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WALKING TOUR BOOKLET

Karlovac

From Tesla to the fortress and the rivers



The Korana in Karlovac, 2005. Photo: Suradnik13, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Echoes of the Past

Crafting Future Leaders Through Heritage and Environment

Project no. 2025-1-HR01-KA210-SCH-000350326

Explore nature, heritage and local identity with the Erasmus+ group of pupils and teachers.

WELCOME & COLLABORATION

Meet your guides

Gimnazija Karlovac students Dora Pavlačić, Eva Mlinarević and Ena Perković lead the Erasmus+ group of pupils and teachers on this walk under the guidance of their teacher, Denis Plavetić.

Two schools, one shared experience

This tour is a joint initiative by Žakanje Primary School (OŠ Žakanje), the coordinating school, and Gimnazija Karlovac. Local students introduce visitors to their city and invite them to ask questions and compare ideas.

Starting point

Gimnazija Karlovac
Rakovac 4, 47000 Karlovac, Croatia

Our question

How have rivers, learning and the old fortress shaped life and identity in Karlovac?

This is a flexible outdoor route. The guides choose the pace and stops to fit the available time. Stay with the group, follow the guides' instructions at road crossings and keep a safe distance from the water. Ask permission before photographing people.

STOP 01 / RAKOVAC

Tesla was a student here



Gimnazija Karlovac, 2012. Photo: Bearcro, CC BY-SA 3.0.

1. Gimnazija Karlovac

Nikola Tesla attended the Karlovac Real Gymnasium from 1870 to 1873. His physics teacher, Martin Sekulić, encouraged his interest in electricity and experiments. The school connects Karlovac to a story of curiosity and discovery.

Talk together: How would your daily life change without electricity?

Look closely: Find the school entrance and a detail that tells you this is a place of learning. Think of a teacher who has encouraged your own curiosity.

STOPS 02-03 / THE KORANA

A river in daily life

2. The Korana weir

Walk from the school towards the river and its weir. Karlovac is known as a city of four rivers: the Kupa, Korana, Mrežnica and Dobra. Water can help explain where people settle and how a town grows.

Talk together: Why might people build a town near a river?

3. The riverside walk by Dragojla

Look at how people use the riverbank today: walking, playing sport, meeting friends and relaxing. Nature is part of everyday city life, as well as part of its history.

Talk together: Which activity can you see? How is this riverbank similar to a place near your own home?

Find evidence

Name one natural detail and one feature made by people. How do they work together in this place?

Photo idea: Show the river and one sign of everyday life in the same frame. Take the picture from a safe place on the path.

STOPS 04-06 / THE STAR

A city designed first

4. The model of the Star

The model shows the fortress as it appears on a plan from 1783. Karlovac was founded in 1579 as a planned fortress. Its six-pointed shape was designed for defence. The corners, or bastions, allowed defenders to watch for attacks from different directions. A moat surrounded the fortress.

Talk together: What shape do you see? Why was it useful for defence?

5. The former Turska vrata

This was one of the two original entrances to the fortress. Gates helped people control who entered. The fortress was built in the context of conflict with the Ottoman Empire.

Talk together: Why does a walled town need gates, and who might have used them?

6. Radićeva Street

Follow the street into the old centre. Look for the planned street layout and the relationship between streets, buildings and open spaces. The fortress has become part of a living town.

Talk together: Can you still find clues to the old fortress?

STOPS 07-08 / INSIDE & OUTSIDE

People lived here



Ban Josip Jelačić Square, 2015. Photo: Quahadi, CC BY-SA 4.0. This is a historical view.

7. Ban Josip Jelačić Square

At the heart of the Star, look for the Holy Trinity Church and Franciscan monastery, the Orthodox Church of St Nicholas, the surrounding buildings and the well. People living in a fortress needed homes, water and places to gather.

Talk together: What would people need to live here for many years?

8. The moat and basketball court

Notice how a former defensive space can become a place for sport and recreation. The old shape remains, while its use changes.

Talk together: How can an old place serve young people today?

STOPS 09-10 / CITY LIFE

Green walks and screens

9. The Promenade

Walk along the green edge of the Star. Trees and paths turn former defensive spaces into places for leisure and meeting people. Look at the shade, benches and spaces for conversation.

Talk together: What makes a city a good place to live?

10. Edison Cinema

Built in 1920, Edison is part of Karlovac’s film heritage. It connects a historic place of entertainment with the ways people watch and share stories today.

Talk together: What is the first thing you remember watching on a screen? How did people share stories before cinema?

Compare past and present

Choose one change you have noticed. Complete the sentence: “In the past, people used this place for ... Today, people use it for ...”

Think about identity: Which places help people feel part of their city?

STOPS 11-12 / GATES & TRADE

Rivers as routes

11. Towards the former Riječka vrata

Unlike the original Banska and Turska gates, this third entrance was created in the 19th century. Look at the paving that marks parts of the former defences and bridge. The ground beneath our feet can reveal hidden history.

Talk together: Why might a growing town need a new entrance?

12. The Kupa

Before modern roads and trucks, rivers were important routes for moving heavy goods. Grain boats on the Kupa connect Karlovac’s river setting with trade and work.

Talk together: Why was a boat useful for carrying large amounts of grain?

Nature shapes choices

Compare the two rivers on our walk. Which examples show recreation? Which examples help explain trade or the growth of the town?

Stay on the riverside path and follow the guides. Observe the water without approaching an unprotected edge.

STOPS 13-15 / THE RETURN

From defence to learning

13. Strossmayer Square

Return towards the square and the City Museum building. Think of Karlovac as a place of education, trade, culture and daily life, as well as a former fortress.

Talk together: Which object from today would you put in a museum for people in the future?

14. The former Banska vrata

This was the other original entrance to the fortress. Compare this location with the former Turska vrata. Use what you have seen to imagine the old boundary of the town.

Talk together: What has changed since Karlovac was founded in 1579?

15. Oružana, the former armoury

End at the former armoury. Its new role as a Regional Competence Centre links a historic building with practical learning and new skills. This is a clear example of giving heritage a future.

Talk together: How can reusing an old building help a community?

Our final thought: A city can protect its past while making room for new people, ideas and uses.

YOUR TOUR NOTES

Take a story home

One place that stayed with me

Name the place and explain why it matters to you.

One link between nature and identity

Use one detail from the Korana, the Kupa or a green space. Explain what it tells you about people’s lives.

One idea for our own community

What could we protect, reuse or share? Choose a small action that young people could take.

Share with a partner: “My strongest example is … because …”

SOURCES & PHOTO CREDITS

Explore further

Route and discussion prompts adapted from the supplied document “Karlovac”. Additional facts checked against the school, city and tourism websites. The dates when the photographs were taken are given in their captions. Present-day details may differ.

Gimnazija Karlovac: school contact and address

Visit Karlovac: the Star and the city model

Visit Karlovac: Tesla’s school years

Visit Karlovac: Edison Cinema

Visit Karlovac: the former gates and paving

City of Karlovac: Oružana and the Competence Centre

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Korana Karlovac.jpg

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OUR SHARED PROJECT

Heritage brings us together

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Crafting Future Leaders Through Heritage and Environment

Erasmus+ KA210-SCH
Small-scale partnerships in school education
Project no. 2025-1-HR01-KA210-SCH-000350326

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