

# short green facts about Žalec



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Žalec municipality is located in the heart of Lower Savinja Valley. It is political, cultural and economic centre of Lower Savinja Valley region and also the centre of hop growing and beer production in Slovenia.

The municipality of Žalec covers 117.10 km<sup>2</sup> and 88 % of it are nature areas which are offering a lot of possibilities for observing fauna and flora. 23,40 % of the area are protected nature areas.

There is more and more emphasis on carbon-free forms of mobility, in which Žalec has joined the Nextbike - Kolesce system. This bike rental system enables citizens to rent ordinary or electric bicycles at seven locations in the city and its surroundings.

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Due to its location, Žalec has always been an important rest stop, which is reflected in the diversity of cultural and historical attractions found in the municipality – there are as much as 27 important historical buildings and four museums presenting history and tradition of Žalec and surrounding villages.

Landscape covered with hop fields, unique Beer fountain and Eco-museum of hop growing and brewing industry are all revealing many hop farms, facilities and hop growing customs.

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Slovenia produces nearly 2.800 tonnes of hop annually and it is currently ranked as the 4th EU`s largest hop producer (after Germany, Czech Republic and Poland), and the 6th in the world (after USA and China).

During the hop harvest, the entire above-ground mass of plants is removed from the field, and after the cones are harvested, the rest of the biomass, such as leaves and vines are left behind. They are a valuable source of organic matter and nutrients for returning to agricultural areas. However, the problem is a synthetic polypropylene twine, which is used as a support for hop plants during growth, as it remains intertwined in hop biomass after harvest and does not decompose by composting. This prevents the use of the biomass as raw material and at the same time poses an environmental problem.

The aim of the project is to replace the polypropylene twine on the hop fields with the biotwine made of renewable material polylactic acid, that can be degraded by composting to simple monomers (H<sub>2</sub>O, CO<sub>2</sub> and biomass). After the harvest hop plant biomass can be used as main ingredient of composting and afterwards used as a natural fertiliser or material to produce biodegradable products. Therefore, the agro-waste can be drastically reduced.

Lower Savinja valley will be an example of good practice for all hop-growing regions not only in EU but also across the world. The project will also benefit in socio-economic value as it can improve the green or so-called eco-tourism.



## **WATER COMMITMENT**

Water flowing from taps and water fountains in the municipality of Žalec is drinkable. Drinking water is also found at many natural springs of the surrounding hills. With the signing of water commitment tourist, culinary and other providers in Žalec municipality obliged themselves to treat Slovenian water with respect.

The water in the municipality is used rationally and sparingly, visitors and guests are offered clean drinking water in jars and bottles made of sustainable materials.

## **BIOHOP PROJECT - REPLACEMENT OF POLYPROPYLENE TWINE WITH POLYMALIC ACID BIOTWINE (NATURAL MATERIAL)**





## CYCLING TRAILS AND HOPS CYCLING

The municipality of Žalec strives to promote sustainable mobility, both among locals and visitors with the project Hops cycling and with developing cyclist-friendly routes. As a part of this road markings have been made, information boards for cyclists have been set up, rest areas and stands for bicycle repairs have been arranged.

Different cycling products have been developed, such as cycling between hop fields, the Hmeljko hops cycling trail for families and a mobile application that presents tourist attractions along the way. A cycling park for adrenaline enthusiasts, mountain trails and all other cyclist-friendly trails are being promoted with a desire to steer people towards a more sustainable way of mobility and activities.



## BUS CONNECTION FOR CYCLISTS: Žalec – Logarska Valley

Every year during the summer season, the municipality of Žalec collaborates with the Nomago company in the project »By Bus in Logarska Valley and Back« - a bus connection with the chance of bicycle transportation between Žalec and the Logarska Valley.

Bus with customized space for bicycles and cycling luggage, drives weekly to Logarska Valley and back, all who want to take a trip to the valley by bike. The bus enables people to access the Upper Savinja Valley and the Logar Valley without using their cars, thus reducing the carbon footprint of individual visitors.

