

RELIGIOUS TOURISM MONASTERIES OF ČAČAK AREA



ТУРИСТИЧКА
ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА
ЧАЧКА

THE CHURCH OF ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

The Church of Ascension of Jesus Christ, a recognisable symbol of the city, was built in the period between 1180 and 1190 as the endowment of Prince Stracimir, brother of the Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja. The church was originally a monastery dedicated to Holy Mother of God in Gradac, which had a prominent place in the hierarchy of the medieval monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church and enjoyed the status of a Royal Monastery, together with other important monasteries such as Studenica, Tracts of Saint Gorge and the Hilandar.

During the Ottoman rule in Serbia, the church was partly destroyed on several occasions and converted into a mosque, but every time it was restored as the Orthodox temple by the Serbian people. Due to this, the structure of the ancient temple underwent a series of changes and the original medieval frescoes have not been preserved.

The two church bells from 1454 were uncovered during the excavation of foundations for the Prefecture building in 1875 have been preserved and are today part of the permanent exposition of the National Museum in Čačak. The Museum also treasures the preserved artefacts and hand-written manuscripts from the treasury of the church.





MONASTERIES OF THE OVČAR KABLAR GORGE

The Ovčar Kablar Gorge is an area of outstanding natural beauty, well-known for its monasteries clustered together on a small area of land. Owing to the centuries long existence they are a unique feature of our cultural and artistic heritage. The monasteries of Sretenje, Sv. Trojica, Vavedenje, Vaznesenje and Preobrazenje are on the slopes of the Ovčar mountain, while the monasteries of Jovanje, Uspenje, Nikolje, Blagovestenje and Church of St. Elijah - Ilinje are located on the slopes of Kablar. There are two more sacred places with chapels, the Church of Saint Sava and Kadjenica.

By marked walking paths, through very beautiful countryside you can reach monasteries where you will find spiritual peace and enjoy the view of the nature, wooded mountains, as well as the river West Morava.

SRETENJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO THE VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN)

The Monastery was raised on the hilltop of Mount Ovčar, in an exceptional natural environment. According to the research work done so far, it is believed that the Monastery was raised in XVI century, when it was mentioned for the first time. However, the first written mention of the monastery moves the time of its erection back by a few decades, even a century. The monastery was burnt down and ruined on several occasions in the past. It was restored thanks to the monk named Nikifor Maksimović, who later became the Bishop.

The Monastery has the iconostasis made of stone, the only one among all Ovcar Kablar monasteries. The monastery treasures several manuscripts, a marble baptistery and rosette from XVII century, as well as the icon of Holy Mother of God, from the XVIII century.





SVETA TROJICA MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO THE HOLY TRINITY)

The Church of Sv Trojica Monastery is the most beautiful church in the Ovčar Kablar Gorge, situated on the south- west forested slopes of Mount Ovčar. The monastery was raised in the second half of the XVI century. The Church of Sv Trojica Monastery is a single- nave building with rectangular chancels and a dome above the central area. The beauty of the monastery church is a testimony to a great skill of masters and their sense of beauty and excellence in architecture despite difficult times in which it was built.

The monastery contains a big cross embroidered with gold and decorative silver of a great artistic value.



BLAGOVEŠTENJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO HOLY ANNUNCIATION)

The Blagoveštenje Monastery is situated on a hilltop of Mount Kablar, above Ovčar Banja Spa. It is one of the very few monasteries in the gorge with a known time of construction and known founders. The inscription over the entrance to the church shows that the church was raised in 1601/02. The church was built in Raška-style in architecture and it is one of the most beautiful monasteries in the Ovčar Kablar Gorge, surpassed only by Sveta Trojica. Monastery of Blagoveštenje contains one of the most significant iconostasis in Serbian art dating back to the first half of the XVII century, dominating with its exceptionally designed engravings and painted decorations in representative church interior. Blagoveštenje frescoes, including representations of St. Gorge and Prince Lazar in the nartex, are ranked among the highest achievements in Serbian fresco painting of the first half of XVII century.



NIKOLJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO SAINT NICHOLAS)

The Nikolje Monastery was erected on the slopes of Mount Kablar, on the left bank of the river Zapadna Morava. By architecture features, it supposedly dates back to the Middle Ages. The monastery contains the icons depicting Great Holidays, a few scenes from the cycle Sufferings of Christ and Other Saints. The architecture of Nikolje monastery is modest, however this is the only monastery in the gorge whose architecture has remained preserved since the Medieval times (this makes it even more important and precious).



SAVINJE- ST SAVA CHURCH

The Savinje chapel (right) is situated on the steep cliffs of Kablar, in a stone recess with a water spring. It is dedicated to St.Sava, and it was built in 1938. It is a square chapel among the rock cliffs. The chapel is uninhabited. The iconostasis was made in 1965. by Mladimir Todorovic, a theology professor.



THE CHURCH OF SAINT ELIAH

The Church of Saint Eliah is situated on a beautiful, picturesque and wooded hillside above the Blagoveštenje Monastery. Being in the immediate vicinity of Blagoveštenje Monastery, it is believed that the church was built by the monks, as their metoh (a small church and land around it). It was built in 1938. on the site of the old monastery.



KADJENICA

The Kadjenica cave is situated on the right bank of the river Morava, upstream from Ovčar Banja. Two stone sarcophaguses and a Crucifixion are a testimony of a tragical event that took place here in 1815. when large number of Serbian refugees were killed by the Ottoman Turks, who closed the mouth of the cave with straw and wood, setting it to fire, so that all the people inside the cave choked from kad (smoke). Since that time the place has been called Kadjenica.

JOVANJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO ST. JOHN)

The Jovanje Monastery is situated on the left bank of the river West Morava, on its biggest meander. It was dedicated to the birth of St. John, the Baptist. Judging by the style in architecture it was supposedly erected in the XVI century. The beauty of the church, the size and the ruins of a number of guest houses around the monastery church are a testimony to a large community of monks in the monastery. Thanks to Archbishop Nikolaj Velimirović, life was brought back to the monastery and in 1936, twelve nuns from Kalište Monastery moved here. That is how the Jovanje Monastery became the first women's monastery in the Ovčar Kablar Gorge. The most valuable objects in the treasury are two icons dating from 1850.





USPENJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO THE HOLY ASSUMPTION)

The Uspenje Monastery was erected above the Jovanje Monastery and can be seen from all sides of the gorge. The first mention of it was in Turkish records in 1536. When Vuk Karadžić visited the monastery in 1820, he wrote about the remains of a round tower located on a raised land and the tradition relating to this object: *“Several monasteries on the hill have the walls of a kind of tower, which is now called Gradina and it is said that Jovanje Monastery used to be a laura, from where other monasteries around Mounts Ovčar and Kablar received orders and judgments and used to have a bell on the tower (where books were written) and a ceiling under the copying room”.*

At the end of XX century, the church was completely rebuilt and although it has never been fresco painted, a new iconostasis has been made.

PREOBRAŽENJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST)

The Monastery of Preobraženje today is situated on the right bank of River West Morava, on the north hill-sides of Mount Ovčar. The old Monastery used to be at the site of present-day railway station in Ovčar Banja, beneath the high and steep cliffs of Mount Kablar. The first written records of the monastery date back to 1525. The old Preobraženje Monastery was pulled down for the purpose of the construction of the railroad to Užice. Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović took an initiative to erect a new Preobraženje Monastery in 1938. Today, the monastery is a building with a square ground plan and low altar apse. The Monastery is not allowed to have any property or a parish, according to the rules of the Holy Mount and has a missionary role.



VAZNESENJE MONASTERY (DEDICATED TO ASCENSION OF THE LORD)

The Monastery of Vaznesenje was erected on the north slopes of Mount Ovčar and because of its location in the gorge, it can be hardly seen by travellers who are passing by. Supposedly, the monastery was erected on the old site, but there is no evidence of that. Due to Gospel Manuscript written at the Monastery of Vaznesenje in 1570, we are sure that the monastery existed in the XVI century. The monastery church is a single-nave building with a low dome and semi circular altar apse. Two marble rosettes with plants ornamentations, have been preserved in the nartex and central church area. The iconostasis of the monastery church contains the icons of small size, because of the small size of the church.





VAVEDENJE – MONASTERY OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY AT THE TEMPLE

The Vavedenje monastery is situated at the entrance of Ovcar-Kablar gorge, on the right bank of the river Morava, next to the Čacak-Užice road. Based on the style, it is supposed that it was built in 16th century. It was probably ruined and deserted in 1690, and renewed in 1797. The monastery is a single-nave building, without a dome and with a semi-circle altar apse. The church is not painted. The present iconostasis is from 1972.



STJENIK MONASTERY

The popular tradition dates the construction of the Stjenik Monastery to the period preceding the battle of Marica in 1371, as the endowment of the Mrnjačević brothers. The first preserved mention of the monastery dates back to 1710, when it was dedicated to the birth of Mother of God. After it had been destroyed and deserted, it was rebuilt in 1802, when it was dedicated to the birth of Saint John the Baptist.

Not far from the monastery is a source of a river, believed to have healing powers.



CHURCH IN TRNAVA

In the village of Trnava, at the source of the river with the same name, on the slopes of the Jelica mountain lies a temple dedicated to the Feast of Annunciation. The church was built on the foundations of a medieval monastery, believed to have been built by the members of the Nemanjić dynasty.

This temple has a great historical significance, as the venue of the 1814 Hadži Prodan Rising, in which the monks took an active part.

JEŽEVICA MONASTERY

The Monastery of Ježevica is located in the village of the same name, at the foot of the Jelica mountain. According to the popular tradition, the monastery is the endowment of ban Milutin and his wife Ikonija, was built in XIV century. The first historic mention of the Ježevica Monastery dates back to 1476. It is supposed that the monastery was later destroyed, and the new church was built on the foundations of the former building, in around 1600.

The church of the Ježevica monastery is a single-nave structure, with the base in the form of an inscribed cross. The choir space is rectangular in form, while the altar apse has a semi-circular, arched shape.

The altar space was decorated with icons in 1609, while the naos and the narthex were decorated in 1636. The iconostasis dates back to the first half of XIX century.

The present-day narthex and the belfry were erected (added to the original structure) in the period 1853-1854.





MONASTERY OF VUJAN

The Monastery of Vujan is located on a wooded slope of the Vujan mountain, in the village of Prislonica. The present-day church, dedicated to Holy Archangel Michael, was built in 1805 by Nikola Milićević, merchant from the nearby village of Lunjevica.

The church is a domeless, single-nave structure, with a semi-circular altar apse. A belfry of asymmetrical proportions is built above the narthex, while the front part is in the form of a wooden porch.

The original frescoes, painted in the period 1805-1808 have not been preserved, and the church was restored in the period between 1939 and 1943, when the new composition of frescoes was made.

Inside the temple is the relic of the unknown monk, the 'Patron of Vujan'. A famous hero from the First and Second Serbian Rising Lazar Mutap was buried in the monastery as well as the founder of the monastery Nikola Milićević Lunjevica.



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