



Institut
za etnologiju
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TRIBINA IEF-a

U KNJIŽNICI INSTITUTA ZA
ETNOLOGIJU I FOLKLORISTIKU
(ŠUBIĆEVA 42, V. KAT)

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Heirloom Plants: A Bridge to Sustainable Food Systems

Living in the Anthropocene highlights the urgent need to respect planetary boundaries, particularly in food production, distribution, and consumption.

In Slovenia today, there is broad recognition that agriculture and food systems significantly impact the environment, prompting calls for a profound transformation in how food is grown, produced, and consumed. However, approaches to addressing this cultural and economic challenge vary. Some advocate for changes in consumer behavior, while others call for systemic reforms. Despite differing perspectives, there is consensus that building sustainable food systems requires looking to the past, drawing lessons from historical practices.

This presentation focuses not on history itself but on contemporary discourses about the future of food heritage in Slovenia. Based on qualitative interviews, the research explores the role of heirloom plants – traditional varieties of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other crops preserved over generations without genetic modification or hybridization. These plants, now gaining renewed attention, embody the potential to bridge past practices and future sustainability, offering insights into how Slovenia can reimagine its food systems in harmony with environmental and cultural traditions.

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2024.

€**13.00**
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PREDAVAČ

DAŠA LIČEN is an Assistant Professor at the University of Maribor and a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology (ZRC SAZU). She works in the fields of anthropology, ethnology, and history. She was the recipient of the Faculty of Arts' (University of Ljubljana) award for the best doctoral dissertation in the humanities and social sciences for 2020/2021 and the Karl Kaser Prize for Historical Anthropology in Southeastern Europe. She has just finished her postdoctoral project entitled *For Beasts, Against Animals: Towards the Long History of Animal Rights Movement*, in which she explored, among other things, the nourishment of pets.