



# Žminj

TOURIST INFORMATION AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



# Facts about **Žminj**

**Population:** 3470 inhabitants (2011.)

**Height above sea-level:** 379 m

**Larger settlements in the Municipality of Žminj:** Balići, Benčići, Cere – Sv. Matej, Debeljuhi, Domijanići, Gradišće, Gržini, Jurići, Karlovići, Klimni, Krajcar Breg, Krculi, Kresini, Križanci, Krničari, Kršanci, Laginji, Matijaši, Modrušani, Mužini, Orbanići, Pamići, Pifari, Prkačini, Pucići, Rudani, Šivati, Tomišići, Vadediji, Vidulini, Zeci, Žagrići, Žminj.

**Climate:** Continental/Mediterranean

**Average summer temperature:** 26° C

**Average winter temperature:** 6° C

**Time zone:** : Central European Time switching clocks for one hour forward in summer

**Telephone:** Croatia +385; Žminj (0)52

**Currency:** kuna (kn) – HRK

**Distance:** Vienna 565 km, Budapest 571 km, Venice 261 km, Ljubljana 181 km, Trieste 97 km, Dubrovnik 673 km, Zagreb 230 km, Rijeka 72 km, Pula (airport) 39 km.

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CIP - Katalogizacija u publikaciji  
Sveučilišna knjižnica u Puli

UDK 379.85:930.85>(497.5 Žminj)(041)=111

ORBANIĆ, Elvis

Žminj : tourist information and  
historical overview / <author Elvis  
Orbanić>. - Žminj : Santinini, 2015.

Om. nasl. - Nasl. izvornika: Žminj :  
turistički i povijesni pregled. -  
Istodobno izašlo na hrv., engl. i njem.  
jeziku.

ISBN 978-953-58636-1-8

ISBN 978-953-58636-1-8



9 789535 863618 >

*Žminj is the Municipal centre in the heart of Istria. Its biggest advantage is the fact that due to its location it is equally distant from Istrian coastal localities which makes it an ideal vacation getaway. Contrary to numerous tourist towns and destinations along the Adriatic coast which are densely packed with thousands of visitors making their way through swarming, noisy streets during summer, visitors yearning for a vacation will find peace and quietness in Žminj and its surroundings just twenty minutes' drive away from the seaside. This brochure has been created in the attempt to acquaint the reader/visitor with the history and rich cultural heritage of the Žminjščina region, its tradition and natural beauties sculpted through centuries, which in their own way reflect the impressive spirit of this place.*

*Marko Križman  
The Mayor*



# History of Žminj

## Prehistory and Antiquity

The first historical traces in the Žminjština region were left by the settlers of the hill, the same one which has been the site of the contemporary Žminj today, during the second millennium BC. The most intriguing archaeological site by far is the town of Žminj itself. It started to develop first as a proto-urban settlement, which later grew into a medieval small town to finally become an important centre of the continental Istria today. According to the available evidence the Žminjština region has been the place of a number of sites holding material remnants (mainly ceramic remnants) at Gradišće – Breg, Sveta Foška (St. Fusca) near the village of Laginji, Mikulanija near the village of Modrušani, Gočan and Žminj itself. Although not abundant, these remnants bear important witness to the existence of settlements in this area already during the prehistory. Water is along with the rather fertile soil the main precondition for the foundation of any settlement. Žminj is no exception to this rule. The springs on the eastern slope of the Lim Valley (Limska Draga), near the village of Vidulini, have been the continuous

source of life to people inhabiting this karstic and water scarce soil of Žminjština for centuries. During the construction of the railway at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy this water was redirected to the Lim Valley (Limska Draga) to serve as the source of power for steam trains. At this point it is worth mentioning that Johann Weichard Valvasor, an eminent travel writer, at the end of the 17th century wrote the following: "The worst thing is that here (in Žminj) there is more wine than water, although many do not consider it to be a disadvantage. However, they fail to consider the difference between pleasure and immediate need." During the prehistory Žminj, although scarcely populated, was the centre of a wider area with a ring of roads leading to various settlements which were founded during the Iron Age (10th century BC), namely: Pićan towards the east, Stari Gočan (Old Gočan) towards the south-east, through Barban all the way to the Raša Bay, one road towards the north went to Stari Pazin (Old Pazin) and the other one to Lindar. These prehistoric routes laid foundation for new roads to come being still functional today. In Istria the years between 177 and 476 were marked



*Silver coin of Vitig  
the King of the  
Goths*

by the Roman rule, while the period of prosperity began with the era of Augustus' reign, when better life conditions were created in the central Istria as well. These facts are substantiated by the inscription to the Mother Earth dating from the 1st century AD, as well as by the ancient altar dedicated to the superior Roman deity Jupiter the Conqueror. This field altar was discovered among the ancient architectural remains nearby the today's Church of the Mother of God - the Holy Sea (Majke Božje Svetomore), the former site of a Roman Villa Rustica (residential and business building) in the ownership of a married couple and today a site dedicated to a Christian cult.

Furthermore, the remains of the Roman ceramic discovered at the eastern side of Žminj, on the plateau of St. Fusca (Sveta Foška) speak in obvious favour of the continuity of life in Žminjština during the Antiquity. The discovery of a silver coin of Vitig the King of the Goths (536-540) at Kortina near the village of Modrušani bears the evidence that the East Goths have found their place on the chronological list of Žminj inhabitants as well.

## Middle Ages

Istria as well as Žminjština experienced huge transformations due to the migration of the Slavs at the beginning of the 7th century. Newly settled Croats, who constituted a part of a wider Slavic community, left numerous rem-



*Today a popular souvenir Žminjski rinčín (Žminj earring) originates from the archaeological site of the old Croatian Necropolis.*



nants and toponyms as evidence of their presence in this area. A necropolis dating back to 9th and 10th centuries, which was discovered during the construction of the primary school in Žminj in 1953, proves that there is a profound connection between Istria's history and the history of the rest of Croatia. Archaeologists think that the similarity between the local archaeological findings and the findings originating from the Croatian early Middle Ages period point to the mutual belonging to the same cultural background. It is necessary to mention that the manner of burial at this early medieval burial ground was Christian (a total of 225 graves were found), which indicates the fact that the above mentioned inhabitants inhabited Žminj even earlier, according to some historians most likely in the first half of the 7th century, since the Croats



arrived in their new homeland as pagans and later converted to Christianity. Žminj acquired all the characteristics of a hill-fort (*castrum*), that is, the fortification of the already existing settlement, already in the 7th century, if not even earlier, and made part of the network of fortifications protecting the population of the Central Istria. In the near vicinity of Žminj, on the southern side of the slope of the hill on which the Church of St. Fusca (Sveta Foška) was built on the remains of an Ancient Roman building, there was a small settlement (at the Babine brajde location) continuously inhabited from prehistory to the early Middle Ages. The early Middle Ages represent the period in which some processes took place in the town of Žminj, which shaped it and imbued it with its dominant characteristics to this day, namely: land surveying, which gave birth to the town of Žminj, Croatisation, which provided Žminj

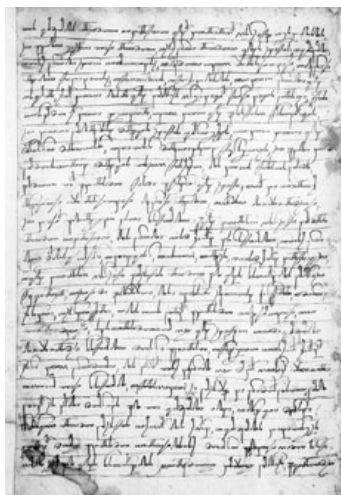
*Valavasar's copperplate engraving dating from 1689*

with the ethnical identity and Christianisation, which made it a part of the Western European culture. The exact date of the construction of the defensive fortification, the so called "kaštel" (castle), which took place some time later on the top of the settlement, has remained unknown. It is assumed that the fortification was erected during the Turkish invasion of Istria in the course of the 15th century. It is a well-known fact that Emperor Frederik III issued the order to defend the Pazin Castle and neighbouring fortifications against the enemy in 1478, so that it might be concluded that by that time Žminj already had the fortification in its place. In the 15th century the city walls were rebuilt and three circular towers were erected at the town entrance, while the rectangular one at the north-western edge of the castle, which may

be seen in Valvasarov's drawing, was already in place before. It is evident from the parish document dating from 1178, by which Pope Alexander III confirmed to the Bishop of Poreč that he was entitled to the properties in his possession (*Ecclesio de Zemino cum copellis*), that the religious life was well organised as early as in the early Middle Ages. It was the first time in history that Žminj was mentioned. Since the end of the 12th century Žminj shared the destiny of the Pazin County (earldom), which was founded at approximately that time. When the Pazin County came under Habsburg rule in 1374, Žminj as its integral part occupied a position of a prominent municipal centre with Župan (County Prefect) as its head, which was a typical historical position held by Slavic people within the local government bodies. The name of the County Perfect Mavro Žagrić, who may be considered the first known Mayor of Žminj, is mentioned in the most intriguing document of medieval Istria called *Istarski razvod* (the Istrian Law Book) which was written in Croatian Glagolitic script as well as Latin and German languages between 1275 and 1325.

## Early New Age and the 19th century

Žminjština received a significant wave of migrants in the 16th century when the migrants from the newly conquered Turkish territories (in 1528 the Turks conquered Lika and Krbava) escaped to the



Excerpt from the Istrian Law Book

west. Some of the villages of the Žminjština region like Otočani and Modrušani were founded at that time by people who came from Otočac and Modruš. At that time Žminj was one of the most important and developed settlements of the Pazin County. Valuable church items and the 16th century attire kept in the treasury of the parish church bear witness to this fact. In the 17th century the Istrian Peninsula was divided between Venice, which ruled over the coastline and Austria, which ruled over the interior of the Peninsula. These two nations fought against each other during the so called *Uskok War* (1615-1617). Žminj was the southernmost fort of the Austrian Istria and therefore exposed to the attacks of the Venetian army. General Antonio Barbaro started the siege of Žminj at the beginning of July

in 1616 but with no success since his troops retreated when they heard that the Austrian troops led by the general Adam von Trautmasdorf were approaching. Although, not for long because by receiving help from inside Žminj they returned and conquered it without great difficulties. One of Žminj judges named Zvane Petrenić, let the Venetians inside the town through the holes in defensive walls in January of 1617. He was rewarded for his deed by the *Serenissima* government with a monthly salary in the amount of six ducats for the rest of his life. Afraid that his fellow citizens might revenge themselves upon him Petrenić fled to Crete, which was under the Venetian rule. It is believed that Petrenić was that particular inhabitant of Žminj who was very loyal to the Republic of St. Marco and as the documents revealed was sending secret information to the Venetians even before the outbreak of the war. In April of 1618 the Venetians with-

drew from the town but only after they had pulled down a part of the defensive wall and devastated the surroundings. The border separating the Austrian from the Venetian Istria was passing near the village of Debeljuhi in Žminjština, which as a dialectical, language border still exists today. Regardless of this event Žminjština soon recovered so that the new baroque parish church was built on the site of the previous medieval church at the end of the first third of the 17th century and gained its present appearance in the 18th century. By the middle of that century there were twenty four small churches in that area. A great deal of Žminjština's social life took place within the framework of religion based associations the so called fraternities and there were twenty of them in the parish by the mid of the 17th century. Žminjština was a part of the Poreč Diocese and shared the border with the Pićan Diocese to the east and the Pula Diocese to the south. The church in Žminj was a collegiate church which meant that besides the priest it had at least one canon. The Parish Church of St. Michael (Sv. Mihovil) was extended in the 17th century. At that time Žminj had its own physician which in regard to the number of inhabitants corresponded to the standard of Tuscan cities of that time. During the next century, when the economic and social conditions in the County improved, culture received an incentive as well as the artistic taste of citizens and young clergy. Numerous churches were



Excerpt from the Fraternity Book





*Ivan Matetić Ronjgov (1880-1960)*

renovated, extended and made more beautiful in the Central Istria and Žminj as well. This area was famous for agriculture and cattle breeding in the 18th century. Lambs were bred, wheat, rye, barley, millet, sorghum, lentil were sown and wine was produced. There were approximately ten quarries during the 19th century in the Žminjščina region and the quarry located near the prehistoric hill-fort of Gradinja, where multi-coloured stone was extracted, is still open today. The main altar of the parish church, baptistery and the pulpit were made of the stone from this quarry. In the second half of the 19th century Žminj boasted with a number of taverns, shops, various craftsmen (bakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, weavers) and people renting accommodation. The first post office was opened in Žminj in 1841 and telegraph arrived at the end of that century. Trieste figured as one of the educational centres of Istria of that time and children of Žminj went there to

receive their education in the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century and they continued their studies at the Universities of Padua, Graz and Vienna. In the mid of the 17th century the presence of a teacher was recorded for the first time in Žminj and the first primary school was built in 1822 and the language of teaching was German. Croatian as a language of teaching was introduced together with the Italian language in 1850. The attempts to open the Croatian school were finally realised with the construction of the new building at the southern part of the square in front of the parish church in 1899. Ivan Matetić Ronjgov (1880-1960), a well-known composer and music pedagogyst, was one of the teachers in the newly opened school, who turned the Istrian scale into an outstanding value of the European music culture. At the end of the 19th century and within the framework of social and folk relations the name of Mate Peteh Kovačić (1839-1895) certainly stood out. This man, a tailor by profession, was the first Croatian mayor in Istria and the first person promoted by the Croatian political representatives in their political fight to take over Croatian municipalities from the Italian minority. The history of Žminj and Žminjščina in the 20th century is related to numerous dramatic events, successes and failures that Žminj shared with the rest of the Istria.



## CHRONOLOGY

of Events in Žminj in the

20<sup>th</sup> century

- 1906**  
Croatian reading room and the Savings and loans Association – Cooperative Society were established
- 1907**  
Cooperative steam mill opened
- 1910**  
Žminjština had 5169 inhabitants
- 1914-1918**  
First World War
- 1928**  
Žminj is one of the bus stops (at St. Barholomew's) on the Pula-Triese route
- 1929**  
Electrification begun
- 1936**  
first cinema opened its doors
- 1939-1945**  
Second World War: the old part of the town was reduced to rubbles



**7<sup>th</sup> May 1945**

Žminj was liberated by the  
Partisans

**1953**

primary school was opened

**1955**

water supply line put in service

**1955-1957**

systematic archaeological  
excavations of the old Croatian  
burial ground

**1958**

Old Slavic liturgy was  
reintroduced

**8<sup>th</sup> June 1969**

The Čakavian Assembly was  
founded

**1977**

Municipal building  
was opened

**1986**

textile factory was opened

**1993.**

Žminj was established  
as the independent  
Municipality

**1999**

the Čakavian House was opened





## Čakavski sabor (the Čakavian Assembly)

Croatian language consists of three dialects: the Štokavian, the Kajkavian and the Čakavian dialect. The Čakavian dialect is spoken in the whole of Istria as well as a part of Dalmatia all the way to the island of Lastovo. In the Žminjština region many varieties of the Čakavian dialect are spoken and the Žminj dialect has been protected as intangible cultural heritage by the Ministry of Culture. The Čakavian Assembly, as the central cultural organisation for research and cultivation of the Čakavian culture and identity, was founded in Žminj in 1970. Its main office is located inside the so called Čakavska kuća (the Čakavian House), which incorporates some parts of the former Castle and it is the site of the so called *Čakaviana Collection* (the lodgement point for all publications in the Čakavian dialect and about it) as well as the library and the reading room and it was opened in 1999. The Čakavian House encompasses around 25 Departments of the Čakavian Assembly (independent associations)

*Traditional raising of the flag which marks the beginning of the Assembly of the Čakavian Poetry contest. The Čakavian House is visible in the background and was opened in 1999. Today it is the site of book presentations, round tables, educational programmes... Local library is situated within its premises as well.*

as its constituent parts scattered all over the Čakavian region.

## Cere Folklore Ensemble

Cere Folklore Ensemble was founded in 1945. It is the oldest folklore ensemble in Istria which has been active for the last seventeen years. Players of folk instruments, singers and dancers are the integral part of this ensemble and they take part in numerous folk festivals all over Istria, Croatia and sometimes





### **Frescoes inside the Church of the Holy Trinity**

even abroad. In Žminj the folklore tradition has been nurtured in all its shapes and forms within the framework of school and kindergarten activities. In 1978 school folklore group was established and is still active today.

### **Glagolitic Alphabet in Žminj**

Glagolitic alphabet is the oldest known Slavic script invented by the brothers Cyril and Methodius from Thessaloniki in the 9th century. They used it to make the Old-Slavic language as the first literary language of the Slavs. It was in use by Croats as well as by other Slavic peoples and regions (Moravia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, Russia). Until the 12th century the Glagolitic script had been widely used among Slavic peoples and since that time its use had been territorially limited only to Croatia, where it remained in use until the 20th century. In the Parish Church of St. Michael (Sv. Mihovil) Sunday mass is sung in the Old-Slavic language within the framework of a cultural event organised

by the Čakavian Assembly of Žminj entitled *DI ČA slaje zvoni* which is traditionally held every year at the beginning of June. The Croats were the only Catholics in the world who were given the permission to hold church services in their mother tongue until the Second Vatican Council. In 1546 Levč Križanić, the local canon and notary, transcribed the Glagolitic script from the most important document of medieval Istria called *Istarski razvod* (the Istrian Law Book), which proves that the Glagolitic script was much in use in private as well as in public life. It is worth to mention that the Parish of Žminj had in its possession a register written in the Glagolitic script. Today in reminiscence of the glorious Glagolitic tradition and as an expression of the authenticity of the medieval Croatian town of Žminj and its surroundings, various graffiti have remained as the written traces left by literate inhabitants of Žminj and visitors to these churches, mainly clergy, on the inside walls of the Churches of the Holy Trinity (Sveta Trojica) and St. Anthony the Abbot (Sv. Antun Opat) dating from the 15th and 16th centuries. The majority of these graffiti is almost illegible today.



## Tower and City Walls

In the 15th century the city walls were repaired and three circular towers were erected at the town entrance, while the rectangular one at the north-western edge of the castle, which may be seen in Valvasarov's drawing, was already there before. The towers were constructed as circular with a slant slope on the lower part, similar to the towers built by the Venetians during the fortification of castles and town walls in Istria and Dalmatia in the 15th century. South-western and north-western towers were pulled down when the imminent threat of war passed and when the parish church was extended to the west (1713) and when the baroque façade was built (1717) in the second decade of the 18th century. The north-eastern tower was destroyed during the bombardment of Žminj in 1943. Today only





one tower has been preserved and a part of the southern wing which has been incorporated into the parish church. The only remaining tower gained the balcony after the cessation of the direct war danger (most likely after the end of the Uskok War in 1618). The walls of the settlement have been preserved in its northern part and repaired in the 15th century.

### **Public Cistern**

Žminj and Žminjščina often experienced water shortages as evidenced by travel writers of the early New Age. Žminj must have had the public cistern well before 1873 since that back then it was referred to as (...) *una grandiosa cisterna*. Although not functional and serving as the ambient enhancer and one of the numerous stages for celebrating St. Bartholomew's

Day (*Bartulja*), it is still there today. It was built during the construction boom in the towns along the Istrian coast in the 19th century.

### **The Palace and the Ghetto**

A part of the town to the west of the parish church was called *Dvorac* (the Palace). There were a few two-storey houses and a three-storey house which were all demolished during the bombardment in 1943 when Žminj irreversibly lost the 19th century town appearance. To the west of the cistern a part of the town with a few houses in a close row was also destroyed during the already mentioned bombardment. This part of the town was known among the inhabitants of Žminj as the Ghetto, highly probable because of the Jews who used to live there.



## The Parish Church of **St. Michael**

The Parish Church of St. Michael Archangel (Sv. Mihovil Arkandel) is situated on the top of the hill. It was built in the middle of the former fortification the so called kaštel (castle). The Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua (Sv. Antun Padovanski) is the only remnant of the medieval church. The 16th century was the period when architectural works were initiated and the church acquired its present day appearance in the first half of the 18th century. The wall of the Žminj castle was used as its side façade. The parish church is 36 meters long and 14 meters wide.

### **Parish Bell Tower**

The bell tower is 34 meters high and it adheres to the church from its southern side. The upper part was made of Žminj stone in 1801. The lower part, covered in mortar, is of the medieval origin and stood on its own until the 17th century when it was incorporated into the body of the church. It boasts with the original stone crest on the last floor. Because of its size and beauty it is usually compared with the bell towers of Kopar and Pazin and *it is one of the most attractive sacral buildings of that kind in Istria* (J. Ivetac).



## Façade

The façade of the parish church was built thanks to the efforts of the priest Sante Rovis in 1717. It is a typical example of the Istrian provincial Baroque with Renaissance elements, similar to the northern Italian Baroque. The statue of St. Michael (Sv. Mihovil), the guardian of the church and town's patron saint, made in 1727 dominates the façade. St. Rocco (Sv. Rok) occupies the right niche and St. Sebastian (Sv. Sebastijan) occupies the one on the left side of the façade and they were installed in their places owing to the financial resources provided by the priest Mihovil Rovis. Stone rosette, whose installation was ordered by the local vicar and canon Ivan Marinac, forms an integral part of the façade as well. The façade of the parish church in Žminj is *unique in the whole of Istria because of a peculiar concluding gable* (R. Matejčić).



## Main Altar

Forged in a Baroque style and was mounted owing to the efforts of the priest Sante Rovis in 1706. Its slender pillars were made of the stone from the nearby quarry in Gradišće. The old altar was substituted by the new marble one looking towards the audience and mounted in 1994. Two years later the floor of the church was remade. Behind the tabernacle there is the painting (oil on canvas) of St. Michael painted by the academic painter Eugen Kokot in 1997.



## Chapels

The chapels were made in a very short period: the first pair next to the apse in 1635, the second on the southern side in 1632 and the one on the northern side in 1633. Local priest and canon Bernard Orlović ordered the construction of all four chapels. The parish church of Žminj was extended at the beginning of the 18th century (in 1713). A pair of chapels was added each of them with a room in front of them, out of which the left one was intended for a baptistery. They were built due to the effort of Jakov Rovis the guardian of the parish church. The nave is covered by a barrel vault and light streams in through its arched windows. The Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua (Sv. Antun Padovanski), on the southern side parallel with the main altar, is the oldest part of today's parish church dating from the 12th century. This chapel was built in the 17th century to fulfil the vow made by the local Bianchi family. During

the 18th century it gained the altarpiece of the unknown author dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua.

## Baroque Pulpit

The baroque pulpit was made of multi-coloured granular stone from the nearby quarry in Gradišće in the first half of the 18th century. This valuable piece of art by a foreign author from the Central Europe is considered one of the best achievements of the 18th century Istrian Baroque. The Bishop of Poreč Gaspare Negri remarked its high aesthetic value during his visit to the parish in 1745.

## Wooden Crucifixion

The wooden crucifixion the Soul in Purgatory is a valuable piece of work by an unknown local artisan in the Gothic style on the side altar dating from the 14th century.

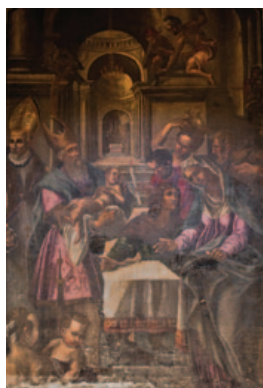


## Zorzi Ventura

Zorzi Ventura was a painter and woodcarver who lived at the turn of the 16th into the 17th century. He was born in Zadar, his nickname was Brajković and he lived and worked in Kopar. He painted under Veronese's influence and he painted the two paintings hanging on the wall inside the parish church in Žminj.

### *TEMPLE APPARITION*

Oil on canvas (Zorzi Ventura). It was reduced in size and width most likely in 1714 when it was mounted on the new marble altar in the chapel bearing the same name. It underwent a restoration in 1989.



### *THE VIRGIN AND THE CHILD, ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL AND THE SAINTS*

Oil on canvas (Zorzi Ventura). It was cut in size most likely in 1706 during its installation on the new marble altar (the main altar today). It was substituted by another painting on the main altar in 1997 and this one was mounted on the southern wall of the main nave of the church. It underwent a restoration in 1989.





## Adoration of the Shepherds

Woodcut of the Adoration of the Shepherds was made by a domestic artist in 1690 under the influence of retarded stylisations of high Renaissance. It is located inside the niche of the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua (Sv. Antun Padovski).



## Parish Choir

The parish choir has more than 30 male and female members. It does not only perform during religious festivities but it is well-known for its religious repertoire as well. The choir has accepted invitations to perform on many stages throughout Istria, Croatia and abroad. It occupies the stage at the festival of traditional Istrian lent hymns once a year.

# Church Treasury

Valuable artistic and liturgical attires and items have been kept in the treasury of the parish church.

- Chasuble made with the Venetian velvet with stylised Renaissance floral decorations dating from the 16th century.

- Chasuble made of bright atlas decorated with flowering branches dating from the 18th century.

- Baroque reliquary of St. Fusca (Sv. Foška) dating from the 18th century.

- Late Gothic monstrance made in the 15th century at the unknown Central European workshop. Gilded silver with engraved figures of evangelists on the 79 cm high stalk.

- Late Gothic 48 cm high cross dating from 1541.

- Two gilded silver chalices dating from the 17th century.

- Two gilded silver chalices dating from the 18th century.

- St. Michael's cloak is the Venetian artifact from the 16th century. It is used in liturgy during the Palm Sunday feast every year.





## Church of the Holy Trinity

It is situated on the northern side of the parish church and built in the 15th century. It is an explicit example of the Gothic architecture. It was built with blocks of domestic carved limestone and the roof was covered with stone slabs (škrilje). It used to stand on its own but it was connected with the parish church by the passage built in the 18th century. On its southern side and on the northern side of the parish church there is the crucifixion relief, a piece of work by a local stonemason dating from 1564. The interior of the church was decorated with an impressive gallery of frescoes, portraying the life of Christ and designed for illiterate gentry at the end of the Middle Ages, finished in 1471. These frescoes belong to the soft style in Gothic painting



which developed in Carinthia at the mid of the 15th century and they were discovered on the eve of the First

World War as this was the case with the frescoes in the Church of St. Anthony (Sv. Antun). Their author is unknown and he came to Žminj from the Alpine region, most likely in his old age. The frescoes were conserved during 1960s. Permission to visit the interior of the church may be granted by the local vicar.

## Church of St. Anthony the Abbot

It is located in the south-western part of the town. According to the Gothic stone inscription it was built by Armirig(us) in 1381. It was built using huge, skilfully shaped blocks with hardly visible treads. Interestingly, the window frames were made together with transennae made



of a monolithic stone. The roof is covered with stone slabs (škrilje). Surprisingly the interior walls of the church are covered with very valuable frescoes portraying the life of Christ and portraits of the Apostles Peter and Paul and scenes of temptation and whipping of St. Anthony the Hermit (Sv. Antun Pustinjak). The painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary surrounded by the choir of angels holding medieval instruments is

one of the most valuable works of the medieval art of Istria. This piece of art was made by an unknown author at the end of the 14th century who was educated in the circle of Venetian Trecento. This church is worth to be compared with the most valuable monuments of the Gothic architecture of the towns on the west coast of Istria. Permission to visit the interior of the church may be granted by the local vicar.

## LEGEND

The legend partially substantiated by the archive material says that once upon a time this church was desacralised and used as a wine cellar and agricultural storehouse and barn. When a two-headed calf was born its owners, filled with fear, decided to abandon it. In 1911 thanks to a financial support provided by the Archduke Franz Ferdinand the church was bought from the owner and renovated and the painting on the rear wall was conserved three years later.



## Church of St. Fusca

It is located 1,5 km east of Žminj on a hill, on the right side of the road leading to Pićan. St. Fusca (Sv. Foška), the early Christian martyr, is its patron saint for protection against headache, depression, rheumatism and the guardian of youngsters. It is the oldest church in Žminjština region built during the Byzantine rule in the 6th century and destroyed by the Avars at the beginning of the 7th century. It was rebuilt around the year 800 during the Frankish rule. Transennae, that is drilled stone slabs used to cover window openings, are visible on its side façade. This typical early Christian architectural element of the 6th century may be for example seen on the Chapel of Santa Maria Formosa (Sv. Marija Formoza) in Pula. Lesenes, that is vertical wall cantilevers serving as a decoration and reinforcement, date from the early Medieval period. The corpus of the today's church was made at the beginning of the 18th century with incorporated front and side walls of this pre-Romanesque church. The bell tower adhering to its front façade was built in the mid-18th century. *Considering the time of construction, stylistic characteristics and its condition the Church of St. Fusca (Sv. Foška) is one of the anthological works of art of pre-Romanesque Croatia (A. Mutnjaković).*







## Church of the Holy Mary – the Holy Sea

It is located 3,5 km south of Žminj by the road leading to Pula. It has been dedicated to the Annunciation to Mary and was built in the 12th century. It acquired its present day appearance in 1666 when the porch (lopica) was added. This porch (lopica) was built to provide shelter to pilgrims from neighbouring villages who took part in church feasts. Caryatids carved in the shape of angels contribute to the originality of the porch, a piece of work by domestic artisans of exceptional skills. According to some opinions they were reused and taken from a nearby ruin. The altar dates from the 18th century. The 18 metres high Romanesque bell tower stands on its own and it has been preserved in its original form. It boasts as one of the best preserved Romanesque bell towers in Istria.





### **Church of St. Bartholomew**

It is located to the west of Žminj, at one of the exit points. It was built in the 16th century and boasts with valuable altars. The statue of the patron saint is a valuable example of rural Baroque in Istria. It is the traditional starting point of the Palm Sunday procession with the Church of St. Michael (Sv. Mihael) as its ending point. St. Bartholomew's Day (Bartulja) is a well-known folk festivity celebrated in Žminj on the last Saturday in August on St. Bartholomew's Day. The church was renovated for the last time in 2014.



### **Church of the Holy Cross**

It is situated in the cemetery and mentioned in the records for the first time in the 17th century. There is a distaff bell tower on the façade erected most likely in the 18th century.



### **Church of St. Quirinus**

It is situated in the village of Mačini and mentioned in the records for the first time at the beginning of the 17th century. There is a valuable portrait of the patron saint on the wooden altar above the altar stone (mensa).

### **Church of St. Mathew**

It is situated in the village of Cere which used to be an independent chaplaincy and in 1952 became the independent parish. The Parish Church of St. Mathew (Sv. Matej) was built in 1630 with the porch (loptica) added in 1698.



## Early Medieval Necropolis

A necropolis dating back to the 9th and 10th centuries was discovered during the construction of the primary school in Žminj in 1953. Archaeologists think that the similarity between the local archaeological findings and the findings originating from the Croatian early Middle Ages period point to the mutual belonging to the same cultural background. It is necessary to mention that the manner of burial at this early medieval burial ground was Christian (a total of 225 graves were found), which indicates the fact that the Croats inhabited Žminj much earlier, most likely in the first half of the 7th century and later converted to Christianity which is substantiated by the fact that the Church of St. Fusca (sv. Foška) was renovated around the year 800. Archaeological finds are put on display at the Archaeological Museum in Pula.



## Canon's House

It is located in the southern part of Žminj. It was built in the 16th century and the western wall is its only preserved part. Arched windows have door jambs decorated with typical Istrian Renaissance decorations dating from the 16th century. The upper part of the façade contains a relief of the founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius of Loyola, which indicates that his cult was worshipped in Žminj. Below the relief there is the stone inscription stating that the house was built by Petar Marinac, which was renovated to meet the needs of the local canon and vicar in 1658. The Marinac (Marinčić) family was held in high esteem in Žminj during the 16th and 17th centuries.

## Relief of St. Chrysogonus

The relief was walled in the well of a private house on its north-eastern side. Before that it belonged to the nearby canon's house.



## Calvary

Called *Krvarija* (blood-soaked place) by the older inhabitants of Žminj is located in the western part of Žminj by the Pazin – Pula road. It was made of stone in 1728 and it consists of three crosses on the hill encircled by the wall and additionally secured with the iron gate. Besides the central cross bearing the body of the Christ, there are statues of Mary, the Mother of God and Mary Magdalen. Until the mid of the last century on St. Mark's the Evangelist Day celebrated on 25th April a procession walked all the way from the parish church to the Calvary, where the priest who was at the forefront of the procession would bless fields in order to allow successful planting. The procession would then take the roundabout road and return back to the church where the celebration ended.



## Nettle Tree

*Celtis australis* (nettle tree) is the tree belonging to the elm tree family and can grow into a tree reaching up to 15 metres and its trunk can reach up to 1 meter in diameter. Nettle tree's fruits are small cylindrical dark brown, sweet and tasty. The life expectancy of this tree is 1000 years. The wood is very strong and it is often used by carpenters (oars). In Istria it is often planted in the middle of a settlement with a local gentry gathering in its shadow. The members of the Municipal Assembly with Župan (the County Prefect) as their head would hold meetings under the nettle tree top. It is mentioned in the Istrian Law Book (*Istarski razvod*) as a place at the

square where the Border Committee held its meeting. Because of all this it has become a symbol of Žminj as well as of the Istrian peninsula.

## Pifari Railway Station

In 1876 when the railway line Divača-Pula was built according to the project it should have passed through Žminj. Some landlords were against this plan fearing that this would damage their estates in the close vicinity of the town. That is the reason why the railway station is located in Pifari, a village 4 km away from Žminj today.





## Kingdom of Feštini

Near the village of Feštini, 7km away from Žminj, a cave was discovered in the 1930s giving an insight into the richness of the underworld of this area and standing out by its natural beauties. The cave abounds in wonderful dripstone forms, among which it is easy to recognize 'the magician's hat', 'Tower of Babylon' and huge 'bat wings'. To make it accessible to visitors there are safe paths in the interior of the cave, about 100 metres long.

## Sport

In Žminjština region there are two cycling trails: Rumenija and Žminj-Feštini popular with cyclists in spring and summer months. Žminj has its own football club in which many outstanding football players have made their first steps and continued with their careers in famous Croatian and international clubs. Handball has been another popular sport played in Žminj and almost every village in the Žminjština region has its own bocce court.



### MORE INFORMATION:

-  +385 91 561 63 27
-  info@sige.hr
-  www.sige.hr



# Events



## Bartulja

St. Bartholomew's Day (Bartulja) is a well-known folk festivity (*fešta*) in memory of the Apostle Bartholomew. The church of this patron saint is situated right at the west exit of Žminj. It used to be celebrated on St. Bartholomew's Day on 24 August, but in time people started gathering the last Saturday in August to meet in large numbers. It is the day when the fair of handicrafts, traditional agricultural tools, and livestock fair are organised and clothes and even cars put on

sale. Gastronomic offer including all restaurants and taverns in Žminj is the inevitable part of the feast. Traditionally, the local public cistern is the site where the sale and tasting of plums (called *kreki* in local jargon) and purchase of souvenirs take place. It is the opportunity to listen and watch Cere Folklore Ensemble performing. During the St. Bartholomew's Day (Bartulja) thousands of people visit Žminj taking part in numerous entertaining programmes and recreational and cultural events. The point of every Bartulja is actually the gathering of domestic people and foreign visitors which makes it one of the largest events of its kind in Istria.



## Municipality Day

Since the establishment of the Municipality of Žminj St. Michael (Sv. Mihovil) has been celebrated as its patron saint on 29th September. Traditionally, cactus and succulent exhibition takes place on that day.



## Corpus Christy Procession

On the feast of Corpus Christy (the Feast of the Body of Christ) a procession is held in Žminj. The procession walks all the way from the parish church to the main square in front of the Municipality building via the two former medieval entrances into town and returns back to the parish church. The particularity of this processing lies in the fact that the entire *štrada* (one of the streets of procession paved with stone) is decorated with flowers and religious paintings attracting a large number of worshippers.





### **Istrian Pasta Festival**

This gastronomic event whose basic ingredient is pasta and which fuses traditional and contemporary in the Istrian cuisine takes place in July.



### **Accordions Behind the Castle Contest**

It is the meeting of amateur accordionists in July. It is held on the stage *Zad Kaštela* (behind the castle).



### **Istrian Pinca Prepared under the Lid on a Hearth**

On the eve of Easter this event is dedicated to the preparation of the sweet bread (pinca), Easter cakes and breakfast. It is the best opportunity to learn about the ways of preparing sweets and tasting traditional deserts of this area.

## The Assembly of the Čakavian Poetry “Di ČA slaje zvoni”

Established in Žminj in 1969 as the contest dedicated to nurturing the artistic expression of children from all over the country writing in the Čakavian dialect and is still held today. It is the predecessor of the Čakavian Assembly, the umbrella organisation, which was established a year later and the Assembly became one of its departments. The contest of young poets and reciters is held every year at the beginning of June.

## Žminj Carnival

Besides the carnival and organised parade with specially designed vehicles to the villages of Žminj and Žminjščina, the mascot of the carnival is traditionally taken to court and burned down shortly before the beginning of Lent.

## Christmas and New Year's Events

Within the framework of Christmas and New Year holidays exhibitions and concerts are held in Žminj and the culmination of the celebrations is marked by the New Year's Countdown at noon on 31st December when many visitors come to Žminj. The parish choir has traditionally been staging the Christmas concert on St. Stephen's Day for more than twenty years.

### Municipality of Žminj

- 📍 Pazinska cesta 2/G, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 250
- ☎ Fax. 00385 52 846 618
- 📧 zminj@zminj.hr
- 🌐 www.zminj.hr

### Tourist Board – Žminj

- 📍 Čakavska kuća bb (Kula), Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 792
- ☎ Fax: 00385 52 846 844
- ☎ Gsm: 00385 91 1846 251
- 📧 tzzminj@zminj.hr
- 🌐 www.tzzminj.hr

### Post Office

- 📍 9. rujna bb, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 110

### Parish Office

- ☎ 00385 52 846 318

### First Aid

- 📍 9. rujna 1, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 455

## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Dentist

- Barbara Aleksić, dr. med. dent.
- 📍 Pazinska 2/I, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 393 027

### Karmen Božin, dr. med. dent.

- 📍 Lukovica bb, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 367

### Elvis Paškola, dr. med. dent.

- 📍 9. rujna 1, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 025

### Pharmacy

- 📍 9. rujna 5, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 426

### Veterinarian

- 📍 Matka Laginje bb, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 002

## Taverns and Restaurants

### KONOBA KRČULI

- 📍 Krculi 5, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 638
- ☎ fax. 00385 52 846 596
- ☎ mob: 00385 98 323 680
- @ info@konoba-krculi.hr
- 🌐 www.konoba-krculi.hr
- 📞 Reservation needed

### POD LADONJON

- 📍 9. rujna 20, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 675

### PULI JURIČA

- 📍 Jurići 1, Žminj,
- ☎ 00385 52 846 678
- ☎ 00385 98 255757
- @ puli.jurica@pu.t-com.hr

### PULI PINETA

- 📍 Karlov vrt 1, Žminj
- ☎ +385 98 99 11 795,
- ☎ +385 91 1 846 644
- @ pulipineta@gmail.com
- 🌐 www.konoba-pulipineta.com

### ŽMINJKA

- 📍 Stara vrata 7/D, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 438

## Pizzerias

### ORHIDEJA

- 📍 9. rujna bb, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 220

### ULIKA

- 📍 Pazinska 2/I, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 476

## Agritourism

### FAMILIJA FERLIN

- 📍 Gržini 2, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 823 515
- ☎ 00385 98 913 3710

- @ neven.ferlin@inet.hr
- 🌐 www.agroturizam-ferlin.com
- 📞 Reservation needed

### PALADNJAKI

- 📍 Paladnjaki 15, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 825 088
- ☎ 00385 91 551 7112
- @ agroturizampaladnjaki@gmail.com
- 📞 Reservation needed

## Diary Shops

### MLJEKARA LATUS D.O.O.

(cheese, milk, homemade yoghurt, cream, fresh cheese)

- 📍 Orbaniči 12/D, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 52 846 215
- ☎ 00385 98 433 522
- @ latus@pu.t-com.hr
- 📞 Cheese tasting by appointment

### FAMILY OWNED FARM GALANT

(cow cheese, curd, milk)

- 📍 Krculi 1/A, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 99 8370 191

## Healthy Food

### FAMILY OWNED FARM GALANT

(donkey milk)

- 📍 Karnevali 16, Žminj
- ☎ 00385 98 453 129

## Prosciutto producers

### PRŠUTANA JELENIĆ

- ☎ 00385 91 420 4999
- ☎ 00385 91 201 3400
- @ info@istarskiprsut.hr
- 🌐 www.istarskiprsut.hr

## Pubs

- CHARLIE**, Cere 3, Cere
- DOMA**, 9. rujna 4, Žminj

**F1**, Matka Laginje 19-0, Žminj  
**GIMINO**, Pazinska 2/H, Žminj  
**MERIKANE**, Modrušani 1/G, Žminj  
**MIRACOLO**, 9. rujna 3, Žminj  
**MONTE**, Industrijska zona, Žminj  
**THE BAR**, Pazinska 1/C, Žminj  
**ZEC**, 9. rujna bb, Žminj  
**ŽMINJ**, Pazinska cesta 2/G, Žminj

☎ 00385 99 5151 802

## Auto Service

**A. S. ZEC**, Zeci 8, Cere  
**ETRADEX AUTOCENTAR ŽMINJ**,  
Karlov vrt 4, Žminj  
**GALANT ELVIS**, Sv. Foška 1, Žminj  
**ISTRAPNEUS**, Matka Laginje bb, Žminj  
**PETEĦ**, Pucići Dolenji 19/A, Žminj

## Pastry Shop

### ERMAN

(cakes, pastry, ice creams)

📍 Industrijska ulica 6, Žminj

☎ 00385 52 846 401

## Banks

**ERSTE**, 9. rujna bb, Žminj  
**OTP BANKA**, Pazinska cesta bb, Žminj  
**IKB**, Pazinska cesta bb, Žminj

## Tow Service

### ETRADEX AUTOCENTAR ŽMINJ

☎ Karlov vrt 4, Žminj

☎ 00385 98 255 119

### GALANT ELVIS

📍 Sv. Foška 1, Žminj

☎ 00385 98 435 155

## Car Wash

**ISTRAPNEUS**, Matka Laginje bb, Žminj

## Tourist Agencies

### ITA D.O.O.

authorised representative of I.D.  
RIVATOURS, Branch Office)

📍 Matka Laginje 2/J, Žminj

☎ 00385 52 846 694

@ zminj@idriva.com

### NOVA SOL TURISTIČKA AGENCIJA D.O.O.

Poslovnica Žminj

📍 Industrijska ulica 6, Žminj

## Hairdressers Shops

**GOGA**, Pazinska cesta 2/F, Žminj  
**INGRID**, Pazinska cesta 2/H, Žminj  
**IRENA**, 1. maja 15, Žminj  
**JASNA**, Trg maršala Tita 9, Žminj  
**NELA**, Lukovica 23, Žminj

## Rent a car

### ETRADEX AUTOCENTAR ŽMINJ

📍 Karlov vrt 4, Žminj

## Beauty/Massage parlours

**DANIELA**, Pazinska cesta 1/B, Žminj  
**GREJS MASAŽA**, Pazinska 2/I, Žminj  
**THINK PINK**, Pazinska 2/I, Žminj



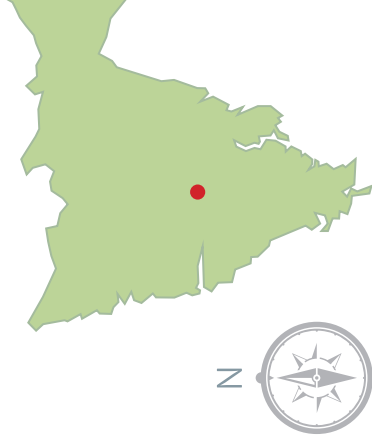
### ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

There are approximately 150 accommodation facilities in the Žminj area (vacation houses, apartments and rooms). Information regarding accommodation may be found at: [www.tzzminj.hr](http://www.tzzminj.hr)

## LEGEND

- |          |                                   |           |                          |
|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Church of St. Michael             | <b>9</b>  | Canon's House            |
| <b>2</b> | Church of St. Anthony             | <b>10</b> | Pharmacy                 |
| <b>3</b> | Tower of Žminj                    | <b>11</b> | Surgery                  |
| <b>4</b> | Čakavian House                    | <b>12</b> | Calvary                  |
| <b>5</b> | Church of the Holy Trinity        | <b>13</b> | Church of the Holy Cross |
| <b>6</b> | Church of St. Bartholomew         | <b>14</b> | Tourist Board            |
| <b>7</b> | Primary School of Vladimir Gortan |           |                          |
| <b>8</b> | Old Croatian Cemetery             |           |                          |

# Map of Žminj





7

8

11

10

13

14

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Pazin ←

→ Pula



## Impressum

**Author:** Elvis Orbanić; **Editor in Chief:** Lenka Šajina;  
**Editorial Board:** Miranda Damijanić Roce, Klara Dujmović, Nada Galant, Milica Kranjčić, Marko Križman, Kristina Mijandrušić Ladavac, Branko Orbanić, Jordan Rovis, Vilma Zohil; **Layout:** Neven Udovičić; **Photographs:** Arheološki muzej Istre, Arhiv župe, Tina Erman, Karin Milotić, Dorijano Orbanić, Nela Peteh, Augustin Ravnić, Neven Udovičić, TZ Žminj; **Language Editor:** Orijana Paus; **Translation:** Mauro Dujmović; **Publisher:** Santinini d.o.o.

Žminj, 2015.

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ISBN 978-953-58636-1-8



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