



# City of Varaždin

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The pearl of north Croatia

# History of Varaždin



## *The first mention of the City of Varaždin*

In historical sources, the oldest information about Varaždin can be found under the name of Guarestin in the charter of King Bela III. issued in the year 1181.

The city came into being as a settlement of craftsmen and merchants at the crossroads of old Roman roads, on the route of today's Optujska, Končareva, Vrazova, Zagrebačka, Braće Radića, Franjevački trg and Kukuljevićeva streets

## *Charta von 1209*

During his imprisonment near Varaždin, Andrija II, a pretender to the Croatian-Hungarian throne, was helped by the residents of Varaždin

When he took power, he repaid the hospitality of the residents of Varaždin by issuing them a charter in 1209, granting them the rights of a royal and free city

This makes Varaždin the first city in mainland Croatia where citizens elect their own “Richtar” (judge) and do not have to pay taxes

The document is now kept in the historical archive

# Capital City



Varaždin was the Croatian capital between 1767. and 1776.

Since 1756. Varaždin has been the seat of the Ban Franjo Nadasdy and gathers the entire political, economic and cultural elite of the Kingdom of Croatia

In 1767. Queen Maria Theresa established the Croatian Royal Council and specifically made Varaždin its seat making it the capital of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia

In a very short time, the image of Varaždin changed and in the city of craftsmen and merchants noble houses were built day by



## *Fire in 1776.*

Because of tobacco,  
Varaždin lost its status  
as the capital

On April 25, 1776. the  
fire broke out due to  
the carelessness of a  
boy from the Varaždin  
area

All the houses outside the city walls caught fire , and the wind-borne flames soon engulfed the city within the walls as well

Gunpowder was hidden in the basement of a trading house, which exploded with a powerful detonation, causing even greater panic among the citizens

The fire was not extinguished until the third day

Almost 80% of the houses and buildings disappeared in the fire

The counts, the royal council, parliament, the nobility and many citizens and craftsmen left the city at that time

# Geographic position



The city of Varaždin is located in the northwestern part of Croatia, on the right bank of the river Drava

The baroque city of Varaždin is the center of Varaždin County

The height of the city above sea level varies from 169 to 173 meters



The average annual temperature is  $10^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the average humidity is 78%

Varaždin has around 44,000 inhabitants and is the cultural, educational, economic, sporting and tourist center of north-west Croatia

The city received the award “Zeleni cvijet” (Green Flower) eleven times as the most well-groomed city in continental Croatia

# Symbols of the city



## *The coat of arms*

*The coat of arms of the city is one of the oldest in Europe*

*In 1464. King Matthias Corvinus issued a diploma in which he praised the loyalty of the citizens and allowed them to continue using the coat of arms that had been used from time immemorial*

*The city may also have a city seal with the coat of arms made of silver or another metal*

*The coat of arms remained unchanged until 1934 .*

*After the Second World War, the angel disappeared, which "flew to" again in 1990.*

*There is a tower in the coat of arms, of which one does not know whether it is a tower of the Old Castle or perhaps a city tower*

*The background is formed by alternating red and white horizontal bars, which are also the basis for the Varaždin flag: 4 red and 3 white stripes*

*The coat of arms can be found on the City hall, on the churches...*

*It is one of the symbols of the city*

## *The Baroque*



Varaždin is known as the Croatian Baroque residence

Such perception of the city of Varaždin is only partially correct, because the gothic tower of the Old Castle, gothic fragments at the church of St. Nicholas, renaissance gallery arches in the Old Castle, renaissance arches in the Mrazović and Drašković palaces, the rococo Patačić palace, numerous classicist buildings, many Art Nouveau buildings and modern architecture "transform" Varaždin into a city of harmonious composition of styles, but undoubtedly based on medieval foundations

The prevailing Baroque style in the city is a result of the fire that broke out in the second half of the 18th century, when a late-Baroque city, which was modern by the standards of the time, was built on the site of the fire in medieval Varaždin

## *City of bikes, flowers and green spaces*



The bicycle is the basic means of transport for the people of Varaždin. Their exact number is unknown, but estimates speak of 22,000 bicycles, which means that there is one bicycle for every 2.3 inhabitants. Therefore, it should not surprise you if in the middle of winter you see a whole family happily cycling along the streets of Varaždin, because the cycling season in Varaždin lasts all year round.

Varaždin cultivates cycling

The Drava Forest Park and Lake Varaždin are ideal for cycling



Thanks to tradition, but also thanks to the efforts of the city's Tourist Board, Varaždin is a huge bouquet of flowers in full bloom from April to October

Magnificent flower cascades blossom on balconies and windows

Every year since 2001, the city has been awarded as the most well-kept city in continental Croatia

The city also received numerous other awards for the city's horticultural design



Numerous well-kept and beautifully designed green areas, walking paths, parks, flower beds and flower sculptures give the city a special flair, but were and are also a symbol of the quality of life that is typical for this area



## *Varaždin Citizen Guard "Purgari"*

As befits the first Croatian residence, the Varaždin Citizen Guard has been watching over Varaždin for two and a half centuries, which received its first known statute in 1750. from the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa

It is an honor to belong to the Varaždin Citizen Guard  
Only a native, honorable, blameless Varaždiner can become its member  
Dressed in blue grenadier uniforms and tall fur hats,  
“Purgari” are a part of many secular and ecclesiastical events  
However, they are most attractive in the ceremony of changing the city  
guard, which takes place every Saturday in front of the Varaždin City  
Hall

The Citizens' Guard has their orchestra and their flag  
The flag "godparents" were respected persons from the ranks of the high  
nobility or the ruling family  
Time of the event: From 15.5. until 15.10. The changing of the guard takes  
place every Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in front of the City  
Hall

# Historical core



Varaždin differs from other cities in its exceptional monumental and artistic heritage and in the best preserved and richest Baroque urbanity unit

In addition to the Old Castle, there are many palaces, buildings of various public institutions, valuable houses and villas from the Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, Secession and one of the oldest European City halls in a relatively small area

The richness of the sacral heritage will tell you one more story about Varaždin as the city of bells, but also about the people who built this city over the centuries

And the angels on altars, walls and paintings will thank you with their kindness for every look you give them



## *The City Hall*

Varaždin City Hall is located in the city center, on King Tomislav Square (“Korzo”)

With its rich history and events, Varaždin City Hall is one of the most recognizable symbols of the city of Varaždin (along with the popular Varaždin Old Castle)

Although the appearance of the City hall itself has changed throughout history, data indicates that it is one of the oldest town halls in Europe

The leaders of the city of Varaždin, including the mayor, have presided over this unique "stone house" for about 500 years

The current appearance of the City hall is due to many architects and master masons who have changed the exterior and interior of the Cityhall several times throughout history

You will easily recognize Varaždin City Hall as it is located in the central part of the main square and can be recognized by its beautiful tower that rises in the middle of the building

In the lower part of the town hall there is a large door, above which there is a recognizable balcony

Above the balcony is the coat of arms of the city of Varaždin, confirmed by Matthias Corvinus in 1464.

On the tower itself there is a large clock, on which residents and visitors of Varaždin can always find out what time it is

The City Hall's windows are adorned with beautiful arches that complement the striking appearance of the City Hall's exterior



## *The Old Castle*

Varaždin Feudal Fortress, which has always been called the Old Castle/"Stari Grad", is the most important historical building in Varaždin

It was the center of aristocratic estates, property and legal separate from the free royal city of Varaždin  
Die heutige Festung wurde in der Zeit vom 14 bis zu den 19 Jh. Gebaut

The central castle is the oldest part of the fortress  
Bänke und Four-poster beds on the ground floor are the most beautiful examples of profane Gothic sculpture in the north of Croatia.

During the wars with the Turks in the 16th century, it became a Renaissance one

In the past it was owned by many important noble families - the counts of Cilli, Ivan Ungnad, Juraj Brandenburg and the Croatian ban Toma Erdödy and his heirs

In 1925. it became property of the city of Varaždin

The Varaždin City Museum was opened in the old castle (Stari grad) in 1925. to celebrate the anniversary of the Kingdom of Croatia

The museum houses the collections of the oldest cultural history department, many of which are currently exhibited in period rooms

The most valuable are the collections of guild items, furniture, historical portraits, weapons, paintings, clocks, objects made of porcelain and glass, among many other objects from the everyday life of Varaždin nobility and rich citizens, which visitors can still see in about 40 museum rooms

The collections from the estate of two famous Varaždiners are particularly valuable: the politician and writer Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski and the linguist Vatroslav Jagić

## *The Castle with Chain Bridge*

Also known as the "Watchtower" ('Kula stražarnica'), it was built in the second half of the 16th century in Renaissance style

It has been preserved in its entirety as the remainder of the feudal fortress' protective structure

In the original function for which it was built, it served as accommodation for soldiers and as a residence for the captain of the fortress





## *Cathedral*

The church was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and forms the middle part of the Jesuit complex, which also includes a high school and a seminary

The entire complex was built in the 17th century

The master builder was Juraj Matoti and construction work started in 1642 .and was completed in 1656.

The church got its final look in the 18th century  
Since 1997. it has been the cathedral church of the newly founded diocese  
of Varaždin

The Baroque Music Festival, better known as the Varaždin Baroque  
Evenings, is traditionally held in the cathedral

The monastery was built next to the cathedral  
Today the Faculty of Organization and Informatics  
is housed in it

The Jesuits completed their complex with the construction of the  
gymnasium building

The Episcopal ordinary is now housed in this building

The Gymnasium began its work in 1636.

It is the third oldest high school in Croatia after Rijeka and Zagreb  
The Gymnasium has become one of the symbols of the city over the  
centuries



## *Croatian National Theater Varaždin*

Croatian National  
Theater Varaždin  
is one of 5  
Croatian national  
theaters and is  
located in the city  
of Varaždin



Croatian National Theater Varaždin is a contemporary national drama theater whose repertoire consists mainly of classical and Central European dramas

It is known for its performances in the Croatian Kajkavian dialect  
Apart from dramas, the theater has a wide range of performances, including many experimental plays

Croatian National Theater Varaždin gathers many famous young actors who also appear in TV, films and shows, as well as renowned Croatian directors

The theater also has its own children's and puppet theater



## *The Varaždin cemetery*

The Varaždin Cemetery is very different from other cemeteries, thanks to the visionary spirit of Hermann Haller

It is not only the resting place of the dead, but also an exceptional example of park architecture and a natural monument

For visitors it is a place of relaxation in the composition of birch trees, flowers, lawn and the slender cypress trees in the gentle play of light and shade...

The Varaždin Cemetery was laid out in 1773.

In 1905, Hermann Haller began to refurbish it and planted around 7,000 cypresses, maples, ash trees, beech trees, magnolias and birches

By pruning the cypresses into geometric shapes, the cemetery acquired characteristics of a French park

One of the most valuable monuments in the Varaždin Cemetery is the "Angel of Death", a work by the sculptor Robert Frangeš Mihanović, which symbolically depicts the farewell of the living to the dead

Among other things, the visitor should visit Vatroslav Jagić's tomb monument, which is decorated with fresh flowers every

# City of students and entrepreneurs

There are 3 faculties in the city of Varaždin, the University of the North and the Student Center with a modern student dormitory and a restaurant

## Faculties:

Faculty of Organization and Informatics

Faculty of Geotechnics

Faculty of Textile Technology

## The most famous companies in Varaždin are:

„Vindija“, „TP Varaždin“, „Gumiimpex“, „Solvis“, „Gp Zagorje-Tehnobeton“, „Kostwein“, „Varteks“, „MIV“, „Colas“ und „Cotra“

# Most famous events in Varaždin

squares and streets in Varaždin are full of activities all year round:

The Trade Fair – April

Festival of Varaždin Courts – June

Summer in Varaždin - June – August

Špancirfest – August - 10 days

Varaždin Baroque Evenings – September – October

International Flower Show “Baroque, Music, Flowers”-September

Advent in Varaždin – November - January



## *Varaždin Baroque Evenings*

Baroque Evenings in  
Varaždin is the most  
important music and  
stage event in central  
Croatia, established in  
1971.

Today, as a specialized  
two-week music  
festival, it is one of the  
most important  
festivals of its kind in  
the world



The festival is of great importance for Croatian Baroque musical heritage as it promotes research, performance and preservation of Croatian Baroque works for domestic and foreign artists, who often perform together as part of the festival

Every year the festival has a partner country



Varaždin  
Baroque  
Evenings are  
mainly held in  
churches and  
palaces in  
September, but  
not only in  
Varaždin - the  
festival has  
crossed the city  
limits since its  
first three-day  
edition



## *Špancirfest*

In the two decades of its existence, Špancirfest has grown into a unique cultural and tourist event and, to top it off, it has been named the top Croatian event



The idea of Špancifest is to give space to offers that during the ten days of the festival will awaken in every visitor a sense of belonging to a community that cultivates creative thinking and freedom of expression



It is not easy to find a common term under which to summarize all the program items of Špancirfest: street performances, comedy, a park of creative, a range of music programs from established names in the music scene to lesser-known street musicians, a gastro & Fun Zone, presentations of traditional craftsmanship and modern product designs...

All the terms are just too narrow to unite what the Špancirfest gives its visitors in the historic center of Varaždin

*Thank you very much for your  
attention!*