Legendary lagoon of ancient Romans, princes and kings, poets and peasants - magical Nin!
We invite you on a literary tour; learn about the natural and cultural beauties of a fairy tale world, and follow in the footsteps of the poet Petar Zoranić!

The literary itinerary, "The Trails of Petar Zoranić of Nin," offers an opportunity to learn about the natural, cultural and historical attractions of the Zadar, Lika-Senj, and Šibenik-Knin counties. The starting point for an individual research or group tour of the area will be in the historic city of Nin, more exactly in the memorial park of the poet Petar Zoranić. A visit to the Queen's Beach, from where the poet began the trip described in the novel Planine, is a must. Since a fairy on a golden apple took the poet by sea to Velebit, it would be good
to organize a trip by boat under the Pag Bridge to Starigrad. The alternative is a trip by bus from Nin to Starigrad, where you can refresh yourself in the restaurant and stay overnight. The next part of the trip includes a walk in the Paklenica National Park and an overnight stay in a mountain hut. Alpinists can go on to the Northern Velebit National Park or the Velebit Nature Park. We suggest traveling to Lika by way of Lovinac and Gračac, where we will spend the third day. The road then leads to Knin from where you can go to Dinara Mountain (a guide is required). The trip out of Knin will take us by the River Krka and you will visit Skradin, Sibenik, and Zadar. The trip then concludes in Nin.

You can find information about this tourist offer, a list of agencies, accommodations and guest facilities in the other portion of this material.
About Petar Zoranić of Nin

The poet Petar Zoranić was born in 1508 in Zadar, but very little is known about his early life. He was the descendant of the old noble Tetačić family of Nin, which because of failing fortunes before the end of the 15th century, moved to Zadar. The earliest information about his life comes from 1531, when he was working as a lawyer and a court reporter in Nin. He is the author of the first Croatian novel Planine (Mountains), dedicated to the holy Nin canon Matej Mattijević, which was completed in Nin on 20 June 1536 and printed in Venice in 1569. This patriotic and romantic novel represents the first travelogue in Croatia.

The story of the novel as the basis of a new tourist trip

Planine by Petar Zoranić of Nin is an allegorical pastoral novel written in prose and verse in which the writer tries to awaken a love of his birthplace, homeland and the people among his countrymen. It rather realistically describes the misfortunes of the people after the Turkish conquest. In the novel a poet plays the role of a traveler and narrator. The trip is arranged geographically: Nin – the area of Velebit Mountain – Paklenica – Lika – Dinara – Šibenik – Nin.

In his hopeless wanderings through the Nin region the protagonist of the novel, a famous poet named Zoran, meets many fairies who tell him about a glorious history and legends. As an educated man, a fairy tells him, he must know how other poets, exaggerating their literary works, have celebrated every stone and bush in their country, but his region, which is perhaps even more beautiful than others, remains unsung because of the indifference of the local educated people.

The skeleton of the tale is the poet's seven-day trip through his homeland, which he undertakes in order to forget about an unhappy love affair, and to write about and celebrate its cities, villages, rivers, mountains, forests, fields, springs, wells, and natural phenomenon, in short to celebrate his native country. He describes the natural beauties of the scenery and records many place names that still exist today.

The trip begins on a spring morning near Nin in Vodica, one kilometer from center of the old town. Here he meets the fairy Zorica, who advises him to go to the mountains to the fairy Dinara to get a cure for his unrequited love. The fairy Mercy takes Zoran on a golden apple across the sea to the foot of the mountains where Starigrad is located today. He continues the trip through the Paklenica Gorge and there hears the story of Bura, the girl from whom that wind has taken its name. He crosses over Velebit Mountain to southern Lika. He stays here for three days in the company of shepherds, who symbolize the people, listening to their tales. He then goes on to Dinara, where he is cured of the anguish of his unfulfilled love.

While on Dinara, he falls asleep and has an unusual dream in which he meets many fairies who have apples in their laps. He recognizes the young fairy H revolver, who has only a few apples in her lap. He is happy because on one apple he reads his name and the beginning of the story of Planine. The fairy tells him that the apples represent writers and the works of a certain nation and that she is very sad that there are so few writers in the Croatian language. At dawn on the sixth day he meets a fairy who accompanies him to the then devastated towns of Knin and Skradin, and then on to Šibenik, and next to Zadar. She leaves him at the bay of Dražnik at Nin. After this, he meets a remarkable mlinař (miller) who on his grindstone grinds villages and cities, famous and not so famous people, everything that falls into his gigantic hands, which is a symbol of transience. On the seventh day the writer rests in a garden, which is what he calls his favorite city – Nin.

Welcome to the magical world of Petar Zoranić of Nin!
The "Croatian Bethlehem" is situated 14 km to the northwest of Zadar. The old town is situated on a historical islet, having a diameter of about 500 metres, and which is connected to the mainland by two stone bridges. It is surrounded by long and beautiful sandy beaches to the west, while the Solana salt pans stretch to the east. The city has a glorious past and is about 3,000 years old, making it one of the oldest cities on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea. History tells a tale here at almost every step.

Liburnians founded it in the 9th century BC as a powerful maritime and commercial centre. At the site of the well-known modern day Zaton Camp was the antiquity period port of Nin, then called Acenona, whose remains are visible underwater to this day (1st century). During the Roman period it becomes a major township.

This is the period from which the remains of the largest antiquity period temple in Dalmatia originate (1st century), as do the mosaics in the floor of a Roman domus, the statues of Roman emperors and others. Nin is the cradle of Croatian statehood. It was the first political, religious and cultural centre of mediaeval Croatian. Nin is also the oldest Croatian royal city, the permanent or temporary seat of Croatian national rulers: the Dukes Višeslav and Branimir, the Kings Tomislav, Petar Krešimir IV, Zvonimir and others. The bishops of Nin play an important role, prominent among them being Grigor Ninski (Gregory of Nin), who struggled to preserve the Croatian national Glagolitic script. The wealth of archaeological finds can be viewed at the Museum of Nin Antiquities (Muzej ninskih starina) where two original old-Croatian ships are kept, the Condura Croatica (11th century) and a reconstruction of a part of the ship Sericz Liburnica (1st century). You can also tour the parish church of Saint Anselm (6th-18th century), the Romanesque belfry, the Church of Saint Ambrose (13th century), the pre-Romanesque Church of the Holy Cross (Sveti Križ, 9th century) called the "smallest cathedral in the world", the bronze statues of Gregory of Nin and Duke Branimir, the "Gold and Silver of the City of Nin" ecclesiastical treasury, the coronation church of Saint Nicholas (11th-12th century), a kilometre to the south of the islet, in the coronation field. Nin is the site of the shrine of Our Lady of Zeevo, whose holiday is celebrated on the first Monday ahead of the holiday of Ascension Day, with pilgrimages to the isle of the appearance organised on May 5th and August 5th. Tourists come to Nin for the diverse attractions in the tourism offer: long sandy beaches and shallow seas, the medicinal mud, the Solana Nin Nature Park, the kitesurfing school on Queen's beach. They also come to sample the culinary delight known as sokol, or to rest in Zaton, a well-known tourist resort and campsite. In the present day the Nin Riviera combines three seaboard settlements: Nin, Zaton and Grbe, and the administrative region also includes the settlements of Ninski Stanovi, Žerava and Poljica-Brig. The neighbouring municipalities that gravitate towards Nin are Privlaka, Vrsi and Vir. (www.nin.hr)
STARIGRAD
www.rivijera-paklenica.hr

The town emerged from the foundations of the ancient antiquity period city of Argynum. Starigrad-Paklenica is now the heart of the Paklenica Riviera. The lives of the local inhabitants are inseparably tied to the mountains. Hidden around the Velebit mountain range are many hamlets at the hearths of which you can sample the charms of the local cuisine, and spend your entire vacation in some of them, living in the spirit of the past. Here too, history has left many traces: a wealth of artefacts from the antiquity period, Fort Paklarić and Vežka Tower from the times of the Turkish incursions, the old-Croatian church of St. Peter an the Mirlita, stone funereal monuments linked to the former burial customs of the local inhabitants, a kind of local phenomenon. At Veliko Rijino, the largest plateau in the Velebit mountain range, is St. Mary’s church – a votive shrine to which traditional pilgrimages are made on the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK
www.paklenica.hr

Between the highest peak in the Velebit mountain range and the shores of the Adriatic Sea, covering an area of 95 square km, lies Paklenica National Park. It has over 150 km of maintained alpine paths and trails, from undemanding tourist routes to the highly demanding trails that lead to the highest peaks on Velebit (Vagasi, 1,758 m above sea level and Sveto brdo at 1,753 m). Its most attractive points are the canyons of Velika Paklenica and Mala Paklenica, the vertical cliff faces of which drop over 400 m, and which have made Paklenica a world famous alpinism destination. Worth a visit, in the company of an expert guide, is the Manita peć cave. Old beech forests, Europe’s second largest Black Pine reserve, mysterious caves, endemic plants, and a large number of wildlife species enrich this primaev natural setting. Paklenica National Park is a challenge to every nature buffs: excursionist, hiker, alpinist, and the adventurer.

SJEVERNÍ VELEBIT (NORTHERN VELEBIT) NATIONAL PARK
www.np-sjeverni-velebit.hr

This area was proclaimed a national park on account of the exceptional diversity of its karst phenomenon, wealth of plant and wildlife and the number of exceptional natural wonders situated on a relatively small area. The park covers an area of 109 square km, and also includes the strict nature reserves Hajićukuk and Rožanski kuk, specific geomorphic phenomenon where over 150 sinkholes have been discovered so far, the best known of which is Lukašina jama, one of the deepest in the world. Also located in the park is the Visibabsa botanical reserve, the home of the largest site of the endemic Croatian Sibirea (Sibirea altaiensis ssp. croatica), and the Zavižan-Balinovac-Velika koša botanical reserve, prominent for its wealth of high altitude plant life. Within the reserve are the well-known Velebit Botanical Gardens, founded back in 1967 by Professor Fran Kučan. The park is intersected with numerous hiking trails, the best known of which is Premuzićeva staza (Premuzić’s Trail). The trail passes by the most stunning and most fascinating parts of Northern Velebit. The mountain peaks offer stunning views of the Adriatic Sea, the Bay of Nin and the islands of Pag, Rab, Goli, Prvić and Krk, and of the Lika hinterland to the inland side.

VELEBIT NATURE PARK
www.pp-velebit.hr

Velebit is Croatia’s largest mountain range (2,274 square km), deeply interwoven into the lives and consciousness of the people who live here. It was proclaimed a nature park because of the impressive beauty of the countryside, the diversity of geographical relief, and the plant and wildlife of its pristine natural surroundings. The many hiking trails, historical edifices, old royal roads, fortifications and sacral monuments bear witness to the many centuries of human interaction with this mythical mountain. Its karst topography means that Velebit abounds with caves, and expert guides can lead you on a speleological adventure. There are many caves open to visitors, attractive for their varieties of landforms, wealth of dripstone decorations and other cave formations. There are a number of attractive localities in the wider Velebit Nature Park area accessible by educational trails.
LIKA
www.lickosenjska.com

The region includes the area from Mala Kapela to the north, to Gračac in the south. Within the area framed by the mountains are fertile plains that supply the needs of tourists on the Adriatic, the best known of which are Ličko polje (Lika Field), Gacko polje (Gacko Field) and Krbavsko polje (Krbava Field). They got their names from Lika's underground streams. The entire area has the characteristics of covered karst in which the countryside has the alternate shades of the dark and light green of woods and plains, completed by the blueness of surface waters, while the karst underworld abounds in speleological landforms. This is the site of a quarter of the total number of caves in Croatia protected as geomorphic natural monuments – particularly prominent is the Grabovača cave park with its Samogradska cave near the settlement of Perušić. Perušić is the site of the only surviving Turkish tower in Lika, dating from the 16th century. Not far from the site is the picturesque Kosinjska udolina (Kosinj Valley) with its cult mediaeval printing press.

GRAČAC
www.gracac.hr

The town is situated in the Velebit Valley. There are traces here of a mediaeval town on the hillfort near the present day Catholic church. This was once the seat of the old Otuča parish. The earliest mention of the town dates to 1302. In 1509 it was owned by Ivan Karlović, and was under Turkish rule from 1527-1687. The 18th century baroque period parish church of St. George (Sveti Juraj) was damaged in World War II. It houses a late-baroque epitaph by Count Knežević (18th century). At the cemetery close to Otuča is a three metre tall monolithic cross over the 16th century grave of Ivan Balenović. The environs of Gračac are excellent hunting grounds. Organised tours of Velebit can be organised by way of many routes, the best known of which are the Gračac-Cerovac caves (1 hour 50 min.) and Gračac-Prezid-Crnopac (2 hours). The Cerovac caves are especially attractive, only 4 kilometres from Gračac, a protected geomorphic natural monument, organised for tourist visits.

LOVINAC
www.lovinac.hr

The town is located to the southeast of Croatia's largest karst plain, Ličko polje. In ancient times this was where the shortest trade routes ran, over Velebit, from the sea to the interior. Humans appeared in this area as hunters of cave bears in Velebit's nearby Cerovačke pećine (Cerovac Caves). In historical sources we find data that the Illyrian Japodes tribe settled the area. In antiquity period sources their battles with the Romans, which started in 126 BC, are described.

KNIN
www.1z-knin.hr

The town lies not far from the source of the Krka River, at the point where the regions of Bosnia, Lika and Dalmatia meet, at the intersection of key routes leading to the Croatian interior and the seaboard, as a result of which it is often referred to as the "Key to Croatia" and the "Dalmatian Gateway". In written sources the name Knin first appears in the middle of the 10th century in a document drawn up by King Krešimir I, as Tignino castro. In the 10th and 11th centuries the old town was one of the temporary seats of the royal residences of Croatian rulers. In the second half of the 11th century Croatian King Dmitar Zvonimir made it the permanent capital of the Croatian state, which is why it is referred to as Zvonimir's City. The Diocese of Knin was created in 1040. Coming to this town nature buffs can walk its untouched countryside, enjoy the view of the easily accessible Krčica Falls with the source of the Krka River, fly-fish at the fishing grounds of the source of the Krka River, hike to the highest peak in Croatia, on the Dinaric Alps (1,831 metres above sea level). Those looking for adventure can enjoy free climbing, horseback riding, canoe rides, rafting, mountain biking, off-roading in jeeps and much more.
DINARA (THE DINARIC ALPS)
www.sibenikregion.com

This is the natural border between Croatia and Bosnia. It divides to climatic regions – Mediterranean and continental. Above Knin itself rises the highest peak in Croatia, atop the Dinaric Alps (Sinjal at 1,831 metres above sea level). To the southwest is Kninski polje (Knin Field), and the mountain ends where the Krečić flows into the source of the Krka River. The other side of the mountain ends just as spectactularly; with the deep and powerful sources of the Cetina River, near the entry to the 2,080 metre-deep Gospodska cave, at the end of which is a subterranean lake. Dinara is uninhabited, and its spectacular characteristic is the longest rock in Croatia. It is six kilometres long. At the foot of the rock is a karst plateau that drops to the road that runs along the Krečić River. The Krečić River canyon is very attractive. The Brezovac alpinist’s house, with 50 beds and a kitchen, is situated at the foothills of Mount Dinara at 1,050 metres above sea level, in a stunning beechwood forest. You can visit Dinara in organised groups with expert guides. If travelling on your own be sure to contact the alpinist’s house prior to your departure. Some parts of the mountain are dangerous for individual touring because of mines remaining from the Homeland War of Independence, so we recommend caution and travelling in organised tours.

SKRADIN
www.skradin.hr

The town borders the Krka River, and the Visovac and Prokljansko lakes, which are in fact flooded areas of the Krka River valley. Skradin is an attractive tourist destination whose beauty is crowned by its three most attractive excursion areas, the Skradinski buk and Roški slap waterfalls with their ancient water mills, and the Franciscan monastery on Visovac Isle with its votive shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Visovac, its rich library and treasury of culture and art. Skradin is a town of traditional meetings of Dalmatian a cappella klapa vocal groups, bocce and carnival festivities and, of course, of the culinary delights offered by the restaurants and local Dalmatian konoba.

KRKA RIVER (KRKA NATIONAL PARK)
www.npkrka.hr

The Krka River springs from the base of Mount Dinara, 3.5 kilometres northeast of Knin, under the 22-metre-high Topoljski slap waterfall, noisy in the winter and dry in the summer. It flows into Dalmatia’s karst region like an umbilical cord forming an inseparable link between Knin and Sibenik. This wondrous river offers us an abundance of natural wonders, scientific mysteries, key centres of culture and history and the methods in which its inexhaustible waters are used in this rocky and waterless region. Thanks to travertine barriers and the constant process of calcareous rock deposit formation, the Krka River is now recognised as a natural karst landform phenomenon. At the very heart of Krka National Park is the Franciscan monastery on Visovac Isle.
SIBENIK
www.sibenik-tourism.hr

The town is situated almost halfway along the central part of the Croatian shores of the Adriatic Sea, in a picturesque, indented bay into which the Krka River flows, one of Croatia's most stunning karst waterways. The area includes 242 islands, islets and rocks. This archipelago is situated for the most part in the northwestern part of the Sibenik waters, and is notable for the high level of coastal indentation, barren landscapes and sparse inhabitation – there are only 10 island settlements in the entire Sibenik area. The most numerous island group is the Kornati, known for their bizarre landforms and abundance of natural wonders. Sibenik is first mentioned in 1066 in a Deed of Donation drawn up by King Petar Krešimir IV. After Croatian national rulers, followed by Croato-Hungarian and intermittent Venetian rule, it falls in the 15th century to a 400-year period of Venetian rule. The most significant cultural and historical monument in Sibenik dates from this period, Sibenik's famed Saint Jacob's Cathedral, built in the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1797 Sibenik becomes a part of the Habsburg Monarchy and remains a part of the monarchy right up to 1918, with a short period of French rule during the time of Napoleon. Today Sibenik is a modern tourist destination visited for its monuments and natural wonders.

ZADAR
www.zadar.hr

The town was built at the centre-point of the Croatian coastline, surrounded by islands, with a rich hinterland and a protected port. Razed in wars and earthquakes and rebuilt again, it is a city that catches your attention with its wealth of cultural heritage. The first written mention of the life of the settlement of Jader, present day Zadar, was noted by its first known inhabitants, the Liburnians tribe, in the 4th century BC. The settlement developed through the centuries, taking on the attributes of a city under Roman rule in the 2nd century. Through its history its name has developed, and in the early 7th century Zara becomes the capital of Dalmatia and the administrative centre of a Byzantine theme (province). Millennia Zadar was always interesting because of its strategic position in the centre of Dalmatia, and the centuries have seen many rulers: the Liburnians, Romans, Croato-Hungarian kings, the four hundred year rule of the Venetians, which left indelible traces in exceedingly valuable monuments, then Napoleon, the Austrian and Italian rule, its incorporation into Federal Yugoslavia, to the present day. As a result of these changes throughout its history, Zadar constantly changes its appearance and role as a city. For centuries the capital of Dalmatia, it is now a regional centre, a city with a rich heritage of monuments. Located here is the largest preserved antiquity period forum in Dalmatia, dating from the 1st century, the city's trademark, the 9th century St. Donatus Church, the Romanesque church of St. Krševan dating from the 12th century, St. Anastasia's cathedral dating from the 13th century, the 16th century municipal loggia and guardhouse, the powerful ramparts with their impressive Port and Land gates dating from the 16th century, many palaces, villas and much more. Zadar is a town with an exceptionally valuable heritage of monuments, a developed hotel and nautical offer, a city of youth, of basketball and maritime sports. Sunsets in Zadar have been called the most beautiful in the world. Zadar is a town of numerous attractions, including St. Simon's coffer, the Gold & Silver of Zadar exhibition and the latest one drawing the attention of tourists – the sea organ at the peninsula (Polaotok).
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Nin, January 2009.