



# Croatian

PHRASEBOOK & DICTIONARY

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**Publisher** Mina Patria

**Product Editor** Elizabeth Jones

**Series Designer** James Hardy

**Language Writers** Gordana & Ivan Ivetac

**Cover Image Researcher** Naomi Parker

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## make the most of this phrasebook ...

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Anyone can speak another language! It's all about confidence. Don't worry if you can't remember your school language lessons or if you've never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.

### finding things in this book

For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Tools chapters are the ones you'll thumb through time and again. The Practical section covers basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Social section gives you conversational phrases, pick-up lines, the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. Safe Travel equips you with health and police phrases, just in case. Remember the colours of each section and you'll find everything easily; or use the comprehensive Index. Otherwise, check the two-way traveller's Dictionary for the word you need.

### being understood

Throughout this book you'll see coloured phrases on each page. They're phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. You don't even need to look at the language itself, but you'll get used to the way we've represented particular sounds. The pronunciation chapter in Tools will explain more, but you can feel confident that if you read the coloured phrase slowly, you'll be understood.

### communication tips

Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. 'Local talk' boxes show you common ways of saying things, or everyday language to drop into conversation. 'Listen for ...' boxes supply the phrases you may hear. They start with the phonetic guide (because you'll hear it before you know what's being said) and then lead in to the language and the English translation.

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## croatian



- official language
- widely understood
- generally understood

For more details, see the **introduction**.



Croatian is the language of one of the world's newer countries. Like the country itself, Croatian has an intriguing, cosmopolitan, and at times fraught, history.

Croatian's linguistic ancestor was brought to the region in the sixth and seventh centuries AD by the South Slavs who may have crossed the Danube from the region now known as Poland. This ancestral language split off into two branches: East South Slavic, which later evolved into Bulgarian and Macedonian, and West South Slavic, of which Slovene, Serbian and Croatian are all descendants.

Croatia may be a peaceful country today but the Balkan region to which it belongs has a long history of invasion and conflict. These upheavals have enriched and politicised the language. The invasion by Charlemagne's armies and forced conversion to the Roman Church in AD 803 left its mark on Croatian in the form of words borrowed from Latin and the

adoption of the Latin alphabet rather than the Cyrillic alphabet (with which Serbian is written). Subsequent invasions by the Hapsburg, Ottoman and Venetian empires added vibrancy to the language through the influx of German, Turkish and Venetian dialect loan words. Many words from the standard Italian of Croatia's neighbour Italy have also added colour.

Linguists commonly refer to the languages spoken in

### at a glance ...

**language name:**

Croatian

**name in language:**

*hrvatski jezik*

*hr-vat-skee je-zeek*

**language family:** Slavic

**approximate number of speakers:** 5 million

**close relatives:**

Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian and Slovenian

**donations to English:**

cravat, dalmatian

Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro as members of the macro-language Serbo-Croatian while acknowledging differences between the individual languages. Croats, Serbs, Bosnians and Montenegrins themselves also generally maintain that they speak different languages. This polarisation of language identities reflects the desire to retain separate ethnic identities.

The good news is that if you venture into Serbia, Bosnia or Montenegro you'll be able to enrich your travel experience there by using this chapter – Croatian, Serbian and Montenegrin are all mutually comprehensible, and it's an official language in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In case of the most common differences between Croatian and Serbian, both translations are given and indicated with *c/s*. The Cyrillic alphabet (used in Serbia, Bosnia and often in Montenegro) is also included on the page opposite. People in Macedonia and Slovenia, who speak closely related languages, generally understand Croatian.

Croatian has plenty of appeal. As well as its rich vocabulary, it has a lovely repertoire of soft lispings sounds such as *sh*, *zh* and *ch* and a lilting musical rhythm due to its use of high and low pitches. It also has an intriguing grammar, quite different from English. It is, however, readily understandable.

Take this phrasebook with you to help make your trip hassle free. It's packed with all the practical language information you'll need and it will also open up a world of possibilities for social interaction and cultural exchange with the locals. Need more encouragement? Remember, the contact you make through using Croatian will make your travel experience unique. Local knowledge, new relationships and a sense of satisfaction are on the tip of your tongue, so don't just stand there – say something!

### abbreviations used in this book

<b>m</b>	masculine	<b>pol</b>	polite
<b>f</b>	feminine	<b>inf</b>	informal
<b>n</b>	neuter	<b>imp</b>	imperfective
<b>sg</b>	singular	<b>perf</b>	perfective
<b>pl</b>	plural	<b>lit</b>	literally

Croatian pronunciation is quite straightforward for English speakers as many of the sounds are similar to English sounds. Some claim, in fact, that for English speakers, Croatian pronunciation is the easiest to master among the European languages.

## vowel sounds

There are seven vowel sounds in Croatian. In the written language, vowels that appear next to each other don't run together to form diphthongs (vowel sound combinations) as in English. When you see two or more vowels written next to each other in a Croatian word, pronounce each vowel separately.

symbol	english equivalent	croatian example	transliteration
a	father	<i>zdravo</i>	<i>zdra-vaw</i>
ai	aisle	<i>ajvar</i>	<i>ai-var</i>
aw	raw	<i>brod</i>	<i>brawd</i>
e	let	<i>pet</i>	<i>pet</i>
ee	bee	<i>sidro</i>	<i>see-draw</i>
oo	book	<i>skupo</i>	<i>skoo-paw</i>
oy	boy	<i>tvoj</i>	<i>tvoy</i>

## consonant sounds

Croatian consonant sounds all have equivalents, or close equivalents, in English. The rolled *r* sound can be pronounced in combination with another consonant (or more than one consonant) as a separate syllable, as in the word *Hrvat hr-vat* 'Croatian'. If

these syllables without vowels look a bit intimidating, try inserting a slight 'uh' sound before the **r** to help them run off your tongue more easily. The sound **s** can appear as a syllable on its own.

symbol	english equivalent	croatian example	transliteration
<b>b</b>	big	<i>glazba</i>	<i>glaz-ba</i>
<b>ch</b>	chilli	<i>četiri, ćuk</i>	<i>che-tee-ree, chuk</i>
<b>d</b>	din	<i>doručak</i>	<i>daw-roo-chak</i>
<b>f</b>	fun	<i>fotograf</i>	<i>faw-taw-graf</i>
<b>g</b>	go	<i>jagoda</i>	<i>ya-gaw-da</i>
<b>h</b>	hit	<i>hodnik</i>	<i>hawd-neek</i>
<b>j</b>	jam	<i>džep, đak</i>	<i>jep, jak</i>
<b>k</b>	kick	<i>krov</i>	<i>krawv</i>
<b>l</b>	loud	<i>lutka</i>	<i>loot-ka</i>
<b>l'</b>	million	<i>kašalj</i>	<i>kash-al'</i>
<b>m</b>	man	<i>mozak</i>	<i>maw-zak</i>
<b>n</b>	no	<i>nafta</i>	<i>naf-ta</i>
<b>n'</b>	canyon	<i>siječanj</i>	<i>see-ye-chan'</i>
<b>r</b>	rag (but 'rolled')	<i>radnik</i>	<i>rad-neek</i>
<b>s</b>	salt	<i>sastanak</i>	<i>sas-ta-nak</i>
<b>sh</b>	show	<i>košta</i>	<i>kawsh-ta</i>
<b>t</b>	tin	<i>sat</i>	<i>sat</i>
<b>ts</b>	hits	<i>prosinac</i>	<i>pro-see-nats</i>
<b>v</b>	very	<i>viza</i>	<i>vee-za</i>
<b>y</b>	yes	<i>svjetlost</i>	<i>svyet-lawst</i>
<b>z</b>	zoo	<i>zec</i>	<i>zets</i>
<b>zh</b>	pleasure	<i>koža</i>	<i>kaw-zha</i>

When **y** comes after another consonant and before a vowel (as in the word *djeca* *dye-tsa*) it runs together with the preceding consonant and vowel. The preceding consonant is then pro-