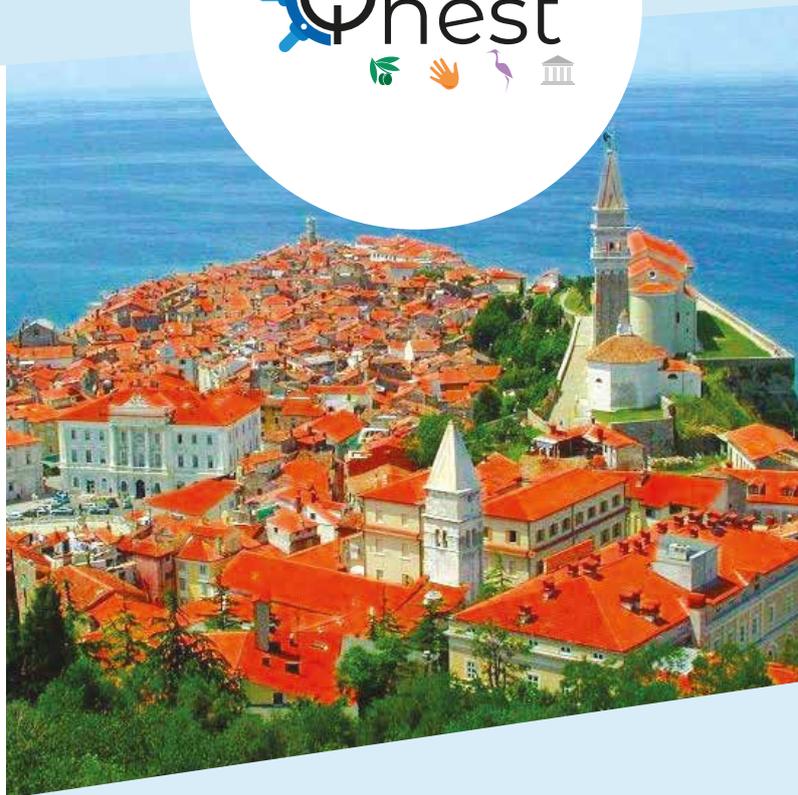




The Obalno-Kraška Region (Slovenian Istria and the Karst)

The Obalno-kraška region (Slovenian Istria and the Karst) is a coastal region with the sub-Mediterranean climate and is the only one in Slovenia with an exit to the sea. The region consists of 8 municipalities and the administrative centre is the town of Koper. Natural features of the region enable the development of tourism, transport and special agricultural crops (esp. grape/wine and olives/olive oil). Agricultural holdings in this region are among the smallest in Slovenia considering the average utilised agricultural area per agricultural holding and the number of livestock on agricultural holdings.



Cultural heritage and environmental resources

The Mediterranean towns of Slovenian Istria, Piran (home of celebrated composer Giuseppe Tartini), Izola and Koper try to expose their multiculturalism and long history, while Portorož invites visitors with its holiday attractions (spa and wellness tourism products). Salt pan workers can be seen at work in the Sečovlje and Strunjan Salt Pans, and the Karst with Škocjan Caves (magnificent natural monument listed among the UNESCO world heritage sites) and Vilenica cave boasts the most stunning underground worlds on the planet. The village of Lipica is also home to the noble white Lipizzaner horses. The word "Karst" ("Kras" in Slovenian language) originates from this region. Slovenian Istria fascinates with its unique blend of Roman, medieval and Venetian influences and the beauty of its nature. The region boasts of rich cultural heritage and tradition. Intangible cultural heritage is also of major importance, particularly the traditional breeding of Lipizzaners in Lipica Stud Farm, the artisan skill of a dry stonewall construction, and the traditional production of sea salt in Sečovlje and Strunjan. There are plenty feasts and festivals related to traditions, rites, practices and customs in the connection with local saints, carnivals, food and wine etc.





Economic activities and regional strategies

The entire region is working towards a greater integration. The cooperation between scientific-research institutions, universities and business, cooperation between companies and their associations has been established in order to enhance the region to become more entrepreneurial. The key development potentials in region are geostrategic position in relation to the Koper trade port and forecasts of future commodity flows; development of tourist offer (including sports tourism) and more efficient marketing, based on already built and new infrastructure and competences; strengthening the role of knowledge and integration / cooperation in the economy; creative potentials of people, including the unemployed; promoting a healthy Mediterranean lifestyle, growing quality food in connection with rural development, sustainable patterns of management and life (transport, energy, spatial planning) and a quality environment, cultural heritage and nature.



Tourist attractions

Slovenia is unique – marked by a significant biological diversity is one of the most water-rich countries in EU; 10% of its territory is covered (protected) with national parks; and 60% with forests. In 2016 Slovenia has become the world’s first country to be declared as a green destination. The Obalno-kraška region is the integral part of the Mediterranean macro destination. The landscape diversity, the natural wonders of Karst, attractive and easily accessible Mediterranean towns with strong ties to the green Istrian countryside and underground world wonders, in symbiosis with culinary delicacies and premium wines.



Local products linked to the Mediterranean Diet

Slovene Istria, with its abundant vegetation, offers a wealth of culinary experiences, with fresh herbs, meat and fish specialties. The old Istrian cuisine which differed depending on the season was based on several essential ingredients such as indigenous, locally grown vegetables, plants, wheat and corn flour, fish and, of course, domestic olive oil, which is the basic fat of the Mediterranean diet. Both, Olive Oil from Slovene Istria and the Piran Salt are legally protected and awarded with the EU quality logo - Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). The Istrian cuisine also features an entire range of unique indigenous dishes which are difficult to find elsewhere in the world, such as Bobiči (casserole of beans and corn), Fuži (special homemade pasta), polenta, and homemade gnocchi with a variety of sauces etc.



Cultural routes and itineraries

There are many events and festivals celebrating its antiques, such as: The Olive oil and Chard festival, Artichoke and Persimmon (kaki) feasts, Wine and garlic festival, Fishermen’s festival in Izola, Refosco wine festival, The Golden Olive Leaf festival, Days of open cellars - from the winemaker to the olive oil producer, Gastronomic treasures of Slovene Istria - a thematic route and gastronomic offer, the event Sweet Istria, The Olive oil route etc.

An important local gastronomic feature is also the “osmica/osmizza” (unique only for Slovene Karst and Istria as it started during the period of the Habsburg monarchy), where local farmers offer exclusively homemade wine and food in their homes for eight days once or twice a year.