

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

IZOLA 2023

Izola is an authentic Mediterranean town built on a former island, and the close bond of its inhabitants with the sea can still be felt today. In addition to its charming alleys and various beaches, it boasts a green countryside and a genuine connection with nature.



Commitment to sustainability

In 2020, Izola took a major step forward in sustainable development with the signing of the Green Politic, which sets clear guidelines for sustainable operations in all facets of life in the municipality. Another important strategic document is the Tourism Development Strategy 2021-2025, which lays the foundations for the further development of sustainable tourism with the motto “green, blue, 365 days a year”.



Visit sustainable providers

Izola currently boasts three tourism providers with green sustainability labels:

The Marina Hotel: The hotel's restaurant has earned a Michelin recommendation for its innovative and sustainable gastronomy. Additionally, it holds a Green Cuisine sustainability label. Renowned for its fresh "from sea to plate" dishes, the cuisine seamlessly blends modernity with tradition. Menus change according to the seasons, ensuring seasonal freshness.

Dolcemente Garni Hotel: Situated next to the promenade in Isola, this hotel offers breathtaking sea views. It is accredited under the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism and proudly displays the Green Key and Green Accommodation sustainability labels.

The Cliff Hotel at Belvedere Resort: Nestled in the Strunjan Landscape Park, this hotel boasts panoramic views of Izola. It holds both the Green Key and Green Accommodation sustainability labels. The location offers excellent starting points for scenic walks within the Strunjan Landscape Park.

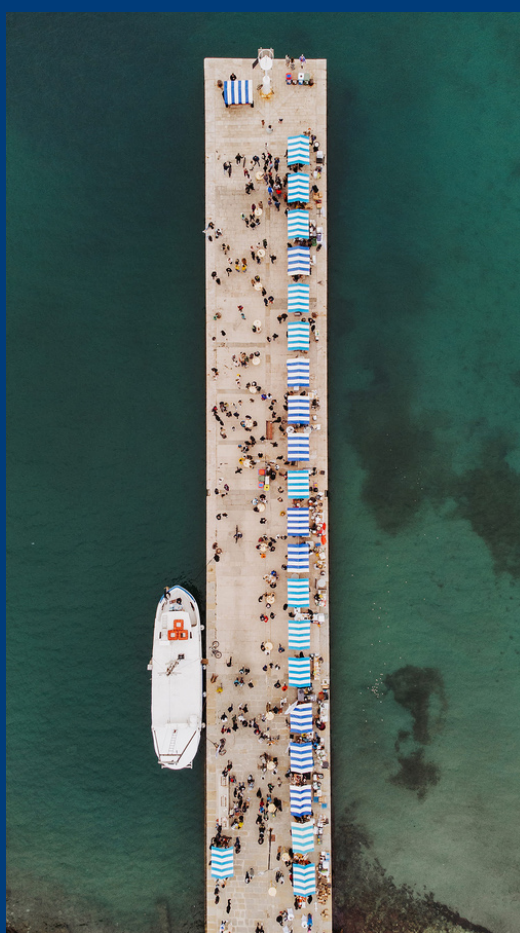


Fresh and local

Izola promotes the local economy and the use of seasonal ingredients with [Kilometer Zero](#) initiative, which encourages local restaurateurs to use local produce. This helps to avoid unnecessary transport of food and improves the quality of the supply. Local producers co-create Izola's offer in several ways: they present their produce at the seasonal markets "[Stuff from my field](#)" and Loreto and take part in traditional events.

Local restaurateurs participate in themed [culinary days](#), which promote typical local dishes. The Culinary Days take place in restaurants Izola, encouraging participating restaurants to create dishes over a two-week period using a typical ingredient that is current at a particular time of the year.

From 2021, we have been organising the [Pier of Tastes](#) in Izola, which brings together local cuisine, wine and other local specialities. The event takes place in spring and autumn.



Picturesque countryside and pristine nature

The countryside of Izola is abundant in both natural and cultural heritage, offering many possibilities for leisure activities. Just a 15-minute drive from the town centre, the village of Korte is a true countryside gem. This is where the Histri settled 5,000 years ago and built their home on the hill above the village. The prehistoric settlement in Korte is the largest of its kind in Slovenian Istria. Today, the former home of our ancestors is a beautiful archaeological park where cultural heritage is inextricably connected with nature. You can visit the [Kašler Archaeological Park](#) on your own, and for a deeper insight into the stories of that time, you can also be accompanied by a local guide from the Šparžin Tourist and Cultural Association.

The countryside is also home to [water sources - reservoirs](#) that were once the only source of water supply in the countryside. Most of the sources are on private land and can only be visited on guided tours, which are organised twice a year by the Šparžin Tourist and Cultural Association. Many local gastronomic delights can also be tasted in the countryside. [Restaurant Korte](#) and [Farm Medljan](#) offer authentic rural cuisine, and the villages of Izola are also rich in wine and olive oil.

Another important natural area is the [Strunjan Landscape Park](#). As part of the INHERIT project, which focuses on the protection of natural heritage and the development of sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean, the Strunjan Landscape Park, adorned by an 80-metre-high cliff, has been identified as an INHERITURA site. As part of the project, a footpath from Belvedere to the White Rocks was restored using sustainable dry-logging techniques. The restoration of the path was carried out to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the area and reduce erosion caused by tourism.



Sustainable mobility

The Municipality of Izola has been a pioneer in efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in its vehicle fleet, having already achieved extremely low average emissions in 2014, which were only planned for 2020. The humanitarian organization Zlata mreža (Golden Network) has also improved sustainable mobility in the social field with the [Prostofer project](#), providing free transport for senior citizens.

The Municipality of Izola has also introduced two [electric minibuses](#), which serve to improve the connection between the town center, parking areas and the administrative unit in Izola, while at the same time facilitating access to commercial and business entities in the municipality, which in turn reduces the use of private means of transport.

There is also a tourist train running from spring to late fall, which can carry up to 50 passengers and is an attractive feature, but also contributes to keeping visitors car-free.

With an integrated transport strategy, the destination promotes the introduction of green tourism products such as [e-scooter](#) and [SUP rental](#). In addition, the Municipality of Izola installed five electric charging stations in 2018, for which it received a subsidy from the EcoFund. Four of these charging stations are located in the city and one in the countryside. In the framework of the IstraConnect project of the Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia 2014-2020 Programme, a smart bike storage room has been installed in Izola to store cyclists' personal items and charge their electric bikes. This investment promotes the use of bicycles as a sustainable means of transport and enables greater connectivity between different modes of transport, contributing to more sustainable and environmentally friendly mobility and creating a more connected community.



Useful items center

The Recycling Centre has set up a Useful Items Center (UIC) where users can drop off and pick up useful objects free of charge. On users' initiative, "[UIC in the city](#)" based on an innovative exchange system was opened in 2019. In addition to the collection and recycling of useful objects, the center has also become an incubator for generating environmental awareness through various workshops.

A respectful attitude towards the environment

Izola focuses on sustainable waste management, aiming to reduce waste at the source and increase the percentage of separately collected waste. The public company Komunala Izola is active in raising awareness among all users by conducting campaigns and activities to promote proper waste management and environmental education. The percentage of separately collected waste is increasing year by year, indicating that their efforts have been successful.

[The Visit & Respect Izola leaflet](#) encourages residents and visitors to Izola to care for the environment and act sustainably. To raise awareness about good behaviour, the [Little Green Secrets of Locals](#) campaign was created, providing guidance in a friendly and humorous manner.

Accessibility

Izola has been a disability-friendly municipality for years. In cooperation with the Slovenian Association of Students with Disabilities, we have implemented a project to remove architectural barriers. We have also carried out a project in cooperation with the Koper Inter-Municipal Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired to provide appropriate floor markings in roundabouts for the blind and visually impaired. A special feature of the tourist offer in Izola is [the beach](#), adapted to all people, regardless of their physical limitations.



Education

The Izola Tourist Board is striving to further strengthen its development function and collaboration with providers. This approach is essential to follow the new Tourism Development Strategy in the municipality and to achieve the outlined objectives of creating a quality tourist offer. In recent years, we have increasingly focused on organizing training sessions, study tours, and knowledge transfer initiatives for the hospitality and tourism industry, encouraging them to develop sustainable business models. We have organized numerous lectures and workshops on the development of the tourist offer in Izola.

Preserving cultural heritage

Izola is exceptionally rich in cultural and natural heritage, diligently preserved and integrated into new tourist products and experiences.

One of the most important preservation sites of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is [Izolana – House of the Sea](#), which opened its doors in 2017. Visitors can learn about the history and maritime character of Izola, admire a collection of wooden boat models, the first preserved map of the Istrian peninsula, and discover the former railway line Parenzana. A large part of Izolana is dedicated to fishing and the fish processing industry, an important part of Izola's tradition. It is particularly interesting for children, offering a unique way of learning about Izola's heritage. Izolana also features a 3D model of Izola, showing the development of the town throughout different historical periods, from prehistoric times to the present day, with the help of an audiovisual projection. Additionally, Izolana is the starting and finishing point of the Forgotten Secret of Izola outdoor adventure game.



Public communication

Informing the public and raising awareness are essential in our efforts to achieve sustainable development. In our communication with the public, we follow modern trends and use digital channels such as the destination website, social media, and email communication. The local population is informed about the importance of sustainable tourism through Bobnič / La Crida, a free municipal newspaper.

We also use promotional brochures, leaflets, and other printed materials, as well as work successfully with various media outlets and organize study tours. Training and workshops for tourism stakeholders are also an important part of the communication.

Best tourist destination 2023

For the 32nd year in a row, the Tourist Association of Slovenia, a national organization responsible for the promotion and development of tourism, has organized the project Moja dežela – lepa in gostoljubna (My Country – Beautiful and Hospitable), which awarded Izola the title of the best tourist destination in the smaller cities category. The Tourist Association of Slovenia emphasizes that a well-maintained and welcoming environment is the key to the successful development of tourism.

Izola is a small Mediterranean town that has become a popular tourist destination, known for its authenticity and hospitality. Despite its popularity among tourists, Izola remains true to its tradition of fishing, viticulture, and olive oil production, which gives it an authentic charm and differentiates it from other coastal towns. With its well-maintained infrastructure, picturesque town center, green countryside, and captivating stories, it attracts visitors and offers a pleasant living environment for the locals. The municipality is actively working towards taking tourism to an even higher level.

You can find out more about the destination's efforts to preserve the environment and promote sustainable development in the [green news](#).

