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Press Release:
PTUJ, SLOVENIA'S OLDEST TOWN,
NAMED BEST CULTURAL HERITAGE TOWN IN EUROPE 2026

(Ptuj, 11 October 2025) – We are proud to announce that Slovenia's oldest town has officially been awarded the prestigious title of Best Cultural Heritage Town in Europe 2026 at today's recognition ceremony, held at the historic Dominican Monastery in Ptuj.

A PRESTIGIOUS TITLE BY EUROPEAN BEST DESTINATIONS

The title was awarded by **European Best Destinations (EBD)**, one of Europe's leading platforms promoting travel, culture, and sustainable tourism. In partnership with over 500 tourism offices, the EDEN Network, and renowned media such as Forbes, Condé Nast, and National Geographic, EBD highlights the most exceptional and authentic destinations across Europe.

Their annual competitions attract millions of travellers and culture enthusiasts who seek out Europe's most beautiful and meaningful places to visit. EBD's labels of excellence aim to showcase the continent's rich diversity, heritage, and hidden gems.

PTUJ RANKED #1
IN THE TOP 10 CULTURAL HERITAGE TOWNS IN EUROPE FOR 2026

For 2026, Ptuj stands proudly at the top of the list, recognised for its outstanding preservation of cultural heritage, architecture, and living traditions.

With its 1,000-year-old **Ptuj castle** overlooking the **Drava River**, renowned wine-making legacy, and a vibrant calendar of festivals and cultural events, Ptuj offers a rare combination: **a town that doesn't just protect its history — it brings it to life**.

From the iconic **Kurentovanje** Carnival to the **Art Stays** contemporary art festival, the **Arsana** music festival, the **Days of Poetry and Wine**, the **Roman and Castle Games**, as well as **Advent in Ptuj**, the town pulses with cultural energy throughout the year.

Nature and culture intertwine beautifully in the surrounding vineyards, the Drava River's **cycling and water activities**, and in the rich culinary tradition showcased at events such as **Salon Sauvignon, Kitchen in Town, and Specialties of Slovenian Farms**. The town's heritage is also preserved in **Ptujska Klet, Slovenia's oldest wine cellar**, a symbol of its deep-rooted tradition, and in **Flavours of Ptuj**, culinary menus offered in select local restaurants.

Ptuj offers easy access without the crowds, warm and genuine Slovenian hospitality, boutique accommodations, and wellness experiences at Terme Ptuj – making it not just a destination, but a memorable escape.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has worked for the benefit of Ptuj, both locally and abroad. This recognition is a result of your dedication, passion, and hard work. You are the reason Ptuj has been named Europe's Best Cultural Heritage Town for 2026.

Our warm congratulations to all finalists in the Top 10:

- 2nd Place: Bruges (Belgium),
- 3rd Place: Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira (Azores, Portugal),
- as well as: Dubrovnik (Croatia), Albi (France), Florence (Italy), Český Krumlov (Czech Republic), San Gimignano (Italy), Zamość (Poland), and Toledo (Spain).

You can read the article featuring Ptuj and other top destinations in **Forbes**:

Top 10 Culturally Rich European Towns To Visit In 2026 According To New Travel Report.

LOOKING AHEAD: A BOOST FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Being named *Best Cultural Heritage Town in Europe 2026* is expected to significantly boost Ptuj's international profile, increase sustainable tourism, and attract more visitors seeking authentic, immersive travel experiences.

Independent research shows growing interest in destinations that are off-the-beaten-path, sustainable, and deeply connected to their heritage – making Ptuj the perfect choice for 2026 and beyond.

Welcome to Ptuj – where the past shapes the present.

ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

European Best Destinations evaluated hundreds of European heritage towns across Europe, including UNESCO-listed sites and other exceptional cultural centres.

A panel of travel professionals and journalists (including contributors to Forbes, Condé Nast Traveler, and National Geographic) shortlisted destinations against four key criteria:

- integrity & preservation of built heritage,
- cultural richness & seasonality (museums, festivals, programming),
- hospitality & soft mobility,
- access to nature and gastronomy without over-tourism

The final ranking was determined by votes from international travellers, making this award both expert-led and traveller-validated.

BODITE OBVEŠČENI O AKTUALNEM DOGAJANJU NA PTUJU:
Na prejemanje mesečnega e-novičnika se lahko prijavite tukaj.

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