

# THE DALMATIAN COAST

CROATIA, MONTENEGRO, & VENICE





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# MAP OF THE DALMATIAN COAST

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# THE DALMATIAN COAST

As you sail through the Adriatic's deep blue waters, explore this stunning coastline and its myriad islands – dotted with ancient cities, hidden caves, vineyards and olive groves, secluded beaches, Roman shipwrecks, and early churches. You'll be traversing the region in the way it was meant to be seen. Once a major hub of Mediterranean trade, the region has been known for millennia as a center of ship-building.

After falling off the tourist map for a while due to the Yugoslav wars, Dalmatia has regained its rightful place as a desirable destination for discerning travelers and, in particular, yacht owners. You'll encounter some of the world's longest-functioning Roman aqueducts, medieval cities perched on cliffs over the Adriatic, exciting diving opportunities to a cave in which Odysseus supposedly sheltered, a region teeming with fresh truffles, and medieval monasteries in the middle of saltwater lakes.



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# DESTINATION HIGHLIGHTS



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# BAY OF KOTOR

## MONTENEGRO

Located along one of Montenegro's most beautiful bays is Kotor, a city of traders and famous sailors, with many stories to tell. Perast is a tidy town on the Bay of Kotor, and essentially the Newport, R.I. of Montenegro. A Unesco-protected fjord., the waterfront is lined with stately Venetian style palaces and old merchant homes built by wealthy sea captains. In the morning, sip Turkish coffee off the aft deck as you look out to Our Lady of the Rocks, a beautiful church on an artificial island built by the townspeople of Perast. In the afternoon, take to the beach, stroll past 17th-century palaces, or tour the bay by speedboat. The bay lends itself well to watersports.



This country of 600,000 may serve as a mere way station to some on their journey into or out of Croatia. But on May 21, 2006, its citizens voted for independence from Serbia, thus dissolving the last remnants of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and it's Independence is only accelerating a process that began in 2003. Montenegro has defined itself in part as an "ecological" state, dedicated to preserving its natural environment — which to some makes this gem one of the finest in Dalmatia.





# DUBROVNIK

## CROATIA

Celebrities and mortals alike are flocking to the quiet stone streets of Dubrovnik, a walled city that after more than a half century in obscurity is making up for lost time, quickly transforming the Croatian coast from ragged backwater to fashionable seaside resort. What this means is, if you missed the golden age of the French Riviera, you've now got a second chance. The Croatian golden age is going on right now.

The beaches are a major attraction for good reason. The shoreline ranges from pebbles to white sand, and the shockingly clear water can be balmy even early in the year. Whatever your sunning intentions are, however, don't ignore the city's cultural offerings. The Museum of Modern Art offers a cool, shady spot to unwind just a few steps from Banja beach. The building itself is a work of art: a vast neo-Renaissance villa originally built for one of the city's wealthiest residents. In the early evening before the sun goes down, walk on the old city's walls, it is the best time to visit when the pale light falls on the city's ochre rooftops.







# KORCULA

## CROATIA

Korcula is the name of both this picturesque, old fortified town and of one of the loveliest islands in the Adriatic. The island is renowned for its wine-making, and you could easily spend a few days relaxing in the pleasant town, full of winding side streets and excellent restaurants. Churches, streets and squares emphasise the harmonious ground plan inside the old town walls. Marco Polo even supposedly lived here, and you can take a tour of the house believed to be his. Note the importance of stone-cutting and shipbuilding here long the two major livelihoods in the town. If you're around in the summer, attend performances at the Festival of the Knightly Games, including the Moreska sword dance, performed on Mondays and Thursdays.

Explore the island further by venturing to the fishing outpost of Racisce, an unspoilt, historic town whose quiet streets winding down the hill feel entirely un-touristed. Inland, the town of Zrnovo houses one of the region's best restaurants, Gera, where garden views, fresh seafood, and house-made wine are the name of the game.



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# VIS

## CROATIA

One of the most unexplored islands along the Dalmatian Coast, thanks to its recent military past, Vis abounds with unspoilt scenery and ancient stone-walled towns. Spend your time visiting the island's famous vineyards, hiking along the spectacular coastline, and exploring the secluded coves and bays, including the lovely Scedro on the northern end of the island.

Just to the west, visit the small island of Biscevo to explore its numerous caves, particularly the famed Blue Cave, a grotto where when the midday sun reflects off the white sandy bottom and in through an underwater entrance to give a most spectacular effect. The area also offers some other excellent diving opportunities, including two ancient Roman shipwrecks and numerous others since then, all the way through World War II.



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# HVAR

## CROATIA

The longest Adriatic island, Hvar holds the local record for the number of sunny days per year, and holds the international distinction of being the Dalmatian Coast's answer to St. Tropez. Anchor at any of the numerous picturesque inlets and bays along its coast to take advantage of the gorgeous waters and surroundings to swim, kayak, or water ski. Or head straight to the main harbour town for beautiful people, stylish cafés and restaurants, and a vibrant nightlife scene, all set against the backdrop of a well-preserved medieval town.

If you're in need of a little more historic culture, pay a visit to the oldest community theatre in Europe, founded here in 1612, on one of the largest Renaissance squares. Visit the Renaissance cathedral with its original tower, rich treasury, and paintings by old masters. Come in the summer and you'll find the inland areas blanketed in the soft purple of lavender in bloom. Visit the nearby St. Klement islands (Pakleni Otoci), small, wooded islands with sandy beaches and a historic fortress overlooking a botanical garden.







# BRAC

## CROATIA

Home to Croatia's most famously beautiful beach, Zlatni Rat – “Golden Cape” in Croatian – and, nearby, the lovely seaside town of Bol, this third largest island in the Adriatic is an idyllic haven for those as interested in water sports as in historic sights. In Bol, explore the stone streets, peruse the lively outdoor market, and slow down to the island's pace. Sail around the island's picturesque, craggy coastline, dotted with historic towns and secluded, tree-lined coves, in search of quiet inlets from which to explore. Off the island, you'll find phenomenal diving and snorkeling among the waters long plied by Adriatic merchant ships.



Both in the towns and as you hike up through the rugged, rocky slopes that make up the center of the island, you'll notice the famous creamy white marble that has been used in famous buildings all over the world, from the Diocletian's Palace in Split to the White House in Washington. Near Bol lies the picturesque town of Milina, a typical Mediterranean town, where you'll find narrow streets and a number of cultural monuments. Between the two towns, you'll find the 16th-century Blaca monastery perched above the ocean, with a valuable library, works of art, and an observatory.





# SPLIT

## CROATIA

Approximately 2,000 years old, Split is the largest town in Dalmatia and has long been an important center of trade for the Adriatic and eastern Mediterranean. The city grew up around and within the huge palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, still the largest and best-preserved late-antique palace in the world.

Wander the city streets, and you'll see evidence of how harmoniously the annexing and partitioning that occurred in the later centuries of the Roman Empire shaped the city. This is exemplified by the Peristyle where, within the embrace of Roman columns and arcades, the Romanesque and Gothic facades, Renaissance and Baroque works of art and architecture were added, including the Romanesque bell tower gives the city its vertical axis.

Now, the city is still a blend of ancient and new, with the Roman aqueducts still providing water and lively cafés and bars lining the streets. Lounge on the popular city beaches, peruse fresh produce and handicrafts in the outdoor markets, explore ancient churches, dine on fresh fish overlooking the ocean, and make friends at the numerous bars and cafés.



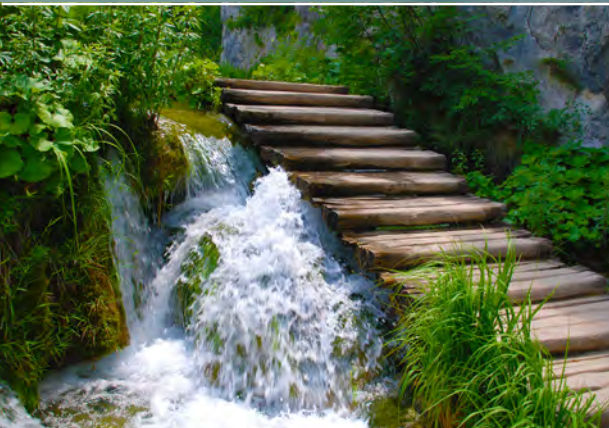




# SIBENIK & SKRADIN

## CROATIA

From the coastal city of Sibenik, explore the Krka River and the Krka National Park, said to have the most breathtaking nature in Croatia and boasts seven falls. The most famous is Skradinski Buk, which has an average flow of 55 cubic meters of water per second. Rich in flora and fauna, the park hosts 222 species of birds, making it one of the most valuable and diverse ornithological areas in Europe. The national park also houses the only hawk training center in Croatia, where you can see demonstrations of hawk trainers' skills and hunting with hawks.

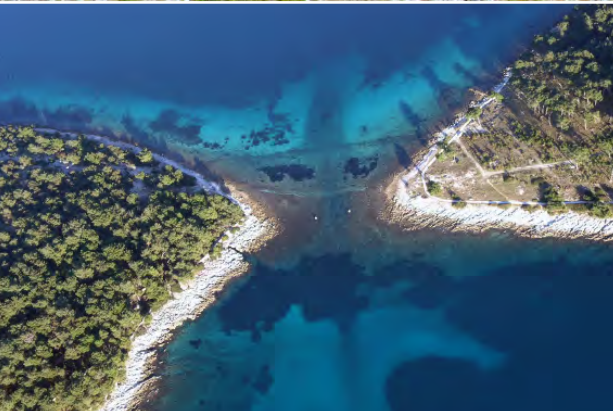


On your way back to Sibenik, stop for lunch in Skradin, a town famous for its Dalmatinsk Proiut, a kind of smoked ham. Sibenik itself still reflects a past rich in history, heritage, and battles, but not yet entirely focused on tourism. Sibenik's old town potentially has everything a visitor would need to discover the best of urban Dalmatia and, at the moment, you can walk through the grand, stone-slabbed main square without being overpowered by tourists.



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# DUGI OTOK

## CROATIA

Dugi Otok and the surrounding islands – a collection of places with names like Iz, Zut, Ist and Uglian – are a haven of beautiful bays and charming villages. Pass through the narrow entrance to the Bay of Sibenik and cruise past the artificial caves in the hills where submarines and torpedo boats hid during air raids in the Second World War.

The island of Dugi Otok itself is one of fishermen, farmers, secluded beaches and coves, and pine-covered coastline, home also to Telascica, a nature reserve and the largest natural harbour of the Adriatic islands. Most of its neighbors are sparsely inhabited, so sail from island to island in search of beautiful anchorages for swimming and exploring.

Nearby Losinj offers several larger towns, as well as plenty of gorgeous scenery of its own, including dense woods, unspoilt bays, and clear blue seas. Many of Europe's aristocracy have used the island as a retreat throughout history, including Prince Rudolph, Franz Ferdinand, and the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph. Be sure to pay a visit to the quaint port town of Veli Losinj.



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# PAG

## CROATIA

With 270 kilometres of coastline, Pag has the longest coastline in the Adriatic, rich with coves, bays, beaches and capes. The landscape here is strange, with the southwestern parts low, rocky, and home to several karst lakes, and the northern reaches steep and with slightly more vegetation. Throughout, the island's rocky ground supports thin grasses and herbs like sage, popular with the many sheep who produce the island's renowned cheese, Paski sir.



The beaches around Novalja, though, are gorgeous, and have attracted visitors in recent years, turning the lovely city into a summer party destination. Spend your nights sipping cocktails at beach bars or joining the party crowd at the a wide variety of music clubs.



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# ROVINJ

## CROATIA

Located on the southern end of the Istrian peninsula, this small city looks to be straight out of 16th-century Venice, complete with a campanile and a statue of St. Catherine of Alexandria on top of the church. It's no wonder – the region was controlled by the Venetians for centuries before the Austrian Empire and then the Italians owned it until after World War II. Due to its location off the beaten Mediterranean paths, it sees comparatively few international tourists, despite being not too far off from Tuscany before the tourists arrived.

Head inland to cute towns like Motovun, where truffles are abundant and incredible restaurants like Barbacan and Mondo Konoba hide behind traditional, low-key facades. You could easily spend a few days cycling around the peninsula's interior, exploring the towns and farmland for yourself. Back on the Adriatic, the area teems with twenty-two islands and islets, all of which are a protected natural heritage. Just north of the city, you'll find the Lim Canal, a gorgeous natural fjord once famous for its oysters. Across from the city, the lovely island of Katarina is worth a stop, as is Crveni Otok, known as the Flower Island for its lush vegetation.



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# VENICE

## ITALY

Long the crossroads between East and West, Venice is more than just a legendary floating city. A city of art, a city of music, a city of travelers from all over the world who have left their mark here throughout history; get lost amongst the labyrinth of side streets and canals and you'll discover one of the few places where China, Rome, Byzantium, and Germany have long sat side-by-side, in everything from architecture to cuisine.

Major sights like the Piazza San Marco and its basilica, the Galleria dell'Accademia, the Doge's Palace, and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection are certainly not to be missed, but don't think that they're all the city has to offer. Visit them in off-hours, if you can – early in the morning or late at night – to avoid the crowds, and then spend your days wandering along the car-free streets between campi, or squares, and less popular, but equally magnificent, attractions like the Chiesa di San Zaccaria, the School of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, the towering church on the Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo, and the Punta della Dogana. Pay a visit, too, to nearby Torcello, the very first settlement in the lagoon, and its 11th-century cathedral.

Sight-seeing and exploring are just the tip of the iceberg in Venice; while wandering, prepare to stop at numerous picturesque cafes for coffee, tapas-style cicchetti, a glass of wine, and some of that famous seafood. Enjoy dinners at world-renowned restaurants, like Da Fiore and Alle Testiere, and local haunts like Antiche Carampane. After a nighttime gondola ride between the quiet back canals, relax in style at the star-studded Hotel Cipriani or at the more intimately elegant Bauer Il Palazzo.



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