



Zagreb

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Best Places to Eat

- » Vinodol (p54)
- » Tip Top (p55)
- » Amfora (p55)
- » Mano (p55)

Best Places to Stay

- » Regent Esplanade Zagreb (p53)
- » Arcotel Allegra (p53)
- » Palace Hotel (p53)
- » Hotel Dubrovnik (p53)

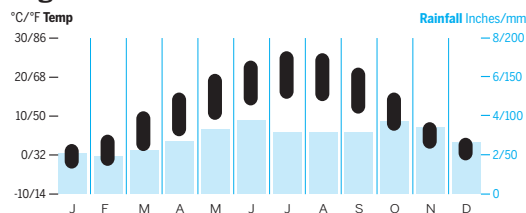
Why Go?

Everyone knows about Croatia's coast and islands, but a mention of the country's capital still draws the confused question: 'Is it worth going to?' Here is the answer: Zagreb is a great destination, with lots of culture, arts, music, architecture, gastronomy and all the other things that make a quality capital.

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 these two elements. This mini 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, boat or dance the night away at lakeside discos, while in autumn and winter Zagrebians go skiing at Mt Medvednica, only a tram ride away, or hiking in nearby Samobor.

When to Go

Zagreb



April & May The city takes off its winter coat and pavement cafes become a beehive of activity.

June Some of Zagreb's best festivals liven up its streetscapes and provide plenty of cultural fodder.

September & October People return from holidays and the city buzzes with summer energy.

History

Zagreb's known history begins in medieval times with two hills: Kaptol, now the site of Zagreb's cathedral, and Gradec. When the two merged in the mid-16th century, Zagreb was born.

The space now known as Trg Josipa Jelačića became the site of Zagreb's lucrative trade fairs, spurring construction around its edges. In the 19th century the economy expanded with the development of a prosperous clothing trade and a rail link connecting Zagreb with Vienna and Budapest. The city's cultural life blossomed, too.

Zagreb also became the centre for the Illyrian movement (see p285). Count Janko Drašković, lord of Trakošćan Castle, published a manifesto in Illyrian in 1832 and his call for a national revival resounded throughout Croatia. Drašković's dream came to fruition when Croatia and its capital joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after WWI.

Between the two world wars, working-class neighbourhoods emerged in Zagreb between the railway and the Sava River, and new residential quarters were built on the southern slopes of Mt Medvednica. In April 1941 the Germans invaded Yugoslavia and entered Zagreb without resistance. Ante Pavelić and the Ustaše moved quickly to proclaim the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska), with Zagreb as

its capital (see p287). Although Pavelić ran his fascist state from Zagreb until 1944, he never enjoyed a great deal of support within the capital, which maintained support for Tito's Partisans.

In postwar Yugoslavia, Zagreb (to its chagrin) took second place to Belgrade but continued to expand. Zagreb was made the capital of Croatia in 1991, the same year that the country became independent.

Sights

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

UPPER TOWN

Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

CHURCH

(Katedrala Marijina Uznešenja; Kaptol; ☉10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun) Kaptol Sq is dominated by this cathedral, formerly known as St Stephen's. Its twin spires – seemingly permanently under repair – soar over the city. Construction began in the second half of the 13th century, following the prototype of the Church of St Urban in Troyes, France.

ZAGREB IN...

Two Days

Start your day with a stroll through Strossmayerov trg, Zagreb's oasis of greenery. Take a look at the **Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters** and then walk to **Trg Josipa Jelačića**, the city's centre.

Head up to **Kaptol Square** for a look at the **Cathedral**, the centre of Zagreb's religious life. While in the Upper Town, pick up some fruit at the **Dolac market** or have lunch at **Kerempuh**. Then get to know the work of Croatia's best sculptor at **Meštrović Atelier** and see its naïve art legacy at the **Croatian Museum of Naïve Art** or the contemporary art exhibition at **Galerija Klovićevi Dvori**. See the lay of the city from the top of **Lotrščak Tower**, then spend the evening bar-crawling along **Tkalčićeva**.

On the second day, tour the Lower Town museums, reserving two hours for the **Museum Mimara**. Lunch at **Tip Top** and digest in the **Botanical Garden**. Early evening is best at Preradovićev trg before dining and sampling some of Zagreb's nightlife.

Four Days

Your third day should take in the lovely **Mirogoj cemetery**, with a stop at **Medvedgrad** or **Maksim Park**.

On day four, take a trip out to **Samobor** for a big dose of small-town charm.