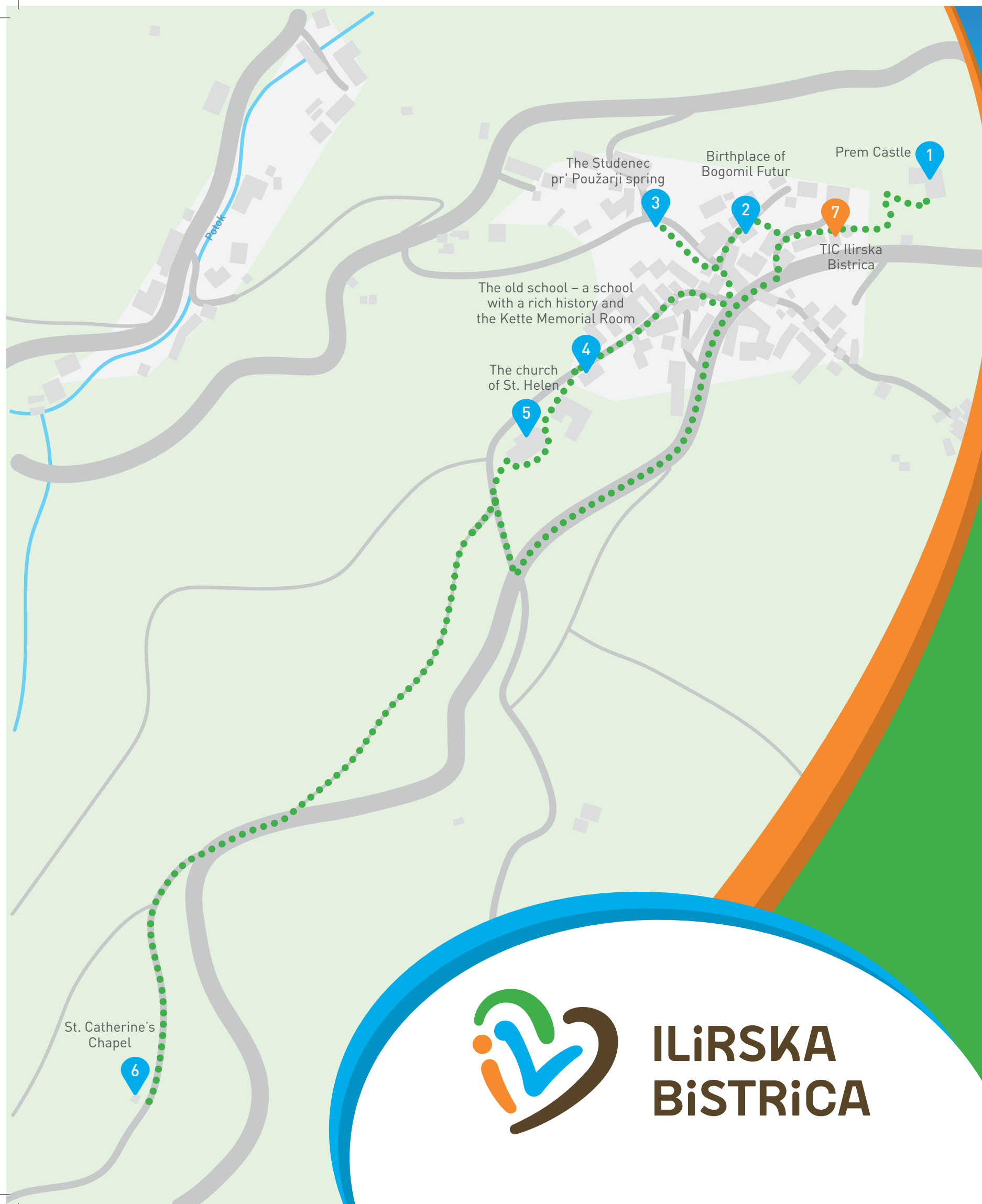




PREM, RICH IN HISTORY AND CULTURE: THE PREM CIRCULAR TRAIL

Take a walk through Prem and
uncover the treasures of its past.

The picturesque village of Prem in the Brkini hills, first mentioned in written sources in 1213, is a treasure trove of history and culture. It rises above the river Reka, which later becomes Slovenia's largest subterranean river after it disappears underground at Škocjan. One end of the village is marked by the castle, and the other by the church of St. Helen. The village also includes the hamlets of Preska and Potok. As you walk through it, you'll discover traces of local and Slovenian history at every step, as well as stories that reach beyond Slovenia's borders. Various important people were born and lived in Prem. In addition to the noble families of Devin, Walsee and Porcia, we can mention the politician and lawyer Karel Lavrič, the poets Dragotin Kette and Bogomil Fatur, and the mountaineer Bojan Počkar. The priest and poet Vili Stegu was born in the hamlet of Potok, on the banks of the river Reka, while the poet Ivo Grahor was born in the neighbouring village of Bitnja. The first church to be painted in the Primorska region by the artist Tone Kralj was St. Helen's in Prem. His paintings were a unique way of marking the Slovenian ethnic territory under fascism. In addition to the cultural sights, you can enjoy views of the typical Brkini terraces and the Reka valley, as well as the faraway peaks of Snežnik and Učka.



**ILIRSKA
BiSTRICA**

1 Prem Castle – an eloquent witness to a rich past

There are a number of old castles to admire in the municipality of Ilirska Bistrica, but Prem Castle stands out among them – the most beautiful, best preserved and most eloquent testimony to the area's rich past. It was built in the Middle Ages, probably at the end of the 12th century, by Volžak II of Devin, who like Udo de Prem, is mentioned in a document from 1213. This is also the first known document mentioning the village of Prem, and the castle is mentioned directly in written sources for the first time in 1366. The castle has had various owners and administrators who have influenced its rich architectural history. Get to know this history by visiting the castle, which is also the venue for events, such as concerts, temporary exhibitions, children's workshops, weddings and more.

Karel Lavrič, a Slovenian lawyer and politician, was born in the castle in 1818. His father was Matevž Lavrič, a district commissioner and judge. Karel advocated linguistic equality, a united Slovenia and a federalist Austro-Hungarian system. He died in 1876 and is buried in Gorizia (Italy). A plaque in his honour has been installed at Prem Castle.



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2 Birthplace of Bogomil Fatur (1914–1990), poet of rebellion, patriotism and love

A commemorative plaque marks the birthplace of the poet, essayist and translator Bogomil Fatur, who was born in Prem in 1914. His poems, imbued with rebellion, patriotism and love, resonated far. In 1975 he received the Prešeren Fund Prize for his fourth poetry collection – *Minuta tišine* (A Minute of Silence). Fatur was also an outstanding translator and essayist who enriched Slovenian culture with valuable translations of foreign literature including *The Marriage of Figaro*.



3 The Studenec pr' Použarji spring – an example of a former source of drinking water

In the past, before the water supply system was constructed, the people of the Brkini hills protected springs by placing stones around them, constructing wells and, even most interestingly, covering water sources that never ran dry with dry-stone vaults. In addition to the *pr Použarji* spring in Preska, there is also the *pr Belaji* spring and the *na Lazah* water source in Prem. There is a trough next to the spring by the road that leads up from Potok to Prem. In order to keep the water as clean as possible, the locals built walls around the springs. They piled up stones around the spring without using mortar. A rectangular basin was dug next to the spring, and the walls and vaulted ceiling were built using local stone (without any mortar) to keep the water fresh, prevent it from evaporating and also to prevent animals from polluting it. Although they no longer serve their original purpose, the springs are still extremely important as they have evolved into habitats for aquatic and water-dependent animals. They are also important items of cultural heritage, as they bear witness to the interactions between people and the environment in the past. The locals also created ponds (known as *kal* or *lokev*) for providing animals with water. Many were later filled in. Did you know that water sources are not inexhaustible? That's why we need to use water sparingly and responsibly. By reducing water consumption, we indirectly reduce electricity consumption, helping to mitigate climate change and preserve the environment.



4 The old school – a school with a rich history and the Kette Memorial Room

Schools are places of knowledge, growth and connection. The primary school in Prem was founded in 1826, as the third rural school (known as *trivialka*) in the region of Ilirska Bistrica, the first one having been founded in Trnovo in 1814. It was the initiative of the priest serving in Prem at the time, Peter Aleš, who also created a tree nursery next to the school. At the end of the 19th century, the school was adapted to its present form, with two classrooms on the upper ground floor, a teacher's flat on the first floor, and the tree nursery was converted into the school garden. The school is especially known as the building in which the poet of the Slovenian modernist movement Dragotin Kette was born in 1876 to the teacher Filip Ket(t)le. Since 1968, a **memorial room** has been dedicated to him on the lower ground floor, and since 2006 a marked **literary route known as the Kette Trail** connects Prem and Trnovo (Ilirska Bistrica). In addition to Filip Ket(t)le, various other important figures taught at the school, such as the fruit grower Matija Rant and the writer Josip Kostanjevec. The bustle of school life stopped for good in 1977, but the former classrooms now house the permanent exhibition entitled *The Hustle and Bustle of School in the Ilirska Bistrica Region*, which portrays the history of primary education from the 19th century to the present day.



Listen to an excerpt from Kette's fairy story *The Seamstress and the Scissors*
QR code:
www.ilirska-bistrica.si/objava/970936



6 St. Catherine's Chapel

The church of St. Catherine once stood on the field path that leads from Prem towards the village of Čelje. It was built in the 17th century and belonged first to the vicariate of Prem (founded in the Middle Ages by the Lords of Prem) and later to the parish of Prem. The 1783 census of churches and chapels in the Duchy of Carniola no longer mentions it. In its place now stands a chapel that is also dedicated to St. Catherine. Despite its modest size, it offers a peaceful haven and invites us to take a moment for silence and reflection.



5 The church of St. Helen – the first church painted by Tone Kralj in the Primorska region

The church of St. Helen was first mentioned in written sources in 1498. A new Baroque church was built on the same site in the 17th century. Shortly after the parish of Prem was founded in 1862, the present pseudo-Romanesque church was built in 1869 thanks to the efforts of the priest Matej Frelj. In 1921, the church was partly painted by the Italian painter F. Furlani. In the same year, the parish priest Ignacij Žgajnar invited Tone Kralj (who he knew as they both came from the region of Dolenjska) to complete the painting of the church's interior. On the walls behind the main altar, Kralj (1900–1975) painted two angels with swords to accompany the painting of St. Helen (the work of P. Künl from 1856). On the side walls of the nave he painted the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary and the patrons of the Slavic peoples, Saints Cyril and Methodius, and on the choir loft King David and St. Cecilia. The cemetery located next to the church includes a memorial to those who died in the National Liberation Struggle and the hostages killed on 4 June 1942.



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Rules of conduct on the Prem circular trail

- Walk only on the marked trail.
- Do not damage cultural monuments. Follow the instructions of the owner or manager of the cultural site.
- Do not damage vegetation, trees, shrubs, or flowers by picking blossoms or leaves, or breaking branches, and do not dig up or pull out plants.
- Do not drop litter. Take your rubbish with you. Where public bins are available, use them. Make sure to separate waste correctly.
- Do not light fires. Do not throw cigarette butts on the ground.
- To ensure that you and other visitors enjoy the Kette Trail, avoid making noise.
- Your four-legged friend is welcome on the trail, but regardless of size, it must be kept on a lead. Please clean up after it.

Walking or cycling to Prem

Literary Route of Dragotin Kette: Literary Route of Dragotin Kette is a literary route dedicated to the poet and writer Dragotin Kette (1876–1899), a representative of the Slovenian modernist movement. It runs between Prem (Kette's birthplace) and Trnovo (now part of the town of Ilirska Bistrica) where the poet spent many of his holidays. It is intended for all who seek inspiration for achieving life goals and who love literature, heritage, nature, outdoor activities and local cuisine. Every year, on the 8th of February (Slovenian Culture Day) a Kette Memorial Hike is organised.



More on the Literary Route of Dragotin Kette
QR code:
www.ilirska-bistrica.si/objava/967469

Cycling in the Brkini hills: The cycling route connecting Prem with Pregarje, Harije and Ilirska Bistrica offers countless views of Snežnik, Nanos and the Brkini hills, as well as Slavník, Žabnik, the Čičarija region and Mt. Učka. The extremely varied landscape ensures that we don't get bored, while the climbs are not too long and don't leave us completely out of breath.



More on the cycling route
QR code:
www.ridewithgps.com/routes/52507788



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