

Solkan

Solkan is a suburb of the town of Nova Gorica, close to the border with Italy. It's total area is only 4,14 km² and it's elevated 94,3 m above sea level. It's population in year 2002 was 3272 persons. It has a Mediterranean climate. Although it is today completely integrated into Nova Gorica, with which it forms a single urban area, it has maintained the status of a separate urban settlement, due to its history and strong local identity of its inhabitants.

Since the Middle Ages, many Friulians have lived in Solkan, but they have been now mostly assimilated. Italians lived here mostly between the late 19th and early 20th century, but after 1947 they mostly fled to Italy or assimilated to the Slovene majority. Immigrants from other regions of former Yugoslavia started settling in Solkan from early 1970s. Today, Slovenes represent around 90% of the population, the remaining 10% are mostly Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, together with smaller numbers of Italians and Albanians.

According to the survey in 1991, 91% of the population spoke Slovene as their first language. Serbo-Croatian came second with a little less than 8%. The Slovene inhabitants of Solkan speak a variant of the Karst dialect of Slovene. The Solkan variant of the dialect served as the basis for the development of the urban dialect of Nova Gorica, which emerged with the second generation of settlers of the town. The Solkan dialect has become well known throughout Slovenia since the early 1990s because the singer-songwriter Iztok Mlakar used it in the lyrics of his songs.

The culture of Solkan has been strongly influenced by the contacts with neighbouring Italian region of Friuli. The influence can be felt in the local kitchen, language, customs and traditions.

Its most prominent landmark is the Solkan Bridge, built between 1904 and 1905. It's a bridge over the Soča River on the Jesenice to Nova Gorica railway. It's 220 m long with a central arch spanning 85 m, making it the longest stone arch bridge spanning over a river and the longest stone arch railway bridge in the world.

In summer you can visit bungee jumping from another bridge, close to the Solkan Bridge and go to Kekec and Sabotion hill. There's also a church in the city center.