

GRATIS



CROATIA

CROATIA LIKE A PICTURE, A PICTURE LIKE CROATIA

CROATIA



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of Croatia

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CONCEPT: Niko Bulić, Ivan Antonović
TEXT: Ivan Antonović, Iyra Zajmi;
DESIGN: Ivan Antonović, Iyra Zajmi;
COLLABORATORS: in the design: Tomislav Haviček;
on the text: Fran Antonović,
Monika Ana Lelas;

TRANSLATION: Mirna Petani
PHOTOS: Fran Antonović, Ivan Antonović,
Milan Babić, Damir Fabijanić, Ivan Hreljanović, Iva
Kaštelna, Željko Kelemen, Juraj Kopac, Renca Kosi-
nožić, Željko Kričadinac, Josip Mandračević, Nino
Marčević, Dragutin Olivitz, Iva Pervan, Saša Pjanić,
Mladen Radolović, Zlatko Ramnitzer, Zvonimir Tamočki,
Robert Valai;
PHOTO SCANNING AND LAYOUT:
Krunoslav Silvan, Tomislav Haviček, Fran Antonović;
LAYOUT AND PREPRESS: Sinisa Daren;
PREPARATION OF MATERIAL FOR THE PRINT:
Iyra Zajmi, Ivana Žuli, Iva Čuljak
TECHNICAL CONSULTANT: Sinisa Daren
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To us, our homeland is the most beautiful country in the world.

Maybe it's just that we've got used to seeing it that way, simply
because history still recalls long centuries of fierce battles fought
between kingdoms and empires, power-wielders and We
proudly believe that its unmatched beauties must have been the
cause of those combats.

....superlatives...

The most beautiful, the most interesting, the oldest and the healthi-
est, the best and the most... We inherited all these when we inher-
ited the land from our ancestors. It seems, though, that from them
we've also inherited a slight proneness to exaggeration. Being the
way we are, we can't help thinking that no other country is as beau-
tiful as ours; yet we have a feeling that you won't be offended!

...and now...

Now that we have, at the very beginning, admitted our weakness,
you will hopefully forgive us for repeatedly using superlatives in the
text through which we wish to introduce to you some of the great
things you can see, hear, feel, experience ... if you decide to come
and be our guest, if not longer, then just for a few minutes while
you're reading these pages.

... and again...

Again, here we are, lamenting our own decision to write only a few
pages. For fear of tiring you, this decision made us leave out much
from this text but we hope, however, that this condensed imagery
will give you some notion of Croatia's beauties.

...the most ...

Naturally, our choice includes only the things with a multiple superla-
tive prefix. Something like the most... raised to the third, fourth or
even fifth power.

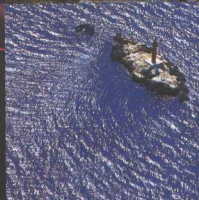
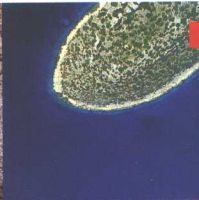
Hyperbole ?

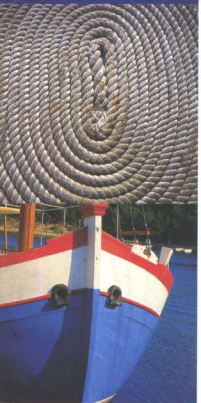
Maybe.

After all, here it is, right in front of your eyes... so see it for yourself!

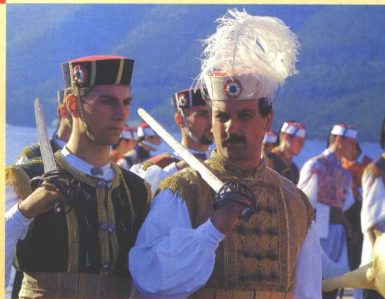


CROATIA LIKE A PICTURE,
A PICTURE LIKE CROATIA





MEDITERRANEAN CROATIA



It isn't really Croatian fiction that the Eastern Adriatic coast is the most beautiful coast in the Mediterranean! As a matter of fact, this is something we have learnt from others including globetrotters, famous seafarers and even Roman Emperors! The Romans chose this coast to settle and built their villas, palaces - whole towns in fact - to indulge in leisure, entertainment and delight. Nowhere else throughout the Mediterranean will you find so many islands, bays, coves, picturesque beaches and cliffs gilded with sunshine. What we have just said is maybe best proved by the fact that as many as five of the eight National Parks and five Nature Parks are located here.





BRIJUNI



KORČULA - THE CATHEDRAL



TROGIR - THE CATHEDRAL

PAKLENI OTOCI (HWAR)



ROVINJ

The towns along the coast are true jewels of Mediterranean architecture. Each stone can tell its own story as their memory reaches far back into history, recalling the sails of the Argonauts and those of Roman galleys; Venetian high-ranking state officials and merchants from Dubrovnik on their carracks and argosies.

It is not just a phrase when we say that there are more than a hundred small towns, villages and islands on the Dalmatian coast where one gets the impression that time stopped long ago; somewhere in the Middle Ages or in the Renaissance.

On the green hills, resembling wave crests, glisten the old towns of Hum, Plomin, Grožnjan and Motovun in Istria, Vrbnik and Lubenice on the islands of Krk and Cres...

Petrified moments of the past centuries can also be recognized in the bell-towers of Rab; in the churches, palaces and pavements of Hvar, Dubrovnik and Zadar; in the balustrades of Korčula; and particularly in the monumental Šibenik Cathedral wreathed in sculptured portraits of medieval citizens of Šibenik; not to mention the villas on the Brijuni archipelago or the monumental church-towers in Pula.

POKČ - EUPHRAZIAN BASILICA



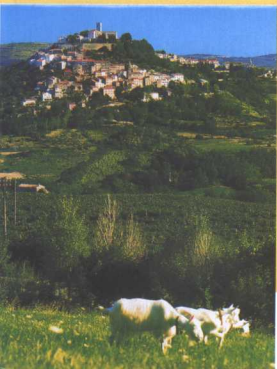
BIJE



KORČULA



MOTOVUN





KORČULA - MORESKA

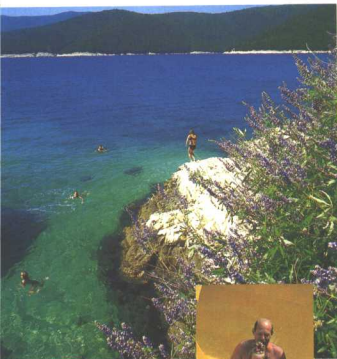


BERAM



HVAR - THE CATHEDRAL

SINI - AIKAR (TUTER IN THE RING)



NIN - ST. CROSS CHURCH



Petrified time - almost literally so - can be seen in some sixty 1000-year-old little stone churches scattered along the Croatian coast, from Istria in the north down to Dubrovnik in the south. Inside these ancient beauties, it is the permanent play of the sun-beams that tells the time and which makes each of these churches, in a very special way, both a clock and a calendar at the same time.

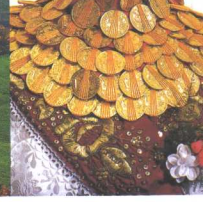
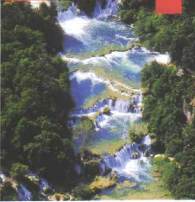
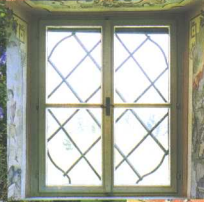


Beside them you will see cypresses and olive trees; lavender and immortelle flowers and vineyards. In the shade of pine trees you will witness day-to-day life, abundant with scents and sounds; cheese and wine, grilled fish, prosciutto and the evening song....

Experience the heaving green sea of olive trees and vineyards in the hinterland and notice the scattered herds of sheep, the drystone walls and the myriad hamlets and villages.

If you wish to see and feel the Mediterranean at its best, all you have to do is visit it and it will become clear to you why the Croatian coast of the Adriatic Sea is often called the jewel of the Mediterranean.







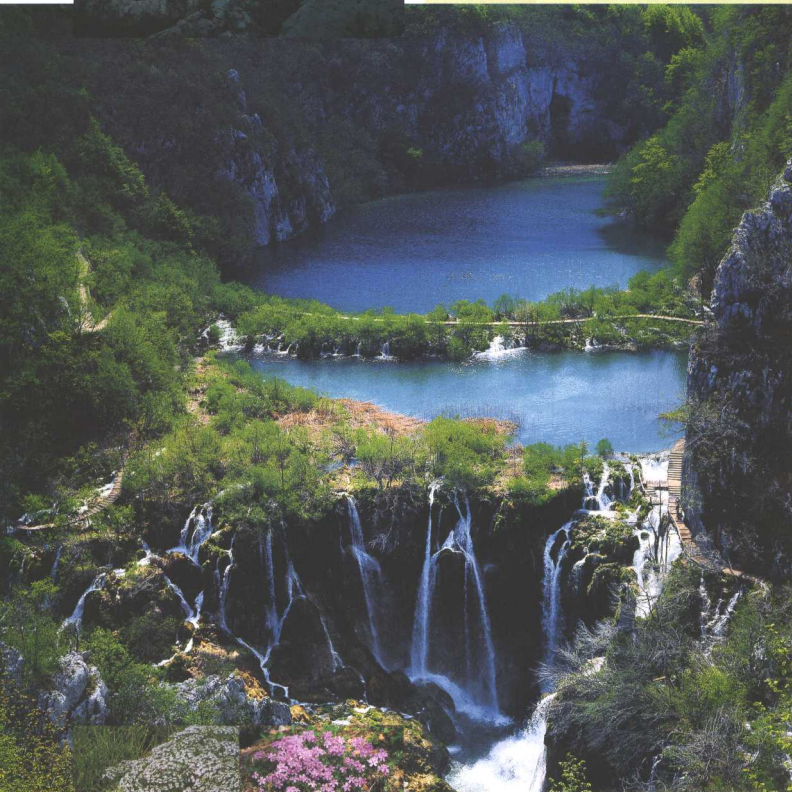
C ONTINENTAL CROATIA



Where olive groves end, continental Croatia begins. Cypresses with the woods of Učka mountain above them are replaced by the pine and fir trees of Gorski Kotar. As coniferous forests spread across the hills, vineyards are gradually replaced by rich grass-lands descending downhill to the orchards, vegetable patches and gardens of the red-roofed village houses in the valley.



VELEBIT



PLITVICE LAKES

Having crossed the Velebit mountain (a protected Nature Park) and descending on its continental side, the road will lead you through the gently undulating landscapes of Lika and Banovina on to the vast valleys of Posavina and Slavonia. En route you will pass Plitvice Lakes, one of the eight National Parks in Croatia, the small town of Slunj, famous for nearby Rastoki, and Karlovac, a lovely city on four rivers... Finally, you will arrive in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia.

If you're approaching Zagreb from the northwest, you pass through the picturesque scenery of Međimurje and Hrvatsko zagorje. These districts are situated on the slopes of gentle hills which are covered with carefully cultivated vineyards ascending almost to the top where, very often, you will notice the graceful Baroque bell-tower of the village church.



KARLOVAC



ZAGREB



ZAGREB



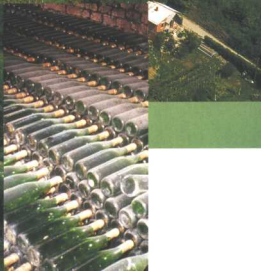
VABAŽJIN



ČAKOVEC



SISAK



Fields and meadows, moderate in size, resemble a brightly coloured patchwork. Villages swarm over hills and along rivers, following their courses toward the cities situated in the valley: Čakovec and Varaždin, the crown of Baroque architecture.

Further east on your way through Slavonia you will drive past the large willow-groves of Podravina; the hunting districts of Moslavina and the thermal springs and spas of Daruvar and Lipik. Going deeper into the very heart of the Posavina valley you will notice charming age-old wooden houses which are typical examples of traditional local architecture. Trimmed by picturesque vineyards in the Golden Valley (Valis Aurea) is the old Baroque town of Požega.

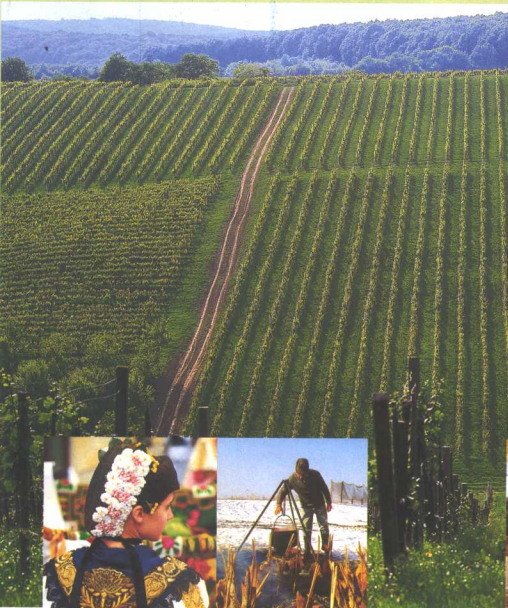
Passing through a number of idyllic Slavonian villages you will come to the cities of Đakovo and Osijek, both famous for their beautiful Baroque-Secessionist architecture. Not far from here, before flowing into the Danube, the River Drava deluges into the area known as Kopački Rit (another Nature Park), the last untouched nesting site of wading birds in Europe. Southeast of Kopački Rit lies Vukovar close to which is the famous archeological site of Vučedol after which the 5000 year-old culture has been named. In the furthest eastern corner of Croatia, towering above the River Danube, is the fortified old town of Ilok, widely renowned for its excellent wines.



ĐAKOVO



OSIJEK





HUM

TOWNS AND CITIES

Treasures of historical vicissitudes and lasting memories



ZAGREB



ZAGREB

Faces of Croatian towns and cities reflect the climate and landscape features of Mediterranean and continental Europe respectively. What they also reflect are historical, cultural and urban environments that have been moulding their shape for hundreds, if not thousands of years. From Hum in Istria which, with some twenty houses, is generally considered the smallest town in the world, to Zagreb, the Croatian capital with a population of almost a million, you will experience the warm hospitality and open-heartedness of local people.

A large city today, Zagreb owes most of its beauty and charm to the periods of Baroque, Classicism and Secession when its population was less than one-tenth of what it is today. It offers numerous museums, art-galleries, theatres, churches and gardens; the upper town, the heart of old Zagreb, overflows with life. With numerous coffee shops, pubs, clubs, crowded streets and squares, boutiques, markets and fairs, Zagreb, still less than 1000 years old, is really still in its youth.





ZAGREB



ZAGREB - THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Before Zagreb, the mace of the capital resided in Varaždin, fittingly called "the museum of continental Baroque". Though some find great delight in the Baroque buildings of Požega, a town situated amidst a picturesque wine-growing district, no one will ever deny that it takes no more than a day in Varaždin to fall in love with its palaces and churches for ever.

VARAŽDIN



If one day is enough to make you fall in love with Varaždin, falling in love with Drubrovnik, that priceless gem of World Cultural Heritage, will not require more than a glance! Enclosed within thick medieval walls and fortresses constantly pounded by the sea, it radiates an eternal and astonishing beauty.

A stroll from one city gate to another will be a stroll from the Romanesque and Gothic to the high Renaissance and Baroque.

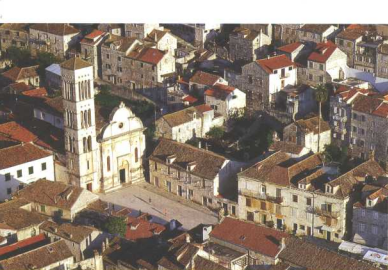


DUBROVNIK



DUBROVNIK





HVAR



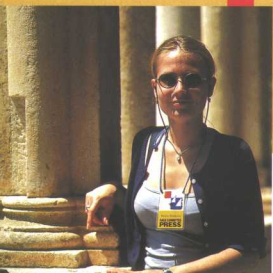
SPLIT



TROGIR



KORČULA



Constantly pounded by the sea are also many other beautiful Croatian cities. Distinctive beauty similar to that of Dubrovnik is also found in Trogir, Hvar, Korčula, Rab, Šibenik and Zadar. These medieval towns, each with its statues, fortresses, palaces, churches and monasteries, seem to continually compete with the Roman pavements and walls in Split and Pula.

Seventeen hundred years ago, Split was marked on the map of the Roman Empire when the Emperor Diocletian chose to have his residential palace erected there. Today, the well-preserved Roman architecture is interlaced with several layers from later ages. There is no doubt that Split is the busiest city on the Croatian Adriatic coast; the origin and junction of all mid-Adriatic transport routes. It is a city of genuine southern spirit; the liveliest old-timer among all Croatian cities.

SPLIT





PULA



NOVI VINODOLSKI

Pula is famous for its Arena which dates back to the 1st century A.D. and was the second biggest in the Roman Empire. It is also renowned for the Triumphal Arch of the Sergius family, the Hercules Gate, the Augustus' Temple and many more Roman monuments which were later mixed with medieval or Renaissance architecture and occasionally blended with Austro-Hungarian Classicism. Having been a crossroads for over two thousand years, today it is also a starting point for those who choose to visit the picturesque Istrian peninsula.

What can one say about the numerous tiny towns in Istria? Buje, Labin, Plomin, Motovun, Grožnjan, Barban, Beram, Pazin, Svetvinčenat, Vodnjan... each is a tale in itself! Or, to be quite precise, a fairy tale!



ROVINJ



LABIN

OPATIJA



No, it's not that we've forgotten to mention Opatija, our oldest seaside resort famous for its glamorous fin-de-siecle hotels, or Osijek, the town which features perfect harmony between Baroque, Classicism and Secession styles at the other end of the country! But we simply have to stop somewhere and allow you to discover something for yourself and thus add a new and precious stone to your treasury of memories.

OSIJEK



C ASTLES

*Jewels that remember long
and are long remembered*



TRAKOŠĆAN



VARAŽDIN



BOSIJEVO

Throughout Croatia you can visit interesting age-old castles, most of which are located in Hrvatsko zagorje, to mention just a few: the Trakošćan Castle, Veliki Tabor, Mali Tabor, Milijana's Mansion, Brezovica and Klenovnik, the old town of Varaždin.

In Slavonia two castles of distinctive beauty are the lordly mansion of the Pejačević family in Našice and the elegant chateau of the noble Eltz family in Vukovar. Regrettably, the latter was badly damaged during the war in Croatia. A number of citadels and strongholds devastated by past centuries can often be seen on strategic elevations throughout the country.

There are also a number of fairly well preserved fortification clusters: at Ston, Hvar, Kaptol (Collegiate Chapter) in Zagreb, "Zvijezda" in Karlovac and "Tvrđa" in Osijek and the old town in Ilok.



MARUŠEVEC



NAŠICE



BREZOVICA



VELIKI TABOR



ORAHOVICA - REMAINS OF RUŽICA CASTLE

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Centuries of pride



In Croatia, fortified towns are no rarity. Long ago many summer residences and even churches were built as fortresses. It seems that no matter how often we are taught that it is not only by war that the history of a nation is determined, the historical destiny of all beautiful countries has always been a destiny of repeated wars. Throughout the ages countries and their peoples have been victims of enemy raids and plunders; their goods taken away and their culture ruined. Even so, it seems that the culture of any nation survives with its people. Our culture has survived and is offered today to our friends and guests for their pleasure and delight. Despite many a war fought against Tatars, Franconians, Venetians, Turks and Serbs, the Croats have succeeded in retaining their homeland whose abundant beauty reflects the richness of their tradition and culture.





BERAM - DANCE MACABRE (Fresco, 15th century)



NIN - CHURCH/FORTRESS OF ST. NICHOLAS (12th century)

Besides the first 7th-century record, many other documents have been preserved and are precious testimony recording as they do the reigns of the oldest Croatian princes and kings since the 9th century. Among the most valuable are Preromanese stone monuments with glagolitic scriptures [AD 1100] and some rich collections of illuminated Glagolitic manuscripts originating mostly from the 13th to the 17th centuries. Due to its extraordinary artistic expressiveness, the pre-Romanesque period bears the greatest importance, particularly in architecture. However, our progress was for many centuries interlocked with that of other European nations and the Croats took their part in the development and use of European artistic styles. The first Croatian printing-house began work in Kolin less than thirty years after Gutenberg had invented the printing machine, and the first public theatre in Europe was opened in Hvar. Thanks to a strong and uninterrupted Catholic tradition there has also been an impressive amount of literature written in Latin and the Latin language was used as the official language in the Croatian Parliament till the end of the 19th century. Croatian writers, musicians, painters, sculptors and architects have contributed greatly to the culture of our civilisation. From the Middle Ages down to today our philosophers, scientists and inventors have written many pages in the book of world heritage.



HVAR - THE THEATRE

THE DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL



POREČ - EUPHRASIAN BASILICA (6th century)



C HURCHES, SHRINES, MONASTERIES



BELL TOWER OF SPLIT CATHEDRAL



LOPUD - CHURCH, MONASTERY AND FORTRESS



KORČULA - BADIJA (MONASTERY)



Silent guardians of sanctities

Having adopted Christianity in the 8th century, the Croats started to build temples. Some of these temples are still objects of keen interest among experts and are generally considered to be the most important contribution of Croatian architects to the European architectural tradition.

Along the coast, from Istria to Dubrovnik, there are many fine examples of monumental buildings of worship: the church of St. Donat on the island of Kik, St. Spas's Church on the Cetina river, the church of The Holy Cross in Nin, the church of St. Donat in Zadar, the Holy Trinity Church in Split and the church of St. Demetrius.

Churches dating from later periods embody the features or sacral architecture typical of the epoch they belong to. We are proud to have such examples as all of them reflect genuine delicacy of various architectural styles. They are: Trogir Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. Tripun, (in Korčula, today on the territory of Montenegro) and Split Cathedral (reconstruction of Diocletian's mausoleum dating from the 4th century AD).

TROGIR - THE CATHEDRAL

ŠIBENIK - THE CATHEDRAL



ZADAR - ST. DONAT





LEPOGLAVA - ST. MARY'S CHURCH



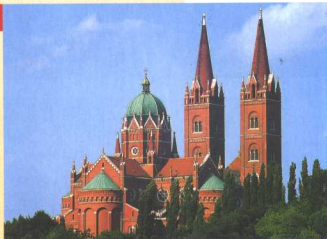
DAKOVO - THE CATHEDRAL

OSIJEK - THE CATHEDRAL

St. Euphrasius' Basilica in Poreč, (dating from the 6th century AD, famous for its magnificent gilded mosaics) and the Renaissance Cathedral in

Šibenik (built by the renowned architect Juraj Dalmatinac) are included in the World Cultural Heritage protected by UNESCO. The Renaissance Cathedral in Hvar and the fortified St. Mary's Church in Vrbovka are equally beautiful. Some cities are so distinctively marked by their churches that it is by the churches that they are recognized, for example the four bell-towers in Rab, the church of St. Donat, St. Anastasia's Cathedral and the church of St. Simun, all in Zadar.

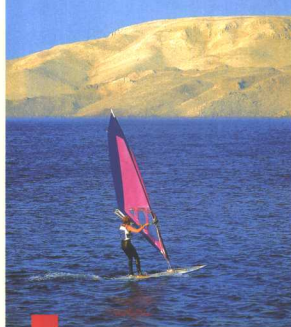
Scattered around Istria are numerous little churches which house remarkable treasures such as medieval wall paintings (Beram, frescoes painted by Vincent of Kastav) or Glagolitic script. A great number of copper "bulls" on church-towers in continental Croatia are easily recognized as a characteristic architectural element dating from the Baroque period. Many Croatian churches are dedicated to the Holy Virgin, for example the richly ornamented Baroque church of Our Lady of the Snows in Belec. Churches dedicated to the Holy Virgin have been and still are among the most popular shrines in Croatia. The most popular are: God's Mother of Bistrica, God's Mother of Trsat, Our Lady of Sinj, Our Lady of the Islands, in Solin, Our Lady of Voćin, Our Lady of Consolation, in Aljmaš, Our Lady of Remete, God's Mother of Jerusalem. There are only two sanctuaries in Croatia that are not dedicated to Our Lady: Svetište Predragocjene Krvl Isusove in Ludbreg and the church of St. Joseph in Karlovac. The walls of Benedictine, Paulist, Franciscan, Dominican and Jesuit monasteries have for many centuries been guardians of numerous remarkable accomplishments of the Croatian spirit, thought and creativity.



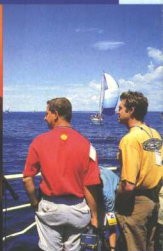
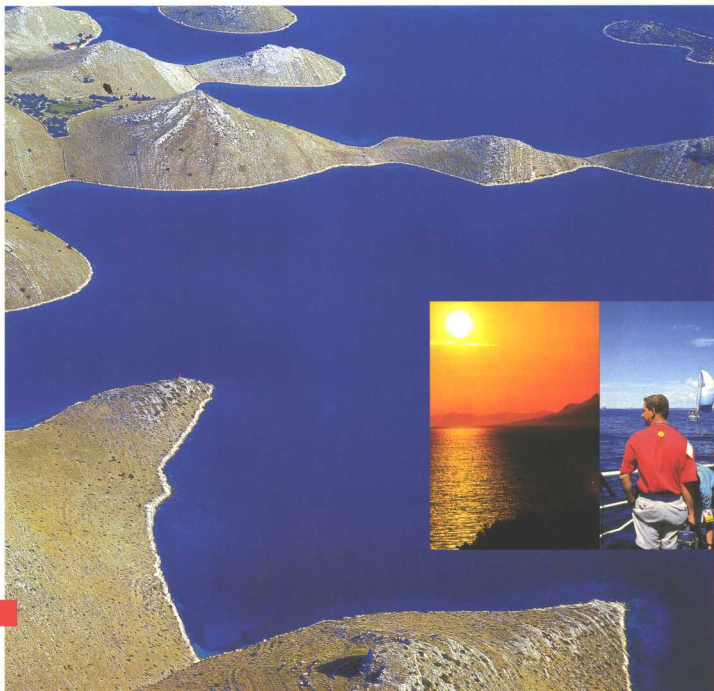
STRIGOLVA - MONASTERY/CHURCH OF ST. JERONIM



BELEC - ST. MARY OF THE SNOWS



KORNATI NATIONAL PARK



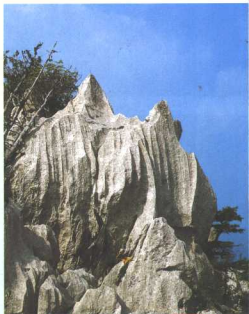
NATIONAL PARKS

Touch of untouched beauty



Even in terms of European proportions, Croatia is a country of comparatively small land surface. The number of National Parks - as many as eight - may seem surprisingly great, but only to those who haven't visited them and therefore are not aware to what extent the natural heritage of our country has been preserved.

Absolutely dominant in the coastal region is the Kornati National Park, the most indented archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea. With some 140 uninhabited islands and islets Kornati is a true labyrinth of sea and rocks, famous for its high cliffs and most unusual forms of relief. The archipelago of Kornati is among the most favoured destinations for sailors.

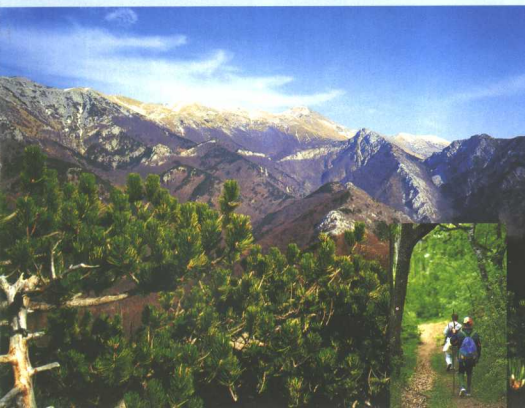


VELEBIT NATIONAL PARK

The Paklenica National Park encompasses the southern side of Velebit, the biggest mountain massif in Croatia. The Park extends from the highest peaks down to the sea. It has been named after Velika (big) Paklenica and Mala (little) Paklenica, two impressive canyons with many caves and magnificent relief forms. Because of its abundant flora and fauna, Velebit has been proclaimed a World Biosphere Reserve and its northern part a National Park.

The Park embraces two Nature Parks: Rožanski and Hajdučki kukovi, both known for attractive karst scenery, and the famous Lukina jama, one of the deepest sinkholes in the world. The world renowned Velebit Botanical Gardens are also located here.

PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK





BRIJUNI NATIONAL PARK



The Risnjak National Park embraces the wooded mountains north of the city of Rijeka. Here, at the junction of the Julian Alps and the Dinara mountain, is the habitat of the brown bear, the lynx, the chamois, the red deer and the grey sea eagle.

The Krka National Park encompasses the Krka basin, the most beautiful river of the Croatian karst. There are seven waterfalls, Skradinski buk and Roški slap being the most beautiful. Between them there is a small lake with the picturesque island of Visovac in the middle. A Franciscan monastery was built on Visovac in the 15th century.

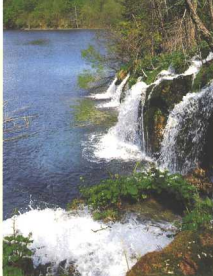


The archipelago off the western coast of the Istrian peninsula consists of two large and twelve small islands. This is the Brijuni National Park and is famous for its luxuriant Mediterranean vegetation and marine fauna, a safari park and the ancient remains of a Roman Palace, Byzantine Castrum, etc.





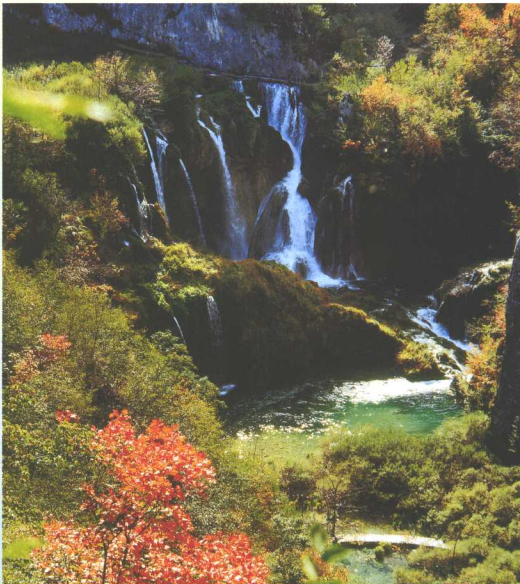
RISNJAK NATIONAL PARK



NATIONAL PARK PLITVICE LAKES



KRKA NATIONAL PARK



Plitvička jezera (Plitvice Lakes) is the most beautiful and best known Croatian National Park; and it is included in the World Natural Heritage protected by UNESCO. The parks, a sequence of 16 lakes connected by numerous waterfalls, is situated close to the main road, connecting Zagreb with Dalmatia. Thick forests of beech, fir and pine make it a perfect place for wildlife, including bears, wolves and numerous bird species. Guided tours in safari vehicles and electric boats are provided for visitors.



MIJET NATIONAL PARK



Southeast of Dubrovnik lies the stunningly beautiful island of Mljet. Its western part with two deep bays has been declared a National Park and because of their very narrow links with the sea, both bays are called lakes. The remains of ancient monuments and the 12th-century Benedictine monastery situated on the small island in the middle of the bay, make Mljet "the most seductive island in the Adriatic".



BIOKOVO NATURE PARK

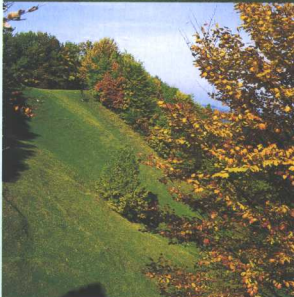
NATURE PARKS:

Besides Velebit, there are several other well preserved areas of rare and natural beauty. **BIOKOVO** is a magnificent rocky mountain just inland from the coast above the Makarska Riviera. It is famous for its rich flora and fauna (especially the chamois) and dazzling scenery. **KOPAČKI RIT**, a large wetland area where the River Drava flows into the Danube, has a rich and varied plant and animal life. Numerous fish species live here along with wading birds and also large herds of deer and wild boar.

LONJSKO POJE is another marshland by the River Sava, between Sisak and Nova Gradiška. It is one of the largest and best preserved wetlands in Europe. Especially impressive are the vast oak woodlands which are home to many different bird species. A special attraction are the storks which live literally next to the people, nesting on the roofs of their autochthonous wooden houses.

MEDVEDNICA is a mountain near the capital city, Zagreb. Even though it is very close to the major urban centre, it is a protected conservation area of beech and fir forests and many natural monuments such as caves, waterfalls and canyons. Medvednica is by far the most popular weekend resort of the inhabitants of Zagreb.

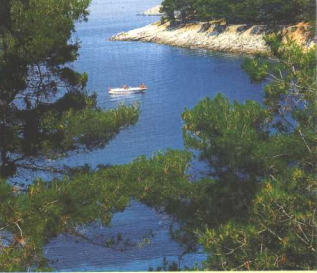
TEJAŠĆICA, the southwest part of Dugi otok in central Dalmatia, has a deep and spacious bay of the same name (Duga uvala). In the bay there are a few lovely islets. On the island, right off the shore, is a small salt lake and on its side facing the open sea are famous cliffs rising as high as 180 meters above the sea. This is one of the spots most favoured by sailors.



MEDVEDNICA NATURE PARK



KOPAČKI RIT NATURE PARK



THE KORNATI ARCHIPELAGO

KOŠIJUN - THE ISLET ON THE ISLAND OF KRK



PRECIOUS SOIL CORUBBED FROM THE ROCKY TERRAIN

FESTIVAL ON THE ISLAND OF IŽ



CROATIAN ISLANDS

Pearls of incomparable beauty

Yes, Croatia has an impressive 1000 islands, reefs and cliffs. However, it is not their number but their astonishing beauty that makes them worthy of special mention. For us, they are a genuine gift from God; a gift that we openheartedly offer to our guests and friends for ultimate joy and delight. Sixty-six inhabited islands are as many good reasons to think about all the marvels that may be waiting for you in Croatia.

From the Brijuni archipelago and its rich verdure discreetly rising from the azure of the North Adriatic, across Cres and its inexplicable fresh-water lake, or the fascinating sandy island of Susak, winegrowing Krk and neighbouring Lošinj, an island covered with centenary pine-woods, to the golden beaches of Rab.... And on to Pag, where the whiteness of the rocks along its bare shores alternates with the green pine woods... Across the Kornati archipelago and Dugi otok to the superb beauty of the islands of Brač, Hvar, Vis and Korčula... all the way down to the southernmost island, Mljet, and the Elaphite islands, the final pearls in the string.

RAB - THE SHIPLUKE ISLAND



THE ISLAND OF BRAČ - SUPETAR



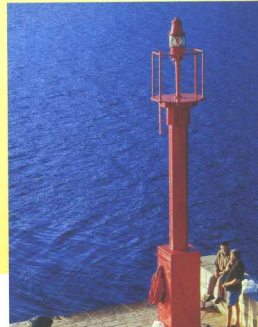
HVAR - THE ISLAND OF LAVENDER



HVAR



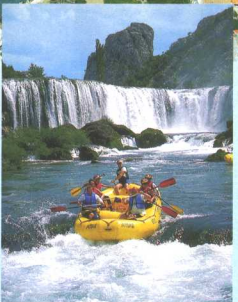
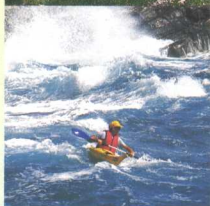
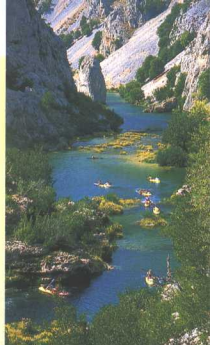
TRANSPARENCY OF THE SEA
AROUND THE ISLANDS IS UNIQUE



Only a few islands have been named here and, like we said, there are over a thousand...

Their immense beauty is there not only for the sailors, not just for incurable sea-lovers, but also for those who have only started to think about the secret of their appeal.





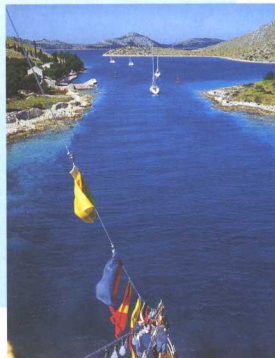
HOLIDAY IN CROATIA

*Where the beach
from our dream can be yours truly*



Any experienced sailor who has visited the Croatian coastline and has utilized the facilities of numerous marinas all the year round, knows that our islands are situated in the most beautiful Mediterranean aquatorium. During the sailing season they will always be able to find a safe port in one of the thousands of calm and peaceful inlets or azure bays. Those who prefer kayaks or canoes can also explore the beauties of not only the coast, but of the rushing streams, rivers and waterfalls in the hinterland.

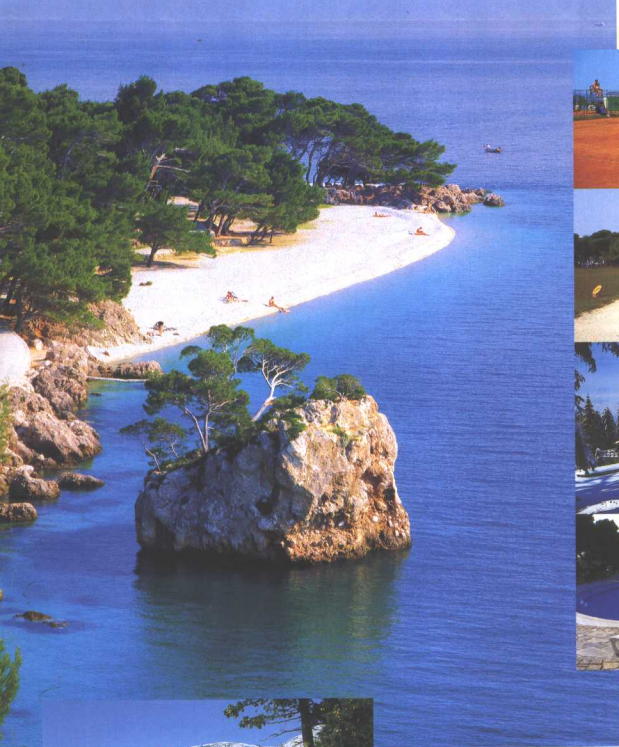
Of course, rafting brings additional excitement, just like horse-riding, cycling, playing golf, hunting, fishing, diving, hiking, trekking, rock-climbing, gliding, skiing, wind-surfing or anything else that goes with an "active holiday". If you are a mushroom-gatherer, why not try it here? Or, maybe, you would prefer picking medicinal herbs, camping, or flying in a balloon... If you like concerts and theatre, we are sure you will find something to your liking in the programs of our traditional summer festivals.

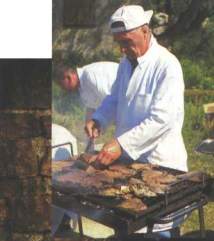




An active holiday does not have to exclude leisurely sunbathing in the solitude of some deserted beach or on a hotel terrace, and there will always be a place nearby where you can play tennis or hire a bike.







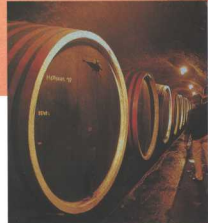
A

TABLE LAID FOR YOU

Balm both for your palate and soul



When we say that a table is laid for you, we do not really always mean a table. Besides hotel restaurants and other fancy places where meals are served according to the highest European gastronomic and epicurian standards, you can also eat delicious food and drink excellent wines in traditional tavernas where tables are often replaced by roughly trimmed boards. As an alternative to restaurants you may enjoy sitting in a wine cellar or in a vineyard cottage where the table is very effectively replaced by a barrel. Country cuisine, we believe, represents our gastronomic tradition best and the signposts along our "wine-roads" are the best visual clues for thorough oenological studies. Our table is "the meeting point" of Italian, Hungarian, Austrian and Oriental cuisines which are mixed in unimagined combinations with native culinary tradition. In Croatia, there are more than fifty different indigenous dishes and as many autochthonous kinds of cheese and dessert. Recommended specialties include barbecued meat, Dalmatian smoked ham (prosciutto), sheep cheese and kulen (paprika-flavoured salami). In the continental area, very popular dishes include turkey served with mlinci (baked dough soaked with turkey sauce) and strukle with cheese (salty pastry with cheese). In the coastal area, popular dishes include Dalmatian-style fish stew, seafood soup and seafood salad. Many centuries of wine growing have resulted in a variety of excellent wines, some of which have "conquered" tables throughout the world and won prestigious prizes. The popular red wines of Mediterranean Croatia include: teran, merlot, cabernet, opolo, plavac, dingač and postup. Popular white wines include: malvazija, pošip, pinot, kujundžuša and muscat. Continental Croatia offers mostly white wines such as grasevina, bijeli burgundac, rizling and traminac. When it comes to liquor, we strongly recommend travarica (herb brandy), lozovoča and šljivovica (plum brandy). Prošek and maraschino are delicious homemade desert drinks the savour of which will be long remembered. These, too, are the gifts from God which we gladly offer to our friends and guests for true and unforgettable delight.



SINGULARITIES OF CROATIA

*What distinguishes us
from the others*



The city walls of Dubrovnik are the best preserved fortification system in Europe.

- The first quarantine hospital in Europe was established in Dubrovnik in the 14th century. Although somewhat changed, it still exists on the location known as Lazaret.
- In the Franciscan Monastery in Dubrovnik (Samostan Male braće), there is one of the three oldest European pharmacies (it was there as early as 1317).
- From the 9th century on, the Croats wrote in their own Glagolitic script. It was used, in parallel with Latin script, till the 18th century. A huge number of historical records was written in Glagolitic script, from parish books to the inscriptions on the walls of some churches. It is still taught in some schools in Istria and Hrvatsko primorje.

PEOPLE

- Marin [a 14th-century stonemason] from the island of Rab, was the founder of San Marino, the first Republic in Europe.
- As legend has it, Marco Polo [1254-1324], the famous seafarer and discoverer of China, was born in the town of Korčula on the island of the same name.
- Julije Klović [1498-1578] was the greatest Renaissance miniaturist (often called the Michelangelo of the miniature)
- Pope Siksto V [1520-1590], known as the reformer of church institutions and deservedly considered one of the most meritorious "architects" of Rome, came from Croatia, too.
- Nikola Tesla [1856-1943], the greatest inventor in the field of electricity worldwide, was born in Croatia. His best known invention is alternating current, without which we can hardly imagine our life today.
- The Croatian baron Franjo Trenk [1711-1749] founded the first military band in Europe.
- The kind of pencil you use most often (the mechanical pencil) and the fountain pen were invented in 1906 by Slavoljub Penkala of Zagreb [1871-1922].
- The Zeppelin, the large dirigible airship constructed from metal, was originally invented by David Schwartz [1852-1897] from Zagreb. Ferdinand Zeppelin later purchased his invention, constructed the airship and named it after himself.
- Fingerprinting (dactyloscopy) as an identification method was discovered by Ivan Vučetić [1858-1924] from the island of Hvar.

PECULIARITIES



- The earliest 5000 years old European calendar known today is the calendar discovered on a ceramic vessel (terrine). The pot belongs to the Vučedal culture and is decorated with four parallel bands representing the four seasons. The symbols represent various zodiacs assigned to for individual parts of the year.



- Old-Croatian pre-Romanesque little churches were built as temples, but as clocks and calendars, too. There is no other place in the world with so many well preserved objects using sun-beams for telling the time of the day (clock) as well as that of the year (calendar).



- Istrian gamut - a specific sequence of notes and half-notes, characterizing Istrian native music, usually performed on a popular instrument the roženice.



AND SOME MORE...

- The Passion procession (through seven churches) on the island of Hvar has been a tradition since the Middle Ages and the songs sung by the people walking in procession are by European musical-ogists considered to be the oldest Passion songs in Europe.
- The first naval museum in the world was founded in Pula in 1870.



FASHION

- The only national costume in Europe, showing women's legs above the knees, is worn by women on the island of Susak.
- Wearing a kravata (the tie) was originally a fashion in Croatia. In the 18th century it was enthusiastically adopted by the French and, seemingly, by the rest of the world - at least over the past two-and-a-half centuries.

NATURE

- The longest karst cave in Europe is Lukina jama on the Velebit mountain.
- The last oasis of the European white-headed vulture is located on the island of Cres.
- The last specimen of the Mediterranean monk seal lives in the Croatian aquatorium.
- The oldest and the biggest (50 cm) variety of jelly-fish known today was discovered in the lakes on the island of Mljet (Mljet National Park).
- Numerous endemic species of flora and fauna, to mention only the endemic plant *Degenia velebitica* and the strange blue frog found in Zagreb.

Long before the "discovery of tourism", we used to give red, heart-shaped gingerbread cakes to our sweethearts.

Nowadays, we give the - GINGERBREAD HEART to honoured guests and friends - today, we give it to you!



It is a sad fact that this is about all we are able to give you in these pages. The sounds of the sea murmur in the morning; the birds' twitter or the shriek of a sea gull; the unceasing rhythms of restless crickets in the pine-woods; these we cannot convey to you. Just like we cannot bring you the melodious sound of "klapa" singing in the narrow lanes of Dalmatian towns or the vivacious playing on the "tambura" on a bedecked Slavonian two-horse carriage. These you will have to experience for yourself.

... how...

How can we make you smell the sweet perfume of immortelle on the island of Brač or lavender on Hvar? How can we make you smell old parchment and incense in monastery libraries or hear the rustle of cypresses in the breeze or the snap of a sail hit by a squall? And, finally, how can we make you feel the freshness of crystal-clear sea into which you plunge from a deserted beach? How to express the taste of "plavac", or that of grilled crab? How to experience the flicker of moonlight on a calm sea? How to retell the touch of a loved hand in the fragrant shade of quiescent pine trees?

... why...

Why did we wish to engage your attention and steal a little of your time in the first place?

You have seen and read a few pages that are meant to give you some notion of the most beautiful country in the world. That is, the country most beautiful to us.

... and ...

Don't you agree with us?

All right, we won't insist. After all, we may have exaggerated just a little. The truth of the matter is, and perhaps you will agree, there are actually two most beautiful countries in the world: your homeland and our Croatia!

CROATIA



TOURIST REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES ABROAD

Kroatische Zentrale für Tourismus,
1010 Wien, Am Hof 13, Österreich
Tel. +43 1 585 38 84
Fax +43 1 585 38 84 20
Email: office@kroatien.at

Kroatische Zentrale für Tourismus,
60311 Frankfurt, Kaiserstr. 23, Deutschland
Tel. +49 69 23 85 350;
Fax +49 69 23 85 35 20
Email: kroatien-info@gmx.de

Kroatische Zentrale für Tourismus,
80449 München, Rumfordstrasse 7, Deutschland
Tel. +49 89 22 33 44; Fax +49 89 22 33 77
Email: kroatien@tourismus.at

Office National Croate du Tourisme,
1000 Bruxelles, 38 Place de la Vieille
Halle aux Bûles, Belgium;
Tel. +32 255 018 88; Fax +32 251 381 60
Email: croatia.brussels@biz.tiscali.be

Ente Nazionale Croato per il Turismo,
00186 Roma, Via dell'Occo 48, Italia
Tel. +39 06 32 11 03 96;
Fax +39 06 32 11 14 62
Email: office@roma@ente.tismocroato.it

Ente Nazionale Croato per il Turismo,
20122 Milano, Piazzetta Pottari 1/3, Italia
Tel. +39 02 86 45 44 97;
Fax +39 02 86 45 45 74
Email: info@ente.tismocroato.it

Chorvátske Turistické Združenie,
821 09 Bratislava, Trenčianska 5,
Slovakia;
Tel. +421 2 55 562 054;
Fax +421 2 55 422 619
Email: info@tz.sk

Hrvatska turistična skupnost,
1000 Ljubljana, Gosposvetska 2, Slovenija
Tel. +386 1 23 07 400;
Fax +386 1 230 74 04
Email: hrinfo@siol.net

Honvív Idegenforgalmi Község,
1053 Budapest, Magyar ut. 36, Magyarország
Tel./Fax +36 1 266 65 05; +36 1 266 65 33
Email: horvativinfo@axelero.hu

Kroatische turistbyrå,
11135 Stockholm, Kungäppan 24, Sverige
Tel. +46 853 482 080; Fax +46 620 24 60
Email: croatinfo@wella.com

Narodowy Ośrodek Informacji Turystycznej
Republiki Chorwacji, Chmielna 16 lok. 2,
00020 Warszawa, Poland
Tel. +48 22 828 51 93; Fax +48 22 828 51 90
Email: info@chorwacja.home.pl

Chorvátske Turistické Združenie,
110 00 Praha 1, Krakovská 25, Česká Republika
Tel. +420 2 2221 1812; Fax +420 2 2221 0793
Email: info@tzr.cz

Xorvátische Touristik-Büroeebe,
Krasnopresnenskaya nab. 12,
123610 Moscow, 1502, Russia;
Tel. +7 095 258 15 07; Fax +7 095 258 15 08
Email: hr@vvt.ru

Tourist Office Services
2800 Ag Gouwe, Hoge Gouwe 93, Netherlands
Tel. +31 182 670 244;
Fax +31 182 526 959
Email: info@crosswaterbet.nl

Croatian National Tourist Office,
New York 10118, 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4003,
U.S.A.; Tel. +1 212 279 8672;
Fax +1 212 279 8683
Email: croatny@earthlink.net

Croatian National Tourist Office,
London W6 9ER, 2 Lanchesters,
162164 Fulham Palace Road, United Kingdom;
Tel. +44 208 563 79 79;
Fax: +44 208 563 26 16
Email: info@britain-tourism.co.uk

Office National Croate de Tourisme,
75116 Paris, 48, avenue Victor Hugo, France
Tel. +33 1 45 00 99 55;
Fax +33 1 45 00 99 56
Email: CROATIE.OT@wanadoo.fr

Kroatische Zentrale für Tourismus
Badenstr. 332, 8004 Zürich, Switzerland
Tel. +41 4 3321 8211;
Fax +41 4 3321 8213
Email: kroatien@gmx.ch

Hrvatska turistička zajednica
Iblov trg 10/IV, p.p. 251; 10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska
Tel. +385 1 46 99 333; Fax +385 1 455 7827
Internet: www.hr.vatska.hr
Email: info@htz.hr


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