

The Hop Pickers' Feast

Hard and strenuous work of hop picking is followed by the hop pickers' feast (the so-called 'hmeljarski likof'). The feast concludes the work that has been well and successfully done.

The customs related to this precious plant are traditionally presented every autumn at the hop pickers' feast. We demonstrate manual hop-picking, customs in the hop field and in the pickers' free time, as well as the hop senior representing the hop plant and the hop princess representing its fruit - the hop cone.



Hop

Hop (*Humulus lupulus* L.) is part of the family Cannabaceae and is a perennial industrial plant originating in Asia. It is grown for lupuline, a bitter and sticky substance, a yellow powder found on the loose cone scales containing bitter and aromatic components.

Only female plants are grown in hop fields. The subterranean part of the plant consists of the roots and rhizomes; the central stem known as the bine or vine has leaves, flowers and cones - the seeds.

Hops are harvested in late summer when the cones are not yet fully ripe and the level of lupuline in the glands is the highest.



The majority of hops are used as a vital ingredient in the beer industry and in herbal medicine. Hop is an essential component in beer production, as it gives beer its pleasantly bitter flavour and aroma.

Source: doc. dr. Barbara Čeh Brežnik



Hop-Related Events in Žalec and the Spodnja Savinjska dolina Valley

Hops and hop-picking are two symbols of the Spodnja Savinjska dolina valley. Their significance and the customs related to this precious plant are preserved through the following events:

- erecting the hop poles,
- the hop pickers' day, selection of the hop senior and the hop princess,
- beginning of hop-picking,
- hop-picking the old-fashioned way,
- a hike on the hop trail,
- the hop pickers' feast.



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Občina Žalec

photo: ZKŠT Žalec, S. Sadnik, M. Orožim, D. Vrhovnik, M. Kapus, T. Škorjanec

A Story of Hop and Beer

When in the lower valley of the Savinja river, we suddenly catch a unique view of hop fields, exuberant in the bright daylight, we find ourselves in the middle of a wonderful and vivid story of a beverage and the people.

Here on vast, well-arranged grounds, a sensuous hop plant tirelessly shoots its roots deep into the soil, while the green vine climbs towards the sky. In summer, its pretty little cones are clad in golden powder. At that time, same time every year, the droplets of hard work are returned to the workers in the form of a magnificent beverage.



The Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and Brewing Industry in Slovenia tells the story of hop carefully and in a modern way; it tells the story to curious travellers, visitors eager for knowledge, tireless explorers and work-hardened inhabitants of this bright valley. Do not expect an ordinary museum experience - we offer you a sensual and informative invitation to a living trail of genuine emotions of hop-growing and beer-brewing, which is actually a part of each and every one of us.

The Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and Brewing Industry in Slovenia (Ekomuzej hmeljarstva in pivovarstva Slovenije)
Cesta Žalskega tabora 2, 3310 Žalec
www.ekomuzej-hmelji.si

Information and group reservation:
TIC Žalec, tel.: +386 3 710 04 34, zkst.zalec@siol.net

The Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and Brewing Industry in Slovenia

The Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and Brewing Industry in Slovenia, which was opened at the end of November 2009 in Žalec, is an important acquisition for the entire Spodnja Savinjska dolina valley. The stories of the past and present life of hop pickers and the tools related to hop-picking have been revived and will continue to live for our descendants.

The central museum is situated in the former hop drying facility in Žalec and arranged in five floors. It provides the visitors with an insight of the cuisine, clothing, customs, way of living, numerous hop products and tools for hop growing and processing. The collection was formed by families whose lives have been connected with hops and who have contributed their documents, photographs and memories. The name 'eco-museum' is derived from its connection with the environment and the people living in it. The museum also contains two drying shafts to show the visitors how large quantities of hops were dried. Next to the museum, there are greenhouses arranged by the Slovenian Institute for Hop Research and Brewing, in which the visitors can see the development of the hop plant throughout the seasons. The offer of the central museum is supplemented by the activity of entry and information points (VIT):

- VIT Braslovče offers an event venue and provides information at the municipality premises, the Municipality of Braslovče, Braslovče 22, 3314 Braslovče, tel.: +386 3 703 84 00.
- VIT Polzela prides itself with a "horizontal drying facility" at the Komenda Castle, the Municipality of Polzela, Polzela 8, 3313 Polzela, tel.: +386 3 703 32 00.
- VIT Prebold provides information at the municipality premises, the Municipality of Prebold, Hmeljarska cesta 3, 3312 Prebold, tel.: +386 3 703 64 00.
- VIT Tabor is located at the community centre, the Municipality of Tabor, Tabor 21, 3304 Tabor, tel.: +386 3 705 70 80.
- VIT Vransko is at the Schwentner House, the Municipality of Vransko, Vransko 59, 3305 Vransko, tel.: +386 3 703 28 00 and
- VIT Žalec is at the Savin House, TIC Žalec, Šlandrov trg 25, 3310 Žalec, tel.: +386 3 710 04 34.

Hop growing in the past



A Hike on the Hop Trail

A traditional event taking place every last Saturday in August, beginning at 9 a.m

1 The trail begins and ends at the **Novo Celje castle** where there was one of the first hop fields in the Savinjska dolina valley.



2 The trail, with 14 km of total length, takes us among the hop fields to the **Vrbje pond**, a nature reserve and a refuge to over 130 bird species.



3 **The Roman Necropolis** - an archaeological park with magnificent tombs of Roman patricians, richly decorated in Roman mythological motives.



4 **The Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and Brewing Industry in Slovenia**

A museum where visitors can see and feel how the inhabitants of the Spodnja Savinjska dolina valley are connected with hops.



You are cordially invited.

