



★★ TOP 10

Not to be missed! Our top hits – from the absolute No. 1 to No. 10 – help you plan your tour of the most important sights.

1 ★★ Dubrovnik

The ‘Queen of the eastern Adriatic’, with its palaces, churches, museums and imposing defensive walls, takes you back to that glorious era when it defiantly held Venice at arm’s length (p. 158).

2 ★★ Plitvička Jezera

Tumbling waterfalls, turquoise-coloured lakes, luxuriant vegetation and dazzling travertine stone create a fairy tale-like landscape (p. 68).

3 ★★ Split

The palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian forms the heart of this bustling port. This is where Ancient Roman gods rub shoulders with Christian saints and trendy cafés with Roman remains (p. 124).

4 ★★ Poreč

Striking mosaics catch the eye in the Euphrasian Basilica, a unique ecclesiastical building from the early days of Christianity (p. 96).

5 ★★ Trogir

This little port’s historical splendour is omnipresent in the Old Town. The magnificent cathedral portal, with

its countless figures, is a highlight of Early Gothic stonemasonry (p. 129).

6 ★★ Nacionalni Park Krka

The Skradinski Buk waterfall is a popular attraction in this national park but there is much more to discover: secluded monasteries, shady walks and lush vegetation (p. 131).

7 ★★ Hvar

The scented lavender isle is one of the most beautiful islands in the world. The main settlement of the same name has a cosmopolitan flair and offers top-notch accommodation (p. 133).

8 ★★ Korčula

Aromatic white wines and unusual sword dances are the trademarks of this southern Dalmatian island. The attraction of the bewitchingly beautiful main town is its narrow alleyways, Venetian palaces and rustic taverns (p. 163).

9 ★★ Pula

This bustling harbour town boasts exquisite treasures from Antiquity – an amphitheatre, the Temple of Augustus and a triumphal arch (p. 99).

10 ★★ Brač

The sun, its beaches and the wind are the three plus points of this island that is one of just a few in Croatia that has a fine pebbly beach (p. 137).

1001 Dalmatians – Island-hopping in the Adriatic

With more than a thousand islands to explore, the cleanest seas in the Mediterranean, no tides to worry about and a pleasantly mild climate, it is no wonder that yacht-owners love the Croatian coast. Croatia has emerged as a serious rival to Greece and Turkey as the Mediterranean's top sailing destination.

Over the past few years established destinations for passionate yacht-lovers, such as Hvar and Dubrovnik, have received a glossy make-over to compete as glamorous alternatives to the French Riviera where the café-culture rules and a fashion-

Facts And Figures

- 1185 islands, of which about 66 are inhabited
- 5835km (3625mi) of coastline
- 4058km (2522 mi) of which are around the islands
- 56 marinas
- 350 natural harbours
- 13,000 berths

able bar scene swings in summer. Elsewhere, countless hidden coves – and some of Croatia's most secluded beaches – await those who can get afloat. And then there is the simple joy of having a tasty supper in a waterside *konoba* (tavern) and a *rakija digestif* before you return to your yacht moored in a moonlit harbour far from the tourist trail.

Island-hopping

There are three ways of island-hopping in the Adriatic. One is to use the excellent network of ferries, most of which are run by Jadrolinija (www.jadrolinija.hr/en/; p. 196), that links the ports of Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik to the major in-



Set sail and explore the Adriatic Sea along the Croatian coastline! The Kornati are particularly attractive.

habited islands. Another is to take a trip on a traditional *gulet* motorised sailing boat (<http://blauereise.com>) which usually spends a week cruising between the islands. Or, alternatively, you can take your own boat. You can charter yachts locally or make arrangements in advance (www.ayc.hr; www.sailcroatia.net). The basic choice is between a bareboat charter in which case at least one member of the crew must be an experienced sailor and a skippered boat, where you can help with the sailing, but pay extra for a captain in charge. Some operators also offer full-service yachts, complete with a captain, cook, steward and hostess. Another alternative is to join a flotilla – you have

to be able to sail your own boat but are part of a larger party where expert help is available if required (www.sailingholidays.com).

In your own yacht you can choose where to stop, perhaps mooring one night in a trendy coastal town and the next in a deserted bay. Most of the 56 marinas are open all year round and all are within a day's sailing of one other (www.croatia.hr/en-GB; www.aci-marinas.com/en/). For a real back-to-nature experience head for the uninhabited islands of the Kornati archipelago (p. 142) near Zadar. Just beware of the *bora*, a strong northeasterly wind that blows from the mainland across the sea.

Getting your Bearings

Zagreb, with around a million inhabitants, one in four of the country's population, is easily Croatia's biggest city. This is the political, economic and cultural heart of the nation, which makes it easy to forget that it has only been a state capital since 1991.

For most of its history, Zagreb has lived in the shadow of Vienna, as a provincial outpost of the Austro-Hungarian empire, or of the former Yugoslav capital Belgrade. Only in the past few years has it rediscovered its confidence as a youthful, vibrant, forward-looking city.

Zagreb lies between the wooded slopes of Medvednica to the north and the River Sava to the south. The Croatian metropolis originally consisted of two fortified hilltop settlements – the religious base of Kaptol, still dominated by its cathedral and the rival political capital of Gradec. Between them, these two make up the area known as Gornji Grad (Upper Town).

In the 19th century, the city expanded and the Donji Grad (Lower Town) was developed, with wide boulevards, museums and grand Austro-Hungarian buildings linked by a green 'horseshoe' of parks, promenades and squares. Much of this district was built following an earthquake in 1880, giving the city a unified, central-European feel.

The two halves of the city meet at Trg Bana Jelačića, Zagreb's central square. With its popular outdoor cafés and hordes of commuters catching trams, the square is busy from morning to night and makes a natural starting point for any visit to the city.

Don't Miss

- 11 Trg Bana Jelačića
- 12 Gornji Grad
- 13 Atelijer Ivan Meštrović

At Your Leisure

- 14 Muzej Grada Zagreba
- 15 Hrvatski Muzej Naivne Umjetnosti

- 16 Muzej za Umjetnost i Obrt
- 17 Muzej Mimara
- 18 Etnografski Muzej
- 19 Lenuzzijska Potkova
- 20 Arheološki Muzej
- 21 Maksimirski Perivoj
- 22 Medvednica
- 23 Groblje Mirogoj

