



ADVENTURES  
*in good company*



## PEARLS OF THE CROATIAN COAST

### TRIP SUMMARY

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visiting Split and Dubrovnik, two of Croatia's most vibrant and completely different cities
- Hiking off the beaten path on Hvar, Korcula, and the Peljasic Peninsula
- Savoring Croatian wine and cuisine
- Experiencing a culture which melds both Italian and Balkan influence into a unique blend

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## TRIP AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Dalmatian Coast, Croatia

**Activities:** Hiking

**Arrive:** Arrive in Split by noon on Day 1

**Depart:** Depart anytime from Dubrovnik on the last day

## TRIP OVERVIEW

Located on the Balkan peninsula and stretched out along the Adriatic Sea, Croatia's Dalmatian Coast is a unique meld of cultures. While this is most clearly seen in the beginning and end of our trip, the contrasting cities of Split and Dubrovnik, every place we go has its own unique feel. We'll visit Diocletian's Palace in Split, learn about traditional life away from the coast and the Alka Tournament in Sinjin, sea kayak in the Pakleni Islands, learn about lavender production on Hvar, sample local specialties on Korcula, taste wine and oysters on the Peljasic Peninsula, and walk the walls of Dubrovnik. We'll go beyond sightseeing as we journey off the beaten path on little-known hikes. And at the end we'll have a new appreciation of this area that only twenty years ago was largely unknown to modern travelers. Maximum group size: 12

## RATING

This trip is designed for active women in good physical condition who want to combine hiking off the beaten track in Croatia, with learning about its history and local culture, visiting two of its best-known cities, and savoring fresh cuisine. **Rating:** 1 [2](#) 3 4 5 A rating of 2 is suitable for any woman who regularly walks at a **brisk** pace 3 to 4 days a week for 35 - 45 minutes. These trips typically involve 3 to 5 hours of daily activity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A local guide and an AGC guide (If there are fewer than 8 on the trip there will not be an AGC guide)
- 7 nights double occupancy lodging
- All meals from dinner the first day to breakfast on the last, except for one dinner
- Airport transfers anytime at the beginning of the trip and one group shuttle at the end
- All transportation (private bus, ferry, private boat) within Croatia
- All entrance fees and activities as described in the itinerary

**Not included:** Transportation to Split (SPU) or back from Dubrovnik (DBV), one dinner, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities and travel insurance.

# OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

## DAY 1

Our trip starts at 1 PM at our hotel in Split. After a welcome and introductions, our Croatian guide will take us on a walking tour of the Old Town of Split, including a visit to the Marjan peninsula. Split is best known for Diocletian's Palace and the co-existence of ancient Roman Walls and current commerce is fascinating. It can also be a bit overwhelming and a visit to Marjan is particularly welcome. Marjan, a beautiful and protected park forest with beaches on all three sides, little churches, trails, and viewpoints, is also known as the lungs of the town. The true locals can't imagine living in Split without Marjan - for many it meant first time experiencing nature, love, first day-trip, and first kiss. Greeks built a little temple there dedicated to goddess Diana, and some five centuries ago hermits walled up caves in the vertical rocks and contemplated life 'far from civilization'. It is an easy place to lose yourself, whether exploring its viewpoints or wandering among various species of Mediterranean herbs and plants growing along its paths as they wind through shades of pine trees in the north side. That night we'll go out for our first taste of delicious Croatian cuisine. Overnight [Hotel Slavija](#) (D)

## DAY 2

Today we start with a transfer to the trail head. Just up over the hills that separate the coast from the interior is a region of timeless, forgotten border villages that divided the great Turkish and Venetian empires. People have lived precariously for centuries between two great cultures. The old trail we hike is as beautiful as it is fascinating, a route that once served people, trade, transport, outlaws and livestock that winds through nature and sparsely populated hamlets. The area is known as Poljicka Republika - The Republic of Poljica. It was a community which existed in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period in central Dalmatia. Our trail will end in small-abandoned village in a traditional home restored by the local family. We will have opportunity to enjoy traditional cooking with Mrs. Ljubica and lunch, before we return back to Split. After the meal a short walk to the vehicle that will drive us back to the hotel. Hiking 6 miles, rolling hills with some steep sections (B, L, D)

### DAY 3

Today we take a ferry to Stari Grad on Hvar island, known as "the sunny island". Although now known as a summer resort, Hvar's history is long and compelling. We'll learn about some of it on our hike today, through two villages. Lavender production was once central to Hvar's economy and while that is no longer true, small scale production still continues. We start in Velo Grablje in the lavender area. It was founded 500 years ago when Hvar's patricians and nobles sought refuge in the hills during the rise of the disempowered plebeians. Nowadays there are only a few full-time inhabitants in the village; many people maintain their homes there and return for the lavender festival during harvest and distillation. We will meet a local lavender producer and learn about the origins and production of lavender oil in these parts. Then we hike down the canyon to get to Malo Grablje - a little village abandoned in the 1950s due to hardships of life. Walking the alleys between the houses that were once bursting with family life and now reclaimed by vegetation, you can almost hear children play or adults talking about making olive oil. Our efforts are rewarded with a tasty lunch in the special ambience of an authentic local tavern in Malo Grablje. Our walk then continues down to a road where you can return to town for some free time. If you prefer to keep walking, a delightful hike along the coastline will bring you back to town. Regardless of which you choose, we'll share dinner at one of the local restaurants. Overnight: Villa Nora or similar Hiking: 3 -5 hours depending on the option you choose (B, L, D).

### DAY 4

Croatia is defined by its location on the Adriatic and today we will be exploring it by sea kayak! We'll start from Hvar Town, close to our hotel and paddle to the group of small islands called the Pakleni. The origin of the name goes back to the time when the islands were the main source of rosin for local shipbuilders. Today, like then, the islands are covered with thick pine woods providing refreshing shade even during the hottest summer days. The route through narrow straits and along islands reveals small hidden pebble beaches where we can swim, snorkel and relax. Lunch is in a restaurant on the beach and afterwards we return to Hvar.

In the afternoon we'll have a tour of the town. Although the area of the town was inhabited more than two millennia ago by Illyrians and later by Greeks and Romans, Hvar began to flourish during the Venetian Empire when it served as a naval base. This is most evident in the architecture of the Arsenal where they repaired galleons, one of the oldest municipal theaters in Europe, the cathedral, and possibly the longest square in Dalmatia. We'll start at the fortress that dominates the town. Known as "Spanjola" it tells stories of the past times. It is a beautiful viewpoint, with Hvar's port and the archipelago of Pakleni spread out below you. Dinner is on your own tonight and after the tour you can explore one of the many restaurants the town is known for. (B, L)

## DAY 5

After breakfast we get on a local ferry for travel to Korcula. Korcula is a historic and fortified town on the east side of the island, populated even before the Greeks arrived. Later Venetians built the city there in the shape of a fishbone, which served as natural air conditioning by regulating the wind flow, and with walls that protected it not just from possible attack but also from stormy and cold winds in winter. Korculans claim it as the birthplace of the famous Italian traveler Marco Polo. We'll follow a trail out of town to the village of Zrnovo, one of the oldest settlements on the island and known for wine and olive oil making, agriculture, and stonemasonry. The churches of this little village, spread across a relatively large area, are known for the diversity of their different visions and architectural styles. We can stop here for a quick coffee and then proceed into the field to a trail that leads to a magical place known as Kocje.

Kocje is a labyrinth of strangely shaped dolomite rocks, overgrown with ivy, surrounded by holm oak and fern. The flora is interwoven in a most delicate way with cave-like spaces between the rocks dressed in moss, seemingly hiding some primordial secrets. Although this protected area is relatively small, we'll enjoy spending some time exploring its green corridors, aromatic herbs, or looking for the "Fairies' spring". On the way back from Kocje we pass through Zrnovo again, this time choosing a different route. Along the way we'll sample local products, prepared using traditional recipes and typical local ingredients. We'll have lunch in a small tavern, before returning to our hotel. Overnight [Hotel Korcula](#)(B, L, D)

## DAY 6

Today we explore the Peljesac Peninsula. Taking a ferry to the beginning of our hike, our trail starts in the small village of Viganj. From here we ascend on a rocky trail through vineyards and stone terraces onto a ridge with stunning views of the Adriatic and Korcula. We descend to the port of Orebic, home to a new maritime museum. From there it's off to one of the famous Peljesac wine producers. The peninsula is famous for its wines, especially the red wines that grow on steep southern exposed slopes. We'll sample teas made of home- or wild-grown ingredients, small biscuits, cheese, wine, and oil with one of the most-esteemed winemakers of this area, Milos. Our next stop is an oyster farm! We'll learn how oysters, a well-known aphrodisiac, are grown and then have an opportunity to sample them. As we continue our journey, we'll take a short break in the small town of Ston. It is a town with majestic walls, the oldest in Europe, and an old salt processing plant, the pride of the Republic of Dubrovnik. We then continue our journey to majestic Dubrovnik, made famous by Game of Thrones, but always the best-known destination in Croatia. After checking into our hotel, we'll have time to explore before or after dinner. Overnight [Hotel Lero](#) in Dubrovnik (B,L,D)

## DAY 7

No photos in the world can match viewing Dubrovnik with your own eyes, especially from the amazing perspective of the city walls where you see almost countless red roofs of old stone houses, not to mention the towers, churches and palaces. The Republic of Ragusa, the historic name of Dubrovnik, was an independent state for four and a half centuries. The city's history dates back long before that, however, and new archeological findings suggest it was founded by Greek sailors. The Republic's independence, which was skillfully lead and preciously maintained against the Ottomans and Venetians, ended with the arrival of the Napoleon's troops. History left traces on Dubrovnik and the mentality of its people, as evidenced by amazing architectural, artistic and cultural achievements. On top of everything else, it is situated in a very beautiful part of Croatia with the hinterland only recently being rediscovered and reevaluated on one side and the archipelago of Elafiti islands counting as the Adriaticâ's finest gems on the other.

Today will be both educational and inspiring. After the morning guided tour of the city, we will journey to the hinterland of Dubrovnik where we will learn about the amazing history of the area and visit the fortress Sokolgrad. After lunch at a family-owned tavern, we'll visit one of the last places we can still see the process of handmade silk production. In the past silk was a very important material in this area, and we will visit a family who demonstrates the traditional manufacturing process, from the cocoon to the delicate details of traditional costumes from Dubrovnik.

Tonight, we'll share one final dinner together, raising a glass to toast each other and our newfound appreciation of Croatian culture, history, and cuisine. (B, L, D)

## DAY 8

You are free to leave anytime this morning. We'll arrange shuttles to the airport based on departure times. (B)

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### GETTING THERE

The trip starts in Split, Croatia at our hotel. Transfer from the airport to the hotel is included regardless of what day you arrive. We will group together everyone who is arriving at similar times and you may have to wait up to 2 hours.

Note that the trip starts Split (SPU) and ends in Dubrovnik (DBV). If you are having trouble finding flights, consider flying to London and then taking one of the low-cost airlines that flies from there. You may need to change airports in London so be sure to check the arrival and departure flights carefully and leave enough time if you do. The best websites for exploring these possibilities are Skyscanner (<http://www.skyscanner.com>) and FlightHub (<http://www.fliighthub.com>).

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

We will be staying in double occupancy rooms with en suite bathrooms in small 3 star hotels as specified in the itinerary and below.

Split - [Hotel Slavija](http://www.hotelslavija.hr/) (<http://www.hotelslavija.hr/>)

Hvar - [Hotel Palace](http://www.suncanihvar.com/the-palace-hvar.html) (<http://www.suncanihvar.com/the-palace-hvar.html>)

Korcula - [Hotel Korcula](http://www.hotelkorcula.com/) (<http://www.hotelkorcula.com/>)

Dubrovnik - [Hotel Lero](http://www.hotel-lero.hr/?file=home) (<http://www.hotel-lero.hr/?file=home>)

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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