



## Intangible Cultural Heritage of Zagreb County

When we talk about heritage, we often first think of buildings, museums and old objects. Yet a large part of Zagreb County's identity is preserved in a different way: in words that are still spoken today, in knowledge passed down through hands, in customs that bring people together, and in flavours that have their place in family recipes and local stories. This is intangible cultural heritage – living, evolving, and always closely tied to the people who keep it alive.

Zagreb County takes pride in a number of protected intangible cultural assets that reflect the diversity and layered character of the region. Below is an overview of part of the protected intangible heritage that is still actively practised and nurtured in this area today.

### **Medičarski obrt** / Gingerbread Craft

Licitars are those small objects that instantly lift the mood: colourful, glossy, carefully decorated and always associated with gift-giving, fairs and holidays. Behind this familiar motif stands the *medičarski obrt* – a craft passed down through generations, thanks to which the art of licitar-making has also been recognised on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Making licitars requires a steady hand and time. The dough is prepared from basic ingredients, shaped in moulds, dried, and then hand-painted and decorated with details that give each piece its own character. In Zagreb County, this tradition is still preserved by family-run workshops that visitors can experience up close: Oslaković and Arko in Samobor, Saraga in Velika Gorica, and Bičak in Bedenica.

### **Kajkavski donjosutlanski (ikavski) dijalekt** / Kajkavian Donjosutlanski (Ikavian) Dialect

Unlike many other forms of heritage, the *kajkavski donjosutlanski (ikavski) dijalekt* is not kept behind glass or taken home as a souvenir – it is preserved by listening and speaking. It is a rare and distinctive form of speech that immediately draws attention precisely because it sounds different.

Its origins are linked to the 16th century and the settlement of people from coastal areas along the Sutla River, who brought elements of Chakavian speech with them. Over time, this merged with the local Kajkavian dialect, creating a unique linguistic blend that is still recognised today by its Ikavian features and spoken in the area of Brdovec, Marija Gorica, parts of Pušća and the outer areas of Dubravica.

## **Opančarski obrt Kruh Vuk / Opanci-Making Craft – Kruh Vuk**

When we see opanci today as part of traditional costume, it is easy to forget that they were once everyday footwear. Handmade from leather and fastened with straps, they accompanied people through work and daily movement, with numerous local variations developing in different regions.

The Kruh Vuk family continues to preserve the knowledge of their production – from selecting materials to shaping and finishing details. This precision and continuity are what make their opanci a recognisable example of a tradition that is still made, worn and passed on today.

## **Rudarska greblica**

At first glance, *rudarska greblica* is a simple savoury pie, but behind it lies a long tradition connected to the village of Rude and the everyday lives of local families. Today, it is recognised as the first – and so far the only – protected food product from Zagreb County.

Its name comes from an old wooden tool used to spread ashes in a bread oven before baking. Over time, the recipe and preparation method were standardised, and greblica became synonymous with Rude, particularly through the Nikl bakery and the event *Dani rudarske greblice*, where its story continues to this day.

## **Kraluš**

*Kraluš* is one of those elements of traditional costume that immediately catches the eye. It is an ornament worn on festive occasions and appears in written records as early as the beginning of the 20th century. Although it looks like pure jewellery, kraluš once also carried a “message” – indicating something about a woman’s age and her position within the community.

The most valued type is the braided kraluš, while a simpler version is known as *kraluš na košic*. In this region, the *samoborski kraluš* stands out in particular, alongside the also protected *svetonedeljski* variant.

## **Pletena koladra**

*Koladra* is a necklace worn by women in the Jastrebarsko area on special occasions – when going to mass, celebrations or events that called for “the best from the wardrobe”. It is mentioned in records as early as the 19th century and has remained a recognisable symbol of traditional dress in this region.

It is made by hand, slowly and in small steps that require a steady hand and experience. That is why no two koladras look exactly the same – each has its own detail and rhythm, which is precisely where its value lies. Thanks to its simple elegance, it still feels natural and understated today, whether worn with traditional costume or on its own.

## **Turopoljski dijalekt / Turopoljski Dialect**

Turopolje has its own speech that is recognisable the moment you hear it. Although it is a Kajkavian-speaking area, the Turopoljski dialect preserves older linguistic layers and local expressions closely tied to place and people – something learned at home and in the neighbourhood.

Written traces of it exist as far back as the 16th century, which speaks to its continuity. Precisely because of this longevity and distinctiveness, Turopoljski folk speech is often highlighted as an important part of linguistic heritage and one of the most striking elements of Turopolje's identity.

## **Jurjevski ophodi Turopolja / Jurjevo Processions of Turopolje**

In Turopolje, *Jurjevo* in April is marked by processions and songs, preserving older, pre-Christian layers of tradition. The songs mention *Zeleni Juraj*, with an emphasis on spring and the start of a new annual cycle.

Young people go from house to house, sing *jurjevske* songs and collect gifts, while hosts welcome them as part of the tradition. The most recognisable moment is the *jurjevski krijes* – a large bonfire made of straw, lit in the park in Velika Gorica and in front of the walls of Stari grad Lukavec.

## **Lan i tkalačka radionica / Flax Cultivation and Weaving Workshop**

In Ivanić-Grad, it is still possible to see and experience how linen textiles are made – from sowing flax to weaving on traditional looms. In the Visitor Centre, a linen towel is a common souvenir, but its true value lies in the knowledge behind it, which for years was close to disappearing. Today, flax is once again being cultivated and processed by hand, and weaving is learned through practice, slowly and precisely, as it once was in households.

## **Vrbovečka pera**

*Vrbovečka pera* is a savoury pie that was not made every day, but for gatherings and celebrations. It is round, generous and distinctive, with a recipe preserved through family transmission – more through demonstration and “try it like this” than written instructions. Today, *pera* is one of the main highlights of the event *Kaj su jeli naši stari*, with growing initiatives to officially protect its original recipe.

## **Samoborska kremšnita**

A small city ritual in Samobor often begins with a *kremšnita*. It originated in the early 20th century in the work of local pastry chefs and quickly became a recipe that does not change easily, but is passed on through practice and habit. This consistency is precisely why *samoborska kremšnita* is instantly recognisable without much explanation.

It is known for its light yellow custard between two layers of puff pastry, and many will say it is best enjoyed while still fresh and warm. Over time, it has become part of the city's identity, with places like *Kavana Livadić* and *U prolazu* preserving the tradition of eating kremšnita slowly, with coffee and conversation.

### **Samoborska češnofka**

*Samoborska češnofka* has been part of Samobor's gastronomic tradition for more than a hundred years. It originated as a simple yet distinctive local dish, closely linked to everyday life and eating habits, and over time became one of the symbols of the Samobor table.

Lightly smoked and prepared by boiling, it is recognised by its pronounced garlic flavour and mild spiciness. That is why it is commonly found in restaurants, taverns, excursion spots and mountain lodges in the Samobor area – as a hearty meal that feels just right after a walk in Žumberak. Producers are brought together by the *Udruga Samoborska češnofka*, which coordinates standards to preserve authenticity and quality.

### **Samoborski fašnik / Carnival in Samobor**

In Samobor, *fašnik* is not experienced as a short-lived event, but as a part of the city's identity that has been lived for two hundred years. The first records of carnival balls appear in the early 19th century, and over time distinctive characters, satire and customs developed – always commenting on everyday life with humour and without restraint.

Processions of masked groups, the symbolic handover of the city keys, and the roles of Prince Fašnik, Sraka and other carnival characters form the core of the event, involving all generations. Behind it all are weeks of preparation – from costumes and performances to entire themes agreed in advance – so when kindergartens, schools, associations and groups of friends get involved, *fašnik* ceases to be just a programme and becomes part of the city itself.