

THE WALK OF PEACE FROM THE ALPS TO THE ADRIATIC

The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is over 500 km long. It is a cross-border long-distance hiking trail between **Slovenia and Italy**. Divided into **30 sections**, it winds down from **the Julian Alps, through the Vipava Valley, Gorica Basin, Goriška Brda and Kras Regions, to the Adriatic Sea**. The trail encompasses more than **300 WW1 heritage points of interest**. Alongside the main section of the trail, there are rear war areas in **the Trenta Valley and Gorenjska Region, Bohinj Area and the Natisone Valleys**.

Besides the main cross-border story of **the Isonzo Front**, which the visitors get to know on the Walk of Peace, there are several places off the main trail that are worth a visit and are important for understanding the life and events that happened in these places during World War I (**areas around Cerkno, Idrija, Logatec, Pivka and Ragogna, Timau, Val Canale/Kanalska dolina Valley, lower part of the Piave River and Venice**).

The Walk of Peace connects outdoor museums, cemeteries, charnel houses, monuments and memorials, forts, WW1 museums and private museum collections, churches, chapels, hills which played an important strategic role in World War I and other important renovated remains of World War I. Places, which a hundred years ago were marked with the horror of war, are now messengers of peace and remembrance, intertwined into the Walk of Peace, bringing the message of friendship among nations.

Since 2016 the Walk of Peace has been included on **Unesco's trial list of world heritage**.

There are **7 Walk of Peace Visitor's Centres, three in Slovenia and four in Italy**:

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **Kobarid**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **Sabotin – The Park of Peace**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **Monument of Peace Cerje**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **SMO, San Pietro al Natisone/Špietar**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **IAT Fogliano Redipuglia**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **Trieste Infopoint**

The Walk of Peace Visitor Centre, **MUB Museo della Bonifica, San Donà di Piave**

The coordinator of the Walk of Peace in Italy is the regional development agency, PromoTurismoFVG.

The marking of the trail:

The trail is uniformly marked. Major points of interest are also accessible by car and bus. The Slovene part of the trail is marked **with red and black markings**. On the Italian side one needs to follow the **red and white CAI** (Club Alpino Italiano) markings. The trail is also marked with **brown road indication signs, and brown information boards and summit books**.

For more information, go to <https://www.thewalkofpeace.com/>

FACTS ABOUT THE WALK OF PEACE FROM THE ALPS TO THE ADRIATIC:

- long-distance hiking trail
- several sections suitable also for cyclists
- more than 500 km of maintained paths
- divided into 30 sections
- it connects around 300 World War I heritage sites
- demanding trail
- starting point: Log pod Mangartom (Slovenia)
- end point: Trieste (Italy)
- the shortest possible route from Log pod Mangartom to Trieste takes 13-19 days
- the highest point: Mt. Krn 2,244 m
- the lowest point: Trieste
- ascent 19,130 m
- descent 20,170 m
- three transborder outdoor museums: Kolovrat, Sabotin, Ermada

STAGES OF THE WALK OF PEACE FROM THE ALPS TO THE ADRIATIC

The stages have been designed in such a way that the differences in altitude and lengths are suitable for most people and do not require special skills, except for an adequate physical condition. Most of the trails run on (dirt) paths, which are closed to vehicular traffic. In settlements, the Walk of Peace goes along the sidewalks next to busy roads. Only in some rare cases the trail runs on roads without sidewalks.



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www.ita-slo.eu/en/walkofpeace

From Log pod Mangartom to Trieste:

1 Log pod Mangartom–Bovec

2 Bovec–Kobarid

3 Kobarid–Mountain Hut Kuhinja

4 Mountain Hut Kuhinja–Tolmin

5 Tolmin–Kambreško

6 Kambreško–Šmartno

7 Šmartno–Sabotin–Nova Gorica

6A Kambreško–Plave

7A Plave–Vodice–Nova Gorica

8 Nova Gorica–Gorizia/Gorica–Nova Gorica

9 SI Nova Gorica–Lokvica

10 SI Lokvica–Komen

11 SI Komen–Malchina/Mavhinje

9 IT Nova Gorica–Brestovec–San Martino del Carso/Martinščina

10 IT San Martino del Carso/Martinščina–Redipuglia/Redipulja

11 IT Redipuglia/Redipulja–Monfalcone/Tržič

12 IT Monfalcone/Tržič–Malchina/Mavhinje

13 Machina/Mavhinje–Miramare/Miramar

14 Miramare/Miramar–Trieste/Trst

Along the Natisone Valleys:

K-C 1 Kobarid–Kolovrat

K-C 2 Kolovrat–Solarie/Solarje–Tribil Superiore/Gorenji Tarbij

K-C 3 Tribil Superiore/Gorenji Tarbij–Castelmonte/Stara Gora

K-C 4 Castelmonte/Stara Gora–Cividale del Friuli/Čedad–San Pietro al Natisone/Špiètar

K-C 5 San Pietro al Natisone/Špiètar–Matajur

K-C 6 Matajur–Kobarid

Over Vršič Pass:

B-KG 1 Bovec–Trenta

B-KG 2 Trenta–Kranjska Gora

To Bohinj:

K-B 1 Mountain hut Kuhinja–Hut by the lake Krn

K-B 2 Hut by the lake Krn–Ukanc

K-B 3 Ukanc–Bohinjska Bistrica

FOCUS GROUPS ON THE WALK OF PEACE:



HIKING IN NATURE

The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is ideal for hikers since it runs through picturesque places where it is possible to stay overnight, to relish local cuisine and experience today's vibes. High-mountain trails, macadam roads along the River Soča, former mule tracks, trails crossing meadows on the Kras and winding among the vineyards in the Brda Hills offer a great variety of hiking challenges and reward hikers with wonderful views from the Alps to the Adriatic.



CYCLING TOURS

The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is in many sections greatly admired by cyclists because it offers challenging ascending and dynamic distance trails. Demanding ascents and adrenaline descents at the beginning of the trail and comfortable winding among the vineyards of the Brda and Collio Hills, across the Kras and to the littoral part with Trieste at the end are an award for everyone who enjoys the wind in their hair.



FAMILY TRIPS

Visiting the less demanding sections of the Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is an excellent idea for family rambling through history and in nature. Outdoor museums and well-kept caves offer children exciting explorations and time travels. At several locations along the Walk it is still possible to find alpine pastures with grazing livestock and hospitable tourist farms which are perfectly suited for active family holidays.



WAR HERITAGE & MEMORY

The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic is a real treat for lovers of military history. For all those who were affected by the Great War through their ancestors it offers an opportunity to understand their forefathers' fate. On special sites of remembrance one can find peace and reconciliation. The Walk renders possible an in-depth research both to enthusiasts and experts.



ORGANISED VISITS FOR GROUPS

Diverse contents of the Walk of Peace are combined into attractive programmes which are interesting for organized groups of visitors. Elementary and secondary schoolchildren explore the Isonzo Front on authentic locations and thus enrich their knowledge. Major points of interest are also accessible by bus.

WORLD WAR I — THE ISONZO FRONT

On **28 June 1914**, **Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria**, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie were assassinated while on a visit to **Sarajevo**. After the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia, **Austria-Hungary** declared war on Serbia a month later (on 28 July 1914). In the first days of August, several countries exchanged the declaration of war, which meant the outbreak of World War I. Europe turned to a vast battlefield, divided into several fronts, since two opposing “blocks” entered the war: the **Central Powers** (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) on the one side and the **Triple Entente** (France, Great Britain and Russia) on the other. During the first year of the war, in spite of its partnership in the trilateral alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany, Italy remained neutral. Signing the **Treaty of London**, negotiated between Italy and the Triple Entente, Italy quit the alliance and declared war on Austria-Hungary on 23 May 1915, starting the operation the next day, on **24 May**. Thus, the **south-west front** was opened; it was more than **six hundred kilometres** long, running **from the Pass of Stelvio** on the Swiss-Italian-Austrian border trijunction, **across the mountain region between Trentino and Veneto** (at that time Trentino was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), **the Carnian Alps, and through the Soča Region to the Adriatic**. The **ninety-kilometre-long section** of the front that ran along the Soča (Isonzo) River **from Mt. Rombon to the Adriatic was named the Isonzo Front**. During the **twenty-nine months of warfare, May 1915 through October 1917**, several fierce combats and twelve offensives took place in this area. Eleven of them were launched by the Italians, the last one, the twelfth, by the soldiers of Austria-Hungary and Germany.

The First Isonzo Battle (23 June–7 July 1915)

The Second Isonzo Battle (18 July–3 August 1915)

The Third Isonzo Battle (18 October–4 November 1915)

The Fourth Isonzo Battle (10 November–2 December 1915)

The Fifth Isonzo Battle (11–16 March 1916)

The Sixth Isonzo Battle (4–16 August 1916)

The Seventh Isonzo Battle (13–17 September 1916)

The Eighth Isonzo Battle (9–12 October 1916)

The Ninth Isonzo Battle (31 October–4 November 1916)

The Tenth Isonzo Battle (12 May–5 June 1917)

The Eleventh Isonzo Battle (17 August–12 September 1917)

The Twelfth Isonzo Battle (24 October–9 November 1917)

After the initial shifting, the front line in the Upper Soča Region stabilized and turned to a **static warfare**. The fights took place mainly in the mountainous world. **Civilians** from the settlements in the immediate vicinity of the front were **evacuated** and forced to seek refuge; the settlements were occupied by soldiers. The front line between the Italian and the Austro-Hungarian armies **ran from the top of Mt. Rombon to the Bovec basin, along the valley of the Slatenik to the Krn range and across Mt. Mrzli vrh** from where it descended to the **Tolmin basin. The hills Mengore, Bučenica and Cvetje** formed a blockade on the right bank of the Soča. In such a way Austria-Hungary defended the important railway- and road connections with the inland of the monarchy. This up to 2.5-kilometre-wide territory entered the history as the **Tolmin bridgehead**. The front line continued across the **Banjška planota plateau**, past Gorizia/Gorica/Görz and across the territory of **Kras** area to the **west part of the Trieste Bay**.

The majority of the Isonzo battles were fought along the lower section of the Soča where the world is not as mountainous as along its upper section. The Italian Army anticipated that it would be easier to break the enemy's defence here than in the mountainous world.

Despite this apparently easier situation, the war on the territory of Kras plateau stabilized as well, especially between June 1915 and August 1916. Austria-Hungary initially established its defence on all strategic elevations and repelled numerous Italian attacks. The front line, running from **Mts. Sabotin and Calvario/Kalvarija** to the hills around **Monfalcone/Tržič**, past **Monte San Michele/Debela griža** and the areas around **Doberdò/Doberdob**, did not change significantly until August 1916, when the Italians managed to conquer **Gorizia/Gorica** and move part of the front line a few kilometres eastwards.

In the spring and summer of 1917, the Italian army organized the most important offensives as to the number of the involved, with the intention to definitely break through the front line, but without success.

The last chapter of the fights along the Soča occurred during the **Twelfth Isonzo Battle** that started on 24 October 1917, right along the river's upper course. In the Austro-Hungarian literature, the battle is also known as the **Miracle of Kobarid** while in the Italian literature it is known as the **Caporetto Retreat**. It started in the Bovec basin with a joint **attack by the Austro-Hungarian and German armies**. They surprised the Italian defence with **gas shell** bombardment. Simultaneously, a determined advance was made from the direction of Tolmin towards Kobarid and Mt. Kolovrat. The break through the Isonzo Front was followed by the advance **to the Friuli lowland and further on, to the Piave River** where the front stabilized on 9 November 1917. During those days (end of October–first days of November 1917) more than a half of the Italian Army (about 1,500,000 men) had to retreat in just a few days across the Friuli lowland, under the protection of rear guards.

More than 200,000 civilians also left their houses and joined the retreating army to flee to inner Italy. During the retreat, a lot of combats took place between the Julian Alps, the Tagliamento River, the Friuli Plain and the Carnic Alps. They were decisive for saving the Italian Army, despite the enormous losses of soldiers and material. The most important **combat of rear guards** took place **on the Tagliamento River**, near Ragogna and Cornino, **between 30 October and 3 November 1917**.

In November 1917, the Austro-Hungarian and German troops reached the **Piave River** and **Monte Grappa**. They won a great victory over the Italian Army, but this victory was not enough to win the war. The Italian Army successfully resisted two offensives launched by the Imperial Army (**Battaglia d'Arresto** in November–December 1917, and **Battaglia del Solstizio** in June 1918). After a year of fighting, the Italian Army managed to win the **Battle of Vittorio Veneto** (end of October 1918) with the help of British and French troops and by taking advantage of the pending **collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy**. On 4 November 1918, the hostilities on the Italian-Austrian front ended. A few days later, on **11 November 1918**, **World War I came to an end with the capitulation of Germany**.

The warfare along the Soča, in Friuli and in Veneto left numerous traces. Its memorials, caves, trenches, fortifications and cemeteries belong to cultural and historical heritage. It reminds us of the suffering, sacrifices and deaths of thousands of lads and men of numerous nations, and stands as a warning. The war also affected bitterly the civil population in the settlements along the front.

Projektni partnerji:

