

Traditional salt harvesting and Cultural heritage

In the Gulf of Trieste and Istria, there used to be the Old Piran salt-pans at Sečovlje, Lucija and Strunjan and several smaller and larger pans such as at Muggia, Koper and Izola. They were marked not only by political and economic interests, but also by the whimsicality of nature, which at times totally prevented salt-making for longer periods of time, or endowed it with superabundance at some other time. They were often the subject of political disputes and wars because salt was a valuable raw material and a strategic commodity, important for the canning of food and for the production of gunpowder.

The Sečovlje and Strunjan salt-pans are the only pans in this part of the Adriatic, where salt is still produced and where the traditional method of salt-making with its daily gathering has been preserved. Today, the economic role of the pans is subjected to the nature conservationist and cultural roles: the salt made here is a delicacy for gourmets; the preservation of salt-pan customs is sustaining the conscience of cultural heritage; the salt-pan area is giving a shelter to the rare or special animal and plant species and is at the same time a reserve of ecologically precious residential environment and a reminiscence of once rich Mediterranean cultural heritage and the rapidly disappearing landscape.

