



Croatia

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Best Places to Eat

- » Vinodol (p220)
- » Konoba Batelina (p228)
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Best Places to Stay

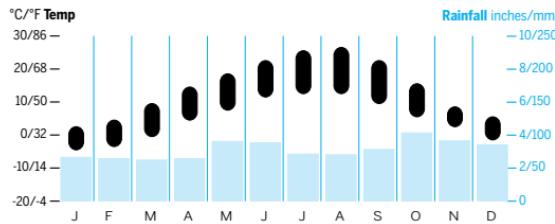
- » Studio Kairos (p219)
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Why Go?

Croatia has been touted as the ‘new this’ and the ‘new that’ for years since its re-emergence on the tourism scene, but it’s now clear that it’s a unique destination that holds its own and then some: this is a country with a glorious 1778km-long coast and a staggering 1244 islands. The Adriatic coast is a knockout: its sapphire waters draw visitors to remote islands, hidden coves and traditional fishing villages, all while touting the glitzy beach and yacht scene. Istria captivates with its gastronomic delights and wines, and the bars, clubs and festivals of Zagreb, Zadar and Split remain little-explored gems. Eight national parks showcase primeval beauty with their forests, mountains, rivers, lakes and waterfalls, and you can finish up in dazzling Dubrovnik in the south – just the right finale. Best of all, Croatia hasn’t given in to mass tourism: there are pockets of unique culture and plenty to discover off the grid.

When to Go

Zagreb



May & Sep Good weather, few tourists, full local events calendar, great for hiking

Jun Best time to visit: good weather, fewer people, lower prices and lots of festivals.

Jul–Aug Lots of sunshine, warm sea and summer festivals; many tourists and highest prices.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Kuna (KN)
- » **Language** Croatian
- » **Money** ATMs available; credit cards accepted in most hotels and many restaurants
- » **Visas** None for up to 90 days; South Africans and some other nationalities need them

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 56,538 sq km
- » **Capital** Zagreb
- » **Country code** +385
- » **Emergency** Ambulance ☎194, fire ☎193, police ☎192

CROATIA

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	6.21KN
Canada	C\$1	5.85KN
Euro Zone	€1	7.60KN
Japan	¥100	6.30KN
New Zealand	NZ\$1	4.97KN
UK	UK£1	8.99KN
USA	US\$1	5.94KN

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 450KN
- » **Two-course meal** 150KN
- » **Museum entrance** 10–40KN
- » **Beer** 15KN
- » **City transport ticket** 10KN

Resources

- » **Adriatica.net** (www.adriatica.net)
- » **Croatian National Tourist Board** (www.croatia.hr)

Connections

Croatia is a convenient transport hub for southeastern Europe and the Adriatic. Zagreb is connected by train and/or bus to Venice, Budapest, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Down south there are easy bus connections from Dubrovnik to Mostar and Sarajevo, and to Kotor (Montenegro). There are a number of ferries linking Croatia with Italy, including routes from Dubrovnik to Bari, and Split to Ancona.

ITINERARIES

One Week

After a day in dynamic Zagreb, delving into its simmering nightlife, fine restaurants and choice museums, head down to Split for a day and night at Diocletian's Palace, a living part of this exuberant seafront city. Then hop over to chic Hvar for a spot of partying and swimming off Pakleni Otoci. Next take it easy down the winding coastal road to magnificent Dubrovnik and take a day trip to Mljet for the final two days.

Two Weeks

After two days in Zagreb, head to Istria for a three-day stay, with Rovinj as the base, and day trips to Pula and Poreč. Go southeast next to the World Heritage-listed Plitvice Lakes National Park, a verdant maze of turquoise lakes and cascading waterfalls. After a quick visit, move on to Zadar, a real find of a city: historic, modern, active and packed with attractions. Then go on south to Split for a day or two. From here, take ferries to Hvar and then Korčula, spending a day or more on each island before ending with three days in Dubrovnik and an outing to Mljet.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Ćevapčići** Small spicy sausages of minced beef, lamb or pork.
- » **Pljeskavica** An ex-Yugo version of a hamburger.
- » **Ražnjići** Small chunks of pork grilled on a skewer.
- » **Burek** Pastry stuffed with ground meat, spinach or cheese.
- » **Rakija** Strong Croatian brandy comes in different flavours, from plum to honey.
- » **Beer** Two top types of Croatian pivo (beer) are Zagreb's Ožujsko and Karlovačko from Karlovac.