



Istria

052

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Konoba Batelina (p105)
- ➔ Monte (p113)
- ➔ Kantinon (p113)
- ➔ Marina (p122)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Villa Meneghetti (p115)
- ➔ Monte Mulini (p112)
- ➔ Hotel Kaštel (p131)
- ➔ Vela Vrata (p127)

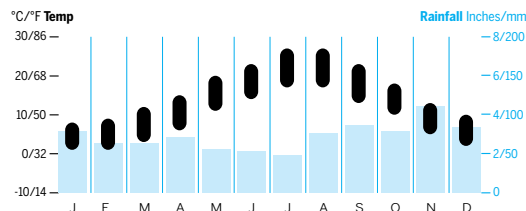
Why Go?

Continental Croatia meets the Adriatic in Istria (Istra to Croats), the heart-shaped, 3600-sq-km peninsula just south of Trieste in Italy. The bucolic interior of rolling hills and fertile plains attracts artsy visitors to Istria's hilltop villages, rural hotels and farmhouse restaurants, while the verdant indented coastline is enormously popular with the sun-and-sea set. While vast hotel complexes line much of the coast and the rocky beaches are not Croatia's best, facilities are wide ranging, the sea is clean and secluded spots are still plentiful.

The coast, or 'Blue Istria', as the tourist board calls it, gets flooded with tourists in summer, but you can still feel alone and undisturbed in 'Green Istria' (the interior), even in mid-August. Add acclaimed gastronomy (starring fresh seafood, prime white truffles, wild asparagus, top-rated olive oils and award-winning wines), sprinkle it with historical charm and you have a little slice of heaven.

When to Go

Pula



Apr Celebrate spring by heading out to the fields to pick some wild asparagus.

Jul–Aug A festival roster of classical music, jazz, films and art sets Istrian towns alight.

Sep The white-truffle season kicks off with the Festival of Subotina in Buzet.



Istria Highlights

- 1 Admiring the mosaics at **Euphrasian Basilica** (p116) in Poreč.
- 2 **Truffle hunting** (p127) in the forests around Buzet.
- 3 Taking in Rovinj's fishing history at **Batana House** (p110).
- 4 Walking the trails of the legendary **Pazin Chasm** (p125).
- 5 Catching alfresco screenings during the summer film festival of **Motovun** (p129).
- 6 Soaking up the communist chic at Tito's playground of **Brijuni** (p107).
- 7 Exploring the wild landscapes of **Rt Kamenjak cape** (p103) near Pula.