

LABIN



A LOCAL GUIDE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN LABIN

ISTRIA, CROATIA



Dear reader,

Hello and welcome to this guide about the beautiful town of Labin. I am Natalia, the author. And I would like you to know some things before you proceed reading.

This guide has been created carefully to promote local tourism that is sustainable in the long run, therefore promoting local gems that should be preserved and taken care of.

All the places and businesses mentioned are personal recommendations from local people of all ages as well as some a bit more foreign as myself, who had the opportunity to enjoy this region for six months.

If you take the recommendations mentioned please be respectful with the environment, the historical sites, and the city in general. That will help us conserve this in a good state for future visitors to enjoy.

Hvala and vidimo se u Labinu!



LABIN, ISTRIA

Labin is a small city in the region of Istria located in the west of Croatia that has 11.178 inhabitants (data from 2015)



The official language is Croatian, even though Italian is widely spread throughout the region as well as Cakavica, the local dialect.

Labin is divided between the medieval town and the newer part of the town.

The medieval part of Labin is located on the 320 meter high hill above Rabac. This is a village that is also part of the municipality of Labin and is on the seaside.

Rabac is in Kvarner bay. Rabac has grown in recent years into a resort town with numerous villas and apartment complexes.





While visiting Labin several places are popular among tourists, either because of their history and meaning to the town or because of the beautiful views.

To begin with, we find the old town or Stari grad, this is the part of the town which is on top of the hill. The old town is surrounded by a wall and overlooks the Kvarner bay, the Učka mountain, and the newest part of the town.



The old town has several historical gems such as the two cannons located on opposite sides of the hill, one overlooking Rabac on a balcony with a beautiful view of the sea, and even some islands.



The other can be found overlooking the Titov trg next to two male bathrooms made from stone.



Also in the old town, we find the bell tower or zvonik that dates back to 1623. This tower can be seen from all over Labin since it is 35 meters tall but the entrance is found in a small street of the old town.

Visitors can go all the way up for the prize of 7 kunas where the panoramic view of Labin and the surroundings are spectacular.



We also find the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Birth. This has a Venetian lion with a sphere in his mouth on the facade, a symbol of Labin recognizing the Venetian government. This church has been reconstructed several times, the last one being in 1993.



Next to this church, we find another one, the Sant Stephen's church that is significantly smaller in size and has a bright orange facade. This is of a baroque style and dates back to the 17th century.



Close to both churches, there is a palace that belonged to the Lazzarini family. This is now the home to the national museum of Labin.

In front of the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we find the Bishop's house which is, like most of the facades in this square, from the Baroque period. This has a beautiful facade, colorful doors, and windows, and a balcony that is painted on.



Taking the street down from there, we find a small square where there is the old theatre with a clock tower. It is a building with a neoclassic facade from 1844 and is still in use nowadays.



One last gem of the old town is the Palazzo Frankovic, which was the home to Mattia Flaccio Illyricum, a leading figure of 16th-century European thought.



Even though the most visited part of Labin is the old town, down the hill we can also find some attractions to visit.

Right at the end of the road that takes us down this hill, we find yet another church. This is called the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian which was built in the 15th century and has beautifully painted walls on the inside.



Labin is known for its mining history in the past, and the entry of the old mines is still visible nowadays. The building next to it which was a part of the factory is called Lamparna and is used for cultural events and expositions, among others.



The local market of Labin is also a place worth visiting, this is open every morning, vendors offer fresh products such as vegetables, fruits, fish, and even baked goods.



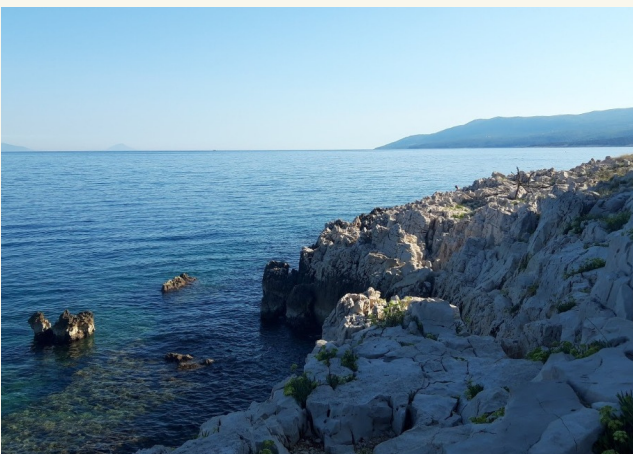
RABAC, ISTRIA

Rabac is a coastline town which is part of the municipality of Labin and therefore the go-to place to enjoy the seaside.

Rabac has become a resort town in the past years and therefore is very populated during summer. You can enjoy many different beaches, mostly with stones and pebbles found along the promenade.



A place that is frequented by locals to avoid those beaches closer to the many resorts is the Golubjera Rocks. These are a walk away from Rabac and are a perfect place to enjoy a dive and jump from the rocks if one wants to.



Rabac is a good destination to hike to from Labin's old town. Right at the end of the walk, you can find a waterfall. This is close to the entrance to Camping Oliva from the side of the forest.



Alternative way to discover Labin

Stari grad is a beautiful place to get lost in for some time one afternoon. If you think so too this activity might be for you. Have you ever heard of Geocaching? Well, now you have.

Geocaching is "the world's biggest treasure hunt" and lucky enough there is one of these hunts in the old town of Labin which you can take part in whenever you want to.



With this specific catch, you can visit most of the places mentioned above along your quest since they are some of the most emblematic places of Labin. You can also find another quest in the newer part of the town by looking it up in the geocaching app and webpage.

To participate in one of these you need to download the app, register, and follow the instructions. Once you have found the quest you want to participate in, take a pen, paper, and your brain. Good luck!

<https://www.geocaching.com/play>



Picture perfect places around Labin



This is an old railroad that is currently not in use. It is near Kožljak, which is around 15km away from Labin, this is less than 20 min by car. This has been damaged by nature since it is not in use anymore, which turned it into what people now call the drunk railway.



The old town of Labin is a perfect place to shoot some pictures. It is full of charming houses and colorful doors, which look great in photos. Get lost around the little streets and discover cute places for your shoots.



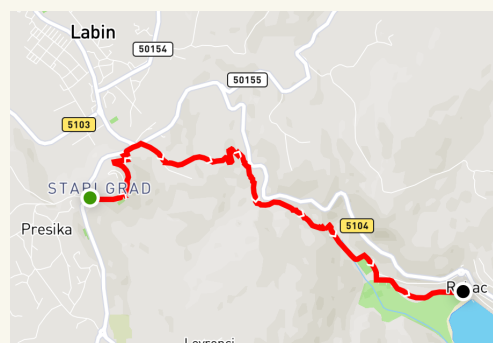
Lamparna, as well as being a cultural place in Labin, is also great for pictures. Especially during the later hours, when the golden light of the sun creates beautiful lights and shadows in this place. Lamparna comes from the word Lampa which means lamp, associated to the town's mining history.



HIKING IN LABIN

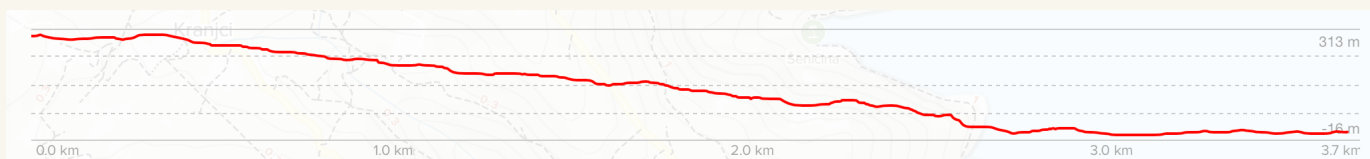
Labin is located on top of a hill and therefore is a perfect place to find beautiful hiking trails to enjoy, both during summer and winter.

Starting with a moderate trail, we find 804, or the hiking trail that goes from the Titov trg in the old town of Labin until the camping Oliva near the seaside in Rabac.



This is a trail anyone can enjoy, it can be completed by beginners and people with a low physical condition.

This trail has beautiful views of the bay and the final destination as well as the Kvarner coast and the beautiful Istrian nature.



Length : 3,7km
Difficulty: Easy



On average, it takes 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the trail when going from Labin to Rabac.

This trail goes through beautiful rivers and waterfalls and the forest, where goats and donkeys can be found. This is also a place with lots of mosquitoes in the summer because of its proximity to the water.

This trail goes down 290 meters from Labin to Rabac, and therefore the way back might be more challenging than the way to the coast.

Nevertheless, if taken slowly is still a relatively easy trail since the road is not very hard to go through.



Even so, for those who feel adventurous, another way to go back from Rabac to Labin might be hitchhiking, a popular way of transportation in Croatia.



HIKING IN LABIN

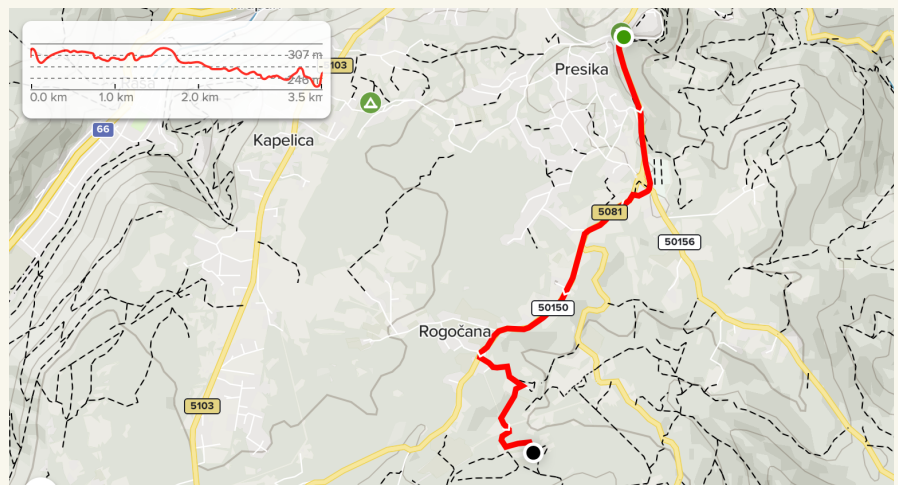
Another hiking trail that is easy for people of all ages and physical conditions is trail 808 or the St Florentius trail.



It goes from the medieval town of Labin to a beautiful church from the 6th century. This is on the Croatian List of protected cultural goods and is told to have been the star of a local legend.

The hike is a quite easy road, this is surrounded by nature and has occasional views of the coast. It does not have a lot of hills, and therefore is quite a pleasant walk that can be enjoyed by beginners.

Length : 3,5km
Difficulty: Easy





The final destination of this hike hides a legend. This says that the church was built by the Greeks during the Byzantine period. They were extremely wealthy, but the rich period was followed by a seven years drought.

Due to the hunger, they had to move so they loaded plenty of gold on small horse-drawn chariots. Since the gold was too heavy, they buried a part of it in a still boiler somewhere around the church with the secret vow. They have never returned looking for gold, and the vow remains a secret to this day.



This trail is perfect for a sunny afternoon walk with family or friends any time of the year. This could end with a picnic at the destination since it is very peaceful and quiet.



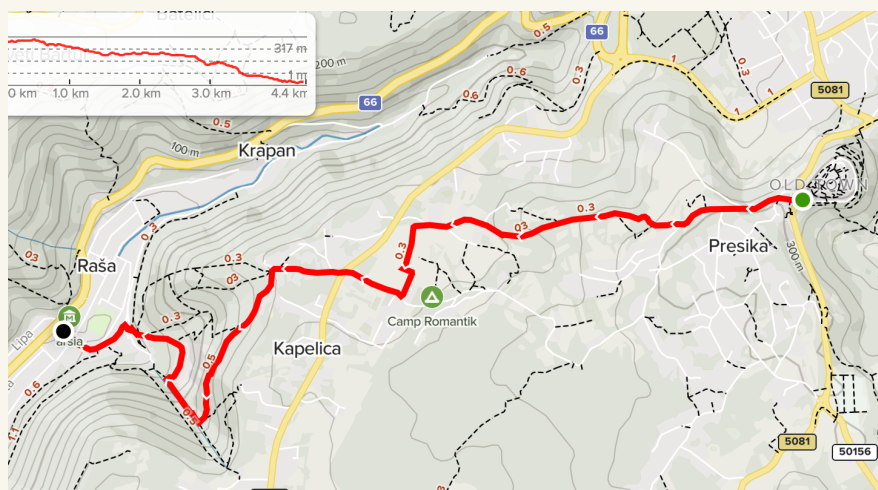
HIKING IN LABIN

Another easy hiking trail is the one from Labin to Raša, trail 807, or the Trail of st Barbara.

This is categorized as an easy trail on the way from Labin to Raša since this starts in Stari grad, which translates as the old town, and ends at the bottom of the mountain, close to the old factory.



Nevertheless, this trail is better enjoyed during the summer months since the last part down the hill is quite steep and can be very slippery.



Length : 4,4 km
Difficulty: Easy



The final destination of this hiking trail is Raša, which is known for being the youngest town of Istria built in 1937. It was used by the coal miners of the area at that time.

Raša was built as part of the urbanization plan of Mussolini when Istria was still part of Italy. This town has an old factory which was abandoned due to bankruptcy in the beginning of 2000's.



This is quite a small town, but it has a unique church that was built to look like an overturned mining wagon to symbolize the importance mining had in this region.




In this little town you can find some of the shops which are recommended in the upcoming pages such as unique ceramics manufacturers.




WHERE TO GET LOCAL PRODUCTS



 Fortohotsauce


Stefan is a 26-year-old entrepreneur who created this brand with a passion for hot sauce as well as with a love for his origins, Istria. He creates these amazing hot sauces under the brand of Forto, they come in 5 flavors with different strengths and have names that represent elements of the Istrian region such as the sea. You can check them out on their webpage.



 Enoteka terra Labin

Enoteka terra is the product of Nina's father's dream, who always wanted a delicatessen store like the one they have now. They opened the shop five years ago in 2015 in the main square of the old town of Labin. This family business sells local oils, truffles, brandies, jams, and wines, among other products.



 Lavanda Faraguna

Lavanda Faraguna is a small local farm that grows lavender. This local business produces homemade lavender products as well as other herbs and honey. This business usually sells their product in the market place in Rabac during the summer but can be contacted on Facebook where pictures of their products, such as lavender oils and balsams are displayed.



 OPGSandomenigo

OPG Sandomenigo is a local Lavander Farm that opened in 2003. They have 6000 Lavander bushes located 10 minutes away from Labin. They offer essential oils, home decorations such as lavender pouches, soaps, as well as local homemade olive oil, which is of excellent quality. They also produce local wines such as Malvazija.



Mirakul Residence


OPG Mirakul has 1 hectare of land and is 3 kilometers from Labin. They have 200 olive trees, 1500 lavender bushes, and flowers. This makes a wonderful scenery for nature lovers, who can go and enjoy the view of the garden and the Učka mountain. At OPG Mirakul, guests can try and buy products such as olive oil, fruit jams, various herbal syrups, and liquors as well as cosmetic products made from lavender.



Vino Matiška

Vino Matiška is a local winery. They offer wine tasting and vineyard tours with a beautiful family history. Only one year after the survivors of the Titanic were rescued Mate Kiršić, also known as Matiška drank the first glass of his own wine. That day "Matiška" wine was created. Decades later, the descendants of the hero transformed his naval and cellarer heritage into a brand of Istrian wine with a family tradition.



 Allegro_ceramics

Allegro is a family-run ceramics manufacture. They make kitchenware, tea sets, mugs, cups, decorative objects and figurines, lamps and custom made objects. They also produce lighting and various local-themed souvenirs such as magnets, pottery, olive oil bottles, bukaletas, a traditional Istrian jug, and tableware. They can also produce paintings on request.



 Inker Raša keramika

Inker Raša Keramika is another family-run business located in Raša, a town 4,8 km away from Labin. They have been producing ceramics since 1985. They make various decorative and useful products and ceramic souvenirs painted by hand according to the customer's wishes. One of them is the Bukaleta, a traditional Istrian product used to make Istarska Supa.



Vintagewave

Vintage Wave is a brand created out of love for vintage clothing, as a revolution against fast fashion and unethical production. Also taking into account that every piece of vintage clothing is a reflection of some historical feeling. It is this feeling and values they revive and that is why their slogan is: Timeless clothing. As the tie is originally a Croatian invention, getting a vintage tie would be a perfect souvenir.




Merania Keramik

Merania Keramik was founded in 1993 and has grown from a small pottery to a family pottery manufactory. They produce ceramic lights, utensils for serving and preparing food, local souvenirs related to the mining history of Labin, and other souvenirs typical of Istria. Their inspiration is from tradition as well as local designers with who they collaborate. Their products are made using traditional pottery techniques.




CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



 Park Sculptura Dubrova


Park Sculptura Dubrova is a sculpture park that is unique in Croatia. The sculptures are made from Istrian stone, which is very durable. Dubrova is the ideal place to combine a walk around nature and culture because of the many sculptures the park has. Dubrova is famous for the Mediterranean symposiums, events that add more sculptures to the big collection the park already has.



 Narodni Muzej Labin

The Labin National Museum was founded in 1960 and is located in the old town's heart in the Baroque palace of the Battiala-Lazzarini family. It provides an overview of Labin's history, with a selection of the most important events. Labin's mining history is also portrayed in a special attraction, a live recreation of what a coal mine looked like which can be explored by visitors.



 Galerija Alvona

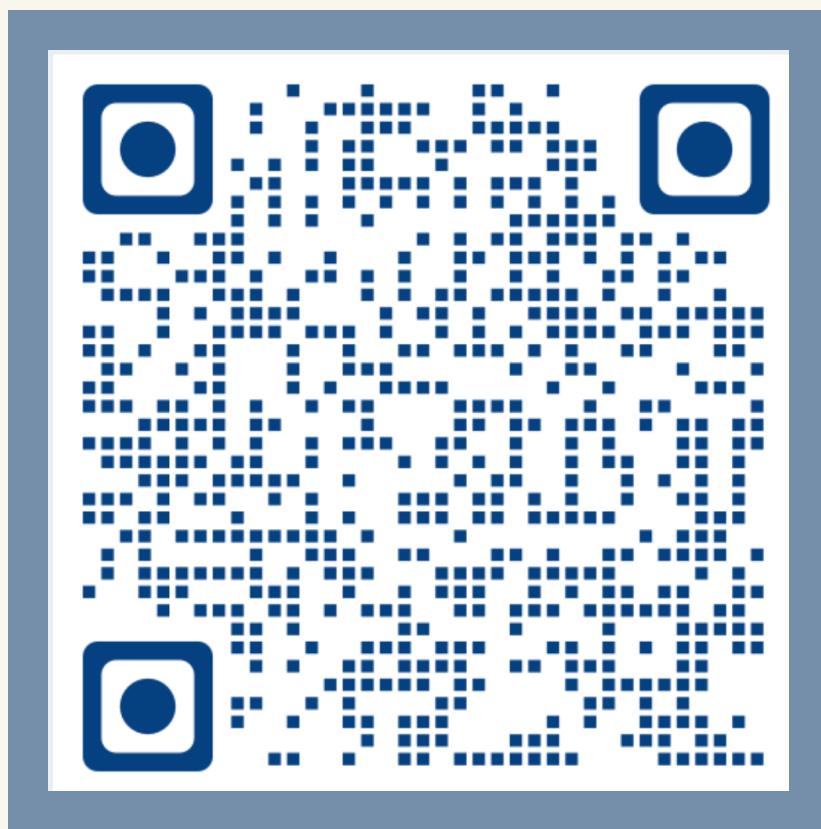
The Galerija Alvona is a contemporary art gallery in the heart of the old town of Labin. It is located in the restored church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which now has a beautiful red facade. The art exposed in the gallery can be purchased by the public by contacting the owners which would help you along the process.



 Gradska Galerija Labin

The Labin Town Gallery is located on the main street of Labin's old town, across from the National Museum and close to the Parish church. The Gallery was founded in 1999 and since that moment a lot of artists and art lovers have gathered in this space. The gallery hosts many events every year, where artists get exposed in exhibitions that are attended by many people from Istria and Labin as well as all around the world.

To find the locations mentioned in this guide scan this QR code or click the link below that will redirect you to an interactive map :



<https://maphub.net/nataliavallve98/map>



Businesses



Touristic spot



Culture



Alfa Albona office



📷 @nataliavallve98

Dear reader,

Thank you for being part of this little project by reading the final result. This guide aimed to gather some places that make Labin a charming town, as well as to try to show some local businesses that can offer meaningful purchases to remember your trip to Labin.

I did this project through the time my European Solidarity Corps service lasted in Labin with the NGO Alfa Albona. This could not have been possible without all the people who helped me through it, such as my supervisors, the owners of these businesses who personally told me about their history, or even the other volunteers who took the time to come with me to explore all these places and take some of the pictures which are featured in these pages.

I hope you enjoyed your read.

Natalia

Some of the information in this guide was found on the following pages:

<http://www.istria-trails.com/en/trails>

<https://www.istra.hr/en/destinations/labin/do-not-miss>

<http://www.iti-museum.com/en/collections/labin-town-museum/about-museum/>

<https://galerija-alvona.hr>

<http://www.istria-culture.com>

<https://www.istra.hr>

<https://www.smrikve.com/istria/books/smrikve/places/east-istria/labin/>