

IDRIJA LACE



Visit Idrija – a town of lace – and experience the Idrija lace story. **See** where tradition meets contemporary designs. **Dive** into the secrets of twisting and crossing the threads – learn how to make lace. **Meet** the lacemakers – listen to their stories about laces and lacemaking. **Buy** big, small, snow-white, silver, gold ... – but most of all the prettiest lace. **Celebrate** with us – join us at the Idrija Lace Festival on the third weekend in June.

Idrija.



Visit Idrija

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Idrija Lace Festival

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Idrija Municipal Museum

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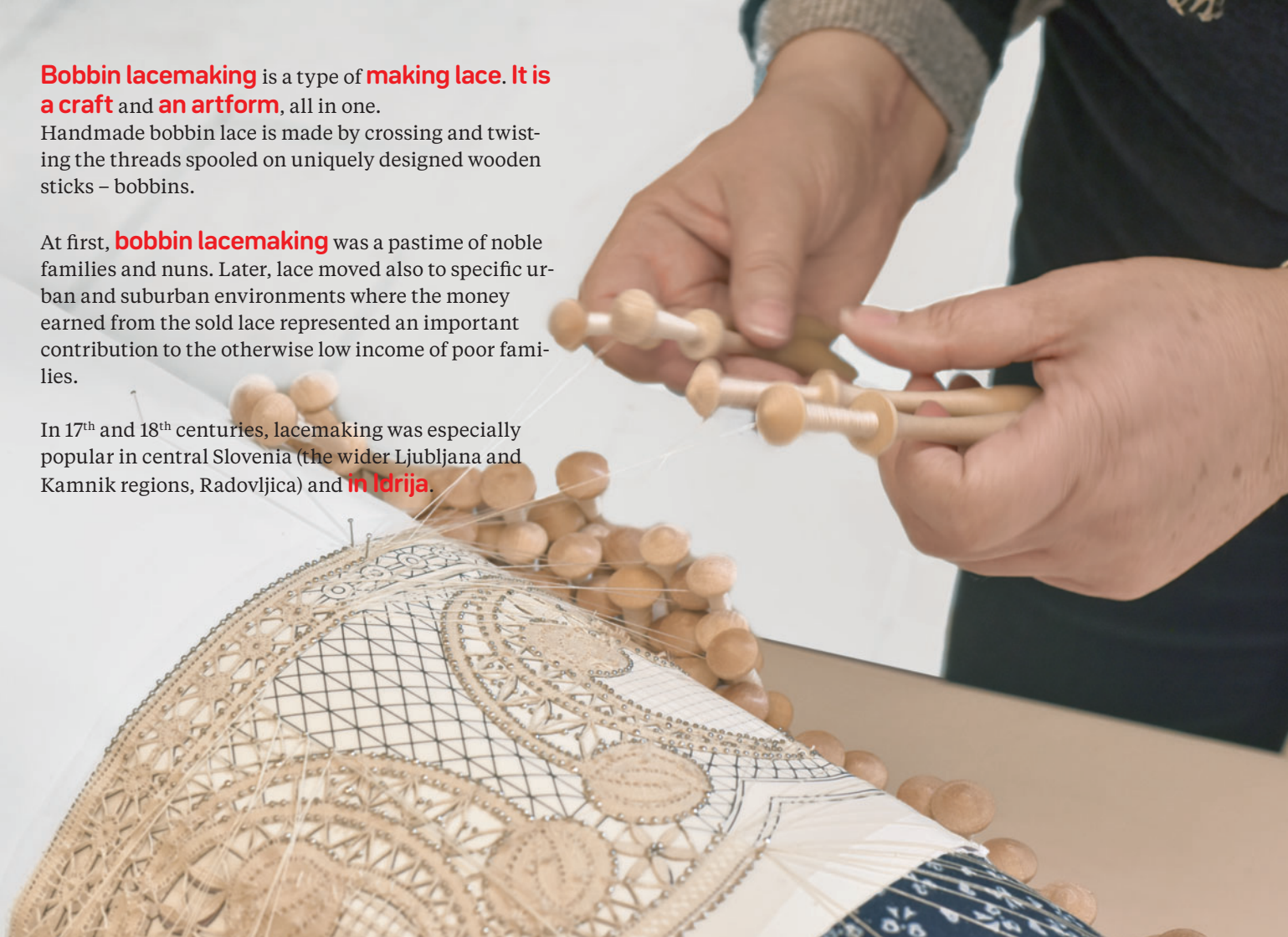
Slovenia

Bobbin lacemaking is a type of **making lace**. It is **a craft** and **an artform**, all in one.

Handmade bobbin lace is made by crossing and twisting the threads spooled on uniquely designed wooden sticks – bobbins.

At first, **bobbin lacemaking** was a pastime of noble families and nuns. Later, lace moved also to specific urban and suburban environments where the money earned from the sold lace represented an important contribution to the otherwise low income of poor families.

In 17th and 18th centuries, lacemaking was especially popular in central Slovenia (the wider Ljubljana and Kamnik regions, Radovljica) and **in Idrija**.





The oldest written source testifying to lace-making in Slovenia dates into 1696 and specifically mentions lace and its traders **from Idrija**. It is unclear what Idrija lace of that period looked like.

Although there is sadly no proof of this, it is assumed that the lacemaking knowledge was brought to Idrija by the wives of miners and mining experts who came to work in the Idrija mercury mine from the German Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge), while Italian influence (Venice, Genova) is also quite possible.

Through decades and centuries, **Idrija women and girls** took the lace patterns as their own, transformed them, adapted them or made them more beautiful, gradually designing a type of lace that was recognizable and different from others.

During the time of the biggest lacemaking boom in the late 19th century, **Idrija traders** began selling these products by the name of **Idrija lace** or "Idriatische Spitze". This was when the lace in Idrija obtained its **distinct expression** technology- and design-wise.



In the beginning, lacemaking knowledge was passed on from generation to generation. Then, with the increasingly demanding customers and bigger market demands for quality lace, a need for organized education began emerging. Since 1876 when the **Idrija Lace School** was established, it has been **continuously educating** new generations of lacemakers.

The decades of teaching saw many **excellent lacemakers** graduate from the Idrija Lace School. Several of them went on to **teach lacemaking** at home and far away in the lands of the then Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the later kingdoms of Italy and Yugoslavia.

Up to this day, the Idrija lacemaking teachers have been spreading the **knowledge** and the **model of the Idrija Lace School** all over the world.



In the past, merchants sold considerable numbers of lace for both **religious** and secular purposes. Since the women of Idrija made lace to earn money, only a handful was left at home; yet every bride prepared **lingerie** and **linens** for her trousseau.

Idrija lace is embellishing our homes **today**, as well; it is an important part of **clothing** and **fashion accessories**, and also finds its place among **business** and **protocol gifts** in Slovenia.

Nowadays, the **Idrija lace** is well-known and established in the world. It prides itself with centuries of tradition and reputation.

It is a precious product of craftsmanship combining values such as knowledge, precision, patience and endless beauty.

Every piece of lace is a magnificent **monument to its creators** – the designer, the drawer, the lacemaker. **It is valued** as a cultural, ethnological and technological gem that needs to be **preserved**; preserved as an **exhibit in museum collections** and as a **live tradition**. At the same time, it presents a **challenge for the contemporary artists** and **designers** who are finding new places, **new images** and new uses for the lace today.





The “**Idrija Lace**” geographical indication is a **certificate of quality** assuring the user that their Idrija lace has been produced in the Land of Idrija Lace geographic area, that it fulfils the due criteria of cultural heritage, that it has been made following the techniques and using the elements of the Idrija Lace School, that it is mostly made of natural materials, and that it meets the requirements regarding the quality of its production.

Safeguarding and respecting cultural heritage must be a commitment of both the individual and the nation. To conserve it, the carriers – **carriers of knowledge** are absolutely essential. They are the only ones that can ade-

quately pass on the know-how that they acquired from past generations in various ways. Idrija lace is preserved by individuals following family traditions, **lacemakers joined in associations** in Idrija and Cerklje regions, and the Idrija Lace School students.

Idrija lacemaking is inscribed in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Register of Slovenia and was proclaimed a **living masterpiece** in 2016. Since 2018, it has been listed on the **UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** as Bobbin lacemaking in Slovenia, together with Making Slovene bobbin lace.