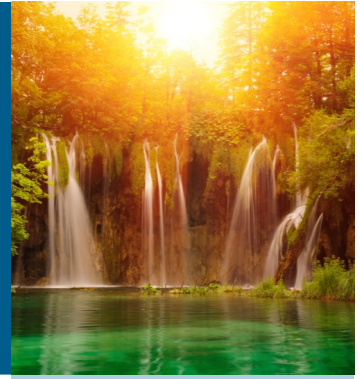
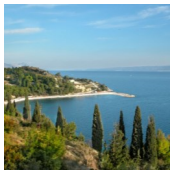


# Best of Croatia

13 DAYS/12 NIGHTS- GROUP TRAVEL  
SUGGESTED ITINERARY-CAN BE CUSTOMIZED

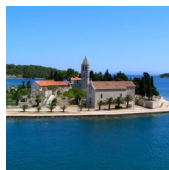


Spend just under two weeks extensively exploring the treasure that is the country of Croatia. While not large in size, this country is absolutely mammoth in terms of historical and cultural value. Its vivid past includes Greek colonies, the Roman Province of Dalmatia, the medieval maritime Republic of Ragusa, the Hapsburg monarchy, the Ottoman Conquest - and more recently, the former Yugoslavia. Geographically-speaking, you'd be hard-pressed to find a vacation destination with as many fantastic national parks, turquoise beaches, breathtaking coastline, thousands of islands (and good seafood), hills, fjords, amazing lakes, mountains and vineyards. This itinerary will show you the best of Croatia, and while there you'll realize that the friendliness of the Croatians ranks right up there with the nature, seafood, wine and history.



## DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE SPLIT

Arrive in the historic city of Split, the second largest city in Croatia and a major port city on the Adriatic Sea. Split's city center, which contains the ruins of a magnificent, 3rd-century Roman palace belonging to the Emperor Diocletian, is a fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site. Upon arrival to the Split Airport, a local assistant will meet your group in the arrivals hall and accompany it to the hotel by private coach. Your hotel rooms most likely will not be ready for check-in until 2:00 pm. Depending on your flight arrival time, energy level and time of the year – this afternoon your group could visit the Mestrovic Gallery (sculpture), go for a swim at the public beach at Bacvice, or simply have free time to begin exploring Split. There will be a welcome dinner tonight either in the hotel or in a local restaurant within walking distance of the hotel. Consider trying some of the delicious, traditional seafood dishes paired with Croatian wine.



## DAY 2 ~ SPLIT

After breakfast in the hotel, meet your local guide in the lobby for a morning sightseeing tour of Split's historic core. Located in the center of the Dalmatian coast and nestled between the mountains and sea, Split has fantastic ruins to be visited that date to the end of the 3rd century during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. On your guided tour, your group will tour the impressive ruins of the emperor's palace complex including the Temple of Jupiter and the Cathedral of St. Domnius. During your tour, the guide will also show the lovely medieval square of Brace Radic Trg and the Riva promenade. The tour will finish in the historic center, although the guide can accompany any group member back to the hotel should they prefer. The remainder of the day is free to visit Split on your own. Continue sightseeing, shop – or relax on the beach. Lunch and dinner are on your own.



## DAY 3 ~ SPLIT

After breakfast in the hotel, meet your local guide in the

## INCLUSIONS

- 3 nights in Split
- 6 nights in Dubrovnik
- 2 nights in Zadar
- 1 night in Mostar
- Breakfast daily
- Lunch and dinner per itinerary
- Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistant and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hotel overnights in beautiful, historic cities along Croatia's famed coastline**
- **Historic city of Trogir, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**
- **The famed Plitvice Lakes National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Natural Site**
- **Skradinski Buk's 17 waterfalls inside inside Krka National Park**
- **Day trip to Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina to see the iconic Stari Most bridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**
- **Day trip to beautiful Montenegro**
- **Classical music concert in Zadar's historic Church of St Donatus**
- **Visit to the beautiful island of Korčula, reckoned by many to be the birthplace of the explorer-merchant Marco Polo**
- **Day trip to the village of Cilipi, famous for its national costumes, folk customs & embroidery**

lobby for a full-day of exciting sightseeing by private bus. You'll begin by traveling to the outskirts of Split to the ancient city of Salona. Salona was the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia, and long before that it was the site of a major Greek market. This morning you will see some of its impressive Roman ruins; please wear comfortable shoes as this is an archeological site and it's only possible to visit the site on foot. Afterwards, your group will travel a short distance to the town of Trogir, whose beauty will knock your socks off! Upon arrival, everyone in the group will have free time for lunch, followed by a guided sightseeing tour of historic Trogir. Trogir is a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its historical tapestry of Greeks, Romans and Venetians - and because the town today still houses a fairytale blend of Romanesque-Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Visit inside the Cathedral of St. Lawrence. See the Clock Tower, the Loggia, the Land Gate, Kamerlengo Castle and St. Mark's Tower. After the tour group members will have time to shop or explore on their own before returning to Split in the late afternoon/early evening. Lunch and dinner are on your own.

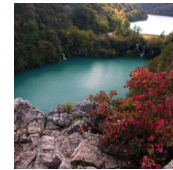


## DAY 4 ~ ZADAR

After breakfast in the hotel, group members should check out and be ready to travel north along the Adriatic coast to the city of Zadar. En route you will visit Krka National Park, which is located on the outskirts of the historic town of Sibenik. You'll tour this remarkable park, which is considered one of Croatia's crown jewels, and cruise to its breathtaking Skradinski Buk waterfall. After the visit, proceed to the historic center of Sibenik where your group will have free time to have lunch and to go inside the Cathedral of St. James, a

15th century Gothic-Renaissance church that is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

From Sibenik, the group will continue traveling north along the coast to the city of Zadar, your overnight base for the next two nights and another incredibly historic city along the beautiful Adriatic Coast. After checking into the hotel, enjoy free time to freshen up, relax or venture out before reuniting with the others for a group dinner in the hotel or a nearby local restaurant. Consider a leisurely stroll down the Zadar's seaside "Riva" promenade.



## DAY 5 ~ ZADAR

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will depart by private bus for Plitvice Lakes National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site world renowned for its 16 cascading, turquoise lakes that contrast beautifully with the surrounding verdancy. If you're a nature lover, this guided excursion will most likely be the highlight of your entire trip to Croatia. In addition to its prized lakes, Plitvice is also home to many animal species, meadows, caves and natural springs. After touring this spectacular feat of nature, return to Zadar. Tonight your group will attend a classical music concert (pending availability) in the Church of St. Donatus, whose 9th century acoustics still continue to impress concertgoers.



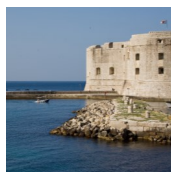
## DAY 6 ~ MOSTAR

After breakfast in the hotel, check out and meet your local guide in the lobby for a morning walking tour of Zadar's Old Town, a bastion of Gothic-Romanesque architecture. The city however is even much older than that. In fact, before the Common Era, Zadar was an important trading center for Phoenicians, Etruscans and Ancient Greeks. On your guided tour



you will see Zadar's ancient city walls and gates as well as Zadar's remarkable 12th-century, Romanesque churches including the Church of St. Mary, the Church of St. Chrysogonus and the St. Anastasia Cathedral (inside visit of the Cathedral is included). Another must-see on this morning includes seeing Zadar's legendary Sea Organ, whose melodies are created by the breaking waves. If time permits, the group will also visit Zadar's bustling market of Dolac to see where locals come to buy produce and to chat.

After the sightseeing tour, group members will have time for a quick lunch before boarding the bus to travel south to the picturesque city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The drive will be a good time to fit in a nap or brush up on your knowledge of Balkan history. Mostar is known for its interesting blend of "East meets West." Upon arrival to Mostar, your group will check into the hotel and have time to relax and freshen up before a group meal in the hotel's restaurant.



#### **DAY 7 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast in the hotel, check out and meet your local guide for morning tour of Mostar's historic Old Town during which you will see the iconic Stari Most (Old Bridge). This UNESCO World Heritage Site was constructed by the Ottomans during the 16th century. It is perhaps the best example of Islamic architecture in all of the Balkans. After the tour and time for a quick lunch on their own, group members will board the bus to proceed to Dubrovnik, commonly referred to as the "Pearl of the Adriatic."

Arrive in Dubrovnik, one of Europe's best preserved walled cities (and certainly one of its most beautiful ones). With dramatic ramparts surrounded by pristine, azure

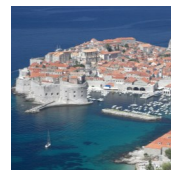
waters - the entire historic core of Dubrovnik is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Upon arrival to the hotel in Dubrovnik, check in and enjoy free time. There will be a group dinner tonight in a local restaurant.



#### **DAY 8 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast, meet your local guide in the lobby for a leisurely full-day tour of Dubrovnik, which is certain to enchant any visitor! Most of the city's top attractions reside within its historic walls. Originally settled by the Romans - Dubrovnik's Golden Age came about during the Middle Ages because of its extremely strategic location as a maritime port. The Venetians, Hapsburgs and Ottomans all coveted Dubrovnik, the seat of the Republic of Ragusa as it was then known. Its medieval past has left a strong mark on the city that you will tour today.

On your guided walking tour through the Old Town, you will see the city's very scenic harbor, the Onofrio's Fountains, the 15th-century Ploce Gate, Luza Square, the Church of St. Blaise, Orlando's Column, the Sponza Palace and the Franciscan Monastery. You will go inside Dubrovnik's Baroque Cathedral (Church of the Assumption) and the Dominican Monastery & Museum. During the tour the guide will give the group free time for lunch and shopping. The tour will finish in the afternoon, and the remainder of the day is free to explore Dubrovnik.



#### **DAY 9 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast in the hotel, you have a full day at leisure to explore splendid Dubrovnik. You could check out the local scene at the Gunduliceva Poljana farmers market or stroll down the "Stradun," the pedestrian street that runs east to west



through Dubrovnik's historic core. Shop for local arts & crafts. Those interested in visiting an amazing beach could take the 10 -minute ferry to nearby Lokrum Island. The Dubrovnik Aquarium and Maritime Museum also makes for a very interesting visit. Lunch and dinner are not provided today.



#### **DAY 10 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast, meet your local guide in the lobby who will lead a fantastic sightseeing excursion today into the neighboring Republic of Montenegro, a nation that – like Croatia - boasts a rich heritage and immense natural beauty. This stretch of the Dalmatian Coast has a very Mediterranean climate and is known for its interesting geology. Your first stop is the picture-perfect Bay of Kotor, a dramatic submerged river canyon (that resembles a fjord). This scenic spot is part of a largest historic area that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From here, your group will proceed to the town of Cetinje, which was once the seat for the Montenegrin royals. While here, you will go inside the Orthodox Monastery of Saint Peter. Also on today's itinerary is a visit to the gorgeous islet of Sveti Stefan, a popular resort in Montenegro. (There will be a stop for lunch on own during the day, perhaps in Budva). After an exciting day of exploring Montenegro, drive back north along the coast to Dubrovnik. The evening is at leisure.



#### **DAY 11 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast in the hotel, meet your local guide for another day of fantastic sightseeing. You'll begin by traveling north along the Adriatic Coast to the seaside village of Ston. During the medieval, maritime Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik),

Ston's fortifications – particularly its walls- were noteworthy. From here your group will drive across the Peljesac Peninsula, an area well-known for its grape vineyards and wine production (why not try some at lunch?). In the port town of Orebic you'll board a ferry for a short voyage to the island of Korcula, which might prove to be another favorite moment on your trip to Croatia. The Old Town of Korcula (on the island of Korcula) was a city of utmost importance during the Middle Ages. Defensively fortified by thick walls, for many years it actually was part of the Republic of Venice. It is even rumored to be the birthplace of explorer-merchant Marco Polo. Enjoy a guided walking tour of Korcula's best medieval attractions before returning to Dubrovnik in the afternoon. The evening is at leisure.



#### **DAY 12 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast in the hotel, meet your local guide for your final day of sightseeing in Croatia; it will be a great one. Today's tour will begin with a drive to the heart of the Konavle Valley to the village of Cilipi, which is known for carefully preserved folk customs, rich national costumes and famous embroidery. You'll visit inside the Konavle Homeland Museum, which showcases many of the traditional costumes and jewelry. (If the excursion takes place on a Sunday, the villages perform traditional folk dances in costumes from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm). After this visit your group will continue to the coastal town of Cavtat, where your guide will provide a walking tour of this lovely, historic fishing town. See its beautiful harbor, the Rector's Palace, the city walls, the Church of St. Nicholas, the Franciscan monastery and the mausoleum of the Racic family, which was designed by Ivan Mestrovic - a famous Croatian sculptor.



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**Peace of Mind**



You will have free time here for lunch before traveling north to visit the Trsteno Arboretum, a seaside villa that's been in business for over 500 years. It is one of the oldest arboretums in this part of the world. Enjoy visiting its beautiful collection of exotic vegetation and Renaissance fountains before returning to Dubrovnik in the afternoon.



**DAY 13 ~ DUBROVNIK**

After breakfast and check-out, your group will transfer by private bus to Dubrovnik International Airport for its return flight to the USA.

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