

Croatia



HISTORY

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Croatia is a former Yugoslav republic on the Adriatic Sea. It is about the size of West Virginia. Part of Croatia is a barren, rocky region lying in the Dinaric Alps. The Zagorje region north of the capital, Zagreb, is a land of rolling hills, and the fertile agricultural region of the Pannonian Plain is bordered by the Drava, Danube, and Sava Rivers in the east. Over one-third of Croatia is forested.

In the Beginning

Croatia, at one time the Roman province of Pannonia, was settled in the 7th century by the Croats. They converted to Christianity between the 7th and 9th centuries and adopted the Roman alphabet under the suzerainty of Charlemagne. In 925, the Croats defeated Byzantine and Frankish invaders and established their own independent kingdom, which reached its peak during the 11th century.

Nikola Tesla

Nikola Tesla was an inventor, mechanical engineer, and electrical engineer. He was an important contributor to the birth of commercial electricity, and is best known for his many revolutionary developments in the field of electromagnetism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Tesla's patents and theoretical work formed the basis of modern alternating current (AC) electric power systems, including the polyphase system of electrical distribution and the AC motor. This work helped usher in the Second Industrial Revolution.

War and Peace

When Germany invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, Croatia became a Nazi puppet state. Croatian Fascists, the Ustashi, slaughtered countless Serbs and Jews during the war. After Germany was defeated in 1945, Croatia was made into a republic of the newly reconstituted Communist nation of Yugoslavia; however, Croatian nationalism persisted. After Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz Tito's death in 1980, Croatia's demands for independence increased in intensity. In 1990, free elections were held, and the Communists were defeated by a nationalist party led by Franjo Tudjman. In June 1991, the Croatian parliament passed a declaration of independence from Yugoslavia. Six months of intensive fighting with the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavian army followed, claiming thousands of lives and wreaking mass destruction. In December 1995, the Dayton peace agreement was signed bringing some peace to the area at last.



MONEY



The Croatian national currency is the kuna (kn), which comes in notes of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000. One kuna equals 100 lipa, and coins with values of 5, 10, 20, and 50 lipa and 1, 2, and 5 kuna are in circulation. Following Croatia's E.U. membership, some Croatian businesses, most notably hotels and tourist agencies, began to express their prices in euros and kuna, though euros are not officially accepted.

Credit Cards

In Croatia, credit cards are accepted by most hotels and restaurants in larger cities, but they generally are not accepted for private accommodations or in rural areas. In addition, some establishments that accept credit cards will offer a discount if you pay in cash. Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club, and American Express credit cards are accepted in most Croatian establishments that accept plastic.

Debit Cards

Large businesses widely accept Visa, Mastercard, and Diners, though they less frequently accept American Express. The Maestro debit card is also widely accepted.



Visitors from the USA

When it comes to exchanging your foreign money into kuna, you have several options. These options include exchange bureau, banks, airport kiosks, hotels and ATMs. The best way to access your money in Croatia is by withdrawing cash from an ATM as you will receive the fairest deal. Before you leave home, check your bank network, find out your daily withdrawal limit, and keep in mind that banks may charge fees for a card used at another bank's ATM—a fee that may be higher for international transactions. Also, a 4-digit PIN is required to withdraw money in Croatia.

ATM

ATMs, or 'bankomats', are readily accessible in most parts of Croatia, especially tourist centres. Most ATMs have the option to transact in English and will accept international cards. For extra safety, bring two functioning cards with you, in case one isn't accepted. ATMs can be found in supermarkets, airports, posts offices, train stations and banks. Note that you need a four-digit pin to operate an ATM in Croatia.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

Croatia can be divided into three Climatic regions. In the north are the Pannonian Plains, lowlands with a continental climate of cold winters and hot summers. Central Croatia consists of the mountainous Dinara Region, which is covered with large forests and has an alpine climate. The Adriatic coast enjoys a Mediterranean climate of cool, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. Winter temperatures range from -1 to 30°C in the continental region, -5 to 0°C in the mountain region and 5 to 10°C in the coastal region. Summer temperatures range from 22 to 26°C in the continental region, 15 to 20°C in the mountain region and 26 to 30°C in the coastal region.

Electricity

In Croatia the power plugs and sockets are of type C and F. The standard voltage is 230-V and the standard frequency is 50-Hz.



Technology & Communication

Communication infrastructure in Croatia is pretty up to date. As far as mobile devices are concerned, you can find distributing stores all over. Buyers are able to purchase pay as you go plans or contract plans. You can purchase one prepaid minute for as little as 0.10 cents in US currency. As far as the internet goes, the infrastructure has improved a lot. There once was a time, not too long ago, when the only available internet was at internet cafes. These days, the internet is widely available with WiFi coverage growing increasingly. You can buy internet services in residential homes for as little as \$23.00 US dollars a month. Some towns have even set up free WiFi hotspots for visitors. Fortunately, data sim cards are available for purchase if you plan to use your mobile device considerably.

Infrastructure & Transport

Transportation infrastructure in Croatia is expanding and was on the rise in the early 2000s. There's a total of 11 highways, known as autocestes in Croatia. These highways have at least three lanes going in both directions. Highways in Croatia extend to connect the northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of the country. Croatia is somewhat of "U" shaped. It connects travelers to all parts of the country. This was once one of Croatia's infrastructure problems. Now, along with the motorways, drivers have expressways and smaller roads to get from one place to another. Drivers can expect tolls on most of Croatia's highways. Drivers have an assortment of ways to pay for tolls ranging from cash, credit cards, smart cards, and ENC's. ENC is an electronic toll collection system. Croatians are also able to travel by railways, but many of these infrastructures need updates, with some dating as far back as pre-WW2. There are nine international airports in Croatia, with flights flying directly to the United States. Many of the major airports' terminals got updated, improving Croatia's infrastructure status.



In Case Of An Emergency

Whether you're in Croatia on holiday, for work or visiting friends or family, it's a good idea to know how to ask for help in Croatian in the event of an emergency. The simplest way to ask for assistance is to shout **Upomoć!** which means **Help!** You can also use the phrase **Možete li mi pomoći?** (Can you help me?) or **Možete li nam pomoći?** (Can you help us?)

The following emergency numbers are free to call throughout Croatia:

If you need to call an **ambulance**, call **194**

You can reach the **fire brigade** on **193**

The **police** can be reached on **192**

Language

The Croatian language is a South Slavic language which is used primarily by the inhabitants of Croatia as well as Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatian is based on the Ijekavian pronunciation of the Stokavian dialect (with some influence from Čakavian and Kajkavian) and written with the Croatian alphabet. German and English are the most common second languages. French, Italian, Czech and Hungarian are also spoken.



LGBT Travel

Homosexuality has been legal in Croatia since 1977 and is tolerated but not widely accepted. It's advisable, all the same, to be discreet in your actions, words and general behaviour. If you're homosexual or travelling with homosexual friends, a trip to Croatia unfortunately has to be made with some precautions. Cities such as Zagreb, or other places along the coast, have gay-friendly spots but it's better to remain discreet in the rest of the country.

Religion

The country has an area of 21,831-square-miles and a population of 4.5-million. Approximately 85% of the population is Roman Catholic and 6% is Serbian Orthodox Christian (SPC). Groups that constitute less than 5% of the population include Muslims, Jews, and followers of other religions. Religious affiliation correlates closely with the country's ethnic makeup. There is no official state religion; however, the Roman Catholic Church receives state financial support and other benefits established in concordats between the government and the Vatican.



Getting There

The easiest way to get to Croatia is by air, and during the summer season most parts of the country are accessible by flights from the UK and Ireland. Though there are a few direct flights to Croatia from outside Europe fares can be expensive; a cheaper option may be to fly to a major Western European city and continue by air, train or bus from there. Airfares always depend on the season. Peak times for flights to Croatia are between May and September, and around the Easter and Christmas holidays; at these times be prepared to book well in advance. Travelling to Croatia by train from the UK is unlikely to save money compared with flying, but can be a leisurely way of getting to the country if you plan to stop off in other parts of Europe on the way. Seasonal ferry services (usually spring to late autumn) run from Ancona to Split, Stari Grad and Zadar; and from Bari to Dubrovnik. Passengers can usually buy tickets on arrival at the relevant ferry port, but if you're travelling with a vehicle it's wise to book in advance, especially in July and August. Services to Split and Dubrovnik usually take eight to twelve hours; services to Zadar slightly less.

Driving

The vast majority of the country's visitors get to Croatia by car, which isn't as surprising as it sounds when you consider that millions of visitors come from one of Croatia's neighbouring or nearby countries! Each year, many millions of visitors drive across or down to Croatia by car from Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The highways are good and getting better as miles of new pavement are poured. This is especially true of the span between Ljubljana and Zagreb, a route that now takes just 2-hours to complete. The route from Budapest to Zagreb runs across Croatia's northern border and is also popular. It takes about 5-hours to reach Zagreb (362-km/225-miles) from the Hungarian capital.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Due to its geographical position, Croatia, over the years has been influenced by its neighbouring countries. The country holds its cultural richness with a fabulous mixture between the Mediterranean and Eastern traditions, but also from Central Europe and the Balkans. As for its cuisine, you will have the opportunity to taste a lot of seafood, proof of its Mediterranean heritage. You will eat, for example, squid that has been fried, grilled or even stuffed in restaurants, colonising the coasts and inhabited islands. In the north of Croatia, you will savour the Sarma, a kind of stuffed cabbage reminiscent of the Austro-Hungarian influences. You will also taste the Cevapcici, meatballs with onions or pitas, dishes inspired by Ottoman cuisine. As a dessert, you will be amazed by the Bajadera, a succulent pastry with hazelnuts and almonds. Croatian gastronomy is a testament to the cultural diversity of the country. But religion also seems to take an important place in the lives of its inhabitants. Throughout the year, various festivals and events show the Croats' attachment to their traditions.

Bucket List

Go hunting for truffles in Istria

Zipline in Omis

Visit the Famous Blue cave

Swim underneath Krka Waterfall National Park

Experience dinner in the sky

Canyoning by the Cetina River

Family Travel Highlights

Visit the museum of illusions

See the Split Aquarium

Enjoy at Istralandia Water Park

Take a ferry ride around islands

Tourism Authority

The Croatian national tourist board is a national tourist organization that was founded, in order to promote and create the identity and reputation of Croatian tourism. It's mission also includes the planning and implementation of common strategies and concepts for promotion, proposal of and carrying out of promotional activities which are of mutual interest to all the subjects in tourism in the country and abroad, and improvement of the complete tourist offering in Croatia. The main website for the Croatian National Tourist Board is www.croatia.hr.



Foods To Try

Peka

Lamb on the spit

Punjena paprika

Octopus salad

Cevapi

Pasticada

Pršut & Pag Cheese

Crni rižot

Zagorski Štrukli

Čobanac

Brudet

Drinks To Try

Craft Beer

Grappa

Travarica

Rakija

sok od bazge

Smrikva



Photography Hot Spots

Krka National Park

Plitvice lakes

Jasenovac Memorial Site

Vrbnik bay

Old Dinaric fortress

Dubrovnik

Trakošćan Castle

Diocletian's Palace, Split

Roman ruins in Pula

Souvenirs To Buy

Sestine umbrella

Samobor Crystal

Croatian Lace

Wooden toys

Ceramic Vucedol dove

Licitar heart

Slavonian Sokadian jacket

Olive oil

Croatian cheese

Kazun

Zovnica



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