

EUROPE · ISLANDS · BEACHES · HISTORY · FOOD · WINE



Croatia

With nearly 1,800 km of mainland coast and more than a thousand islands and islets, Croatia is Europe's great island-hopping country, with Roman ruins and Venetian towns between swims. Walk Dubrovnik's walls early, watch Plitvice's lakes spill over travertine terraces, and save June or September for the Dalmatian islands, when ferries are calmer and the Adriatic is still warm.

Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Croatia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

CAPITAL Zagreb	CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	LANGUAGE Croatian	BEST TIME May–Jun, Sep
DAILY BUDGET £60–£260 ££ Moderate	PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 40m direct ~£80–£300 return	TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Croatia curls in a crescent around Bosnia and Herzegovina, which gives it two characters: a continental interior of Habsburg Zagreb, Slavonian plains and the forested lakes of Plitvice, and a long Adriatic coast of limestone mountains, pine-backed coves and stone towns built by Romans and Venetians. Most first trips focus on Dalmatia, linking Split and Dubrovnik by road or ferry with a few islands such as Hvar, Brač, Korčula or Vis in between. Istria, the heart-shaped peninsula near Italy, suits a separate week of hill towns, truffles and wine, and Zagreb pairs naturally with Plitvice on the way to the coast.

High summer is crowded and pricey: Dubrovnik's old town fills with cruise passengers, island ferries sell out and apartment rates peak in August, when coastal prices can rival Italy's. In June or September the sea is warm, prices ease and the towns feel lived-in again, though many island businesses close from mid-October. Days settle into a rhythm of morning sightseeing, an afternoon swim from rocks or pebbles rather than sand, and late dinners of grilled fish. Visitors are often surprised by the quality of the wine and olive oil, and by how much quieter the interior is than the coast.

Top 5 highlights

1

HISTORY

Dubrovnik's city walls

Nearly two kilometres of medieval walls ring the marble-paved old town of the former Republic of Ragusa. Walk them at opening time or late afternoon, then ride the cable car up Mount Srđ for the view.

2

NATURE

Plitvice Lakes National Park

Sixteen terraced lakes linked by waterfalls and wooden boardwalks in forested hills between Zagreb and Zadar. Croatia's oldest national park, declared in 1949, is UNESCO-listed; buy tickets online in summer and arrive at opening time.

3

HISTORY

Diocletian's Palace

The Roman emperor's retirement palace, completed around AD 305, is less a ruin than a neighbourhood. Explore the Peristyle, the cathedral that was once his mausoleum, and the vaulted cellars used as a Game of Thrones set.

4

BEACH

Hvar

This long Dalmatian island mixes a glamorous harbour town with lavender fields, the UNESCO-listed Stari Grad Plain and quiet coves on the Pakleni islets offshore. Stay in Stari Grad or Jelsa for a calmer base.

5

FOOD

Rovinj and inland Istria

Rovinj's Venetian old town rises on a former island to the church of St Euphemia. Inland, hill towns such as Motovun and Grožnjan look over oak forests famed for white truffles, at their best in autumn.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Zagreb

≈ 1.1 million people

An underrated Habsburg capital of hilltop Gornji Grad, the Dolac market, the quirky Museum of Broken Relationships and café terraces; its Advent markets are among Europe's most popular.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Split

≈ 300,000 people

Croatia's second city grew inside Diocletian's Palace, whose Roman walls still enclose shops, bars and homes. It is the main ferry hub for Brač, Hvar and Vis, with a palm-lined seafront Riva.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Rijeka

≈ 200,000 people

A working port with Austro-Hungarian architecture, Trsat castle and Croatia's biggest carnival; better as a gateway to Krk, Cres and the Opatija riviera than as a beach base.

Figures are approximate urban-area populations; the cities proper had about 767,000 (Zagreb), 161,000 (Split) and 108,000 (Rijeka) residents at the 2021 census.

Holiday regions in Croatia

These areas have their own season and weather — see their guides for sea temperatures, resorts and flights.

**Dalmatian Coast**

Croatia Best: Jun, Sep 2h 30m from London

Sea up to 24°C ~£140/day

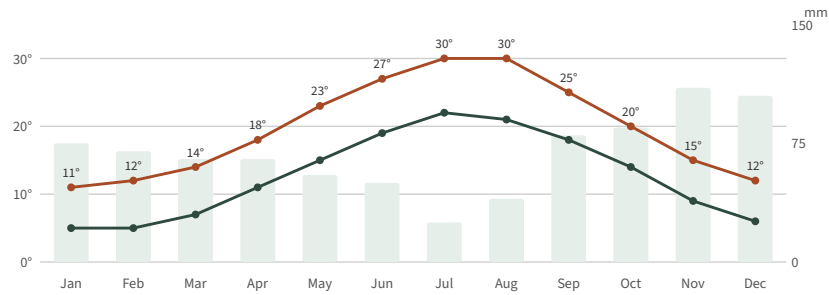
When to go to Croatia

Best time: **May–Jun, Sep.**



Average climate in Split

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan, Nov–
Dec

Advent in Zagreb

From late November to early January, the capital's squares, parks and Upper Town fill with Christmas stalls, mulled wine, concerts and an ice rink on King Tomislav Square.

Feb–Mar

Rijeka Carnival

Croatia's biggest carnival peaks with an international parade on the Sunday before Lent, when bell-ringing zvončari from nearby villages march among thousands of costumed revellers.

Jul–Aug

Dubrovnik Summer Festival

From 10 July to 25 August, theatre, classical music and dance take over the old town's squares, palaces and Lovrijenac fortress, where Hamlet has often been staged.

How much does Croatia cost?

SHOESTRING

£60

per person / day
≈ €71.42

hostels, street food, buses

MID-RANGE

£130

per person / day
≈ €155

3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis

COMFORTABLE

£260

per person / day
≈ €309

4-star+, guided trips, private transfers

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Peka

Lamb, veal or octopus slow-roasted with potatoes under an iron bell covered in embers; konobas usually need a few hours' notice, so order ahead.

Crni rižot

Black risotto coloured and flavoured with cuttlefish ink, a Dalmatian coastal staple that leaves a temporary dark stain on lips and teeth.

Štrukli

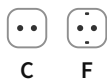
Parcels of thin dough filled with fresh cottage cheese, boiled or baked with cream; the classic comfort dish of Zagreb and the Zagorje hills.

Getting around

Buses are the backbone: frequent coaches link Zagreb, Plitvice, Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik, with tickets sold online. Jadrolinija car ferries and faster catamarans serve the islands from Split, Dubrovnik, Zadar and Rijeka. Trains are slow but scenic between Zagreb and Split. A hire car suits Istria and the interior, and the Pelješac Bridge lets drivers reach Dubrovnik without crossing Bosnia's Neum corridor. Uber and Bolt work in the main cities.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter

DIALLING CODE

+385

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

TIPPING

Service is rarely included; leave around 10% for good restaurant service, round up taxi fares and tip tour guides a few euros.

ETIQUETTE

Cover shoulders and knees in churches, and don't walk around town in swimwear: Split and Hvar fine people who do. Avoid lumping Croatia in with 'Yugoslavia'; memories of the 1990s war remain raw.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Franjo Tuđman Airport (ZAG), Zagreb; Split Airport (SPU), Split; Dubrovnik Airport (DBV), Dubrovnik

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **112** (ambulance, fire, police)

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+1 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the right

Visas & entry for Croatia

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Croatia, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Croatia are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Rabies

Tick-borne encephalitis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Croatia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 1 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day
Wed 18 Nov 2026	Remembrance Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Saint Stephen's Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 6 Jan 2027	Epiphany
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Sun 30 May 2027	Statehood Day
Tue 22 Jun 2027	Anti-Fascist Struggle Day
Thu 5 Aug 2027	Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day and Croatian Veterans Day
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Assumption Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Croatian

ENGLISH	CROATIAN	SAY IT
Hello	Dobar dan	DOH-bar dahn
Thank you	Hvala	HVAH-lah
Please	Molim	MOH-leem
Excuse me	Oprostite	oh-PROH-stee-teh
How much is this?	Koliko ovo košta?	KOH-lee-koh OH-voh KOSH-tah

Know before you go

- Book island ferries and catamarans ahead for July and August, especially with a car; Jadrolinija sells tickets online, and foot-passenger catamarans to Hvar sell out first.
- Your UK GHIC covers state healthcare in Croatia, but buy travel insurance too, since it won't pay for repatriation, private clinics or mountain rescue.
- Visit Dubrovnik's old town early or after 5pm, and check the port's cruise schedule online: days with several large ships in port are noticeably more crowded.

