

Published based on [Visit Vilkovo - The Ukrainian Venice](#)

# **Visit Vilkovo - The Ukrainian Venice**

In the Danube Delta marshlands, built out of the river itself, lies the picturesque town of Vilково. Situated where the Danube River splits into three as it meets the Black Sea, this town is extraordinary not only for its diverse culture, but also for its integration with the astonishing nature under and around it.

Vilково has the diverse culture and cuisine of a town that has seen Greek, Roman, Ottoman and Slavic civilisations conquering the town and its inhabitants. The nearby Izmail fortress is an historical site from the Russian-Turkish war many centuries ago, signifying yet another phase of influence on the inhabitants of Vilково. Boats are the primary mode of transport, and fishing is a major source of income for the residents of Vilково. No wonder that all three churches in the town are named after St Nicholas, the patron saint of fishermen, sailors and travellers. Each home has a boat moored at their door, most of them built the same as the Cossack boats used centuries ago. Called 'herring' boats today, they are used to catch the renowned Danube herring, but can also be used in the Black Sea to catch sturgeon.

One of the town's main industries is of course fishing. The Danube herring caught in Vilково are sought after as a delicacy by restaurants from Paris to Moscow, and sturgeon caught in the Black Sea as well as salmon form the backbone of the fishing industry. Sport anglers will enjoy the giant carp and catfish that can be caught while visiting Vilково. All this fresh fish means that the restaurants of the town offer delicious fish dishes, showcasing the diverse cuisine of the area.

The homes and gardens in Vilково are each built on their own island, built up from river sediment. This explains the areas nickname - 'The Ukrainian Venice'. These are high maintenance homes though, as each year a trench around the house has to be dug out to replace sediment on the island, allow boats access, and prevent flooding. Without the addition of more silt each year, the homes would sink back into the marsh. The sediment is very rich, and the gardens in Vilково are magnificent.

Wooden walkways along the channels and waterways provide endless opportunity for visitors to stroll through the town admiring the gardens and scenic views. The waterways were once the only water source, used for drinking, washing cooking and transportation. Although piped water is now available, many still make use of the supply outside their front door. Vilково is well known for its strawberries, apples and quince, as well as its viticulture. The local range of wines is produced from the Novak grape, and is said to be somewhat higher in alcohol content than many visitors expect - so sip carefully.

Being a marshland, [Vilково forms part of the Danube Biosphere Reserve](#) and is home to over 950 plant species and 260 bird species, including pelican, cormorant, spoonbills and sea-eagle. Visitors to Vilково in spring and summer will be greeted by vast reedbeds, lily-coated lakes and in spring, frogs abound. Nature tours are a must in this diverse reserve, and boat tours through the Danube Delta provide visitors with a bird's eye view of the flora, fauna and beauty of this region. Perhaps most importantly, visitors will experience a taste of life that is governed by the natural rhythms of water, climate and seasons. A visit to Vilково will leave you at peace, having traversed the waters of the Ukrainian Venice.

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