The splendid golden beach of Bol, on the island of Brač
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The detailed information and tips given in this guide will help you to get the most out of your visit to Croatia. Introducing Croatia maps the country and sets it in its historical and cultural context. The six sections, one dedicated to Zagreb, describe the main sights using maps, photographs and illustrations. In Istria, Kvarner and part of Dalmatia, two languages are spoken (Croatian and Italian) and two place names may refer to the same town. Where both names are officially recognized, the Croatian name is given first, then the Italian in brackets. Restaurant and hotel recommendations can be found in the section Travellers’ Needs, together with information about shopping and entertainment. The Survival Guide has tips on everything from transport to making a phone call, as well as other practical matters.

CROATIA AREA BY AREA

Croatia has been divided into six main areas, each one identified by its own colour code. On the inside front cover is a general map of the country showing these six areas. All the most interesting places to visit are located on the Regional Map in each chapter.

Introduction
This section describes the character and history of each area, highlighting its development over the centuries and what it has to offer the visitor today.

Regional Map
This shows the road network and provides an illustrated overview of the whole region. The most interesting places to visit are numbered, and there are useful tips on getting around the region by car and public transport.

Detailed Information
All the important towns and other places to visit are described individually. They are listed in order and follow the numbering shown on the Regional Map. Detailed information is given about the most important sights.
Main Towns
All the main towns have an individual section where the museums, monuments and other places of interest are listed. All the sights of major interest are located on the town map.

The town map shows the main roads, stations, car parking areas and tourist offices.

Street-by-Street Map
This gives a bird's-eye view of the key areas of interest in the main towns and cities with photographs and captions describing the sights.

Croatia's Top Sights
These are given two full pages. There are cutaways or reconstructions of historic buildings, maps of national parks with information about trails and facilities available, and there are floorplans of the major museums. There are also photographs of the main sights.

Stars indicate the sights that no visitor should miss.

The Visitors' Checklist provides practical information about transport, opening times, events and the closing dates of places of particular interest.

Detailed Information on Each Sight
The main attractions are listed for each place. A map shows the main towns, villages and beaches on the larger islands.
INTRODUCING CROATIA

DISCOVERING CROATIA 10–11
PUTTING CROATIA ON THE MAP 12–13
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INTRODUCING CROATIA

With over 4,800 km (3,000 miles) of Mediterranean coastline and 1,185 islands, Croatia is one of Europe’s leading holiday playgrounds. Close to the beaches there are picturesque ancient ports and excellent restaurants with sea views.

But there is more to Croatia than just the coast. Inland lie the cultural hot spots of Zagreb and Varaždin, as well as a varied countryside dotted with castles, spa-towns and nature parks. These pages pinpoint Croatia’s main attractions and highlights.

ISTRIA AND THE KVARNER AREA

- Beautiful old port towns
- Imperial Opatija
- Plitvice Lakes National Park
- The Island of Rab

Istrian port towns are notable for their stout walls, church towers, and medieval houses tumbling down steep, cobbled alleys to picturesque harbours. Prettiest is Rovinj (see p56), but Poreč (see pp53–5) with its 6th-century Basilica of Euphrasius and Pula (see pp60–3) with its 1st-century Roman Amphitheatre have the star attractions. The best way to enjoy Opatija (see p67) is by checking into one of the grand 19th-century seafront promenade hotels – originally built as holiday villas for the Austrian imperial elite; the crystal chandeliers, grand halls of stuccoed columns, elegant parks and formal gardens, contrast sharply with the more Italianate Istria. Arguably the greatest natural wonder in Croatia is the Plitvice Lakes National Park (see pp86–7). A whole day of lakes, cliffs, forests and falls will leave you both awe-struck and coolly refreshed. Serious bathers should seek out the secluded, sandy beach of Lopar on the island of Rab (see pp82–3), one of the most exquisite islands in Kvarner Bay.

Dalmatia

- Carefree island hopping
- Great seafood restaurants
- Beaches aplenty
- Coastal capitals of antiquity

Frequent ferry services make Dalmatia’s archipelago of islands easily accessible to visitors: see lavender-scented Hvar (see pp126–7); medieval Korčula (see pp132–5) prettily fortified by the Venetians; and unspoilt, pine-covered Mljet (see pp136–7), with its quiet coves and picturesque lakeside monastery. The most expensive region of Croatia, Dalmatia offers one of its finest treats – dining al fresco on a terrace looking over the sea. Swimming in the cool, clean water is also a delight, and you soon learn the art of finding a flat, warm rock to lie on and how to cross a stretch of sharp pebbles. The walk round the walls at Dubrovnik (see pp140–7) above the mosaic of orange-tiled roofs is amazing, as is Diocletian’s Palace in Split (see pp118–123), a repository brimful of Roman, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Quaint Trogir, (see pp112–5) an historic town on an island, also cannot fail to charm.

ZAGREB

- Sophisticated nightlife
- Enchanting Upper Town
- Cathedrals and churches
- Galleries and museums

Having emerged from the historical shadow of Belgrade, Croatia’s capital city, Zagreb now resounds again with all
its old self-confidence. At night the city comes out to play in Croatia’s classiest choice of bars, clubs, casinos, restaurants, theatres and concert venues. The Upper Town (see pp151–7), with its cozy medieval alleyways, churches, funicular railway and fine views, is clearly the loveliest part of Zagreb. At the city’s heart stands the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (see p150) with its Neo-Gothic spires. Enjoy too the array of galleries and museums, especially the Gallery of Old Masters (see pp162–3), and the Mestrovic Gallery (see pp153–5) devoted to the most renowned Croatian artist.

The imposing Veliki Tabor castle in the Northern Counties

THE NORTHERN COUNTIES

- Baroque Varaždin
- Dramatic castles
- Historic spa-towns

Linked by winding country roads through green rolling hills, the Northern Counties are best visited by hire-car from Varaždin (see pp202–3). Once the capital of Croatia, 12th-century Varaždin may have a medieval castle and town hall but the atmospheric charm of its cobbles, pretty churches, and outdoor cafés is pure Austrian Baroque. The 14th-century castle Veliki Tabor (see p210) looks good from the outside, but the century older Trakošćan (see pp206–7), overlooking a lake, is more impressive. Nestled in a lush green forest, Varaždinske Toplice (see p213) is a Roman spa-town that should not be missed.

SLAVONIA AND BARANJA

- Kopački Rit Nature Park
- Beautiful Osijek
- The rural charm of Topolje

The flat, fertile plains of Slavonia contain Kopački Rit Nature Park (see pp194–5), a wetland extravaganza of animal, fish and bird species that is best explored by boat. Stroll along the Drava at Osijek (see pp190–3) or enjoy a summer’s evening swim in the river, hot from admiring the Baroque architecture of the city’s 18th-century centre, the Tvrda (see pp191–3). See the Hungarian influenced farmhouses in the charming countryside around Topolje (see p189), many garlanded with drying chilli peppers. In much of the area the painful consequences of war are all too obvious, but as the rebuilding shows, the astonishing resilience of the human spirit is also much in evidence.

The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Zagreb

CENTRAL CROATIA

- Fairytale Samobor
- Country houses and castles
- Lonjsko Polje Nature Park

The least visited part of the country, Central Croatia nonetheless holds several gems. Just west of Zagreb, up in forested hills typical of the region, lies Samobor (see p170). With trim, pastel houses, wooden bridges and a pretty trout stream, this showcase village also offers 13th-century ruins, great walks and family-run restaurants with local specialities. Try local sausages with smoked mustard followed by kremšnita custard pastries. Near Zagreb, the country houses (see pp172–3) of the Croatian aristocracy dot the landscape, while further away in Sisak, Ogulin and Hrvatska Kostajnica (see pp174–5), great castles bear witness to the area’s turbulent history. For nature, head south-east to Lonjsko Polje Nature Park (see p176), home to Posavina horses, Turopolje spotted pigs and black storks; and smoke-house cottages.

Black Stork, Lonjsko Polje Nature Park

Chilli peppers drying in the sun in Topolje, Baranja
Putting Croatia on the Map

Covering an area of 56,542 sq km (21,825 sq miles), Croatia has a population of around 4,437,460 with an average of 78 inhabitants per square kilometre. Since the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, and Croatian independence, the country has been bordered by Slovenia, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the two now independent republics of Serbia, and Montenegro. It is not a large country, but it has a wide variety of natural and man-made environments. From a topographical point of view the country is made up of three types of terrain. Much is mountainous, with peaks up to 2,000 m (6,560 ft) high, mostly covered with forest and pasture. The vast Pannonian Plain lies between the rivers Drava, Sava and the Danube. Coastal Croatia is nearly 600 km (372 miles) long, but over 2,000 km (1,242 miles) long when the indented coastline is taken into account, and twice that when the hundreds of islands are included.
Croatia forms a meeting point between the Mediterranean and central Europe, and between the Alps and the Pannonian Plain. Its relatively small territory is made up of a wide variety of landscapes. A stunningly beautiful country, it has re-emerged from the difficult years of conflict and regained its role as a popular holiday destination.

Croatia seceded from the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia in 1990, following the first free elections since World War II. However, the brutal conflict that quickly followed had disastrous effects on the economy and led to the damage and destruction of many historic monuments and treasures. The United Nations administered disputed territories until 1995, and the last region, Eastern Slavonia, was returned to Croatian administration only in January 1998.

The resolution of the conflict recreated a country which had lost its autonomy long ago in 1102, when Croatian nobles handed the vacant crown to King Koloman. Under Koloman, Croatia became part of Hungary and remained so for 900 years, until 1918. At the end of World War I, Croatia declared independence but, under pressure from greater powers, agreed to become part of the kingdom of Yugoslavia. From the ruins of the Habsburg empire emerged Yugoslavia: a new state of Serbs, Croatians and Slovenes.

Few people live in the steep mountainous areas and as a result the forests of this region, among the most beautiful in southern Europe, are unspoilt. The coast and larger islands are more densely populated and the income from tourism is important to many. The political upheavals of the last decade of the 20th century have caused a shifting of the population and many Serbs have moved away.
According to a census carried out in 2001, Croatia has a population of 4,437,460, of which 4,399,364 are resident. Compared with the census of 1991 there has been a 5.2 per cent fall in the population and a 7 per cent decrease in those resident. These figures, a reflection of the upheavals of the 1990s, reduce the numbers to the population levels of 1968. Two different factors were responsible for these changes. Firstly, the departure of about 400,000 Serbians (partially offset by the return of Croatians resident in other parts of former Yugoslavia), and secondly, the emigration of many young people in search of work in other countries in Europe, America or Australia.

The tragic events of the 1990s have also altered the distribution of the population, emptying villages and concentrating populations in large urban centres. Changes to the size of many towns and cities, the result of enlarging their territorial boundaries, make detailed analysis difficult, particularly with regard to Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Osijek and Zadar.

Manufacturing industries are concentrated in the larger cities and employ 20 per cent of the population. The service industry is being overhauled and provides employment for an increasing number of workers, mainly in the tourist sector, which has recovered after a decade of recession and neglect: 7 per cent of the population is employed in this area.

Demand for fresh fish to supply the tourist resorts means that the fishing industry has revived and mussel farming has also expanded, in particular along the Limski Channel and around Ston. The privatization of much agricultural land, and the introduction of modern machinery and the rationalization of crops, have reduced the number of farm workers. However, the production of fruit and wine grapes has recovered, and overall quality is improving significantly.

The urgent need to rebuild public and privately-owned buildings damaged during the conflict in the 1990s and the ever-increasing demand for tourist facilities keeps the numbers employed in the building trade high: 7 per cent of the workforce is involved in the construction industry. However, in spite of an improved standard of living for most of the population, unemployment is still high. Croatia hopes to resolve most of its employment problems by joining the European Union, and by providing land, energy and labour at competitive costs. The building of a modern road network with the construction of new motorways, the modernization of the railways and plans to improve the ports will also help to alleviate high unemployment levels.
TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS
Since the rebirth of the Croatian state, all kinds of traditional festivals have reappeared. These festivals, ceremonies or games commemorate historical, religious and military events. Some festivals are expressions of primitive or ancient faith, and mix Christianity with ancient pagan rites, others are linked to the religious calendar. Traditional costumes and jewellery, carefully preserved by the older generation, are worn on these occasions. The materials may sometimes be new but the designs stay faithfully traditional.

Other expressions of popular culture are the rites linked to the rhythms of farming: harvesting, bringing flocks down from the mountains, felling trees. The Feast of St Blaise, the patron saint of Dubrovnik, is magnificent. People from local and surrounding parishes gather, dressed in splendid costumes and displaying ancient banners in honour of the saint. Even the communists were unable to suppress this tradition. Another spectacular festivity is the Olympics of Ancient Sports in Brodanci, when young people parade in gold-embroidered costumes, followed by groups of musicians. Other important events are the Festival of the Bumbari in Vodnjan with its donkey race, the Folk Festival in Đakovo and the Moreška and Kumpanija festivals in Korčula, commemorating battles against the Ottoman Turks.

LANGUAGE
The attempt to fuse the Croatian and Serbian languages lasted more than a century, but in 1991 the official language of Croatia became Croatian, and this is now part of the constitution. The language has always been a fundamental part of Croatian identity, even under foreign domination. The people continue to use three basic dialects, štokavski in southern and eastern Croatia, čakavski in Istria and parts of Dalmatia, and kajkavski in Zagreb and the north. A dialect similar to Venetian is spoken along the coast.

RELIGION
Religious feeling has always been important to Croatians. Religion was relegated to a secondary role during the communist period but the great sanctuaries are once again centres of spirituality. In the 2001 census, over 90 per cent declared they were Christian (88 per cent Catholic, 4 per cent Orthodox), with a Muslim minority, mostly Bosnians, and a Protestant minority, mostly Hungarians. The Orthodox community has shrunk due to the fall in the number of Serbians.
The Landscape and Wildlife of Croatia

A wide variety of landscapes can be found in Croatia, from wild uninhabited craggy gorges to steep river valleys and a stunningly beautiful indented coastline stretching into the lower Adriatic, dotted with hundreds of islands. A plateau stretches from the Istrian peninsula towards Gorski Kotar and ends in the hilly vine-growing region of Zagorje. The geological formations produced by the porous limestone terrain called karst are found in Gorski Kotar and continue to nearby Istria and the Velebit mountains, where the combination of wind, rain and rock has created strange shapes called *kukovi*. Nicknames and legends have been created by folklore for these rock formations, and for the thousands of rocky islands off the coast, remnants of an ancient mountain chain.

**MOUNTAINS**

Mountains form 40 per cent of Croatia and rise to nearly 2,000 m (6,560 ft) high. The higher land is given over to sheep farming and the breeding of livestock. The forests are mixed, with pine, fir, chestnut and beech, depending on altitude and microclimate. The wildlife includes bears, wolves, wild boar, lynxes, badgers, foxes, roebucks and chamois. Forestry management aims to control deforestation.

**THE PLAIN**

The plain is bordered by wide rivers which also define Croatia’s borders for much of their length. The vast Pannonian Plain is the breadbasket of Croatia. Maize, wheat, soya and tobacco are grown here and at the fringes are vine-covered hills. At one time there were forests here, dominated by the Slavonian oak, much sought-after in Europe for the quality of its wood. A few isolated remnants of these forests can still be seen.

**The forests** are a precious resource in Croatia. Thick vegetation covers more than 30 per cent of the country.

**The oak of Slavonia** was famous since ancient times, was used to build most of the ships in the Venetian and Dubrovnik fleets, because of its extraordinary strength.

**The Croatian plain** is one of the most fertile areas in Europe. Some agricultural produce is exported.

**The chamois** was thought to have disappeared from Croatia but there are now a dozen or so animals originating from Slovenia.

Seagull perched on a rocky outcrop near the island of Pag
NATIONAL PARKS
Croatia began protecting wildlife areas of particular importance in 1949 by setting up the Plitvice Lakes National Park on the Lika plateau. A few years later, the Risnjak National Park was founded north of Rijeka, then in 1985 the Krka National Park north of Šibenik. The Paklenica National Park, at the heart of the Velebit mountain chain, dates from 1949. In 1978 it was declared a world biosphere reserve by UNESCO and later included on the list of World Heritage Sites. It is home to over 2,400 species of plant. There are four national parks in the Adriatic: the Mljet National Park, founded in 1960, the Kornati National Park (1980), the Brijuni National Park (1983) and the North Velebit National Park (1999). There are also nature reserves, oases, biotopes (environments characterized by particular conditions) and two marshes: Kopački Rit and Lonjsko Polje. In 2008, Stari Grad Plain on the island of Hvar was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

THE COAST
The coast’s appearance is determined by the extent of its exposure to the fierce, northeast bora wind. Mediterranean flora flourishes on the sheltered side, with olives, lemon trees and vines. Low-growing vines are cultivated along the central part of the coast and on some of the islands, sheltered from the wind by stone walls. Two common plants along the coast and on the islands are lavender, particularly on Hvar, and broom.

LAKES AND RIVERS
The lakes of Croatia are not large, but some are truly spectacular, as for example those of Plitvice and those formed by the River Krka. The rivers are another of Croatia’s valuable resources. The Danube, Drava, Sava and Kupa are all navigable and form international transport routes (although traffic is currently partly interrupted). The rivers abound with a variety of fish and are a big attraction for fishing enthusiasts.

**Broom** is a common sight in Croatia. In spring, it bears bright yellow flowers.

**Waterlilies** are in flower in late spring, particularly in Lonjsko Polje and Kopački Rit.

**Storks** live near the rivers as well as in protected nature reserves in Croatia. The wetlands make an ideal habitat for the rare black stork.

**The marine life** is extraordinarily varied, with a wide range of species including sea-horses.

**Risnjak National Park with its thick forests of fir and beech**
Art and Artists in Croatia

For centuries Croatian art has combined elements from eastern and western Europe. The coast was ruled by Venice for 400 years, and between the Middle Ages and the 17th century, Croatia was in regular contact with the other side of the Adriatic. Italian artists came to the islands to work, and the Dalmatians crossed the sea and brought Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance styles back to their country. After the expulsion of the Turks at the end of the 17th century, many churches were rebuilt in the Baroque style, and acquired rich ornamentation. The 20th century saw the advent of Naive painting, an important artistic trend, and sculptor Ivan Meštrović was confirmed as Croatia’s most famous contemporary artist (see p157).

SCULPTURE

The art of sculpture in Croatia has ancient origins and may have been inspired by the local stone, used to construct some of the most important Roman monuments in Pula and Split, which became models for future generations of Adriatic sculptors.

Sculpture and stone carving reached the height of expression with the Romanesque style. Dating from this time are the cathedral doors of Trogir and Split, the rose windows of Zadar and Rab, the capitals in the cloisters in Dubrovnik and Zadar, and much church statuary. The technical skills of the Renaissance period are documented in Šibenik cathedral, with masterpieces by Juraj Dalmatinac, Nikola Firentinac and Andrija Aleši.

The stonemasons should also be remembered, particularly those of Korčula. Decades of skilled work went into Korčula cathedral and the masons’ work can be seen in hundreds of other towns and cities in Croatia. Sculpture again reached a peak in the 20th century with Ivan Meštrović, the chief figure in a group of great artists which included Antun Augustinčić.

ANDRIJA BUVINA

All that is known of this sculptor is that he was born in Split and lived in the 13th century. The great door of the cathedral of his native city is testament to his skill. This masterpiece from 1214 consists of 28 wooden panels depicting the life of Christ, and uses simple lines allied to a wealth of detail.

MASTER RADOVAN

The sculptor Master Radovan was of Dalmatian origin and lived in the 13th century. His name appears on the door of

Maria Banac, sculpture by Ivan Meštrović

Wooden panel by Andrija Buvina in Split cathedral

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JURAJ DALMATINAC

Juraj Dalmatinac, also known as Giorgio Orsini, was an ambassador for Dalmatian art, which was greatly influenced by Venice. The artist was born in Zadar in about 1400 and died in 1475. He was active in Dalmatia and in Italy as a sculptor and an architect.

The cathedral of St James in Šibenik (see pp108–9), to which he contributed, is regarded as one of the masterpieces of the Croatian Renaissance. Dalmatinac sculpted the faces on the upper part of the base of the apses and also the statues of Adam and Eve at either side of the Door of Lions.

The door of the cathedral of Trogir by Master Radovan

Face by Dalmatinac in the cathedral of Šibenik

Wooden panel by Andrija Buvina in Split cathedral

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ARTISTS

Painting in Croatia cannot boast a history equal to that of sculpture since it was only after contact with the Venetian school at the end of the 16th century that Croatian painting emerged in Istria and Dalmatia. The monasteries and cathedrals commissioned Venetian masters to make altarpieces and in emulating these models the great artists of Dubrovnik developed.

In the late 17th–18th centuries, the Baroque style predominated in inland Croatia in architecture as well as art. Baroque originated in German-speaking areas and inspired local artists; the Austrian artist Ivan Ranger (see p206) was a key figure. Interest in religious paintings then dwindled, and in the 19th century, young artists were inspired by pan-European culture. In the 1930s and 40s Naive Art developed.

Vincent od Kastva

One of the most expressive cycles of frescoes in Istria bears the signature of this Istrian painter, Vincent od Kastva (Vincenzo da Castua), who lived in the 15th century. The frescoes are hidden away in the small church of St Mary (Sv. Marija na Škriljinah) in Beram. The brightly coloured frescoes, on the side walls and the inside façade, were painted in about 1471 with assistants and have a primitive but vigorous style. The Life of Christ and the Virgin has figures of saints; the best-known work is the Dance of Death, where Death, holding a scythe, punishes sinners, here represented by all the most powerful people on earth (from the pope to lords of the manor).

Lovro Dobričević

Little is known of Lovro Marinov Dobričević (Lorenzo De Boninis), pupil of Paolo Veneziano, who lived in the 15th century and is regarded as one of the most significant exponents of the Dubrovnik school. Two of his great works are in Dubrovnik: the Baptism of Christ (c.1448) is in the Dominican Museum and the polyptych Virgin, Christ and the Saints Julian and Nicholas (1465) is in the church of St Mary of Danče (Sv. Marije na Dančama).

Julije Klović

Julije Klović (Giulio Clovio) was one of the most famous Renaissance miniaturists. A native of Croatia he was born in Grižane in 1498, his most significant works are found outside the country. The painter developed his craft in Venice, and was then summoned to work in Rome, Mantua, Perugia and numerous monasteries. He died in Rome in 1578.

The Hlebine School

Krsto Hegedušić (1901–75), Expressionist painter and later a Naive artist, founded a group of artists called Zemlja (“Earth”). He encouraged the work of two amateur painters from the village of Hlebine, near Koprivnica: Ivan Generalić and Franjo Mraz, who depicted their local world on glass and canvas in fresh, vivid style. Together with Mirko Virius they founded the Hlebine school which flourished from 1930 to the beginning of World War II. Many other painters, including Ivan Večenaj, Dragan Gaži, Franjo Filipović and Josip Generalić, followed their ideas, concentrating on depicting the lives of outcasts, the poor, and working folk. The Hlebine school became a worldwide phenomenon with the 1952 Venice Biennale and exhibitions in Brazil and Brussels. Naive works are on show at the Hlebine Gallery in Koprivnica and the Museum of Naive Art in Zagreb.
Architecture in Croatia

Croatian architecture, like its art, has also been influenced by Croatia’s position in Europe. Secular and religious buildings display a fusion of elements from nearby Italy and Germany and other forms originating in the Byzantine or Slavic worlds. This blending of influences was first noticeable in the time of the Romans and still continues today. Some styles became particularly important: for example the impressive cathedrals of the Adriatic coast, the legacy of many centuries of Venetian rule. In inland Croatia Baroque architecture prevails, characterized by exuberant decoration and expansive forms.

PRE-ROMANESQUE AND ROMANESQUE

True Croatian architecture begins with pre-Romanesque and dates back to the time of Duke Branimir (879–92), who created the first state of Croatia. Contact with the Byzantine world influenced the look of religious buildings in Istria and Dalmatia but some decorative elements reveal the first signs of Romanesque: small churches with irregular ground-plans appear in areas inhabited by Croatian tribes. The founding of Šibenik (1066) saw the first Romanesque buildings, introduced by the Cistercians. The style spread and remained popular until the end of the 16th century, and three-aisle cathedrals with apses were built as well as monasteries with cloisters, public buildings, town halls and loggias.

The church of the Holy Cross in Nin (see p100), one of the most interesting examples of the pre-Romanesque, known as the world’s smallest cathedral, was built in the 9th century. It has a Greek cross ground-plan with three apses. It is positioned to ensure that the sun’s rays fall in pre-planned positions on the floor and act as a clock.

GOTHIC

The Gothic style, more than any other in Croatia, is lasting evidence of the long rule of the Venetians along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts. It developed following the Venetian conquest of the Adriatic coast (1420) and is a fundamental expression of the close contact that was established. Venetian Gothic not only influenced the design of Dalmatian and Istrian churches but also mansions in Pula, Rab, Pag, Zadar, Šibenik and Split.

The door with an ogival arch is decorated with thin spiral columns and has two lions on the corbel.
RENAISSANCE
The Renaissance style was only able to develop in those parts of the country which did not fall under Turkish rule. The most important architects and artists of the time were Juraj Dalmatinac (see p20), Nikola Firentinac and Andrija Aleši, who worked mainly along the Adriatic coast. They were all involved in the construction of churches and public buildings. The cathedral of St James in Šibenik (see pp108–9) became a model for the churches of St Stephen in Hvar, St Mary in Zadar and St Saviour in Dubrovnik. Renaissance buildings also appeared in the north of Croatia, both in the form of private residences (Varaždin and Čakovec) and castles (Trakošćan and Veliki Tabor).

BAROQUE
This was the style that characterized the legitimization of Christian worship in Croatia after the expulsion of the Turks at the end of the 17th century. The signs of Ottoman rule were eradicated and architects, mainly of German extraction, constructed public and private buildings, enriching them with ornate decorations equal to those of the churches, castles and sanctuaries. The most notable examples of the Baroque style can be found in Varaždin, Požega, Osijek, Križevci, Ludbreg and Krapina.

MODERNISM
By the 19th century Zagreb had become the centre of political and cultural life in Croatia, which gave it a prominent role as leader in the architectural field. Much experimentation took place in the following century in the capital, inspired first by the Viennese Secession style and later by Modernism. The church of St Blaise and Villa Krauss are interesting examples of the latter style.
INTRODUCING CROATIA

The upheavals of the decade from 1991–2000 inevitably affected the calendar of events which characterizes the cultural life of Croatia. However, concerts, theatre seasons and sporting events have now largely been resumed along with religious festivals and events linked to local traditions. The different stages in the agricultural year, such as the grape harvest, the threshing, fishing or hunting seasons, are also marked. In addition, every town celebrates its patron saint’s day and the “town’s day”, which is linked to episodes in the town’s history. Zagreb offers a rich calendar of cultural events all through the year, while the festivals in the towns and villages along the coast are generally held during the summer season.

CROATIA THROUGH THE YEAR

The arrival of spring in Croatia coincides with a series of important dates in the religious calendar. Spring brings warmer weather and also sees the beginning of a series of festivals and events which continue throughout the summer. Catholic churches are especially busy around Easter time, with its associated rituals.

MARCH

Holy Week (Easter). On Korčula Easter is celebrated with processions of brotherhoods performing mystery plays and singing.

APRIL

Musical Biennial of Zagreb (Apr). Annual festival of modern music.

ST GEORGE’S DAY, SENJ (23 APR)
ST VINCENCA’S DAY, KORČULA (28 APR)

APRIL

St George’s Day, Senj (23 Apr).
St Vincenca’s Day, Korčula (28 Apr). The Kumpanija dance which commemorates an ancient battle between enemy armies is performed. At the finale local girls in costume dance in a circle.

MAY

CROATIAN WINE EXHIBITION, KUTJEVO (MAY). Displays of Croatian wines plus a folklore and music programme.

DAYS OF HRVATINJA, HRVATINJA (MAY). Annual celebration of Croatian literature and theatre, as well as scientific themes and presentations by scientists from other countries.

REGATTA ROVINJ–PESARO–ROVINJ, ROVINJ. Annual celebration of traditional Croatian maritime culture.

MEETING OF PUPPET THEATRES, OSIJEK (EARLY MAY). Performances of professional and amateur puppet theatre companies.

TOURNAMENT OF RAB (9 MAY). Parade of costumed riders with crossbows.

FESTIVAL OF THE SMALL THEATRE, RIJEKA (FIRST HALF OF MAY). Groups from all over Europe participate.

FESTIVAL OF CROATIAN TAMBOUR MUSIC, OSIJEK (MID-MAY). Festival of ancient music with period instruments, including the tambour.

SUMMER

As this is the season when most tourists visit Croatia, particularly Istria and Dalmatia, this is also the period when the calendar of events is busiest. There are festivals dedicated to music, theatre and dance, as well as many traditional festivals. The folk festivals held throughout the summer are particularly colourful events.

JUNE

DANCE WEEK, ZAGREB (MAY/JUN). International festival of dance, movement and mime, organized in collaboration with European associations.

MUSIC EVENTS, PULA (ALL SUMMER). Various events in the Roman amphitheatre.

FESTIVAL OF SATIRE, ZAGREB (JUN). International festival celebrating the satirical.

Typical costume of Pag

Procession during Holy Week on the island of Korčula

Typical costume of Pag

The festival of Brodsko Kolo, Slavonski Brod

Typical costume of Pag

The festival of Brodsko Kolo, Slavonski Brod

Festival of Amateur Film and Video, Požega (end May). Screenings of short amateur films and videos.
CROATIA THROUGH THE YEAR

Brodsko Kolo, Slavonski Brod (mid-Jun). Displays of folk dancing in costume, shows and exhibitions of regional produce.

Summer of Margherita, Bakar (last week of Jun). Concerts and performances in the čakavski dialect.

International Children’s Festival, Šibenik (end Jun–beginning Jul). Festival dedicated to the creativity of the very young. Music, dance, theatre and film.

Summer Festival, Hvar (Jun–Sep). A fun festival of music, theatre, folklore and dancing.

JULY

Festival klapa, Omiš (Jul). Celebration of traditional Dalmatian songs performed by groups of five to ten men.

Rapska fjera, Rab (Jul). For three days the town of Rab is returned to medieval times, with craft displays, preparation of traditional dishes and an archery tournament.

Đakovački Vezovi, Đakovo (first week of Jul). Folklore displays and exhibition of local embroidery.

St Theodore’s Day, Korčula (29 Jul). The Moreška, a dance re-enacting a battle between Christians and Muslims.

International Tennis Tournament, Umag (end Jul).

International Folklore Festival, Zagreb (end Jul). Croatian music and dance with international guests.

Pag Carnival, Pag (end Jul). Traditional dancing, kolo, and various shows with the local people in traditional costumes.

International Jazz Festival, Grožnjan (Jul–Aug). International jazz artists participate in this festival in the picturesque Istrian town of Grožnjan.


Split Summer (mid-Jul–mid-Aug). A programme of opera, concerts, dance, theatre and performances of the first plays written in the Croatian language.

International Festival of Theatre, Pula (mid-Jul–mid-Aug). Multimedia festival with the participation of other European groups.

Dubrovnik Summer Festival, Dubrovnik (mid-Jul–end Aug). The oldest international festival in Croatia: music, theatre, folklore, ballet, with performers from many countries.


Concerts in the Basilica of Euphrasius, Poreč (Jul–mid Sep). Performances of church and secular music given by Croatian and European musicians.

Sunshine

The Dalmatian coast is one of the sunniest parts of Europe, and the island of Hvar holds the record with its 2,700 hours of sun a year. The summers along the coast are hot and dry, while the inland areas have a continental climate with hot summers and cold winters.

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The Moreška dance, St Theodore’s Day, Korčula
AUTUMN

Visiting Croatia in this season means there are fewer crowds, even along the busy Adriatic coast. However, this season also offers an unexpectedly rich and varied calendar of events. Many of the events are cultural but there are also several festivals celebrating wine and food—offering an ideal opportunity to discover some of the local produce of this country.

SEPTEMBER

Festival of the Golden Strings of Slavonia, Požega (Sep).
Festival of folk and modern music using the traditional Slavonian instrument the tamburica.
Lace Exhibition, Lepoglava (Sep).
Exhibition of traditional hand-made lace, still made according to ancient methods.
Week of Kajkavian Culture, Krapina (Sep).
Festival of Kajkavian poetry, folk music and painting.
International Doll Festival, Zagreb (beginning Sep).
Grape Festival, Buje (3rd weekend in Sep).
Vinkovačke Jeseni, Vinkovci (Sep–Oct).
Festival of music and folk traditions. Parades in costume.

Rainfall

Rain is sparse along the coast, particularly in summer, when there is often the threat of drought. However, in the mountains, rain and snow are plentiful. In northeastern parts of the country, there may be summer thunderstorms. Winter brings snow.
Baroque music with the participation of top Croatian and European musicians.

**OCTOBER**

**Dora Pejačević Memorial**, Našice (Oct). Music festival commemorating this composer, with concerts, performances by artists and competitions.


**NOVEMBER**

**St Martin’s Day**, Dugo Selo, Samobor, Sv. Ivan Zelina, Velika Gorica, Zagreb County (Nov). A traditional wine festival that celebrates the period when the must is turned into wine.


**DECEMBER**

**The Town’s Day**, Osijek (2 Dec). Celebration of Osijek’s main feast day with music and dancing.

**JANUARY**

**International Competition for Young Pianists**, Osijek (second half of Jan). For young musicians under 21.

**Feast of St Blaise**, Dubrovnik (end Jan or early Feb). Processions celebrating town’s saint.

**FEBRUARY**

**Shrovetide Sezona**, Kraljevica. Traditional masked ball.

**Carnival of Rijeka**, Rijeka. Colourful parade in elaborate costumes.

**Carnival of the Riviera**, Opatija.

**International Violin Competition (Vaclav Huml)**, Zagreb (first half of Feb). For violinists under 30.

**Carnival**, Lastovo.

**CROATIAN HOLIDAYS**

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<td>Epiphany</td>
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<td>Easter Sunday and Monday</td>
<td>Mar or Apr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour Day</td>
<td>1 May</td>
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<td>Corpus Christi</td>
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<td>Anti-Fascist Victory Day</td>
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<td>All Saints’ Day</td>
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<td>Boxing Day</td>
<td>26 Dec</td>
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Temperature

The climate in Croatia is typically Mediterranean along the coast, with mild winters and hot, dry summers. Inland the climate is continental with hot summers and cold winters. The mountainous areas have an alpine climate.