

## History

Napisao Administrator

sreda, 21 mart 2018 00:00 - Poslednje ažurirano sreda, 21 mart 2018 08:40

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The history of using mineral waters of Vrnjačka Spa goes back far into the past, in the time when this region was inhabited by the Celtic tribe Scordiscs. After the Roman conquest of the Balkans, in the last centuries BC and in the first few centuries AD, mineral waters were used for drinking and bathing as testified by a Roman spring that was discovered during the impoundment of hot mineral water in 1924, and by a great number of coins with images of Roman emperors engraved on them. It is very likely that the newly settled Slavs in the Middle Ages were aware of the healing properties of the Vrnjci waters. There is almost no evidence that the mineral waters were used after the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, with the exception of several unreliable legends saying that the Turks, however, towards the end of their reign, were familiar with the healing properties of the waters and that they were using them as such.

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After the liberation from the Turks, in the beginning of 19th century, Prince Miloš hired a Saxon geologist baron Herder to examine mineral springs in Serbia, thus hot mineral water of Vrnjci was also examined. There are reliable data that the local residents of the village Vrnjci and its surroundings, were using hot mineral water for cure in the middle of 19th century; Janja, the Bishop of Žiča, also used it for drinking and bathing. However, the history of modern spa in Vrnjci is related to the year 1868, when Kruševac prefect Pavle Mutavdžić together with a few benefactors and prominent people from Kruševac, Karanovac (Kraljevo) and Trstenik founded the Founding Endowment Association of Hot Mineral Water in Vrnjci. In the same year two hot mineral springs were impounded and building of spa facilities started, the baths first of all. The first season, in the following year 1869, justified the establishing of such an association and showed the perspectives of a new spa. After several years of stagnation, due to the lack of funds for building a sanatorium, and partly because of the negligence of the state, in the 1880s, when the Spa in Vrnjci became state run, and especially after construction of the General Jovan Belimarković's villa, a regent of King Aleksandar Obrenović, Vrnjačka Spa began to develop into a modern health resort. In 1885 the National Inn owned by Kosta Petrović – Rakica started to work as a real catering facility. Enterprising people from surrounding towns were having their villas and boarding houses built, the central spa area was being landscaped, and in mid 90s the first regulation plan of Vrnjačka Banja Spa was drawn up.

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The number of visitors was increasing year after year. Spectacular rise of the Spa was experienced in the years preceding the Balkan wars. In that time Vrnjačka Spa got a great number of modern boarding houses, new baths were built, one cinema was in operation, and the construction of another one was in a preparatory stage. Just before the wars, the railway Stalać - Požega was constructed and passed near Vrnjačka Spa, so the Spa became very well connected with most big towns in Serbia. Stagnation affected Vrnjačka Spa during the wars from 1912 to 1918. In 1915 several allied hospitals were housed in the Spa boarding houses and resorts. After the First World War a meteoric rise was recorded, whose climax was reached towards the end of the 1930s. Zest was not even fading in the years of economic crisis: modern villas were built, so were sanatoriums (St George, Živadinović), in 1924/1925 a great impoundment of a hot mineral water was performed, modern baths were constructed, regulation of the Vrnjačka river was done, the spa parks were extended and landscaped, traffic routes were built, waterworks and sewage systems were extended. According to the 1933 census there were 133 handcraft and commercial shops. Cultural life was flourishing as well, with kermises being organized, classic music concerts held, renowned theatre groups performed as guests. The Tourism Society "Goč" was established and after the Bill on Spas had been

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enacted, all villas and boarding houses, which numbered up to 257 according to the inventory of 1935, were strictly categorized. That year 28 080 guests were recorded, which vastly outnumbered the recorded visits of all other tourist resorts in Serbia. After the Second World War the profile of visitors changed: now the civil services started sending patients for treatments, the level of provided services declined, a large number of exclusive spa facilities was not used any more. Another upswing Vrnjačka Spa experienced in the 1950s and 1960s owing to the increased number of visitors and construction of new facilities. The greatest visit to the Spa was in the 1980s – almost 200 000 tourists and two million overnight stays.