

## **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 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 lisping 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-



nounced with the tongue rising up towards the roof of the mouth. Something similar happens in English when you say 'and you' quickly. You don't need to be too conscious of this feature as it should happen more or less automatically as you follow the pronunciation guides.

## stress & pitch accent

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Certain syllables in Croatian have stress, which means you emphasise one syllable over another. As a general rule, in two-syllable words stress usually falls on the first syllable. In words of three or more syllables, stress may fall on any syllable except the last. In our pronunciation guides, the stressed syllable is italicised.

Croatian also has what's known as pitch accent. A stressed vowel may have either a rising or a falling pitch and be long or short. The combination of stress, pitch and vowel length in a given syllable can affect the meaning of a word. The word *sam* pronounced with a short vowel and falling pitch means 'alone' and sounds like 'sum'. When it's pronounced with a long vowel with falling pitch however, it means 'I am' and sounds like 'sarm'.

You don't need to worry about reproducing this feature of Croatian and we haven't indicated it in this book, as it only distinguishes meaning in a very few cases. In such cases it should be clear from the context what is meant. You may notice though that the speech of native speakers has an appealing musical lilt to it. You may also notice marks over the vowels in some dictionaries and grammar books to indicate vowel length and pitch.

## reading & writing

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Croatian is so closely related to Serbian that many people describe them as two dialects of the same language. However, religion and historical circumstances dictated that Croatian be written in the Latin alphabet, like English, rather than the Cyrillic alphabet, like Serbian. The Croatian alphabet has 30 letters, of which three are digraphs (single sounds made up of a combination of two letters). The accents above letters change the pronunciation of letters. The letter *c* for

example is pronounced like the 'ts' in 'cats', while the letter č is pronounced like the 'ch' in 'cheese'.

Croatian spelling is absolutely phonetic – there's a fixed regular correspondence between letters and the way they're pronounced even when they're combined into words. What you see is what you say!

### letter for letter

The table below shows the correspondences between the Croatian alphabet and the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet. This could come in handy if you venture beyond the confines of Croatia and want to try to read and understand written Serbian.

croatian		serbian		croatian		serbian	
A a	a	А а	a	L l	el	Л л	el
B b	be	Б б	be	Љ љ	l'	Љ љ	l'
C c	tse	Ц ц	tse	M m	em	М м	em
Č č	tch	Ч ч	tch	N n	en	Н н	en
Ć ć	ch	Ћ ћ	ch	Nj nj	n'	Њ њ	n'
D d	de	Д д	de	O o	aw	О о	aw
Dž dž	dzh	Џ џ	dzh	P p	pe	П п	pe
Đ đ	j	Ђ ђ	j	R r	er	Р р	er
E e	e	Е е	e	S s	es	С с	es
F f	ef	Ф ф	ef	Š š	sh	Ш ш	sh
G g	ge	Г г	ge	T t	te	Т т	te
H h	ha	Х х	ha	U u	oo	У у	oo
I i	ee	И и	ee	V v	ve	В в	ve
J j	y	Ј ј	y	Z z	zed	З з	zed
K k	ka	К к	ka	Ž ž	zh	Ж ж	zh