



# Inland Croatia

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## Why Go?

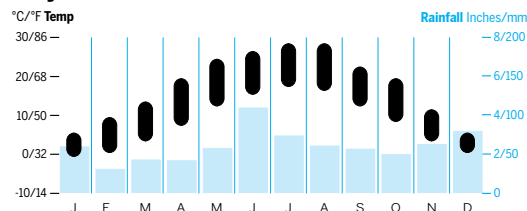
In addition to Zagreb, the country's burgeoning capital, inland Croatia offers diverse landscapes featuring a mix of small-town highlights, countryside delights and natural marvels.

To the east of Zagreb, towards Hungary and Serbia, stretch Pannonian plains and the flat farmlands of Slavonia. Here you'll find the watery wonderland of Kopački Rit Nature Park, as well as wine roads with historic cellars, scenic cycling routes, delightful rural B&Bs, and the riverside city of Osijek with its ancient quarter set in a baroque citadel.

The bucolic northern region of Zagorje showcases fairy-tale medieval castles, vineyard-speckled hills, towns built around thermal springs, and the baroque beauty of Varaždin, one of Croatia's prettiest small towns. Other highlights include Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, southeast of Zagreb, with its historic timber villages and great birdwatching, and the undulating landscapes, wine cellars, country restaurants and thermal spas of Međimurje, northeast of Varaždin.

## When to Go

### Osijek



**Apr & May** Nature wakes up after winter hibernation and inland areas become lovely to explore.

**Jul & Aug** Most people head to the coast and it's a blissfully crowd-free time, though hot.

**Sep & Oct** Join the wine harvest and sample great local offerings.

## AROUND ZAGREB

The area around Zagreb is rich with quick getaway options, from picturesque towns with great food to peaceful hikes and nature reserves.

### Samobor

📍 01 / POP 19,000

Samobor is where stressed-out city dwellers come to wind down and get their fix of hearty food, creamy cakes and pretty scenery. A shallow stream of the Gradna curves through the town centre, which is composed of trim pastel houses and several old churches.

The main focus of the town's economic activities are tourism and bolstering small family businesses, including restaurants and those involved in handicrafts and the production of mustard, wine and spirits. The town's literary and musical traditions are reflected in a number of annual festivals, most famously the Fašnik (Samobor Carnival) in January and February, and the Samobor Autumn Music Festival in September and October.



### Activities

Samobor is a good jumping-off point for hiking into the Samoborsko Gorje, a mountain system (part of the Žumberak Range) that links the high peaks of the Alps with the karstic caves and abysses of the Dinaric Range; carpeted with meadows and forests, it's the region's most popular hiking destination, and has been the cradle of organised mountaineering activity in Croatia since 1875. Most of the hikes are easy and there are well-marked trails and nine mountain huts that make pleasant rest stops. Many are open weekends only (except in high season); more information is available through the **Croatian Mountaineering Association** ([www.hps.hr](http://www.hps.hr); Kozarčeva 22; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri). In 1999 the whole area, covering 333 sq km, was proclaimed a nature park, Žumberak and Samobor Hills ([www.park-zumberak.hr](http://www.park-zumberak.hr)), because of its biodiversity, forests, karst caves, river canyons and four waterfalls.

The range is divided into three sections: the Oštrc group in the centre, the Japetić group to the west and the Plešivica group to the east. Both the Oštrc and Japetić groups are accessible from the Šoičeva Kuća mountain hut and restaurant, 10km west of Samobor, reachable by bus 144 (direction Lipovec). From there it's a rather steep 30-minute climb

to the medieval hill fort of Lipovec and an hour's hike to the peak of Oštrc (752m), with another mountain hut.

Another popular hike is the 1½-hour climb from Šoičeva Kuća to Japetić (879m), the highest peak of Samobor Hills and a famous paragliding spot (see [www.parafreek.hr](http://www.parafreek.hr) for information). You can also follow a path from Oštrc to Japetić (two hours). The Plešivica group has ruins of a medieval fort and a protected park forest area, and it's also a famous rock-climbing spot; you can access it from the village of Rude (bus 143 services Rude and Braslovje). From Rude, head east to the hunting cabin Srndač on the mountain saddle of Poljanice (12km), from where it's a 40-minute, rather steep hike to the peak of Plešivica (779m).



### Sleeping & Eating

Most people come to Samobor on a day trip from Zagreb, but there are a couple of sleeping options should you wish to stay, including a family-run hotel right in the town centre and a hostel.

Samobor is mostly known for its famous custard pies (*kremšnite*) but it's also home to one of Croatia's best ice-cream shops and a fantastic classic restaurant.

#### U Prolazu

DESSERTS €

(Trg Kralja Tomislava 5; ☎ 7am-11pm) The best *kremšnite* (7KN to 18KN) in town.

#### Slatka Tvornica Medenka

ICE CREAM €

(Mirka Klešića 1; ☎ 9am-9pm) Don't miss this amazing ice-cream shop, which has quickly become one of Croatia's best. Their ice cream is made in a traditional way, with no artificial aromas, colourings or preservatives, and the flavours are unique – pumpkin oil, spinach, blue cheese and carrot. They recently opened a shop in Zagreb too (next door to Cafe u Dvorištu; p65).

#### Gabreku 1929

CROATIAN €€

([www.gabrek.hr](http://www.gabrek.hr); Starogradska 46; mains 55-150KN; ☎ noon-midnight) This classic restaurant, a short walk from the town centre, has been run by the same family since the 1920s. It's known for its 40 types of sweet and savoury *palačinke* (crêpes).



### Information

**Tourist Office** (☎ 01-33 60 044; [www.tz-samobor.hr](http://www.tz-samobor.hr); Trg Kralja Tomislava 5; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) In the town centre. Has plentiful brochures and maps of