



Croatia

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Best Places to Stay

- » Arcotel Allegra (p125)
- » Hotel Peristil (p151)
- » Lešić Dimitri Palace (p159)
- » Hotel Bellevue (p166)

Best Places to Eat

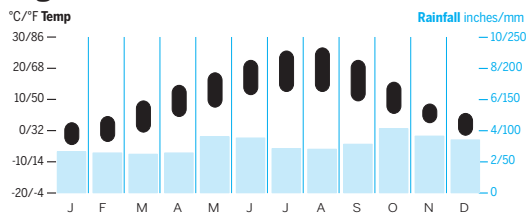
- » Vinodol (p126)
- » Konoba Batelina (p138)
- » Foša (p148)
- » Konoba Trattoria Bajamont (p153)

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. Punctuate all this with dazzling Dubrovnik in the south – just the right finale. Best of all, Croatia hasn't given in to mass tourism: there are pockets of authentic culture and plenty to discover off the grid.

When to Go

Zagreb



July & August

Lots of sunshine, warm sea and summer festivals. Many tourists and highest prices.

June

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

May & September

Good weather, few tourists, full local events calendar, great for hiking.

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. Some nationalities need them.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 56,538 sq km
- » **Capital** Zagreb
- » **Telephone country code** 385
- » **Emergency** ambulance 194, fire 193, police 192, roadside assistance 1987

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	5.32KN
Canada	C\$1	5.29KN
euro	€1	7.36KN
Japan	¥100	6.04KN
New Zealand	NZ\$1	4.01KN
UK	UK£1	8.27KN
USA	US\$1	5.08KN

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget room** 450KN
- » **Two-course meal** 150KN
- » **Museum entry** 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. Down south there are easy bus connections from Dubrovnik to Mostar and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), 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 and windsurf in pretty Bol on Brač. Next take it easy down the winding coastal road to magnificent Dubrovnik, for the final two days, taking a day trip to Mljet or the nearby Elafiti Islands.

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, Brač 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.
- » **Pijeskavica** 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 flavors, from plum to honey.
- » **Beer** Two top types of Croatian *pivo* (beer) are Zagreb's Ožujsko and Karlovačko from Karlovac.