

## SPODNJA IDRİJA WITH THE LEDINE AND VRŠNIK PLATEAUS

**Surface:** 38,05 km<sup>2</sup>

**Highest point:** 1106 m

**Lowest point:** 298 m

**Settlements:** Spodnja Idrija, Spodnja Kanomlja, Mokraška vas, Ledinsko razpotje, Idršek, Ledine, Ledinske Krnice, Korita, Mrzli Vrh, Pečnik, Govejk, Gorenji Vrsnik, Spodnji Vrsnik, Žirovnica

**Rivers and streams:** Idrija, Kanomljica, Žirovnica, Osojnica

**Predominant rock types:** dolomites, marly and oolite limestones, marlstones of varying colors

**Predominant forest type:** Dinaric fir-beech forest  
(*Abieti-Fagetum dinaricum*)

**Botanical peculiarities:** Carniolan primrose (*Primula carniolica*), Idrija primrose (*Primula x venusta*)

**Peaks with a view:** Jelenk (1106 m), Gradišče (998 m), Cerkovni vrh (804 m), Sivka (1008 m), Lončmanova Sivka (987 m)



**Spodnja Idrija** is situated in the Idrija valley, at the confluence of Idrija and Kanomljica. With 1,400 inhabitants, it is the second largest settlement in the Municipality of Idrija. Above Spodnja Idrija, in addition to the highest Krnice Plateau, there are also the **Ledine** and **Vrsnik Plateaus**, with elevations between 600 and 800 m and with the most sun exposure in the Municipality. The Plateaus lie at the border between the Slovene Littoral and Upper Carniola, where the continental divide between the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea can be found.

Spodnja Idrija has road connections to Idrija, Kanomlja, and Tolmin. The Ledine and Vrsnik Plateaus are reached from Idrija through Mokraška vas or from the Poljane Valley through Žiri.

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I FEEL  
SLOVENIA

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Slovenia.  
UNESCO  
HERITAGE



# SPODNJA IDRİJA ... THE LEDINE AND VRŠNIK PLATEAUS

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Welcome to the world with a centuries-old history of pilgrimages, quaint villages, and vast panoramas. At the confluence of the Kanomljica and Idrija rivers lies Spodnja Idrija. From here a picturesque road leads to the plateaus of Ledine and Vrsnik.







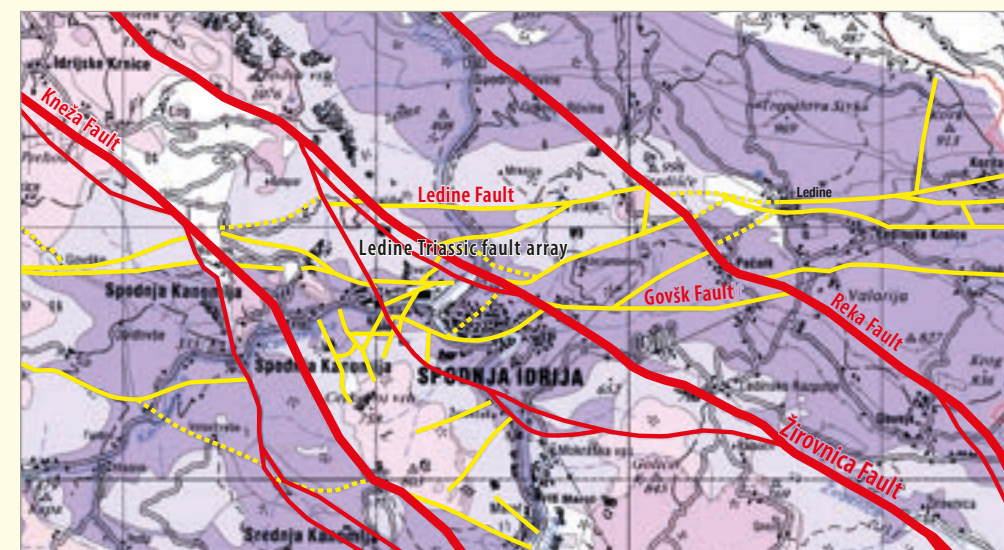
**Spodnja Idrija**, also known by the locals as Fara ("the Parish"), is situated in the extended valley of the **Idrijca river**. The main factors that have shaped the town, its surroundings, and the lives of the inhabitants throughout history, are the surrounding hills and the relentless flow of the Idrijca river.

This little, but immensely hospitable place is perfect for **anyone who likes to spend time in nature or enjoys culinary delicacies**. Take in the beauty of the crystal-clear Idrijca river and taste the delicious *štruklji*, ricotta rolls made by the housewives of Spodnja Idrija.

Even by appearance, the rocks and minerals from Spodnja Idrija and its surroundings differ significantly from the rocks of similar age found elsewhere in the Idrija region. The reason for this is the Spodnja Idrija junction of Middle Triassic faults dating to 240 million years ago. The faults cross the region in an east-west direction, extending from the Ledine Plateau through Spodnja Idrija and towards the Govšk Ravine. The region is characterized by a surprisingly frequent interchange of Early Triassic and Scythian (aged 252–247 million years) **dark-colored and brecciated dolomites, limestones, marlstones, and mudrock insertions**. Various locations close to smaller northwest-southeast faults feature dolomites in crumbled zones. These tectonic characteristics are the reason for numerous fascinating morphological phenomena in the region, such as the direction of the Pekel and Govšk ravines, the protrusion of the hill where the Spodnja Idrija church was built, and the unusual double turn of the Idrijca streambed.



Idrijca river with typical colorful gravel in Spodnja Idrija.



— Middle Triassic Faults (E-W)

— Tertiary Faults (NW-SE)

layered dolomite with lenses of sandstone, shales and siltstones with oolite limestone, brown marlstone with dolomite (Scythian - Lower Triassic)

dolomite (Anisian - Middle Triassic)

colorful conglomerates, grey limestone, tuff and tuffites (Ladinian - Middle Triassic)

dolomite (Cordevolian - Upper Triassic)





## The Pilgrimage to Mary-on-the-Rock

The Baroque **Church of Our Lady of Assumption** (also known by the locals as **Marija na skalci**, "Mary-on-the-Rock") is situated above the old town center of Spodnja Idrija and boasts a long and tumultuous history. Legend has it that in the past, a depiction of the Virgin Mary kept miraculously appearing on the hill above Idrijca, which led to the first chapel being built there. The main feature of the church is a **series of mid-18th-century frescoes**, the work of notable painter Jožef Mrak, who was also a cartographer and the architect of the klavže, water barriers on the Idrijca and Belca rivers. The frescoes – a monumental feature of the church – cover the entire ceiling from the choir-loft to the presbyterium.

The surroundings of the Church of Our Lady of Assumption feature a **number of chapels dedicated to Virgin Mary**. In the past, these were built in places where pilgrims from nearby

Idrija, Kanomlja, Cerklje, and Lendava would stop on their way to Spodnja Idrija. There, the pilgrims were able to spot the church for the first time in their journey (or the last time if they were leaving), and tradition would have them kneel or bow at the occasion. The chapels are still known to the locals as *pokloni*, meaning "kneelings" or "genuflections".



## The Celebration of the Assumption of Mary

A **traditional local celebration** takes place each year on August 15. According to tradition, the holiday was celebrated by weaving ivy garlands and cooking *štruklji*. Up to this day, the main location remains the Church of Our Lady of Assumption, where a holy mass ceremony is held for the occasion. Throughout the years, the event developed from a purely religious holiday into the central celebration of the town's cultural and ethnological features, as well as a yearly source of entertainment.

### The *Štruklji* of Fara

For all important holidays and local events, the housewives of Spodnja Idrija prepare *štruklji*, **rolls made of filo dough and filled with ricotta**. It is a tradition that has been given new life in the last three decades. The locals often call the dish *prfarski štruklji*, "the *štruklji* of Fara".







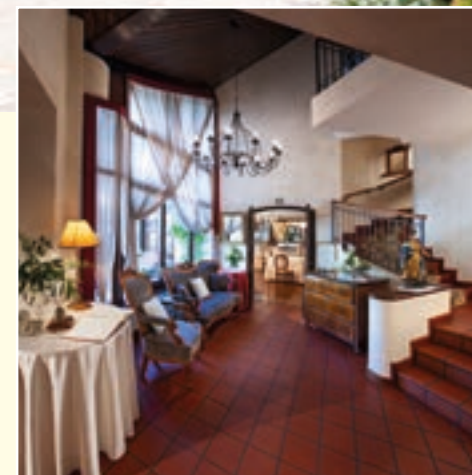
## Šajblčki – The Treasure of the Fara Pottery Tradition

Šajblčki are small clay cups filled with wax used in the past by locals instead of candles on graves to honor the dead. These clay cups are the heritage of a rich pottery tradition that used to be present in Spodnja Idrija. Šajblčki are mostly lit on special occasions and holidays: during Easter, their glow from the windows of the houses of Fara accompany the Holy Week procession. After World War II, they were also lit on the eve of May Day, when celebrations with bonfires are also common. Thanks to the efforts of several local associations, the tradition of lighting šajblčki on the eve of May Day survives to this day.



## Kendov Dvorec – The Home of Tranquility

In Spodnja Idrija, the spirit of history is kept alive and well by a number of well-preserved and renovated homesteads. The most notable among these is the **Kenda Homestead**. Its origins reach all the way back to 1377, when according to historical sources, the first landowners already held a large farmstead above the Idrija river valley. The building of the former Kenda homestead has been renovated and revitalized in the spirit of times long past, and today, it is a **high-end hotel** that is proud to present and expand the rich culinary tradition of the area as part of the international Relais & Châteaux association. An important part of the Kenda homestead was its **two-story brick granary** with a wooden balcony and gable roof.







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## Trail Along the Idrijca River

### Idrijca – A Paradise for Fly-Fishing Enthusiasts

Spodnja Idrija, with the **Idrijca** and **Kanomljica** rivers, is a paradise for all fly-fishing enthusiasts. Fly-fishing in the area follows the catch-and-release model. The crystalline waters of the Idrijca and the Kanomljica are home to the autochthon Upper-Idrijca-type marble trout, the rainbow trout, the river trout, and the grayling.

Fishing and fish have played an important role in the culture of Spodnja Idrija, as confirmed by the quaint local legend titled *The Fish That Sang on a Poplar Tree*. Many versions of the legend exist – one of them says that young women would try to glimpse their future husband's face in the Idrijca river, but the reflection would only show them fish and the surrounding poplar trees. The women sang and it was said that they saw a fish singing on a poplar tree.

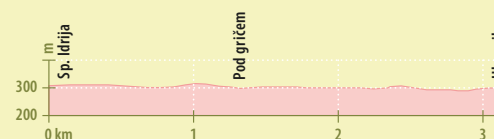
### Peaks With a View

Spodnja Idrija is surrounded by three major elevations: **Jelenk (1106 m)**, **Gradišče (998 m)**, and **Cerkovni Vrh (804 m)**. They can be reached in all seasons of the year by numerous hiking trails suitable for both novice hikers as well as more advanced sports enthusiasts.



**Starting point:** Sp. Idrija – old town center  
**Length:** 3 km  
**Elevation difference:** 26 m  
**Walking time:** 45 min (in one direction)  
**Difficulty:** Easy

What is now a popular walking trail along the left bank of the Idrijca river used to be the main road between Spodnja Idrija and the Tolmin region. From the old town center below the Church of Our Lady of Assumption, the trail follows the old road to Kanomlja and passes the two chapels to the confluence of the Idrijca and Kanomljica rivers, then continues along the Idrijca. When walking along the trail, you can admire the steep slopes of Jelenk and the green waters of Idrijca.



Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*).



Fly-fishing on the Idrijca river.





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## Jelenk - The mountain with botanical treasures

**Starting point:** The Spodnja Idrija Industrial Zone  
**Length:** 4.2 km  
**Elevation difference:** 890 m  
**Walking time:** 2 h (in one direction)  
**Difficulty:** strenuous (climbing) trail

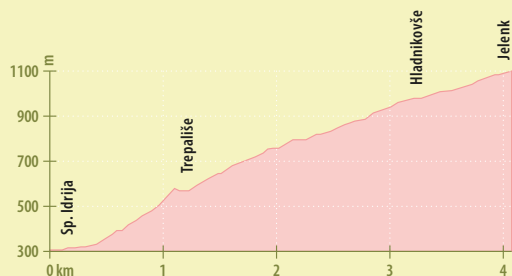
Jelenk is rising above the valleys of the Idrija and Kanomljica rivers. In the spring, the cliff-like rocky outcrops of Jelenk are home to a unique local blossom – the Idrija primrose. It is said that even Frederick Augustus I of Saxony wanted to see this unique botanical specimen, which is

why Jelenk is also called "the royal botanical mountain". In addition to the divergent flora, the trail will also let you admire the Alpine Wall fortifications built by the Italian army.

**Caution:** The trail leading through Kendove Robe is only suitable for advanced hikers and climbers.



Kendove robe.



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## The old Spodnja Idrija - Ledine pilgrimage route

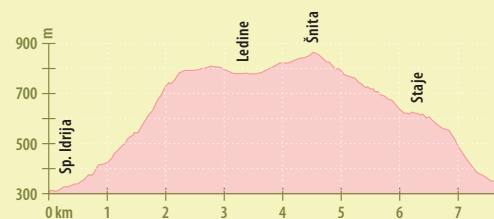
**Starting point:** Spodnja Idrija Bus Station  
**Length:** 9.5 km  
**Elevation difference:** 623 m  
**Walking time:** 3 h 30 min  
**Difficulty:** steep unmarked trail

The steep gravel road leading from Spodnja Idrija to the Ledine Plateau offers a series of beautiful views of the Idrija Hills and the Idrija river valley. In the past, the inhabitants of the Ledine Plateau used this road for their annual pilgrimages to the church of Mary-on-the-Rock in Spodnja Idrija.

According to legend, the Virgin Mary heard their prayers and granted them protection from hail and a bountiful harvest. The trail leads past a beautifully renovated chapel that harkens to this historical tradition of pilgrimages.

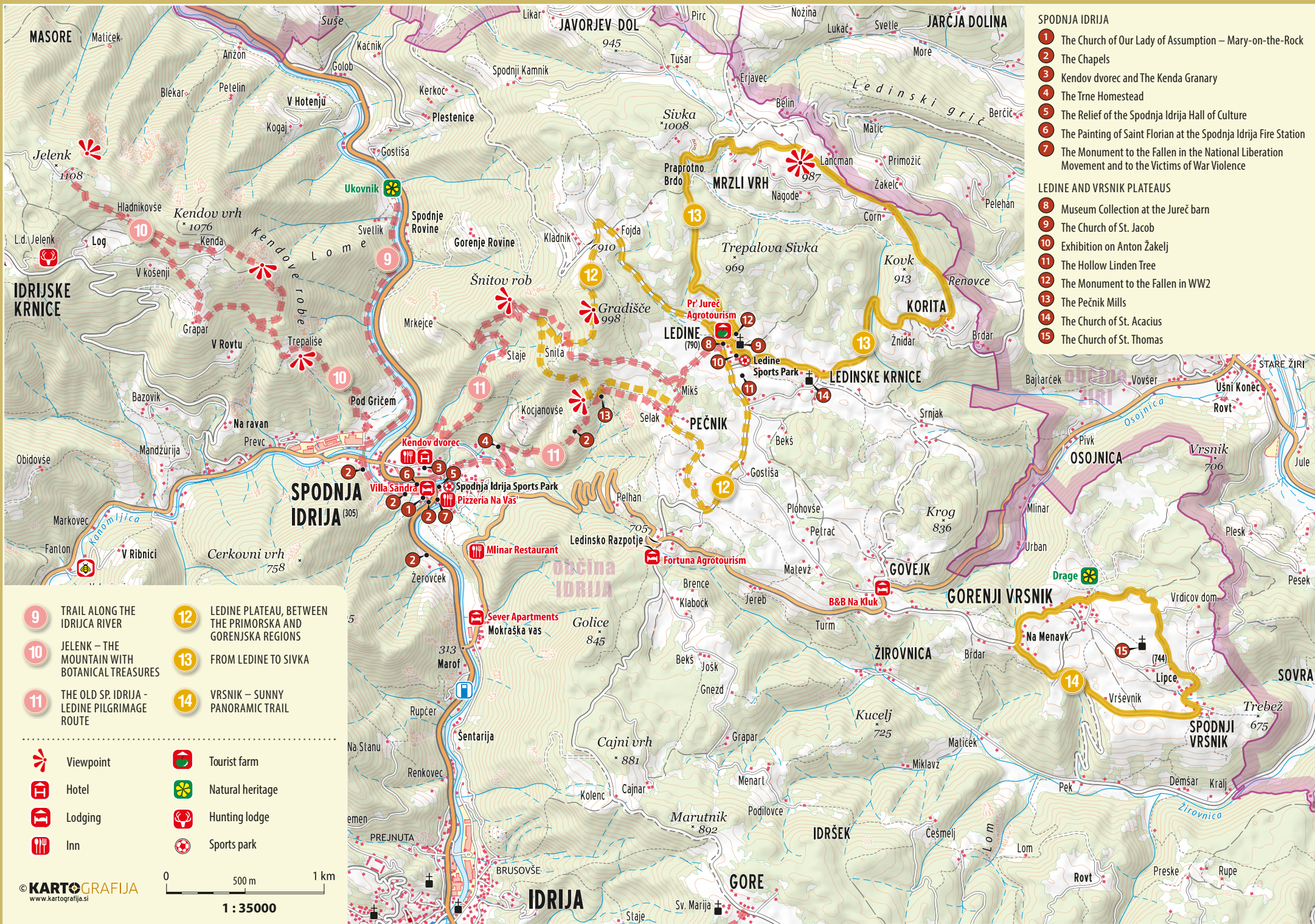
The trail is still very popular among the locals for its picturesque sights and scenic views.

You are welcome to take the journey on the old pilgrim's road from Fara to Ledine.



The Trne Homestead.





#### SPODNJA IDRİJA

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- 2 The Chapels
- 3 Kendov dvorec and The Kenda Granary
- 4 The Trne Homestead
- 5 The Relief of the Spodnja Idrija Hall of Culture
- 6 The Painting of Saint Florian at the Spodnja Idrija Fire Station
- 7 The Monument to the Fallen in the National Liberation Movement and to the Victims of War Violence

#### LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

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- 9 The Church of St. Jacob
- 10 Exhibition on Anton Žakelj
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- Viewpoint
- Hotel
- Lodging
- Inn
- Tourist farm
- Natural heritage
- Hunting lodge
- Sports park





Ledine

The terrain surrounding **Ledine** and **Vrsnik** is a transitional area with a turbulent history and geological development, between the Slovene regions of Upper Carniola and the Littoral, at the continental divide between the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea, between Middle Europe and the Mediterranean.

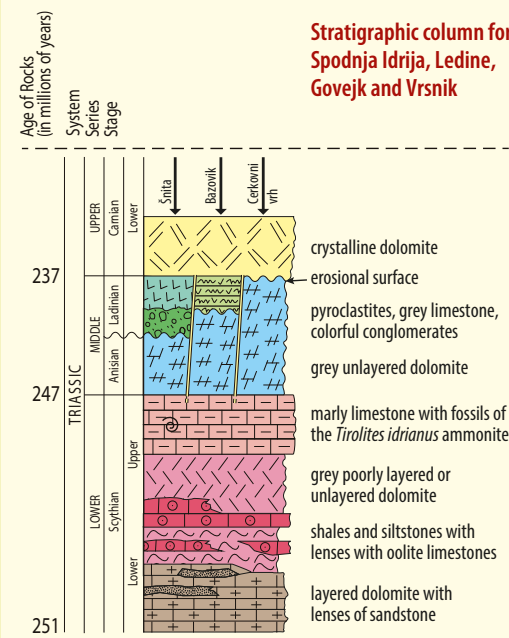
In the past, the inhabitants of the plateaus lived **in harmony with nature**. Their traditions have been upheld and some are still observed today: visitors to the plateau can admire a priceless **collection of farmers' equipment and tools**, as well as visit the **traditional rye harvest festival**. You can get to know the world of the sunny plateaus of Ledine and Vrsnik by taking a trip along one of the **numerous hiking and biking trails** in the area. The relaxing journey will make you think: "How come we haven't discovered this place before?"



The surface of the **Ledine Plateau** consists of rocks from the Scythian and Anisian periods (248–242 million years ago), with an age equal to those found in the surroundings of Spodnja Idrija (see the geological chart). In these periods, different colorful rocks were formed in the shallow sea that covered this area and where gravel from the land was deposited.

Among the oldest rocks (aged 252–251 million years) in the area are the **layered dolomites with sandstone lenses and various claystones and mudstones with oolite limestone**. A somewhat younger category (aged 251–241 million years) consists of **grey poorly layered or unlayered dolomite** transitioning into **brown marlstone**; it is the foundation of a significant portion of the Ledine Plateau between Govejk and Pečnik. In the same period, **marly limestones** were also formed. These can be observed from Korita across Ledine all the way to the Idrija Valley. Next, there is a younger **grey unlayered Anisian dolomite** (aged 247–242 million years), which is the basis of the central part of the Ledine terrain. The dolomite is covered by erosion patches of young Ladinian rocks aged approximately 240 million years. These are rare, but interesting and colorful: **colorful conglomerate, grey limestone, as well as green tuff and tuffite**, which were formed through volcanic activity. The youngest rock (aged 235 million years) is the Cordevol **dolomite**, which is characterized by its white color and crystalline structure.

The diverse terrain of **Vrsnik**, with valleys, karst sinkholes, ridges and elegantly curved elevations, will fascinate you. The abundance of soil provides excellent conditions for meadows and fields. The terrain here consists of rocks from two geological periods: on the surface of northern edges of the plateau, you can find **grey unlayered dolomite** from the end of the Early Triassic (Upper Scythian; 251–247 million years). The central part of the plateau consists of **marly limestone** with fossils of the *Tirolites idrianus* (Hauer). The higher and slightly more exposed hills of the plateau consist of **grey unlayered dolomite** from the Anisian period (247–242 million years).



Oolite limestone consist of numerous spherical grains with concentric layers (reaching sizes of up to 2 mm).

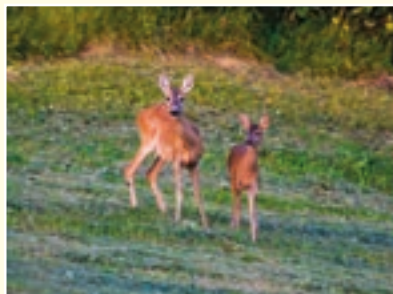


The original illustration of the *Tirolites idrianus* ammonite, illustrated in 1863 by its discoverer, the Austrian paleontologist Franz Ritter von Hauer.





Autumn lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*).



Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*).

## Diversity of Flora and Fauna

The **highly transitional character of the terrain at Ledine and Vrsnik**, with a mixture of diverse climate, geological and geographical features, provides good conditions for a variety of plants. Because of farming practices that have fostered the co-existence of nature and agriculture, the meadows are still full of colorful field flowers. In spring, the area is home to the very rare **white asphodel** (*Asphodelus albus*). In autumn, it features the even rarer **autumn lady's-tresses** (*Spiranthes spiralis*). The typical fir-beech forest undergrowth features two varieties of snowdrops, hellebores, the creeping navelwort, *Hacquetia epipactis*, the European scopolia, and other plants from the rose family, ferns, seed plants, mosses, lichens, and fungi. The forests are home to deer, foxes, rabbits, and badgers, as well as to the more seldom found boars, chamois, bears, and wolves.



## Keeping the Farming Traditions Alive

The **Jureč Barn** (*Jurečeva šupa*) in the middle of the village of Ledine features a rich museum collection of machines, tools, and everyday objects once used in farming. The collection consists of about 1,000 objects. The oldest object with a date is a splinter-making tool from 1843. The objects have been collected from the Jureč farm, its surroundings, and from several more distant places. Together, they form a collection of typical farming tools and machines that are characteristic of this area.

The Jureč farm maintains the farming tradition of the Ledine Plateau alive for new generations by organizing the annual rye harvest festival, as well as other thematic events and workshops for people of all generations.







## Anton Žakelj – rodoljub ledinski

In Ledine in 1814, the poet and folk song collector **Anton Žakelj** (also known under his pseudonym Rodoljub Ledinski) was born. After secondary education, he studied theology and served as a chaplain in several towns of the Ljubljana Archdiocese. Even in his highschool years, **he recorded folk songs** sang to him by his mother Ana. He wrote original lyric and narrative poetry, taking inspiration from France Prešeren, the greatest Slovene poet. The memory of the life and work of Anton Žakelj has been revitalized through an exhibit that is still available today at the parish hall of Ledine.



A memorial plaque dedicated to the poet and folk song collector Anton Žakelj.

## St. Jacob's Church in Ledine

The Church of St. Jacob in Ledine was first mentioned in 1540, but got the form it maintains until today in 1666. The precious altar painting of St. Jacob was painted in 1877 by the Slovene painter Janez Šubic.



Border stone, Mrzli Vrh.

## The Italian Occupation and the Rapallo Border

With the Rapallo Border established in the period between the World Wars, the territory of the Ledine and Vrsnik Plateaus, which until then had been under the administrative and ecclesiastic authority of Žiri, was annexed to Italy. Several reminders of this tumultuous historical period remain to this day: **border stones, defensive and military buildings (air-raid shelter caves, border outposts and guardhouses, the water reservoirs of Ledine and Vrsnik)**, as well as roads between Govejk and Ledinske Krnice, Ledine and the Idrijca Valley (through Kladnik), and the Žirovnica Valley and Vrsnik. The largest barracks in the area were built in Govejk, Vrsnik, and Mrzli Vrh.

Relationships – called *amori di frontiera* (*border love*) in Italian – frequently grew between local girls and border officers. Several women married and left for Italy with their soldier husbands. However, many of them remained here in their hometowns with the children that were the fruits of their border love.



Military buildings, Vrsnik.



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## Ledine Plateau, between the Primorska and Gorenjska regions

**Starting point:** Ledinsko Razpotje

**Length:** 6.8 km

**Elevation difference:** 253 m

**Walking time:** 3 h 30 min

**Difficulty:** easy

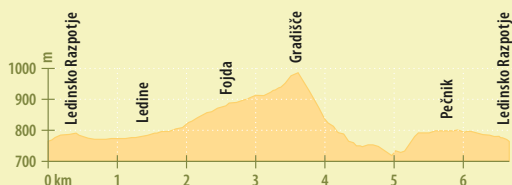
This scenic, but not strenuous circular path along the edges of the Ledine Plateau will fascinate all hiking enthusiasts. From the path, you can hike to Gradišče (998 m), where according to some sources, an ancient outpost used to stand in the tumultuous period of the downfall of Ancient Rome and the Migration Period. You can also admire the ruins of the abandoned Pečnik mills. The path is full of scenic panoramas toward the Idrija Valley, the Idrija Hills, the Trnovo Forest, and the Julian Alps.



The hollow linden tree from 1864, planted by the women of the Catholic organization Mary's Society to honor the establishment of the independent parish of Ledine.



The Mills of Pečnik.



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## From Ledine to Sivka

**Starting point:** Ledinske Krnice

**Length:** 10.2 km

**Elevation difference:** 255 m

**Čas kolesarjenja:** 1 h

**Walking time:** 2 h 30 min

**Difficulty:** easy

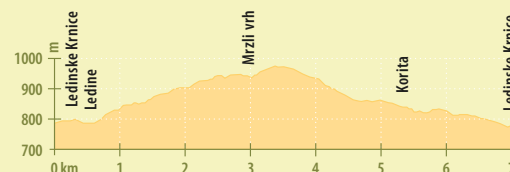
Either by bike or on foot, breathe in the natural environment and the picturesque villages of the countryside, listen to the history of the Rapallo Border that divided the inhabitants of this area in two countries, and feel the heritage of the old farming tools on the farms of times past. This circular path is particularly picturesque in spring, when saffron blossoms paint the slopes of Mrzli Vrh purple. From here, you can admire the view of the Škofja Loka and Cerkno Hills, the Julian Alps, the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, and the Polhov Gradec Hills.



The Church of St. Acacius in Ledinske Krnice.



The Monument to the Fallen in WW2 in Ledine.





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## Vrsnik - sunny panoramic trail

**Starting point:** The crossroads at Gorenji Vrsnik

**Length:** 4 km

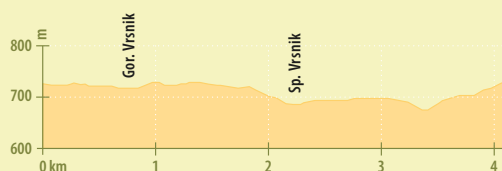
**Elevation difference:** 46 m

**Cycling time:** 30 min

**Walking time:** 1 h

**Difficulty:** easy

This sunny circular trail leading across the Vrsnik Plateau will inspire you no matter the time of year. The Church of St. Thomas from the 17th century, which dominates the hill between Spodnji and Gorenji Vrsnik, gives the trail a particular charm. The image of the church nestled between two linden trees at the top of the hills is fit for a postcard, as is the view from the hill itself: a panorama of the hills of Vrh Svetih Treh Kraljev, Blegoš, and the surrounding hill range all the way to Triglav, Slovenia's highest mountain. Cycling or hiking along this trail is short and easy, but you can lengthen the hike by following the forking trails.



Cycling across the Vrsnik Plateau.



Gorenji Vrsnik.

## Museum Collections and Homesteads

LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

- **Museum Collection of Farming Tools at the Jureč Barn**  
Ledine 19, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 37 79 096, +386 (0)41 919 473
- **Permanent exhibit – Anton Žakelj – Rodoljub Ledinski**  
Ledine 7, 5281 Spodnja Idrija

## Restaurants and Accommodation

SPODNJA IDRIJA

- **Kendov dvorec Relais & Châteaux**  
Na Griču 2, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 37 25 100
- **Pizzeria Na Vas'**  
Na vasi 38, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 99 58 223
- **Restaurant Mlinar**  
Žirovska cesta 4, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 377 63 16
- **Villa Sandra Apartments**  
Na vasi 37, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)31 662 718
- **Sever Apartments**  
Mokraška vas 15, 5280 Idrija  
t: +386 (0)40 838 104

LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

- **Agritourism Fortuna**  
Idršek 1a, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)40 600 811
- **B&B »Na Kluk«**  
Govejk 14c, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)51 435 497, +386 (0)41 656 827
- **Agritourism Pr'Jureč**  
Ledine 19, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 37 79 096, +386 (0)41 919 473



## Home-Made Products

SPODNJA IDRIJA

- **Fara Tourism Association**  
Slovenska cesta 12,  
5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)31 335 621
- **Butcher's Shop Pr'Far**  
Slovenska cesta 27, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)5 37 43 278
- **Zlumah Distillery, Craft Gin**  
Na vasi 31, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)51 410 140

LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

- **Farmstead Pri Kafurju**  
Spodnji Vrsnik 18, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)41 774 365

## Sports Activities

SPODNJA IDRIJA

- **Spodnja Idrija Sports Park**  
Na vasi 26, Spodnja Idrija
- **Sever Horse Riding School**  
Mokraška vas 15, 5280 Idrija  
t: +386 (0)40 838 104

LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

- **Ledine Sports Park**  
Ledine 13, 5281 Spodnja Idrija  
t: +386 (0)31 654 946

## Traditional Events

SPODNJA IDRIJA

- **May Day Bonfire** (on the eve of the 1st May)
- **Hike to Jelenk** (Pentecost Sunday)
- **Assumption of Mary** (August)
- **Fara Festival** (August)

LEDINE AND VRSNIK PLATEAUS

- **Jacob's Sunday** (July)
- **Cherry Sunday** (July)
- **Rye and Wheat Harvest** (July/August)
- **Cycling Race for the Tanja Žakelj Cup** (October)
- **Weekend of štruklji** (October)

