

Zagreb Mountain, Medvednica, Sljeme...

Medvednica stretches in a southwest–northeast direction, from the Krapina River valley and Podsused in the west to Kašinska Road, which crosses the mountain at a pass of the same name to the east. The northern side of the mountain drops steeply toward Zagorje, while its southern slopes descend gently toward the Sava plain, merging with the city of Zagreb. It is an exceptionally rare example of a nature park extending into a capital city. This is a space where natural and cultural-historical values intertwine and shape one another. This great and benevolent mountain has been, for the city's inhabitants, wood and coal and salt and stone and silver and water and mill... in short, a source of life and protection.

The name Medvednica, like Medveščak and Medvedgrad, reminds us that this region was once a kingdom of bears (medvjeda). This beautiful folk name has lived among the people since ancient times, and the mountain was recorded under this name in the earliest documents. In the Golden Bull of Béla IV from 1241, it is referred to by the name "Medwenicha," which also appears in several later historical documents. The name Medvednica was preserved until the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, when it was often referred to as Zagreb Mountain (Agramer Gebirge). This, along with the frequent use of "Sljeme" (the name of its highest peak), led to terminological confusion. Although the people of Zagreb still often say they are going "to Sljeme" when heading to any part of the mountain, the original name, Medvednica, was systematically restored in all official documents and publications throughout the 20th century. Who knows? Perhaps one day, even the bears will return...



View from the Most Slobode (Liberty Bridge)
Second half of the 20th century / MGZ