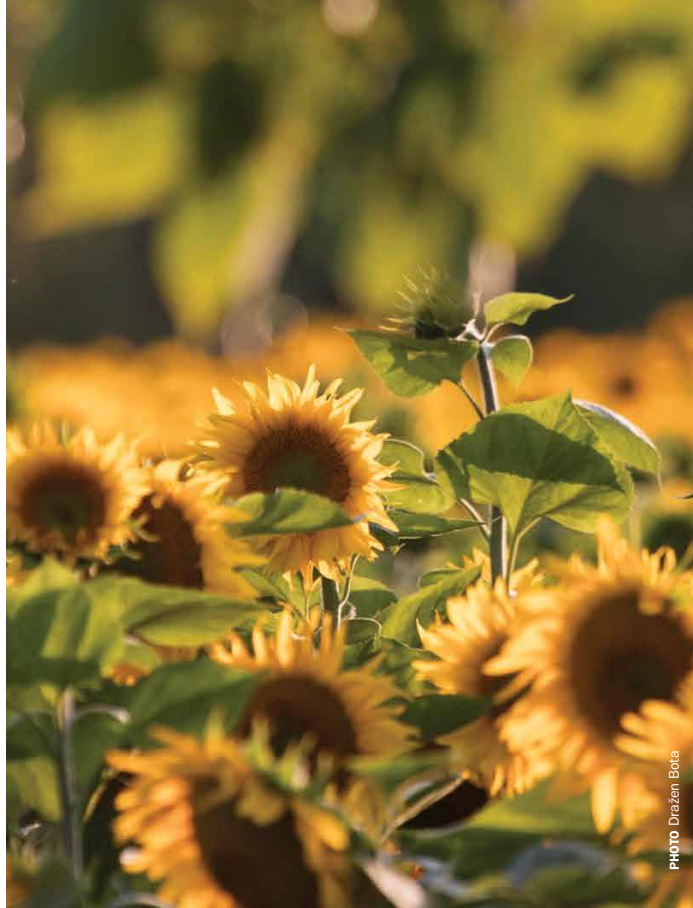


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# DID YOU KNOW...

**...that the Croatian anthem was composed by a Vinkovci inhabitant?**

**Josip Runjanin** was an amateur composer and an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. He received his musical training from a military chaplain in Glina, where he served as an imperial cadet. There he often socialised with Illyrian patriots, where the works of Illyrian writers were read as well. It was there that Runjanin first heard the poem **Horvatska domovina (Croatian Homeland)** by **Antun Mihanović**, whose selected verses were later declared the Croatian national anthem.

**...that Cibalae** belongs to the most prominent **early Christian centres**. Already in the 3rd century, they had their bishop named Eusebius, who died as a martyr in the persecution of Christians during Emperor Valerian in 258 AD. **Eusebius of Cibalae** is the earliest **known bishop** in all of Pannonia. In the persecutions during the reign of Emperors Diocletian and Maximilian, **Polion**, the **“lead lector”** of Cibalae, was also burned somewhere in the vicinity of the city - it is believed that the exact location of his burning was found at Kamenica site, today a field in Prišinci. **St. Eusebius** is worshipped along with St. Polion, their memorial day being on 29 May. The parish church of St. John of Nepomuk in Vinkovci changed its patron saint in 1972 and since then it has been known as the **Church of St. Eusebius and Polion**.

**...that famous Poirot, but also James Bond stopped** at the railway station in **Vinkovci**? Indeed, it is a well-known fact that **“Murder on the Orient Express”** happened just outside Vinkovci, and James Bond was also a passenger on the Orient Express in the famous sequel **“From Russia with Love”**.

**...that Slavonian outlaw and bandit** about whom legends were told and literary works were written, **was arrested precisely in Vinkovci**. By his real name Jovo Stanisavljević, known only as **Čaruga**, he was a member of the Hajduk gang “Kolo gorskih tića” (“Band of Mountain Birds”), and later became **harambaša** (senior commander of the Hajduk gang). He committed many robberies and murders, and many **romantic**, but historically unsubstantiated **legends** were quite often spread about him.

**...what Orion is?** It is a vessel of unusual beauty, a ceramic pot painted in black and white squares. It was **discovered in 1978** when digging a shelter for the Slavonia Hotel facility. Significantly, it happened **on the first day of spring**. It was later discovered that the vessel **dates back to 2600 BC**, from the time of the Vučedol culture! Twenty years after its discovery, the **secret of the unique ornaments** was solved - it is a symbolic representation of the sky above the town. More precisely, **Orion is a calendar, the oldest calendar in Europe**. Just to compare, it's about 500 years older than the famous Stonehenge site. No matter what season you visit Vinkovci, **look up to the starry sky during clear nights and try to find symbols from Orion**.

**...that in the very centre of Vinkovci a hoard of silver utensils** was found, which was probably buried there by a **rich inhabitant of Cibalae - Roman Vinkovci at the end of the 4th century**. Some of the total of **45 different shapes of pots** are decorated with **engraved ornaments** and the **niello technique**, and an inscription on one of the most luxurious pots reveals that they were made by **Master Antoninus of Aquileia**.

