



Croatia

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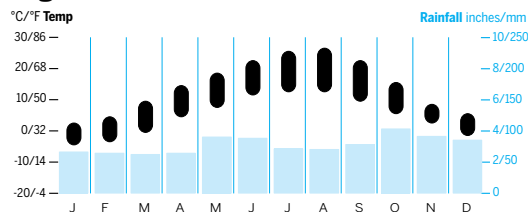
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Why Go?

If your Mediterranean fantasies feature balmy days by sapphire waters in the shade of ancient walled towns, Croatia is the place to turn them into reality. The extraordinary Adriatic coastline, speckled with 1244 islands and strewn with historic towns, is Croatia's main attraction. The standout is Dubrovnik, its remarkable Old Town ringed by mighty defensive walls. Coastal Split showcases Diocletian's Palace, one of the world's most impressive Roman monuments, where dozens of bars, restaurants and shops thrive amid the old walls. In the heart-shaped peninsula of Istria, Rovinj is a charm-packed fishing port. The Adriatic isles hold much varied appeal, from glitzy Hvar Town on its namesake island to the secluded naturist coves of the Pakleni Islands just offshore. Away from the coast, Zagreb, Croatia's lovely capital has a booming cafe culture and art scene, while Plitvice Lakes National Park offers a verdant maze of turquoise lakes and cascading waterfalls.

When to Go

Zagreb



May & Sep Good weather, less tourists, full events calendar, great for hiking.

Jun Best time to visit: beautiful weather, fewer people, lower prices, the festival season kicks off.

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

ZAGREB

POP 790,000

Zagreb has culture, arts, music, architecture, gastronomy and all the other things that make a quality capital city – it's no surprise that the number of visitors has risen sharply in recent years. Croatia's coastal attractions aside, Zagreb has finally been discovered as a popular city-break destination in its own right.

Visually, Zagreb is a mixture of straight-laced Austro-Hungarian architecture and rough-around-the-edges socialist structures, its character a sometimes uneasy combination of the two elements. This small metropolis is made for strolling the streets, drinking coffee in the permanently full cafes, popping into museums and galleries, and enjoying the theatres, concerts and cinema. It's a year-round outdoor city: in spring and summer everyone scurries to Jarun Lake in the southwest to swim or sail, or dance the night away at lakeside discos, while in winter Zagrebians go skiing at Mt Medvednica (only a tram or bus ride away).

Sights

As the oldest part of Zagreb, the Upper Town (Gornji Grad) offers landmark buildings and churches from the earlier centuries of Zagreb's history. The Lower Town (Donji Grad) has the city's most interesting art museums and fine examples of 19th- and 20th-century architecture.

★ **Museum of Broken Relationships**

MUSEUM

(www.brokenships.com; Ćirilometodska 2; adult/concession 30/20KN; ☺ 9am-10.30pm Jun-Sep, 9am-9pm Oct-May) Explore mementoes that remain after a relationship ends at Zagreb's quirkiest museum. The innovative exhibit toured the world until it settled here in its permanent home (it recently opened a second location in Hollywood). On display are donations from around the globe, in a string of all-white rooms with vaulted ceilings and epoxy-resin floors.

Funicular Railway

FUNICULAR

(ticket 4KN; ☺ 6.30am-10pm) The funicular railway, which was constructed in 1888, connects the Lower and Upper Towns of Zagreb.

Dolac Market

MARKET

(☺ open-air market 6.30am-3pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun, covered market 7am-2pm Mon-Fri, 7am-3pm Sat, 7am-1pm Sun) Zagreb's colourful fruit and

vegetable market is just north of Trg Bana Jelačića. Traders from all over Croatia come to sell their products at this buzzing centre of activity. Dolac has been heaving since the 1930s, when the city authorities set up a market space on the 'border' between the Upper and Lower Towns.

Zrinjevac

SQUARE

Officially called Trg Nikole Šubića Zrinskog but lovingly known as Zrinjevac, this verdant square at the heart of the city has become a vital part of Zagreb. It's filled with stalls almost year-round, and features festivals and events, be it summer or winter. Most are centred on the music pavilion (dating from 1891).

Art Pavilion

GALLERY

(Umjetnički Paviljon; ☎ 01-48 41 070; www.umjetnicki-paviljon.hr; Trg Kralja Tomislava 22; adult/concession 40/25KN; ☺ 11am-8pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, to 9pm Fri) The yellow Art Pavilion presents changing exhibitions of contemporary art. Constructed in 1897 in stunning art nouveau style, the pavilion is the only space in Zagreb that was specifically designed to host large exhibitions.

Museum of Contemporary Art

MUSEUM

(Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti; ☎ 01-60 52 700; www.msu.hr; Avenija Dubrovnik 17; adult/concession 30/15KN; ☺ 11am-6pm Tue-Fri & Sun, to 8pm Sat) Housed in a stunning city icon designed by local star architect Igor Franić, this swanky museum displays both solo and thematic group shows by Croatian and international artists in its 17,000 sq metres. The permanent display, *Collection in Motion*, showcases 620 edgy works by 240 artists, roughly half of whom are Croatian. There's a packed year-round schedule of film, theatre, concerts and performance art.

Maksimir Park

PARK

(☎ 01-23 20 460; www.park-maksimir.hr; Maksimirski perivoj bb; ☺ info centre 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) The park, a peaceful wooded enclave covering 18 hectares, is easily accessible by trams 11 and 12 from Jelačić square. Opened to the public in 1794, it was the first public promenade in southeastern Europe. It's landscaped like an English garden, with alleys, lawns and artificial lakes.

Mirogoj

CEMETERY

(Aleja Hermanna Bollea 27; ☺ 6am-8pm Apr-Oct, 7.30am-6pm Nov-Mar) A 10-minute ride north of the city centre (or a 30-minute walk