

Kvarner Region



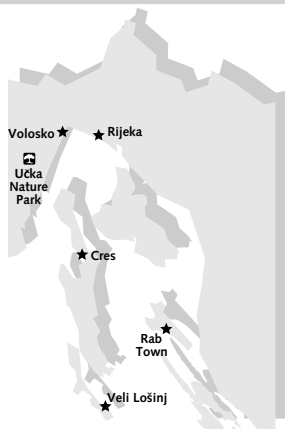
Protected by soaring mountains, covered with luxuriant forests, lined with beaches and dotted with islands, the Kvarner Gulf (Quarnero in Italian) abounds in holiday options. You can explore the urban fabric of Rijeka, Croatia's third-largest city and biggest port, swim in clear seas off secluded bays, hike in the dense woods of Učka and Risnjak parks, feast on fresh seafood in the foodie mecca of Volosko, wander about medieval Rab Town on the eponymous island, and tour the ancient hilltop villages of Cres.

Covering 3300 sq km between Rijeka in the north and Pag in the south, Kvarner is a microcosm of the many influences that have formed Croatian culture. Rijeka owes its architecture to Hungary, and echoes of the Venetian era pervade the islands of Cres, Lošinj and Rab, while Krk was the seat of Croatia's native nobility, the Frankopan dukes. The mild weather explains the wealth of vegetation: the islands of Cres, Lošinj and Krk feature some 1300 plant species; Rab is known for its evergreen forests; and the lush greenery around Opatija helped establish its reputation as a health resort.

From the gateway city of Rijeka, you can easily connect to the 19th-century elegance of Opatija or Baška's sandy beach on Krk. The picture-perfect old towns of Krk, Rab, Mali Lošinj and Cres are just a ferry ride away, as are plenty of remote coves for scenic swimming. Krk is the largest and most developed island, with excellent tourist infrastructure and summer hordes that make use of it. Mali Lošinj is also packed but prettier, and you're within easy reach of wild unspoiled Cres with its virgin woods and medieval villages. Rab has the most striking old town and enough hidden coves to easily escape the shoulder-to-shoulder summer crowds.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sampling seafood specialities in the foodie mecca of **Volosko** (p128)
- Taking in the panoramic views from Rijeka's **Trsat Castle** (p122)
- Enjoying a verdant hike in **Učka Nature Park** (p129)
- Learning about Adriatic dolphins at **Blue World** (p136) on Veli Lošinj
- Hiking the primeval forests of Tramuntana on **Cres** (p138)
- Wandering the cobbled streets of medieval **Rab Town** (p149)



Climate

The region's mild climate has played an important part in the growth of tourism. The Kvarner Gulf is protected from harsh weather by the mountain range running from Vojak (1401m) on Mt Učka in the northwest to Gorski Kotar in the east and the Velebit Range in the southeast. Summers here are long and cooled by the *maestral* (strong, steady westerly wind). In winter, the *bura* (cold northeasterly wind) brings sudden rushes of cold air, but temperatures rarely drop below freezing.

KVARNER COAST

RIJEKA

pop 147,700

While Rijeka (Fiume in Italian) doesn't fit the bill as a tourist destination per se, it does offer an insightful glimpse into the workaday life of Croatia's third-largest city. Most people rush through en route to the islands or Dalmatia, but for those who pause, a few assets await. Blend in with the coffee-sipping locals on the bustling Korzo pedestrian strip, stroll along the tree-lined promenade that fronts the harbour, and visit the imposing hilltop fortress of Trsat. Rijeka also boasts a burgeoning nightlife and, every year, Croatia's biggest and most colourful carnival celebration.

Despite some regrettable architectural ventures in the outskirts, much of the centre contains the ornate, imposing public buildings you would expect to find in Vienna or Budapest, evidence of the strong Austro-Hungarian influence. It's a surprisingly verdant city once you've left its concrete core, which contains Croatia's largest port. The industrial aspect is evident from the boats, cargo and cranes that line the waterfront, but there's a seedy beauty to it. There's rumour of redeveloping the harbour, building a new ferry terminal, banning traffic along the seaside and revitalising the city.

As one of Croatia's most important transportation hubs, Rijeka has buses, trains and ferries that connect Istria and Dalmatia with Zagreb. There's no real beach in the city so it's assumed most visitors will pass through. Tourist resources are limited and hotel options few, as most people base themselves in Opatija.

History

Following their successful conquest of the indigenous Illyrian Liburnian tribe, the Romans established a port here called Tarsaticae. It was the Slavic tribes who migrated to the region in the 7th century and built a new settlement within the old Roman town.

The town changed feudal masters – from German nobility to the Frankopan dukes of Krk – before becoming part of the Austrian empire in the late 15th century. Rijeka was an important outlet to the sea for the Austrians and a new road was built in 1725 connecting Vienna with the Kvarner coast. This spurred economic development, especially shipbuilding, the industry that has remained the centrepiece of Rijeka's economy ever since.

With the birth of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy in 1867, Rijeka was given over to the jurisdiction of the Hungarian government. The urban landscape acquired a new look as Hungarian architects descended upon the city to erect municipal buildings. A new railway was built linking the city to Zagreb, Budapest and Vienna, and bringing the first tourists to the Kvarner Gulf.

Between 1918, when Italian troops seized Rijeka and Istria under the leadership of Gabriele d'Annunzio, and 1942 when Rijeka became part of postwar Yugoslavia, it changed hands several times, with sporadic periods as a free city. In 1991, Rijeka became part of independent Croatia but still retains a sizeable, well-organised Italian minority who have their own newspaper, *La Voce del Popolo*.

Orientation

Korzo runs through the city centre, roughly parallel to Riva, towards Mrtvi Kanal and the Rječina River in the east. The intercity bus station is on Trg Žabica at the western edge of Riva. Local buses and the airport shuttle run from Jelačićev Trg. The train station is a five-minute walk west of the intercity bus station.

Information

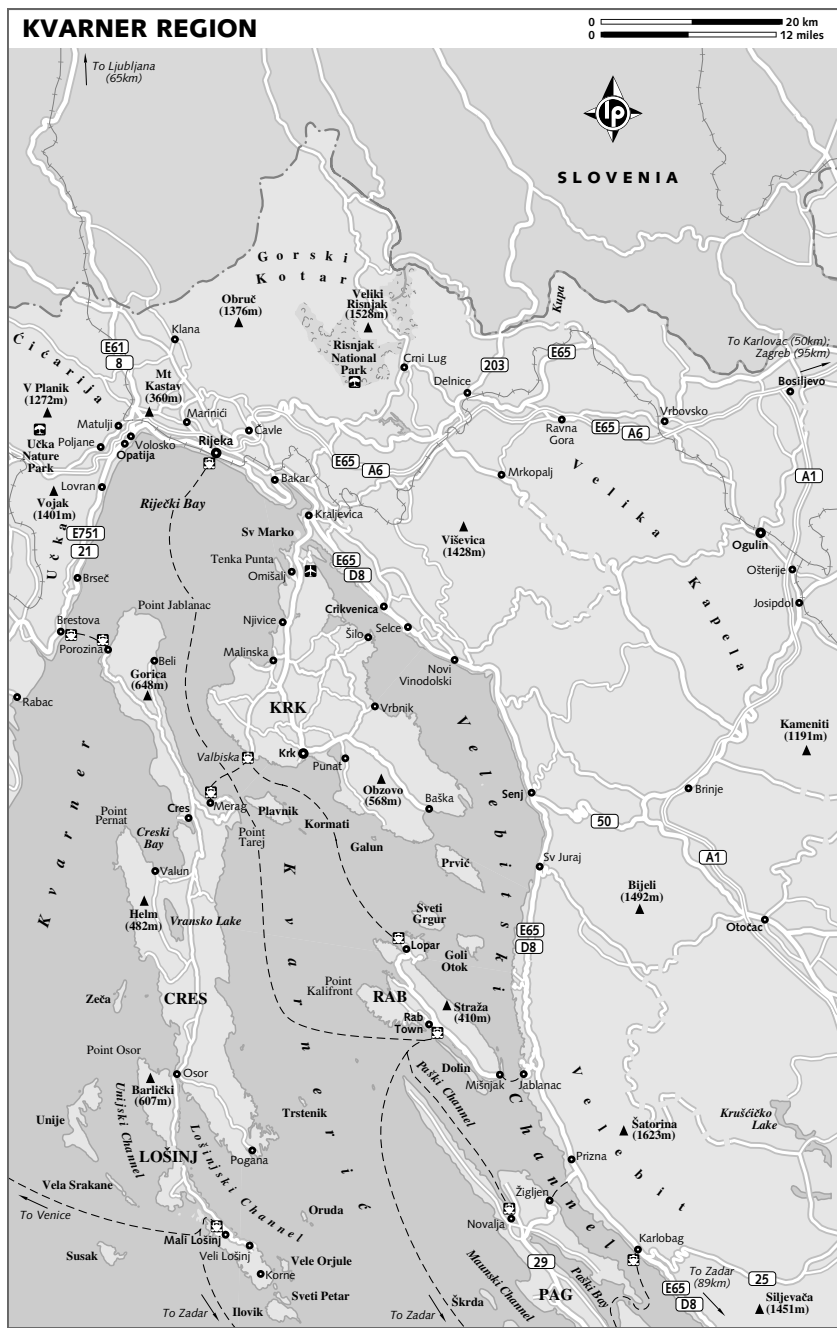
INTERNET ACCESS

There's free wireless access along Korzo and in parts of Trsat.

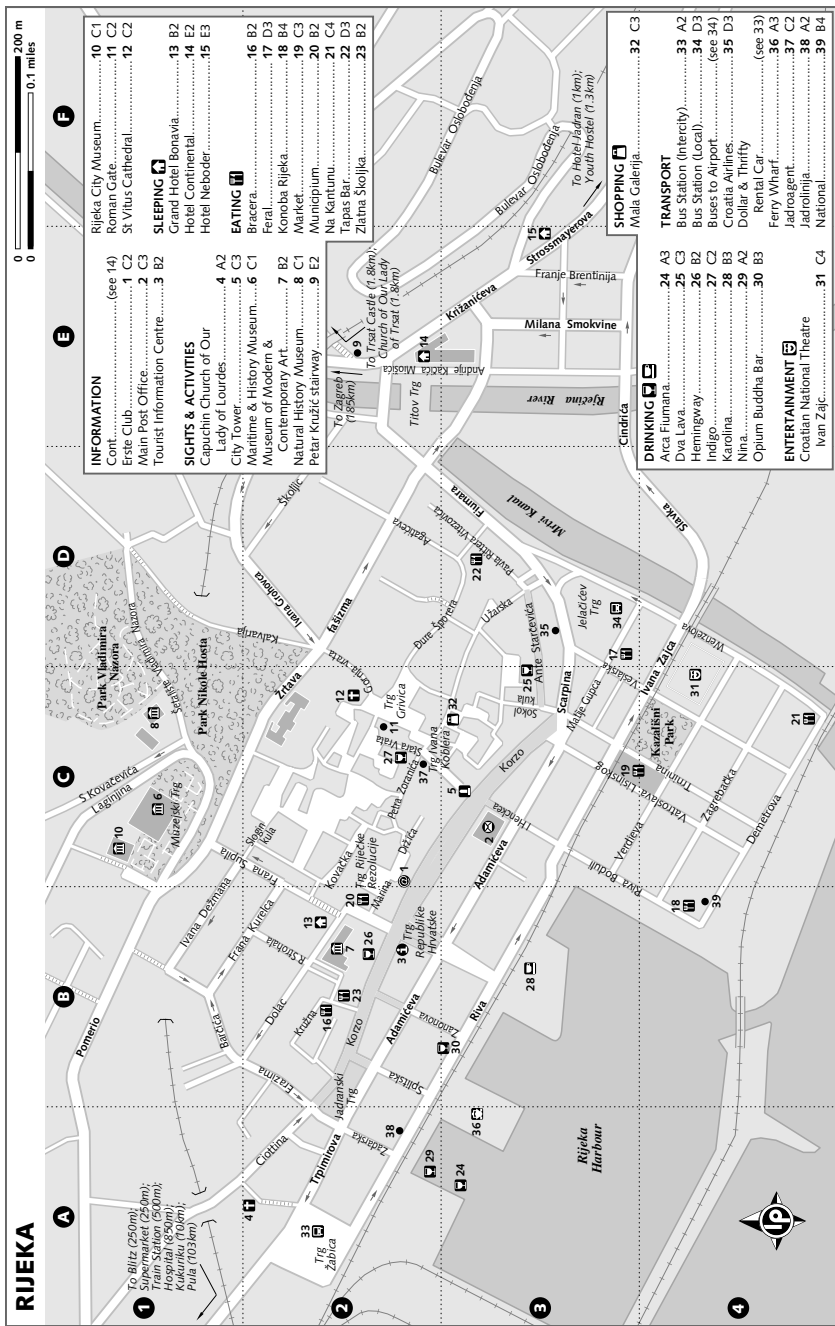
Cont (☎ 371 630; Andrije Kačića Miošića 1; per hr 15KN;

✉ 7am-10pm) This café inside Hotel Continental has a full bank of computers.

Erste Club (☎ 320 072; Korzo 22; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm Sun) Four terminals where you can surf for free, up to 30 minutes.



KVARNER REGION



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LAUNDRY

Blitz (Krešimirova 3a; per small load 51KN; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Between the intercity-bus and train stations.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Garderoba intercity bus station (per day 13KN; ☎ 5.30am-10.30pm); train station (per day in locker 15KN; ☎ 4.30am-10.30pm) The bus station *garderoba* is at the café next door to the ticket office.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Hospital (☎ 658 111; Krešimirova 42)

MONEY

There are two ATMs at the train station and a number of them along Korzo and around the city centre. The exchange offices adjacent to the train and bus stations keep long hours.

POST

Main post office (Korzo 13; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Has a telephone centre and an exchange office.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 335 882; www.tz-rijeka.hr; Korzo 33a; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun Jun-Aug, 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat Sep-May) This spiffy centre has plentiful free materials and info about private accommodation.

Sights

A devastating earthquake struck Rijeka in 1750 and destroyed much of its original architecture. The city was almost entirely rebuilt in the grand Habsburg style that prevails today. **Korzo**, the main pedestrian promenade and these days the focal point of social coffee drinking, was built as a commercial avenue on the site of the demolished town walls.

The maze of streets and squares in the ancient core of Rijeka is excellently marked with multilingual plaques explaining the history of each sight. The tourist office distributes maps of this **walking route**, called Turistička Magistrala.

MONUMENTS

One of the few buildings to have survived the earthquake, the distinctive yellow **City Tower** (Gradski Toranj) was originally a gate from the seafront to the city. The Habsburgs added the baroque decorations after the disaster, including the portal with coats of arms

and busts of emperors. The still-functioning clock was mounted in 1873.

Pass under the City Tower, continue through Trg Ivana Koblera and take an alley to the north to find the oldest architectural monument in Rijeka, the **Roman Gate** (Stara Vrata). This plain archway marks the former entrance to Praetorium, an ancient military complex, the remains of which you can see in a small excavation area.

ST VITUS CATHEDRAL

North of the Roman Gate is the **cathedral** (Katedrala Svetog Vida; Trg Grivica 11; ☎ 7am-noon & 4.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 7am-noon Sun Jun-Aug, 6.30am-noon Sep-May), built by the Jesuit order in 1638 on the site of an older church and dedicated to Rijeka's patron saint. Massive marble pillars support the central dome under which are housed baroque altars and a 13th-century Gothic crucifix. According to legend, a man named Petar Lončarić threw a stone at the crucifix and blood began to flow from Christ's body. The man was swallowed by the ground and the blood is still held in a vial.

CAPUCHIN CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Looming over the intercity bus station, this **church** (Crkva Gospe Lurdske; Kapucinske Stube 5; ☎ 8am-noon & 4-6pm), with its ornate neo-Gothic facade, dates from 1904. The Capuchin sponsors of the project ran into financing problems midway through construction and enlisted the aid of a 'St Johanca', who allegedly sweated blood in front of the credulous masses. Gifts and money poured into the coffers and the building was finally completed in 1929. ('St Johanca' was arrested for fraud in 1913.)

MARITIME & HISTORY MUSEUM

This **museum** (Pomorski i Povijesni Muzej Hrvatskog Primorja; ☎ 553 666; www.ppmhp.hr; Muzejski Trg 1; adult/student 10/5KN; ☎ 9am-8pm Tue-Fri, to 1pm Sat) is housed in the Governor's Palace, a splendid showcase of Hungarian architecture. Pick up the small leaflet in English for a self-guided tour that gives a vivid picture of life among seafarers, with model ships, sea charts, navigation instruments and portraits of captains.

RIJEKA CITY MUSEUM

Just to the west of the palace is the **Rijeka City Museum** (Muzej Grada Rijeke; ☎ 336 711; Muzejski Trg 1/1; adult/student 10/5KN, admission free Mon; ☎ 10am-1pm &

5-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat). Housed in a 1970s cubicle structure, it hosts temporary exhibits and events, ranging from retrospectives by local photographers and architects, to visiting shows from Serbia and Italy.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

In the same area, the **Natural History Museum** (Prirodoslovni Muzej; ☎ 553 669; Lorenzov Prolaz 1; adult/student 10/5KN; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 3pm Sun) is devoted to the geology and botany of the Adriatic. In addition to a multimedia centre with an aquarium, there are exhibits on bugs, snakes and frogs on the three floors of this 19th-century villa. The adjacent botanical garden with over 2000 native plant species is a great place to unwind.

MUSEUM OF MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ART

Just up from the Korzo on the 2nd floor of the University Library, this **museum** (Muzej Moderne i Suvremene Umjetnosti; ☎ 334 280; www.mmsu.hr; Dolac 1; adult/student 10/5KN; 🕒 10am-1pm & 6-9pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug, 10am-1pm & 5-8pm Sep-May) puts on rotating shows, be it an opus of a contemporary Croatian artist or a display of multi-artist works curated around a single theme.

TRSAT CASTLE & CHURCH

High on a hill overlooking Rijeka and the Rječina River, **Trsat Castle** (☎ 217 714; adult/student 15/5KN; 🕒 9am-8pm May-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Apr) is a 13th-century fortress that has occupied this strategic position since Illyrian times. The present structure was built by the Frankopan dukes of Krk, but the latest facelift was done in 1824 when Irish-born count Laval Nugent, a commander in the Austrian army, bought the castle and had it restored in a romantic Classicist-Biedermeier style. The ancient Greek-style Nugent family mausoleum houses a gallery, while underground a former dungeon hosts occasional exhibits. During summer, the fortress features concerts, theatre performances and fashion shows. The open-air café is a wonderful spot to take in the vistas.

The other hill highlight is the **Church of Our Lady of Trsat** (Crkva Gospe Trsatske; ☎ 452 900; Frankopanski Trg; 🕒 by appointment), a centuries-old magnet for believers. According to legend, the angels carrying the house of the Virgin Mary from Nazareth rested here in the late 13th century before moving it to Loreto in

TOP FIVE BEACHES IN THE KVARNER REGION

- Baška (p146; Krk Island) – a gorgeous sweep of pebble beach with a glorious mountain backdrop
- Beli (p138; Cres Island) – this cosy cove has calm, crystal water and no crowds
- Lopar (p152; Rab Island) – a strip of sandy beaches bordered by pine groves
- Sunčana Uvala (p132; Lošinj Island) – plenty of rocky and pebbly coves with pine-tree shade
- Lungomare (p126; Opatija) – rock formations create dozens of private beaches along the promenade

Italy. Pilgrims started trickling in to the chapel erected on the site, and then pouring in when the pope donated an icon of Mary in 1367. The famous painting is on the main altar behind a magnificent wrought-iron gate. Check out the offerings of votive gifts across the baroque cloister and make an appointment to see the valuable sacral art collection in the treasury, where they'll play a 15-minute film about the church.

To follow in the pilgrims' steps, climb the **Petar Kružić stairway** from Titov Trg, built in 1531 for the faithful on their way to Our Lady of Trsat. The steep stairs are lined with chapels dedicated to saints, once used as rest stops for the pilgrims. For an easier way up, take a quick ride on city bus 1 or 1A to Trsat Castle.

Festivals & Events

The **Rijeka Carnival** (www.ri-kanerval.com.hr) is the largest and most elaborate in Croatia, with two weeks of partying that involves pageants, street dances, concerts, masked balls, exhibitions and an international parade. Check out the *zvončari*, masked men clad in animal skins who dance and ring loud bells to frighten off evil spirits. The festivities take place anywhere between late January and early March, depending on when Easter falls.

Concerts are held at the Croatian National Theatre (p124) during **Rijeka Summer Nights** (Riječke Ljetne Noći) in June and July.

Sleeping

Prices in Rijeka hotels generally stay the same year-round except at Carnival time, when you

can expect to pay a surcharge. You should book well in advance if you want to visit during this time. There are few private rooms in Rijeka itself; the tourist office lists these on its website. Opatija is a much better choice for accommodation (see p126).

Youth Hostel (☎ 406 420; rijeka@fhfs.hr; Šetalište XIII Divizije 23; dm/s/d 130/235/310KN; 📺) Five bus stops east of the centre (on bus 2) in the leafy residential area of Pečine, this renovated 19th-century villa has clean and snug units and a communal TV room. Breakfast is available (15KN); reservations are advisable in summer.

Hotel Continental (☎ 372 008; www.jadran-hoteli.hr; Andrije Kačić Miošića 1; s/d 384/449KN; 📺) At the time of writing, more than half of the rooms inside this grand building were being revamped. Once they're primped up, the rating will go up to three stars and the prices will increase by 15%. The location is great, just northeast of the centre.

Hotel Neboder (☎ 373 538; www.jadran-hoteli.hr; Strossmayerova 1; s/d 440/550KN; 📺) Fantastic city and harbour views make up for the small rooms in this recently refurbished high-rise on a gentle hill near Hotel Continental. Superior units have air-con and balconies.

Ourpick Hotel Jadran (☎ 216 600; www.jadran-hoteli.hr; Šetalište XIII Divizije 46; s/d 672/793KN; 📺) The four-star upgrade of this longstanding hotel produced airy rooms with huge glass windows or balconies offering sea vistas. Perks include a restaurant, a small gym and a private beach below. It's worth the 1km trip east of the city centre.

Grand Hotel Bonavia (☎ 357 100; www.bonavia.hr; Dolac 4; s/d from 945/1135KN; 📺) Bet on highbrow luxury at this top hotel, one of Croatia's best. Slick rooms are equipped with all top-of-the-line amenities. The restaurant serves outstanding creative cuisine, while the spa offers treats such as aromatherapy showers.

Eating

If you want a meal on a Sunday, you'll be relegated to either fast food, pizza or a hotel restaurant, as nearly every other place in Rijeka is closed. There are a number of cafés on Korzo that serve light meals.

Konoba Rijeka (☎ 312 084; Riva Boduli 7c; mains from 25KN) Tasty and cheap fish meals can be had at this restaurant right on the harbour, with high ceilings, stone walls and plenty of

fish nets. Try the dried octopus omelette, a house speciality.

Tapas Bar (☎ 315 313; Pavla Rittera Vitezovića 5; tapas around 25KN) One of Rijeka's newest openings, this small and stylish spot on a quiet city centre block churns out Croatian-inspired tapas. Delicious *bruschette* are topped with anchovies, truffles, fresh tuna and so on, and cost 9KN per piece. Portions are small and the bill adds up.

Ourpick Na Kantunu (☎ 313 271; Demetrova 2; mains from 35KN) If you're lucky to grab a table at this tiny lunchtime spot on an industrial stretch of the port, you'll be treated to the superlative daily catch. Just point to your fish of choice or let the staff prepare it house style. Friday lunches are the busiest, when many locals don't eat red meat.

Feral (☎ 212 274; Matije Gupca 5b; mains from 60KN) It may be past its glory as one of Rijeka's best restaurants but this city classic, around since 1964, still does great black risotto and *šurlice* (homemade pasta from Krk) in its exposed brick interior. The fish *marenda* (lunch) served till 1pm costs just 30KN.

Zlatna Školjka (☎ 213 782; Kružna 12; mains 65-95KN) Savour the superbly prepared seafood and choice Croatian wines at this classy maritime-themed restaurant. The mixed-fish starter, Conco d'Oro, is pricey (100KN) but worth it. The adjacent Bracera, by the same owners, serves crusty pizza, even on a Sunday.

Municipium (☎ 213 000; Trg Riječke Rezolucije 5; mains from 70KN) What comes out of the kitchen at this fancy restaurant in a historic building are updated versions of Croatian classics. The food is light and well prepared and the crowd busy making business deals.

Kukuriku (☎ 691 417; www.kukuriku.hr; Trg Matka Laginje 1a, Kastav; 6-course meals 370-510KN; 📺 closed Mon Nov-Easter) Among the pioneers of the slow food movement in Croatia (see p52), this gastronomic destination in the old town of Kastav, Rijeka's hilltop suburb, offers delectable meals amid lots of rooster-themed decoration. It's worth the splurge and the trek out of town on bus 18. The restaurant is set to move to a new nearby location soon; check the website for updates.

For self-caterers, there's a large super-market in between the intercity bus and train stations, and a **city market** (btwn Vatroslava Lisinskog & Trminina) open till 2pm daily (noon on Sundays).

MORČIĆI

The *morčići* is a traditional symbol of Rijeka, and its official mascot. The image of a black person topped with a colourful turban is made into ceramic brooches and earrings, and is a popular disguise at the Rijeka Carnival (p122).

There are a few legends about Rijeka's most recognisable symbol. According to one story, during the 16th-century Turkish invasions, the women and children prayed for a rain of stones to bury their enemy. An arrow struck and killed the Turkish pasha in the temple as a result of their prayers. The terrified Turks scattered as the skies opened and stones hailed down, burying them. The men were so grateful for their wives' assistance that they presented them with the colourful earrings. Another tale tells of an Italian baron who was so fond of her black slave that she granted the woman her freedom and had earrings made in her image.

More mundanely, it appears that the *morčići* was a spin-off from the Venetian *moretto* design that was part of a 17th- and 18th-century fad. The gem-encrusted Venetian Moor was simplified by Rijeka jewellers and sold to poorer women as simple B&W ceramic earrings. Men also picked up on the fashion; a single earring was worn by only sons, sailors and fishermen for good luck.

In the late 19th century, Rijeka jewellers improved the quality of the artisanship and branched out into rings, brooches and necklaces. Upper-class women snatched up the pieces and, with a display at the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873, *morčići* became popular throughout Europe.

Drinking

With several recent openings, Rijeka's nightlife got a boost of energy. Bar-hoppers cruise the bars and cafés along Riva and Korzo for the liveliest social hubbub. A couple of these are housed in boats on Adamićev Gat: the downstairs of *Arca Fiumana* is frequented by the rock crowd, while *Nina* next door hops with *narodnjaci* (folk music). Many of the bars double as clubs on weekends.

Dva Lava (☎ 332 390; Ante Starčevića 8) The two alfresco terraces of this popular den, one on a tree-shaded square, are always packed during the day. DJs spin on weekend nights and the two floors with futuristic decor hop till late.

Hemingway (☎ 211 696; Korzo 28) This stylish venue for coffee-sipping, cocktail-drinking and people-watching pays homage to its namesake with large B&W photos and drinks named after him. It's part of a fashionable chain.

Indigo (☎ 315 174; Stara Vrata 3) On weekends, the owner likes to lay tracks at this snazzy hang-out next to an archaeological dig. Salsa dancing and after-work parties take place on weeknights. There's a restaurant that, atypically, serves brunch.

Karolina (☎ 211 447; Gat Karoline Riječke bb) Trendy but not self-conscious about it, this waterfront bar-café is a relaxed place for a daytime coffee. At night, crowds spill out onto the wharf in a huge outdoor party. There are live DJ acts on summer nights.

Opium Buddha Bar (Riva 12a) The decor is wannabe Asian, the sounds are electronic and the weekends jump at this dark and sprawling lounge bar with an outdoor terrace.

Entertainment

Croatian National Theatre Ivan Zajc (☎ 355 900; www.hnk-zajc.hr; Verdieva 5a) In 1885, the inaugural performance at this imposing theatre was lit by the city's first light bulb. These days, you can catch mostly dramas in Croatian and Italian, as well as opera and ballet. Gustav Klimt painted some of the ceiling frescoes.

Shopping

Look for the traditional Rijeka design known as *morčići*, a ceramic jewellery piece of a Moor wearing a turban (see boxed text, above). You can pick one up at **Mala Galerija** (☎ 335 403; www.mala-galerija.hr, in Croatian; Užarska 25).

Getting There & Away

AIR

Croatia Airlines (☎ 330 207; www.croatiaairlines.hr; Jelačićev Trg 5; ✈ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) operates international and domestic flights.

BOAT

Jadrolinija (☎ 211 444; www.jadrolinija.hr; Riva 16; ✈ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) sells tickets for the large coastal ferries that run all year between Rijeka and Dubrovnik on their way to Bari in Italy, via Split, Hvar and Korčula.

Other ferry routes include Rijeka–Cres–Mali Lošinj and Rijeka–Rab–Pag. Schedules and fares change so check Jadrolinija's website. All ferries depart from Rijeka's wharf (Adamićev Gat).

Jadroagent (☎ 211 626; www.jadroagent.hr; Trg Ivana Koblera 2) has information on all boats around Croatia.

BUS

If you fly into Zagreb, there is a Croatia Airlines van that goes directly from Zagreb airport to Rijeka twice daily (145KN, two hours, 3.30pm and 9pm). It goes back to Zagreb from Rijeka at 5am and 11am. There are six daily buses to Trieste (60KN, 2½ hours) and one daily bus to Plitvice (130KN, four hours), with a change in Otočac.

The **intercity bus station** (☎ 060 302 010; Trg Žabica 1) is in the town centre. For international connections, see p308. Following are some of the more popular domestic routes:

Destination	Fare (KN)	Duration (hr)	Daily services
Baška	71	2¼	4-8
Dubrovnik	340-485	12-13	2-3
Krk	50	1-2	14
Poreč	72-114	1-3	7-11
Pula	78-88	2¼	8-10
Rab	125	3	2
Rovinj	81-112	2-3	4-5
Split	241-327	8	6-7
Zadar	153-202	4-5	6-7
Zagreb	95-174	2½-3	13-17

CAR

Dollar & Thrifty Rental Car (☎ 325 900; www.subrosa.hr), with a booth inside the intercity bus station, has cars from 466KN per day (2500KN per week) with unlimited kilometres. You can also try **National** (☎ 212 452; www.nationalcar.hr; Demetrova 18b).

TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 213 333; Krešimirova 5) is a five-minute walk from the city centre. Seven daily trains run to Zagreb (96KN, 3½ to five hours). There's a daily train to Split (160KN, 10 hours) that changes at Ogulin, where you wait for two hours. Two direct daily services head to Ljubljana (93KN, three hours) and one daily train goes to Vienna (307KN to 498KN, nine hours). Reservations are compulsory on some *poslovní* (business-class) trains.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Rijeka Airport (☎ 842 040; www.rijeka-airport.hr; Hamec 1, Omišalj) is on Krk Island, 30km from town. An airport bus meets all flights for a 30-minute ride to Jelačićev Trg; it leaves from this same square for the airport two hours and 20 minutes before flight times. You can buy the ticket (22KN) on the bus. Taxis cost about 300KN; call ☎ 332 893 or ☎ 335 138.

BUS

Rijeka has an extensive network of city buses that run from the central station at Jelačićev Trg. Buy two-trip tickets for 14KN at any *tisak* (newsstand). A single ticket from the driver costs 10KN.

Rijeka also has a sightseeing bus that shuttles tourists between major sights in Rijeka, Trsat and Opatija. The one-day ticket, available for hopping on and off wherever and whenever you please, costs 70KN. For tickets and detailed schedules, visit the tourist office (p121).

OPATIJA

pop 9073

Just 15km west of Rijeka, Opatija (Abbazia in Italian) is one of Croatia's most spectacular sights. On this stretch of coast, the forested hills slope down to the sparkling sea, enhanced by the peak of Vojak (1401m), west of Opatija and the highest point on the Istrian peninsula. The best vantage point for this vista is Lungomare, a waterfront promenade that stretches for 12km along the Opatija Riviera from Volosko to Lovran.

It was this breathtaking location and the agreeable year-round climate that made Opatija the most fashionable seaside resort for the Viennese elite during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Between the world wars and during the Yugoslav period, however, the belle époque villas went into decline and Opatija lost its former lustre.

The good news is that the grand residences of the wealthy have since been revamped and turned into upmarket hotels, with a particular accent on spa and health holidays. Foodies have been flocking from afar, too, for the clutch of fantastic restaurants in the nearby fishing village of Volosko. Good food, coastal scenery, clear waters and many parks attract a steady flow of tourists, especially in the summer months and around Christmas.

History

Until the 1840s, Opatija was a humble fishing village with 35 houses and a church, but the arrival of wealthy Iginio Scarpa from Rijeka turned things around. He built Villa Angiolina (named after his wife) and surrounded it with species of exotic plants from Japan, China, South America and Australia. The villa hosted some of Europe's finest aristocrats, including the Austrian queen Maria Anna, wife of Ferdinand. The town's reputation as a retreat for the elite was born.

Opatija's development was also assisted by the construction of a rail link on the Vienna–Trieste line in 1873. Construction of Opatija's first hotel, the Quarner (today the Hotel Kvarner), began and wealthy visitors arrived en masse. It seemed everyone who was anyone was compelled to visit Opatija, including kings from Romania and Sweden, Russian tsars and the celebrities of the day such as Isadora Duncan, Gustav Mahler, Giacomo Puccini and Anton Chekov.

Although Opatija has never acquired the glitter of the French Riviera, it has become a favoured holiday spot for sleek, bronzed Italians in the summer. The mild winters attract a sizable number of elderly Austrians who come to nibble on cakes in the Hotel Kvarner and take a healthy saunter by the sea.

Orientation

Opatija sits on a narrow strip of land sandwiched between the sea and the foothills of the Učka mountain range. Ulica Maršala Tita is the main road that runs through town; it's lined with travel agencies, restaurants, shops and hotels. The bus from Rijeka stops first at the Hotel Belvedere, then near the market and finally at the bus station at the foot of town on Trg Vladimira Gortana.

Information

Ulica Maršala Tita has numerous ATMs and travel agencies eager to change money.

Da Riva (☎ 272 990; www.da-riva.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 170; ☎ 8am–8pm Jun–mid-Sep, shorter hr rest of year) Finds private accommodation and offers excursions around Croatia.

GI Turizam (☎ 273 030; www.tourgit.com; Ulica Maršala Tita 65; ☎ 9am–10pm summer, to 8pm rest of year) Finds private accommodation, books excursions, rents cars and changes money.

Katarina Line (☎ 603 400; www.katarina-line.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 71; ☎ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat, 8am–9pm Sun

summer, 8am–4pm Mon–Sat rest of year) Known for its cruises around the Adriatic, it also books accommodation and day trips.

Linea Verde (☎ 701 107; www.lineaverde-croatia.com; Andrije Štangerca 42, Volosko; ☎ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat, 8am–9pm Sun summer, 8am–4pm Mon–Sat rest of year) Hiking excursions to Risnjak (p128), gourmet tours to Iстрия (p154) and shepherd's picnics to Učka Nature Park (p129).
Post office (☎ 271 733; Eugena Kumičića 4; ☎ 7am–9pm Mon–Fri, to 2pm Sat) Behind the market.
Tourist office (☎ 271 310; www.opatija-tourism.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 101; ☎ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat, 5–9pm Sun Jul & Aug, 8am–7pm Mon–Sat Apr–Jun & Sep, 8am–4pm Mon–Sat Oct–Mar) Distributes maps, leaflets and brochures.

Sights & Activities

Restored to its former neoclassical splendour, the exquisite Villa Angiolina now houses the **Croatian Museum of Tourism** (Park Angiolina 1; ☎ 9am–1pm & 4.30–9.30pm Tue–Sun summer, shorter hr rest of year). The collection of old photographs, postcards, brochures and posters tracing the history of travel is interesting enough, but the real highlight is the villa's interior – a marvel of trompe l'œil frescoes, Corinthian capitals and geometric floor mosaics. Don't miss a stroll around the lush park, overgrown with ginkgo trees, sequoias, holm oaks and Japanese camellia, Opatija's symbol. At the time of writing, admission to the museum and grounds was free; however, there will soon be an entrance fee.

The pretty **Lungomare** is the region's showcase. Lined with plush villas and ample gardens, this shady promenade winds along the sea for 12km from Volosko to Lovran via the small villages of Ičići and Ika. Along the way are innumerable rocky outgrowths providing places to throw down a towel and jump into the sea – a better option than Opatija's concrete beach.

Opatija and the surrounding region offer some wonderful opportunities for hiking and biking around Učka Nature Park (see p129).

Sleeping

There are no real budget hotels in Opatija, but the midrange and top-end places offer surprisingly good value for money considering Opatija's overall air of chic. **Liburnia Hotels** (☎ 710 444; www.liburnia.hr) manages 15 hotels in the area and is a good bet for getting a room. Note that Opatija gets booked up over the Christmas holidays, so reserve ahead for this time.

Private rooms are abundant and reasonably priced. The travel agencies listed on opposite all find private accommodation. In the high season, rooms cost between 80KN and 115KN per person, depending on the amenities; two-person apartments range from 255KN to 575KN. A 30% surcharge applies for stays under three nights.

HOTELS

Hotel Opatija (☎ 271 388; www.hotel-opatija.hr; Trg Vladimira Gortana 2/1; s low-high 280-361KN, d 678-1002KN; (P) (♿)) The setting in a Habsburg-era mansion is the forte of this hilltop three-star with pleasant rooms. Facilities include a fantastic terrace, an indoor seawater pool and tennis courts.

Hotel Residenz (☎ 271 399; www.liburnia.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 133; s low-high 293-524KN, d 354-816KN) While rooms boast no frills – unless you pay extra for a unit with a balcony – the building is a classic, right on the seafront with a private beach below.

Villa Ariston (☎ 271 379; www.villa-ariston.com; Ulica Maršala Tita 179; s low-high 350-480KN, d 600-800KN; (P) (♿)) Plush furnishings, gilt-edged mirrors and ornate chandeliers adorn this imperial villa that has hosted celebrities including Coco Chanel and the Kennedys. A fragrant garden of cypress and pine trees drops down to the sea.

Hotel Kvarner (☎ 271 233; www.liburnia.hr; Pave Tomašića 1-4; s low-high 462-578KN, d 653-1039KN; (♿)) Feel like part of the jet set from a bygone era in Opatija's oldest hotel. Splash in an indoor-outdoor pool, walk through plush hallways and recline on period furniture in high-ceilinged rooms that, despite the fame, could use an update.

Hotel Mozart (☎ 718 260; www.hotel-mozart.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 138; s low-high 660-920KN, d 1095-1530KN; (P) (♿) (♿) (♿)) Light-flooded rooms feature old-school style and Secessionist furniture, the stars add up to five, and the spiffy new spa offers saunas and steam baths. Most rooms come with sea-facing balconies.

CAMPING

There are two camping grounds in the area: **Medveja** (☎ 291 191; ac-medveja@liburnia.hr; per adult/tent 41/29KN; (♿) Easter-mid-Oct), on a pretty cove 10km south of Opatija, and **Camping Opatija** (☎ 704 836; www.rivijera-opatija.hr; Liburnijska 46, Ičići; adult/tent 36/27KN; (♿) Apr-Oct), in a pine forest 5km south of town before you reach Lovran.

Eating

Maršala Tita is lined with serviceable restaurants that offer pizza, grilled meat and fish. The better restaurants are off the main strip.

Vongola (☎ 711 854; Ulica Maršala Tita 113; mains from 30KN) For cheap chow, head to this simple spot on Slatina city beach, at the eastern end of Maršala Tita. Expect pizzas, pastas, grilled meats and fish.

Kaneta (☎ 712 222; Nova Cesta 64; mains from 40KN) At the top of Maršala Tita, this family restaurant specialises in goulash, pasta with truffles, steak with gorgonzola and other hearty delicacies.

Istranka (☎ 271 835; Bože Milanovića 2; mains from 45KN) Graze on flavourful Istrian mainstays, such as *maneštra* (vegetable and bean soup similar to minestrone) and *fuži* (hand-rolled pasta tubes), at this rustic-themed tavern in a small street just up from Maršala Tita.

Bevanda (☎ 493 888; Zert 8; mains from 80KN) It recently changed ownership from that which built its reputation, but this elegant restaurant on the Lido still delivers terrific fresh fish and shellfish. Get a table at the all-white terrace right on the sea.

For self-catering types, there's a **supermarket-deli** (Ulica Maršala Tita 80).

Drinking

Opatija used to be the playground of Rijeka's partygoers, but it took a hit when the police started cracking down on drunk drivers. Viennese-style coffeehouses and hotel terraces still dominate the scene, while a few stylish bars add the extra punch.

The ever-popular **Hemingway** (Zert 2) on the harbour is an enjoyable place for a seaside drink. For a cocktail on the beach, head to **Tantra** (Lido) just around the corner, a lounge bar with chill-out music and unbeatable coastal views. The trendiest place in town is still **Monokini** (☎ 703 888; Ulica Maršala Tita 96), the watering hole of choice for Opatija's scenesters. Chocolate lovers should head next door for a sweet fix at **Choco Bar** (☎ 603 562; Ulica Maršala Tita 94), with great chocolate cocktails, ice cream and cakes. **Disco Seven** (www.discoseven.hr; Ulica Maršala Tita 125) is Opatija's only club with a typical roster of electronic tunes and a seaside terrace.

Getting There & Away

Bus 32 stops in front of the train station in Rijeka (15KN, 15km) and runs along the Opatija Riviera west of Rijeka to Lovran every 20 minutes daily until late in the evening.

AROUND OPATIJA

Volosko

Volosko, 2km east of Opatija, is an old fishing village rising up on a gentle hill in a warren of narrow alleyways, stone townhouses and flower-laden balconies. In addition to its Mediterranean allure, a chief reason to visit is a set of stellar restaurants that has sprouted around the small harbour of this otherwise quiet village. Volosko is now a mecca for foodies, with several fine choices, however deep your pockets.

You can come from Rijeka by bus or walk along the coastal promenade from Opatija, a 20-minute stroll past bay trees, palms, figs and oaks, behind which you can glimpse magnificent villas.

EATING

Konoba Ribarnica Volosko (☎ 701 483; Štangerova 5; mains from 20KN; 🍷 closed Sun dinner) No cash to splash? This tiny shopfront has Volosko's cheapest fresh fish. Point to your desired sea creature – calamari, sardines, scampi – and eat the well-prepared dish in a small downstairs dining room around the corner. It's on the main road parallel to the harbour.

our pick **Skalinada** (☎ 701 109; Put Uč Dol 17; mains from 25KN) One of Volosko's best-kept secrets, this small, colourful and artsy restaurant hides behind a stone vault entrance just below the second bus stop on the road from Rijeka. Appetising food is made with seasonal ingredients from nearby villages.

Tramerka (☎ 701 707; Andrije Mohorovičića 15; mains from 30KN) Locals in the know flock to the stone-wall interior of this *konoba* (tavern) named after an uninhabited island in the Zadar archipelago. Expect creatively prepared and well-priced seafood dishes. It's just up a set of stairs to the left of Plavi Podrum.

Plavi Podrum (☎ 701 223; Supilova Obala 12; mains from 60KN) The decor is on the maritime-kitsch side, but the seafood is consistently top-rated and paired with select wines. The owner is one of Croatia's top sommeliers and wine columnists.

Le Mandrač (☎ 701 357; Supilova Obala 10; mains from 60KN) The forward-thinking Mediterranean food at Le Mandrač is innovative and full of flavour, but locals appear to prefer Plavi Podrum next door. It could be that the over-designed swanky interior is a tad intimidating. Splurge on a tasting menu (270KN to 490KN).

RISNJAK NATIONAL PARK

Relatively isolated, rarely visited and certainly underappreciated by foreign tourists, this majestic park only 35km northeast of Rijeka deserves to be much better known. Part of the wooded Gorski Kotar region, it covers an area of 63 sq km and rises up to 1528m at its highest peak, Veliki Risnjak. The landscape is thickly forested with beech and pine trees, carpeted with meadows and wildflowers, and pock-marked by karst formations: sinkholes, cracks, caves and abysses. The bracing alpine breezes make it the perfect hideaway when the coastal heat and crowds below become overpowering. Wildlife includes brown bears, lynx (*ris* in Croatian, after which the park is named), wolves, wild cats, wild boar, deer, chamois and 500 species of butterfly.

Most of the park is unspoiled virgin forest, with only a few settlements. The largest is Crni Lug at the park's edge where you'll find the **park information office** (☎ 836 133; 🍷 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) in the park's only hotel, **Pension Risnjak** (☎ 836 133; Bijela Vodica 48, Crni Lug; d low-high 240-260KN; 📍). The **park entrance** (adult/concession 30/15KN) is a few hundred metres behind the *pension* (guest house).

The best way to discover the park is to walk the **Leska Path**, a delightful 4.5km trail that begins at the park's entrance. It's an easy and shady walk punctuated by several dozen explanatory panels (in English) telling you all about the park's history, topography, geology, flora and fauna. You'll pass crystal-clear streams, forests of tall fir trees, bizarre rock formations, a feeding station for the deer, and a mountain hut with a picnic table.

There's no public transport to the park. To get there by car, exit the main Zagreb-Rijeka motorway at Delnice and follow the signs to Crni Lug.

LOŠINJ & CRES ISLANDS

Separated by only an 11m-wide canal, these two serpentine islands in the Kvarner archipelago are often treated as a single entity. Although their topography is different, the islands' identities are blurred by a shared history and close transportation links. On Lošinj (Lussino in Italian), the fishing villages of Mali Lošinj and Veli Lošinj attract tourist hordes in summer, especially from Italy. The more deserted Cres (Crepsa in Italian) has remote

UČKA NATURE PARK

One of Croatia's best-kept nature secrets, this 160-sq-km park lies just 30 minutes from Lovran on the Opatija Riviera. Comprised of the Učka mountain massif and the adjacent Čičarija plateau, it's officially split between Kvarner and Istria. Its highest peak is Vojak (1401m), which, on a clear day, affords views of the Italian Alps and the Bay of Trieste.

Much of the area is covered by beech forests but there are also sweet chestnut trees, oaks and hornbeam. Sheep peacefully graze on alpine meadows, griffon vultures and golden eagles fly overhead, brown bears roam and endemic bellflowers blossom.

The enthusiastic staff at the **park office** (☎ 293 753; www.pp-ucka.hr; Liganj 42; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) in Lovran have info on all the activities listed following. The office also has two seasonal info points: one at **Poklon** (🕒 9am-7pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep) and one at **Vojak** (🕒 9am-7pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep).

Don't miss **Mala Učka**, a half-abandoned village at over 995m above sea level, where a few shepherds live from May to October. You can buy delicious sheep's cheese from the house with green windows by the stream at the village's end. Just ask for *sir* (cheese).

Organised activities in the park include **mountain biking** and **trekking** on 150km of trails, incorporating two marked educational paths, Slap and Vela Draga. Pick up a map for 55KN from the park office or the tourist office in Opatija (p126). There's also **free-climbing** in the Vela Draga canyon, **horseback riding** (around 80KN per hour) and **bird-watching**. Paragliding and hang-gliding can be organised through **Homo Volans Free Flying Club** (www.homo-volans.hr) in Opatija.

The park has several sleeping options but the standout is **Učka Lodge** (☎ 091 762 2027; www.uckalodge.com; d 360KN), a traditional house at 600m above sea level, deep in the woods. The English owners, Frank and Alice, had it beautifully converted into an eco-B&B. The electricity comes from solar panels, the rainwater is filtered and there's a natural sewage treatment plant. There are two charming rooms with shared bathroom, and the breakfast is made of local ingredients (jam from forest fruits and sheep's cheese from the neighbours). Frank will take you out in his 4WD upon request and they'll arrange any tour in the area.

Another highlight is **Dopolavoro** (☎ 299 641; www.dopolavoro.hr; Učka 9; mains from 40KN; 🕒 closed Mon), which serves excellent game dishes featuring deer, wild boar and bear prepared under *peka* (domed baking lids). Bikes are available for rent beside the restaurant (20/90KN per hour/day), and there's a herbalist across the street who sells curative teas and creams made from local plants.

camping grounds and pristine beaches, especially outside Cres Town, and a handful of medieval hilltop villages. Both islands are criss-crossed by hiking and biking trails.

History

Excavations indicate that a prehistoric culture spread out over both islands from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age. The ancient Greeks called the islands the Apsyrtydes, which were in turn conquered by the Romans, then put under Byzantine rule and settled by Slavic tribes in the 6th and 7th centuries.

The islands subsequently came under Venetian rule, followed by that of the Croatian-Hungarian kings, then back to the Venetians. By the time Venice fell in 1797, Veli Lošinj and Mali Lošinj had become important maritime centres, while Cres devoted itself to wine and olive production. During the 19th century, shipbuilding flourished in

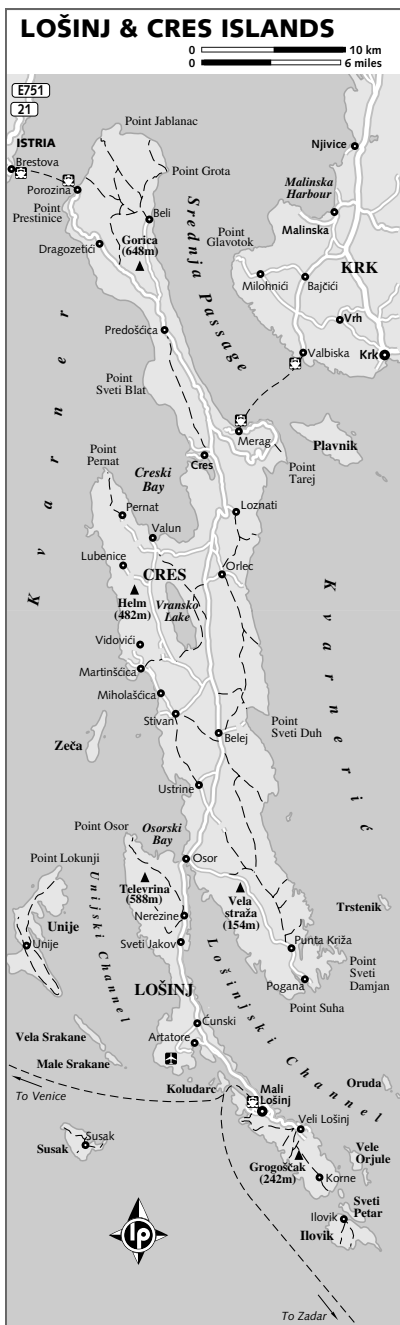
Lošinj, but with the advent of steamships it was replaced by health tourism as a major industry. Meanwhile, Cres had its own problems in the form of a phylloxera epidemic that wiped out its vineyards. Both islands were poor when they were annexed to Italy as part of the 1920 Treaty of Rapallo. They became part of Yugoslavia in 1945 and, most recently, Croatia in 1991.

Today, apart from a small shipyard in Nerezine in north Lošinj and some olive cultivation, sheep farming and fishing on Cres, the main activity on both islands is tourism.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The main maritime port of entry for the islands is Mali Lošinj, which is connected to Rijeka, Pula, Zadar, Venice and Koper in the summer. Jadrolinija (see p134) runs a daily ferry between Zadar and Mali Lošinj



(47KN, seven hours) from June through September. In July and August, it also runs a daily catamaran from Mali Lošinj to Cres (28KN, 2½ hours) and Rijeka (40KN, four hours). There is also an hourly Jadrolinija car ferry from Brestova in Istria to Porozina at the tip of Cres (passenger/car 17/113KN, 20 minutes).

In July and August, **Venezia Lines** (☎ 052-422 896; www.venezialines.com) runs catamarans from Venice to Mali Lošinj via Pula twice weekly (465KN, five hours). **Split Tours** (☎ 021-352 533; www.splittours.hr) runs a catamaran service from Zadar to Pula via Mali Lošinj five times weekly during July and August (50KN, two hours); in June and September, the service is reduced to twice weekly.

BUS

All buses travelling to and from the islands originate in Veli Lošinj and stop in Mali Lošinj before continuing to Cres and the mainland. There are six to nine daily buses from Veli Lošinj to Cres Town (50KN, 1½ hours); four daily to Merag (62KN, two hours) and Valbiska on Krk (99KN, 2½ hours); three per day to Porozina on Cres (82KN, 2½ hours) and Brestova in Istria (90KN, three hours); five daily buses to Rijeka (146KN, 4¼ hours); three to Zagreb (260KN to 275KN, seven hours); and one daily to Ljubljana (295KN, 6¼ hours) in Slovenia.

LOŠINJ ISLAND

The more populated and touristy of the twin islands, the 31km-long Lošinj also has a more indented coastline than Cres, especially in the south. The towns of Mali Lošinj and Veli Lošinj in the southeast are ringed by natural pine forests interspersed with tall Aleppo pines planted in the 19th century. The vegetation on the island is particularly lush and varied, with 1100 plant species, 230 medicinal herbs and some atypical growths such as lemon, banana, cedar and eucalyptus brought from exotic lands by sea captains.

The island is known for its dolphin population; in fact, its waters are the first protected marine area for dolphins in the entire Mediterranean. The Blue World NGO (p136) based in Mali Lošinj has done much to protect these graceful sea creatures with an educational centre and various activities.

CYCLING THE KVARNER REGION

An increasingly popular cycling destination, Kvarner offers a variety of options for biking enthusiasts, from gentle rides to heart-pumping climbs on steep island roads. There are several trails around Opatija; two easier paths depart from Mt Kastav (360m), while a challenging 4½-hour adventure goes from Lovran to Učka Nature Park (p129). Lošinj offers a moderately difficult 2½-hour route that starts and ends in Mali Lošinj. On Krk, a leisurely two-hour ride from Krk Town shows you meadows, fields and hamlets of the little-visited island's interior. A biking route from Rab Town on Rab explores the virgin forests of the Kalifront Peninsula. On Cres, a 50km trail takes you from the marina at Cres Town past the medieval hilltop village of Lubenice (p140) and the seaside gem of Valun (p140).

For details on these itineraries, ask at any tourist office for the *Kvarner by Bicycle* brochure, which outlines 19 routes across the region. A great source of info is www.pedala.hr, which focuses on trails mainly around Zagreb but also has good practical info about biking in Croatia.

Mali Lošinj

pop 6500

Mali Lošinj sits at the foot of a protected V-shaped harbour on the southeast coast of Lošinj. Vestiges of its 19th-century prosperity can still be seen in the stately sea captains' houses that line up along the seafront of the pretty old town. Even with the summer tourist commotion, this ancient quarter still retains the charm of a small Mediterranean town. That's partly due to the fact that most large hotels sit out of town, leading up from the harbour to Sunčana Uvala in the south and Čikat in the southwest.

This leafy area started to flourish in the late 19th century, when the wealthy Vienna and Budapest elite, who gravitated to the 'healthy air' of Mali Lošinj, started building villas and luxurious hotels around Čikat. Some of these grand residences remain, but most of the current hotels are modern developments surrounded by pine forests that blanket the cove and its fantastic beaches.

More relaxed to visit in spring and autumn, even in the hectic summer months Mali Lošinj can serve as a good base for excursions around Lošinj and Cres or to the small islands of Susak, Ilovik and Unije nearby.

ORIENTATION

The Jadrolinija ferry dock for all large boats is in the northeastern part of town, a 500m walk along the harbour from the town centre; catamarans stop a few metres closer to town. The bus station is further down, on the edge of the seafront.

Most shops, travel agencies and cafés are on Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana, which runs along the harbour to Trg Republike Hrvatske

and its fountain. When you cross over to the other end of the harbour, there are roads to the hotels and beaches of Sunčana Uvala and Čikat.

INFORMATION

With the town's long history of tourism, there is no shortage of travel agencies to arrange private accommodation, handle air tickets, change money and book excursions.

Cappelli (☎ 231 582; www.cappelli-tourist.hr; Kadin bb; ☎ 9am-9pm) Books private accommodation on Cres and Lošinj and sells tickets for Venezia Lines.

Erste Banka (Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana 4) There's an ATM outside.

Garderoba (☎ 231 110; Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana 19; ☎ 6am-10pm) Left-luggage facilities (10KN per piece).

Hospital (☎ 231 824; Dinka Kozulića 1)

Internet Point F1 (☎ 231 129; Giuseppe Garibaldi 39; per hr 25KN; ☎ 8am-1pm & 5-10pm) Internet access.

Manora Lošinj (☎ 520 100; www.manora-lošinj.hr; Priko 29; ☎ 8.30am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm & 6-9pm Sun) Friendly agency with a full gamut of services.

Post office (Vladimira Gortana 4; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 231 884; www.tz-malilosinj.hr; Riva Lošinjskih Kapetana 29; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Oct-May) This treasure trove of useful information distributes spiffy brochures and maps of hiking trails on the two islands.

SIGHTS

The main attraction of Mali Lošinj is the attractive port and the greenery of the surrounding hills tumbling into the sea. There are a few monuments that recall the island's history. In the graveyard around the 15th-century **Church of St Martin** are the tombstones of the town's former inhabitants – sailors, fortune-seekers



from Italy and Austria, Italian royalty and 19th-century Austrian children sent here in the hopes that the mild climate would cure their tuberculosis or respiratory problems.

In the town centre, peek into the parish **Church of the Nativity of the Virgin** (Župna Crkva Male Gospe) either before or after Sunday Mass at 10am. Inside are some notable artworks, including a painting of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin by an 18th-century Venetian artist and relics of St Romulus.

Mali Lošinj's arts scene centres on the **art collections** (Umjetničke Zbirke; ☎ 233 892; Vladimira Gortana 35; admission 10/5KN; 🕒 10am-1pm & 7-10pm Tue-Sun) of the Mihičić and Piperata families. There are modern Croatian works, as well as the old masters with emphasis on Italian, French and Dutch painting.

For a whiff of enchanting Adriatic smells, head to the **Garden of Fine Scents** (Miomirisni Otočki Vrt; ☎ 233 638; Braće Vidulić bb; admission free; 🕒 10am-noon & 6-9pm Jul & Aug, 10am-noon Sep-Jun), just out of town. This fragrant paradise has over 250 native plant varieties plus 100 exotic species, all framed with *gromače*, traditional stone fences. There are special events on summer

Wednesday nights, from traditional drink tastings to guest lectures.

The town's unofficial icon is the antique statue of **Apoksiomen**, found on the sea bed near Lošinj in 1999. At 192m, this 2000-year-old bronze athlete is one of few such well-preserved pieces in the world. After years of meticulous restoration, the statue is expected to move into its very own exhibition space inside Mali Lošinj's restored Kvarner Palace some time in the future; contact the tourist office to find out whether the statue is on display yet.

ACTIVITIES

Sunčana Uvala offers the best pebble beaches, excellent for swimming. With its long, narrow pebble beach and great wind exposure, **Čikat** is the spot for windsurfing. You can take a course at the **Windsurfing School** (☎ 231 222) or at **Sunbird** (☎ 091 792 5926; www.sunbird.de), near Hotel Bellevue. Sunbird also offers courses in cat-sailing and rents mountain bikes (75KN per day).

Cycling and hiking have become increasingly popular on Lošinj, and these activities are

much promoted by the local tourist board. Pick up the free brochure *Promenades & Footpaths*, with maps of 220km of trails that criss-cross the five islands of the archipelago (Lošinj, Cres, Ilovik, Susak and Unije). Options include climbing up to the highest peak of Televrina (588m) or a steep hike to Sveti Nikola (557m) for the nicest views.

The waters surrounding Lošinj offer good **diving**. Who knows, you may uncover the next Apoksiomen! There's a wreck dating from 1917, a large, relatively shallow cave suitable for beginners and the wonderful Margarita Reef off the island of Susak. The main dive operation is **Diver Sport Center** (☎ 233 900; www.diver.hr) on Čikat, which offers courses and dive packages from 320KN.

SLEEPING

Mali Lošinj offers a range of accommodation options. The travel agencies listed under Information (p131) find rooms and apartments around Mali Lošinj, although there's little available in the town itself. The tourist office has a detailed brochure with listings of private accommodation. Expect to pay between 90KN and 140KN per person for a room in the high season. Two-person apartments start at 320KN. In summer, you're likely to pay a penalty for a stay under four nights.

Most hotels are in the pine forest on the hill over in Čikat, with some in Sunčana Uvala. The majority falls under the umbrella of **Lošinj Hotels & Villas** (www.losinj-hotels.com). Most of these package resorts are bland and nearly indistinguishable tourist developments, despite recent facelifts and renovations. The leafy beachside location is the main draw of staying here. Most hotels close between November and Easter; in summer, they impose a surcharge for stays under three or four nights.

Budget

Camping Čikat (☎ 232 125; www.camps-cres-losinj.com; Dražica 1, Čikat bb; per adult/site 62/47KN; ☞ Apr–mid-Oct) Near a concrete beach, this large camping ground has a full spectrum of facilities.

Camping Village Poljana (☎ 231 726; www.poljana.hr; Poljana bb; per site low-high 87-166KN) Surrounded by a pine forest, this spiffy spot has perks such as wireless internet (for a fee), a restaurant and a supermarket.

Guest House Helios (☎ 232 124; www.losinj-hotels.com; Čikat bb; s low-high 158-270KN, d 315-540KN; (P)) Bland and screaming for a renovation, but

boasting a brilliant location amid greenery, and just steps from the beaches.

Midrange

Hotel Vespera (☎ 231 304; www.losinj-hotels.com; Sunčana Uvala bb; s low-high 233-420KN, d 360-735KN; (P) (Q)) Tennis courts, volleyball, hiking paths and water sports nearby make this three-star a great option for families and active types. It's a stone's throw from a pretty beach in Sunčana Uvala.

Hotel Bellevue (☎ 231 222; www.losinj-hotels.com; Čikat bb; s low-high 233-420KN, d 390-765KN; (P) (Q) (R)) The pine forest location, wellness centre and refurbished rooms can help you forget the package tour groups that frequent this place. The lower priced annexe, Villa Hortensia (single low-high season 132KN to 315KN; double 263KN to 630KN), is right on the beach.

Top End

Mare Mare Suites (☎ 232 010; www.mare-mare.com; Riva Lošinskih Kapetana 36; s low-high 600-900KN, d 750-1050KN; (P) (X) (Q) (R)) This chic little B&B occupies a historic townhouse on the seafront. No two rooms or suites are alike but all have sea vistas and stylish decor. There's a jacuzzi terrace, an à la carte pillow service, and free wireless internet, bikes and beach transfers in summer.

Villa Favorita (☎ 520 640; www.villafavorita.hr; Sunčana Uvala; d low-high 660-1150KN; (P) (Q) (R) (S)) Set in an intimate Habsburg mansion, the eight deluxe rooms here are named after flowers; four face the sea. There's a sauna, massage and a seawater pool in a well-kept garden. The annexe, Villa Jelena (single low-high season 330KN to 575KN; double 610KN to 850KN), has slightly smaller rooms with no air-con.

EATING

Catering to the tremendous influx of Italian tourists in summer has lent the island's cuisine a decidedly Italian flavour. As on many islands, there is not a wide variety in price or quality and the menus tend to be more or less the same, with an accent on seafood, grilled fish, pasta and risotto. You'll generally eat better at places away from the main harbour area in the old town.

Pizzeria Draga (☎ 231 132; Braće Ivana i Stjepana Vidulića 77; pizzas from 35KN) The owner has received many awards for the pizzas that come out of the brick oven at this friendly place. No wonder the terrace gets packed with locals and tourists in summer.

Corrado (☎ 232 487; Svete Marije 1; mains from 50KN) No farmed seafood is served at this *konoba* with a covered terrace, owned by a deep-sea fisher. The oven-baked fish with veggies is delicious, as is the peasant specialty, *verze na pofrih*, a squid and kale stew (order two hours ahead).

ourpick Porto (☎ 231 956; Sveti Martin 35; mains from 60KN) A fish fillet with sea urchins is the signature dish at this lovely little spot on a small quiet bay near the Church of St Martin. Slightly off the tourist track, its covered terrace by the sea doesn't get too crowded.

Diana (☎ 232 055; Ćikat bb; mains from 65KN) Part of a small four-star hotel complex in Ćikat, this restaurant is particularly notable for its cypress-tree-shaded terrace on the sea and its lamb medallions with asparagus. The fish dishes are good, too.

Barakuda (☎ 233 309; Priko 31; mains from 70KN) The charcoal-grilled seafood and the nautically themed decor make this harbour restaurant stand out. However, tourist crowds can detract from your eating pleasure in summer months.

Self-caterers can head to the large supermarket on Trg Zagazinjine, just north of the harbour's edge.

ENTERTAINMENT

The terraces of café-bars along the harbour get packed with tourists and locals in the summer months. Riva Lošinjkih Kapetana and Ulica Vladimira Gortana are chock-a-block with choices, although they're not widely varied. For live music and a fun atmosphere, head to the town's most popular spot, **Katakomba** (Del Conte Giovanni 1), in an alleyway on the other side of the harbour. To party on the water, check out **Marina** (Velopin bb), a floating cocktail bar docked on the southwest side of the harbour, with DJs and live music on summer nights.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are nine buses a day between Mali Lošinj and Veli Lošinj (15KN, 10 minutes). For other bus and boat connections, see p129. The **Jadrolinija** (☎ 231 765; www.jadrolinija.hr; Riva Lošinjkih Kapetana 22) office has ferry information and tickets.

GETTING AROUND

From late April to October there is an hourly shuttle bus (10KN) that runs from the centre

of town to the hotels in Sunčana Uvala and Ćikat, till 11pm.

You can zip around the island on a scooter, available at **SanMar** (☎ /fax 233 571; www.sanmar.hr; Priko 24; per day 200KN; ☎ 8.30am-2.30pm & 6-10pm), which also rents bikes (80KN per day).

Islands Around Mali Lošinj

The nearby car-free islands of Susak, Ilovik and Unije are the most popular day trips from Mali Lošinj. Tiny **Susak** (population 188; area 3.8 sq km) is unique for the thick layer of fine sand that blankets the underlying limestone and creates delightful beaches. It's the island's unusual culture that makes it particularly interesting. Islanders speak their own dialect, which is nearly incomprehensible to other Croats. On feast days and at weddings, you can see the local women outfitted in traditional multicoloured skirts and red leggings. When you see the old stone houses on the island, consider that each stone had to be brought over from Mali Lošinj and carried by hand to its destination. No wonder the island has steadily lost its population, with many of its citizens settling in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In contrast to flat Susak, **Ilovik** (population 145; area 5.8 sq km) is a hilly island known for its profusion of flowers. Overgrowing with oleanders, roses and eucalyptus trees, it's popular with boaters and has some secluded swimming coves.

The largest of the islands in the Lošinj archipelago, **Unije** (population 273; area 18 sq km) has an undulating landscape that abounds in Mediterranean shrubs, pebble beaches and numerous coves and inlets. The island's only settlement is a picturesque fishing village of gabled stone houses.

Many travel agencies sell excursions to Susak, Ilovik and Unije but it's easy enough to get there on your own. Jadrolinija makes a daily summer circuit from Mali Lošinj to Susak (13KN, 2½ hours) and Ilovik (13KN, one hour), with a boat departing in the morning (some days at the crack of dawn) and one returning in late afternoon. You can do a day trip to Unije (13KN, 1½ hours) any day but Monday or Wednesday. Note that the boat schedule for all islands is tricky on Sundays.

Veli Lošinj

Despite the name (in Croatian, *veli* means big and *mali* means small), Veli Lošinj is smaller, more languid and somewhat less

crowded than Mali Lošinj, only 4km to the northwest. It's also managed to retain more of its fishing-village character. Pastel-coloured baroque houses cluster around a narrow bay that protrudes like a thumb into the island's southeastern coastline. Narrow cobblestone alleyways lead uphill from the central square past foliage-buried cottages to the rocky coast. The absence of cars in the centre is refreshing, but the presence of summer tourist hordes takes away from the pleasure of walking the traffic-free streets.

Like its neighbour, Veli Lošinj had its share of rich sea captains who built villas and surrounded them with gardens of exotic plants they brought back from afar. You can glimpse these villas on a walk up the steep streets. Sea captains also furnished the churches in town, most notably St Anthony's on the harbour.

ORIENTATION

The bus station is on a hill at the entrance to town, by the main parking lot. Vladimira Nazora takes you down to the harbour, which is the town centre. The bank, post offices, tourist agencies and a number of cafés are on Obala Maršala Tita, which wraps around the bay. A coastal route leads north up to the Hotel Punta beach and east to the bay of Rovenska, a 10-minute walk away.

INFORMATION

Erste Banka (Obala Maršala Tita) Has a foreign-exchange counter. There are a few other ATMs in town.

Post office (Obala Maršala Tita 33; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat)

Turist (☎ 236 256; www.island-losinj.com; Obala Maršala Tita 17; ☎ 8am-2pm & 5-9pm summer, shorter hr rest of year) Finds private accommodation, changes money, rents bikes (50KN per six hours) and scooters (80KN per hour) and offers excursions to Susak and Ilovik (115KN).

Val (☎ /fax 236 352; www.val-losinj.hr; Vladimira Nazora 29; ☎ 9am-8pm Jul & Aug) In addition to booking private accommodation, this travel agency has internet access (30KN per hour).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

You can't miss the tall bell tower of the **Church of St Anthony the Hermit** (Crkva Svetog Antuna) on the right side of the harbour. Built in baroque style in 1774, thanks to wealthy sea captains it is elaborately decked out with marble altars, a rich collection of Italian paintings, a pipe organ and relics of St Gregory. It's only open for Sunday Mass

but you can catch a glimpse of the interior through a metal gate.

The striking **tower** (kula; Kaštel 2) in the maze of streets set back from the harbour was built by the Venetians in 1455 to defend the town from the notorious Uskoks (a community of pirates that once lived in Senj). It now contains a small **museum & gallery** (☎ 236 594; admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-1pm & 7-10pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-1pm Tue-Sat mid-Sep-Oct & Apr-mid-Jun), which centres on the island's maritime history, explaining it with English captions.

The town's most enlightening attraction is the **Lošinj Marine Education Centre** (☎ 236 406; Kaštel 24; adult/student 10/7KN; ☎ 9am-1pm & 6-10pm Jul & Aug, 9am-1pm & 6-8pm Jun & Sep, shorter hr rest of year), dedicated to sensitising visitors to the local marine life, particularly its endangered population of bottlenose dolphins. The centre is a project of Blue World (see p136).

Stop by **Ultramarin art gallery** (☎ 236 117; www.ultramarin.hr; Obala Maršala Tita 7; ☎ 9am-10pm Jun-Aug), signposted from the harbour. You can peek inside this family-run atelier where a wife and husband make colourful decorative boats, vases and candleholders out of driftwood collected from the island.

SLEEPING

Both Val and Turist travel agencies (left) will find private accommodation for about the same price as in Mali Lošinj. Pension Saturn on the harbour is a good choice; you can book through Val. At the time of writing, a new hostel was in the works, which should be up and running shortly.

Youth Hostel (☎ 236 234; www.hfhs.hr; Kaciol 4; dm low-high 110-135KN; ☎ Jun-Oct; ☑) You can bunk for peanuts in the decently clean and comfy rooms of this slightly rundown 1884 Habsburg villa in the middle of a shady pine forest. Book in advance, as school groups sometimes take over.

Hotel Punta (☎ 662 000; www.losinj-hotels.com; slow-high 285-487KN, d 420-827KN; ☎ ☑ ☑) There's not much character at this standard package resort on a hill, but the balconied rooms are adequate, and there's easy access to the beach and a full array of facilities, including a small wellness centre.

EATING

The restaurants along the harbour serve generic seafood and meat dishes. The two spots following are worth sampling.

BLUE WORLD

The **Blue World Institute of Marine Research & Conservation** (☎ 236 406; www.blue-world.org; Kaštel 24) is a Veli Lošinj-based NGO founded in 1999 to promote environmental awareness in the Lošinj-Cres archipelago, Croatia and the Adriatic. It raises public awareness through lectures, media presentations and the organisation of **Dolphin Day** in Veli Lošinj on the first Saturday of August, which sees photography exhibitions, street performances, treasure hunts and children's competitions in drawing and painting.

As part of the Adriatic Dolphin Project, Blue World studies bottlenose dolphins that frequent the Lošinj-Cres area. Each dolphin is named and catalogued by photos taken of the natural marks that can be seen on their dorsal fin. Since the community of resident bottlenose dolphins in the Lošinj-Cres archipelago has dropped by a dramatic 40% in the last 15 years – only about 100 dolphins frequent the area today – Blue World has managed to establish the **Lošinj Dolphin Reserve**, the first marine protected area in the Mediterranean dedicated to bottlenose dolphins.

We stole a few minutes with Peter Mackelworth, Conservation Director of Blue World. When asked about the steady drop of dolphin numbers in these waters, Peter explained: 'Overfishing and the busy summer season bring a lot of disturbing noise and boat traffic. Dolphins leave for calmer waters to the north and south in the summer months, but each year it takes them a little longer to return.'

We asked Peter what people can do. 'For now, visit the centre and get informed,' he said. Want to do more? You can adopt a dolphin, for only 150KN! By doing so, you are supporting the activities of the Adriatic Dolphin Project. You even get a personalised adoption certificate and a photo of your chosen dolphin. At the time of writing, four friendly dolphins were up for adoption – Sonja, Debbie, Meta and Mush.

If you want to do something even more active, you can join an eco-volunteer holiday. Blue World offers these from June through September – 12-day programs start at €700 per person with accommodation, food, lectures and activities.

Ribarska Koliba (☎ 236 235; Obala Maršala Tita 1; mains from 55KN) Just around the corner from St Anthony's church, this pleasant place serves lamb and suckling pig on a spit, as well as good *buzara* (scampi and mussel stew) on a sea-facing terrace.

ourpick Bora Bar (☎ 867 544; www.borabar.com; Rovenska Bay 3; mains from 70KN) Truffle specialties conjured up by Italian-born chef Marko Sasso are reason enough to come to Veli. Delicacies include truffle-topped saffron risotto and *panna cotta* (a creamy Italian dessert) with truffle honey. On scenic Rovenska Bay, it's cheerful, colourful and friendly, with wireless internet and a book exchange. All dishes – many without the fungus, too – are made from scratch and with love, so don't mind a longish wait.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are nine buses a day between Veli Lošinj and Mali Lošinj (15KN, 10 minutes).

CRES ISLAND

Stretching 68km from tip to tip, Cres is longer, less populated and more undeveloped than

Lošinj. On this wild island, you can wander around primeval forests, swim in hidden coves, sample some of Croatia's most delicious lamb, and visit ageing hilltop towns.

The northern half of the island, known as Tramuntana, is covered with dense oak, hornbeam, elk and chestnut forests. It's also home to the protected griffon vulture (see p138) in the hilltop village of Beli, on the eastern coast. The 6km-long Vrana Lake (Vransko Jezero) in the centre of the island, with its bottom about 60m below sea level, is the source of drinking water for both islands. The main seaside settlements lie on the western shore of Cres, while the mountainous interior southwest of Valun features the astounding medieval town of Lubenice (see p140).

Cres Town

pop 2234

Wandering around sun-drenched Cres Town, with old ladies chattering away in Italian, you may wonder if you've accidentally strayed across the border to Italy. Pastel-coloured terrace houses and Venetian mansions hug the medieval harbour, Mandrač, which is

jam-packed with small fishing boats. The town is popular with Italian boaters, who come here in droves come summer.

The Italian influence dates from the 15th-century Venetians who relocated their headquarters to Cres Town after Osor fell victim to plague and pestilence. Public buildings and patricians' palaces were built along the harbour and a town wall added in the 16th century. As you stroll along the seaside promenade and the maze of old town streets, you'll notice reminders of Italian rule, including coats of arms of powerful Venetian families and Renaissance loggias.

ORIENTATION

The bus stop (there is no left-luggage office) is on the southeastern side of the harbour next to the tourist office and bank. The old town stretches from the harbour promenade, Riva Creskih Kapetana, inland to Šetalište 20 Travnja. Most of the monuments and churches are concentrated within this area. If you continue around the harbour to Lungomare Sveti Mikule, after about 1km you'll reach the rocky beaches around Hotel Kimen and Autocamp Kovačine.

INFORMATION

Autotrans (☎ 572 050; www.autotrans-turizam.com; Zazid 4; ☎ 7am-9pm Jun-Aug, 8am-noon & 5.30-7.30pm Mon-Sat Sep-May) Arranges private accommodation, bike rental (20KN per hour), excursions and bus tickets.

Cresanka (☎ 571 161; www.cresanka.hr; Cons 11; ☎ 7.30am-10pm Jul & Aug, 7.30am-9pm Jun & Sep, 7.30am-noon & 3.30-8pm Oct-May) Books private accommodation and changes money.

Erste Banka (Cons 8) Changes money. There's another ATM at Riva Creskih Kapetana 3.

Post office (Cons 3; ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

Tourist Agency Croatia (☎ 573 053; www.cres-travel.com; Melin 2/33; ☎ 8am-9pm summer, shorter hr rest of year) Can arrange private accommodation and has internet access (1KN per minute).

Tourist office (☎ 571 535; www.tzg-cres.hr; Cons 10; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-2pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) Has maps and brochures.

SIGHTS

At the end of Riva Creskih Kapetana is Trg Frane Petrića with the graceful 16th-century **municipal loggia**, the scene of public announcements, financial transactions and festivals under Venetian rule. It's now the site of a morning fruit and vegetable market.

Behind the loggia is the 16th-century gate that leads to **St Mary of the Snow Church** (Sv Marije Snježne; Pod Urom; ☎ Mass only). The facade is notable for the Renaissance portal with a relief of the Virgin and Child. It's worth checking out the serene interior before or after Mass for the carved wooden pietà from the 15th century (now under protective glass) at the left altar.

Stop by **Ruta** (☎ 571 835; www.ruta-cres.hr; Zazid 4A; ☎ sporadic or by appointment), a local collective that promotes the island's cultural and ecological identity by preserving old traditions such as weaving and felting of sheep wool. Using the discarded wool of the indigenous Pramenka sheep, the craftspeople make wonderful slippers, hats, handbags and clothes. You can see the workshop, learn about felting or even try it yourself (three-hour workshops are available for 150KN).

ACTIVITIES

For the best beaches, head to the area around Hotel Kimen. Diving is offered by **Diving Cres** (☎ /fax 571 706; www.divingcres.de, in German) in Autocamp Kovačine. **Cres-Insula Activa** (☎ 091 738 9490; www.cres-activa.hr, in Croatian) is an ecologically minded association that can organise biking, climbing and kite-surfing trips. Hiking has become increasingly popular on Cres and Lošinj; the tourist office (left) distributes a map of footpaths and trails around the island.

SLEEPING

All the agencies listed under Information (left) can find private rooms. Prices vary greatly according to season (August being the peak), comfort level and location (in the old town or on the outskirts). Rooms with shared bathroom start from 175KN per person in a single; doubles start at 235KN. Two-person apartments go for about 365KN.

Autocamp Kovačine (☎ 573 150; www.camp-kovacine.com; Melin 1/20; per person low-high 34-70KN; ☎ Easter-mid-Oct) There's no tent charge at this 18-hectare camping ground about 1km southwest of town. There are solar-powered bath facilities, a restaurant and activities galore, including basketball, volleyball and diving.

Kovačine Rooms (☎ 573 150; www.camp-kovacine.com; Melin 1/20; s low-high 225-348KN, d 406-624KN; ☎) Part of Autocamp Kovačine, this small building has 13 efficient en suite rooms with phones, satellite TV and even air-con. Some feature balconies with views over Valun Bay.

Hotel Kimen (☎ 573 305; www.hotel-kimen.com; Melin 1/16; s low-high 240-485KN, d 334-610KN; (P) ♿) The shady pine forest location, about 1km from the centre, and the beaches are the highlight of this otherwise unremarkable hotel. The recently touched-up rooms all have balconies. There's also an older annexe (single low-high 174KN to 304KN; double 290KN to 507KN).

EATING

Luna Rossa (☎ 572 207; Palada 4b; pizzas from 18KN, mains from 32KN) This small Italian spot on the harbour churns out excellent pizza and pasta on a small terrace. The risottos and the gnocchi are also yummy.

our pick Bukaleta (☎ 571 606; Loznati bb, Loznati; mains from 40KN) Don't miss the famous Cres lamb, deliciously prepared at this longstanding family restaurant in the hamlet of Loznati, 5km from Cres Town. Start with the sheep ricotta and continue with the herb-fed lamb (from 80KN) – breaded, grilled or from the spit. It's worth the taxi ride.

Santa Lucia (☎ 573 222; Lungomare Sveti Mikule 4; mains from 40KN) Don't be turned off by the fancy look of this good-value restaurant on

the coastal promenade towards Hotel Kimen. Sit on the terrace by the sea and savour the speciality – salty oven-baked fish.

Restaurant Riva (☎ 571 107; Riva Creskih Kapetana 13; mains from 50KN) The fish is prepared with care and the terrace on the harbour is a great place to watch the sun disappear over the pastel-coloured townhouses across the way. Order the barbecued scampi.

The **supermarket** (Trg Frane Petrića) can be found right across from the loggia.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are three buses a day to Opatija (61KN, two hours) and five to Rijeka (84KN, 2½ hours). Three daily buses go to Porozina (29KN, one hour) and Brestova in Istria (with ferry ticket 66KN, 1½ hours).

For more information on buses between Cres and Mali and Veli Lošinj, see p130.

Beli

Lying at the heart of the Tramuntana region on the island's northern tip, with ancient virgin forests, abandoned villages, lone chapels and myths of good elves, Beli is one of the

THE THREATENED GRIFFON VULTURE

Of all Croatia's birds, the Eurasian griffon vulture is the most majestic. With a wingspan of almost 3m, measuring about 1m from end to end, and weighing 7kg to 9kg, the bird looks big enough to take on passengers. They cruise comfortably at 40km/h to 50km/h, reaching speeds of up to 120km/h. The vulture's powerful beak and long neck are ideally suited for rummaging around the entrails of its prey, which is most likely to be a dead sheep.

Finding precious sheep carcasses is a team effort for griffon vultures. Usually a colony of birds will set out and fly in a comb formation of up to a kilometre apart. When one of the vultures spots a carcass, it circles as a signal for its neighbours to join in the feast. Shepherds don't mind griffons, reasoning that the birds prevent whatever disease or infection killed the sheep from spreading to other livestock.

The total known number of griffon vultures in Croatia is 150, most of them living on the coastal cliffs of Cres and in small colonies on Krk and Prvić islands. The birds' dietary preferences mean that griffons tend to follow sheep although they will eat other dead mammals, to their peril. The last remaining birds in Paklenica National Park recently died after eating poisoned foxes. Fewer local farmers are raising sheep but shepherding is still active on Cres, supported by the Eco-Centre Caput Insulae in Beli (opposite).

Breeding habits discourage a large population, as a griffon couple produces only one fledgling a year and it takes five years for the young bird to reach maturity. During that time, the growing griffons travel widely: one griffon tagged in Paklenica National Park was found in Chad, 4000km away.

The griffon population enjoys legal protection as an endangered species in Croatia. Killing a bird or disturbing them while nesting carries a €5000 fine. Intentional murder is rare but because the young birds cannot fly more than 500m on a windless day, tourists on speedboats who provoke them into flight often end up killing them. The exhausted birds drop into the water and drown.

island's oldest settlements. Perched on a 130m hill above a lovely pebble beach, its 4000-year history can still be felt in its twisting lanes and stone townhouses overgrown with plants.

The highlight is **Eco-Centre Caput Insulae** (☎ /fax 840 525; www.caput-insulae.com; Beli 4; adult/concession 25/10KN; ☞ 9am-8pm summer, to 4pm spring & autumn), part nature park, part sanctuary for the endangered Eurasian griffon (see boxed text, opposite). The eco-centre is devoted to caring for and maintaining the habitat of these majestic birds. It works with local farmers to ensure a supply of sheep needed for the griffons' survival and with local fishers to rescue drowning vultures. It saves about 10 young griffons each summer; these young birds cannot fly more than 500m and if provoked to fly, many fall into the sea and drown.

A visit to the centre, inside an old mansion at the town entrance, starts with exhibits explaining the biology and habits of the vulture, but the highlight is the vultures themselves. There are usually about four birds in residence flapping around in a caged-in area behind the centre. Keep an eye on the sky and you may spot one of the birds swooping overhead. The best time to see one is after their morning and afternoon meals. The eco-centre also offers a well-established volunteer program that runs throughout the year, as well as a griffon adoption program (what's 200KN to save a griffon?).

Admission to the centre includes access to the 50km network of seven educative **eco-trails** that connects the abandoned villages of Tramuntana, each clearly marked with a different colour. There are also **stone labyrinths** dedicated to ancient Croatian and Slavic gods, designed to connect walkers to nature's spirit. Pick up an informative booklet and maps from the centre, explaining the history, culture, and flora and fauna of the region.

Down on the beach about 1km from town, the small **Brajdi campsite** (☎ /fax 840 532; Beli bb; per person & site 54KN; ☞ May-Sep) has a diving centre (www.diving-beli.com) and a beach bar offering snacks.

In summer, there are two daily buses from Cres Town to Beli (27KN, 30 minutes), except on Sundays.

Osor pop 70

When crossing from Lošinj to Osor, you may have to wait at the drawbridge spanning the

Kavuada Canal, as the bridge is raised twice a day (at 9am and 5pm) to allow boats to move from the Lošinj Channel to the Kvarner Gulf and back. It's a treat to watch the yachts, sailboats and motorboats file through the narrow canal that separates the two islands.

The channel is thought to have been dug by the Romans, and because of it Osor was able to control a key navigational route. In the 6th century, a bishopric was established in Osor, which controlled both Cres and the largely unpopulated Lošinj throughout the Middle Ages. Until the 15th century, Osor was a strong commercial, religious and political presence in the region, but a combination of plague, malaria and new sea routes devastated the town's economy and it slowly decayed.

Now it's gaining a new life as a museum-town of churches, open-air sculptures and country lanes that meander off from its 15th-century town centre. Despite obvious investment in bringing Osor back to life, there's still no tourist office but it's an easy day trip from Mali Lošinj and Cres Town.

SIGHTS

Entering through the gate on the canal, you walk right into the centre of town. First you'll pass the remains of an old castle and then, on your right, the **Archaeological Museum** (☎ 237 346; admission 10KN; ☞ 10am-1pm & 7-10pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-1pm Tue-Sat Oct-May) on the main square in the 15th-century town hall. It contains a collection of stone fragments and reliefs from the Roman and early Christian periods.

Next door is the **Church of the Assumption** (Crkva Uznesenja; ☞ 10am-noon & 7-9pm Jun-Sep) built in the late 15th century, with a rich Renaissance portal on the facade. The baroque altar inside has relics of St Gaudencius, Osor's patron saint. Gaudencius was an 11th-century bishop who, according to local legend, took it upon himself to castigate the townspeople for their sins and corruption. The bitter bishop was in turn expelled from town, became a hermit in a cave and put a curse upon all the poisonous snakes on the island (the curse is still on – there are no poisonous snakes on Cres).

Before leaving the square, notice the Ivan Meštrović statue **Daleki Akordi** (Distant Chords), one of the town's many modern sculptures on a musical theme.

FESTIVALS

During **Musical Evenings of Osor** (Osorske Glazbene Večeri) from mid-July to late August, high-calibre Croatian artists perform classical music in the cathedral and on the main square. The tourist offices in Mali Lošinj and Cres Town have details.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are no hotels in Osor, but private accommodation is available and there are two camping grounds in the area. The tourist offices in Mali Lošinj and Cres Town have listings of private rooms and apartments.

Bijar (☎ /fax 237 027; www.camps-cres-losinj.com; Osor bb; per person low-high 40-60KN) This camping ground is 500m from Osor, on the way to the town of Nerezine, and twice the size of Preko Mosta. The location on a remote cove with pebble and rocky beaches makes it a tranquil hideaway.

Preko Mosta (☎ 237 350; www.jazon.hr; Osor bb; per person/site 52/41KN) Overlooking the bridge to Lošinj, this small camping ground sits in a nice pine forest.

Konoba Bonifačić (☎ 237 413; Osor 64; mains from 50KN) The cuisine at this down-home restaurant

features dependable risottos, with asparagus, scampi, prosciutto and plenty of fish. You can enter through the lush garden in the back or from the old town. Have a shot of elderflower grappa while you're there.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

All buses travelling between Cres and Mali Lošinj stop at Osor (24KN, 45 minutes).

Valun pop 68

In a country with numerous idyllic coves, Valun is a standout. The little hamlet, 14km southwest of Cres Town, is buried at the foot of steep cliffs and surrounded by shingle beaches. You leave the car on top of the hill and go down steep steps to the old town that drops to the cove. The relative inaccessibility means that the narrow cove with a handful of restaurants is rarely crowded, and there are no souvenir stalls blocking your view of the old stone town clinging to the hills.

The **tourist bureau** (☎ 525 050; ☎ 8am-9pm Jul & Aug), a branch of Cresanka (see p137), is in the centre a few steps up from the harbour. It

LUBENICE

Time seems to stand still at this medieval hilltop hamlet atop a rocky ridge on the western side of Cres. Semi-abandoned (with a permanent population of 17) and swept by strong winds at 378m above sea level, this small maze of ancient stone houses and churches provides one of the last vestiges of traditional island life.

The experience of getting there, along a narrow road lined with stone walls, wildflowers and meadows, is just as spectacular as the settlement itself. At the end of the 10km drive (from the main road to Valun), this breathtaking place awaits. **Ekopark Pernat** (☎ 513 010; www.ekoparkpernat.org), a Rijeka-based centre for sustainable development, has done much to keep Lubenice alive. It runs a **cultural-educational space** (☎ 840 406; suggested donation 7KN; ☎ 9am-10pm Easter-Oct) in the old school building at the village's end, with a small permanent exhibition about sheep-raising. Other projects are in the works, such as restoring the parsonage building and organising various workshops.

Lubenice lies above one of Kvarner's most remote and beautiful **beaches**, in a secluded cove accessible by a steep path through the underbrush. The 45-minute descent is a breeze, but coming up is more of a challenge so you could consider taking a taxi boat from Valun or Cres.

Another reason to visit Lubenice is for the annual **Lubeničke Glazbene Večeri** (Lubenice Music Nights), with alfresco classical concerts every Friday night in July and August. The tourist office in Cres Town (p137) has schedules and info on organised transportation.

The only way to stay in Lubenice is to rent private accommodation. The tourist office in Cres Town has private room listings, although there aren't many to choose from.

The only place to eat is **Konoba Hibernicia** (☎ 840 422; Lubenice 17; mains from 45KN), notable for its lamb dishes served in a cool stone interior or on the handful of tables outside.

In summer, there are two daily buses from Cres Town (27KN, 50 minutes), except on Sunday. It's possible to visit on a day trip on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, which are the only days when there is a same-day return bus.

books private accommodation (scarce in tiny Valun and usually reserved way in advance), but it's better to go through the main office in Cres Town. Expect to pay the same price as for private accommodation in Cres Town.

The main sight is the 11th-century **Valun Tablet**, kept in the parish Church of St Mary (whose opening hours are sporadic). Inscribed in both Glagolitic and Latin, this tombstone reflects the ethnic composition of the island, which was inhabited by Roman descendants and newcomers who spoke Croatian.

Valun's natural showcase is its series of lovely **beaches**. To the right of the harbour, a path leads to a beach and camping ground. West of the hamlet, about 700m further on, there's another lovely pebble beach bordered by pines.

Zdovice campsite (per person 95KN; ☒ May-Sep) is a small camping ground on the eastern cove, but it doesn't accept reservations. Call the tourist bureau to find out if there's space.

Of the town's restaurants, **Konoba Toš-Juna** (☎ 525 084; Valun bb; mains from 35KN) stands out. It's inside a converted olive mill with lots of wood, exposed stone and a nice terrace on the harbour. Try the fresh tuna in olive oil as a starter and continue with lamb or scampi.

There are two daily buses from Cres Town (24KN, 20 minutes), but none on Sunday. The problem is the return: there's a morning bus back only twice a week (on Monday and Wednesday). If you come by car, you'll have to pay the 15KN parking charge.

KRK ISLAND

pop 16,402

Croatia's largest island, connected to the mainland by a bridge, 409-sq-km Krk (Veglia in Italian) is also one of the busiest in summer, as Germans and Austrians stream over to its holiday houses, auto-camps and hotels. It may not be the lushest or most beautiful island in Croatia (in fact, it's largely overdeveloped and stomped over), but its decades of experience in tourism make it an easy place to visit, with good transport connections and a well-organised infrastructure.

The northwestern coast of the island is rocky and steep with few settlements because of the fierce *bura* that whips the

coast in winter. The climate is milder in the south, with more vegetation and beaches, coves and inlets. The major towns – Krk, Punat and Baška – are found on the forested southwestern coast.

Centrally located Krk Town makes a good base for exploring the island. Nearby Punat is an alternative place to stay and the gateway for the unique Košljun Island and monastery. Baška, on a wide sandy bay at the foot of a scenic mountain range, is the island's prime beach destination. On the east coast and off the beaten trail, Vrbnik is a cliff-top medieval village known for its *žlahtina* wine.

History

The oldest-known inhabitants of Krk were the Illyrian Liburnian tribe, followed by the Romans who settled on the northern coast. With the decline of the Roman Empire, Krk was incorporated into the Byzantine Empire, then passed between Venice and the Croatian-Hungarian kings.

In the 11th century, Krk became the centre of the Glagolitic language – the old Slavic language put into writing by the Greek missionaries Cyril and Methodius. The oldest preserved example of the script was found in a former Benedictine abbey in Krk Town. A later tablet with the script was found near Baška and is now exhibited in Zagreb. The script was used on the island up to the first decades of the 19th century.

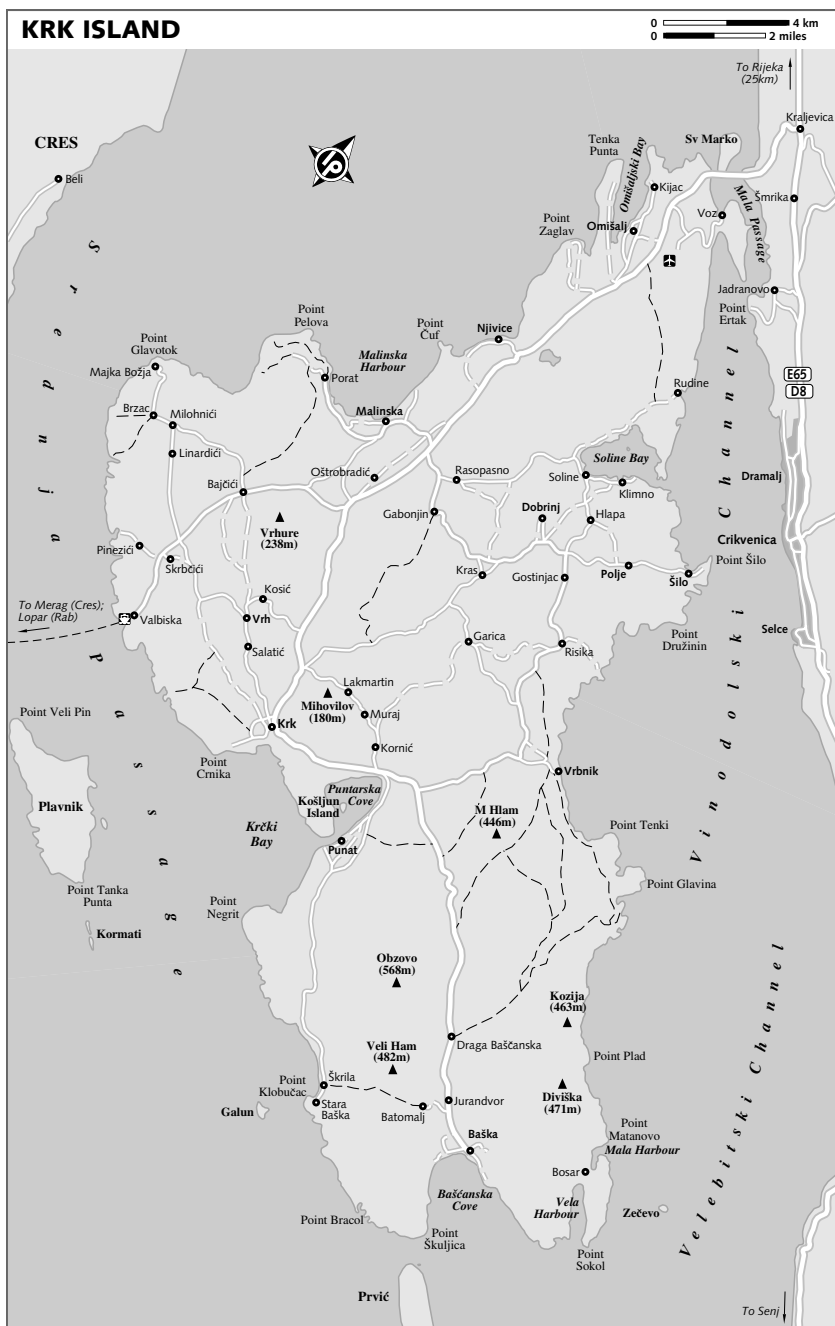
In 1358, Venice granted rule over the island to the Dukes of Krk, later known as the Frankopans, who became one of the richest and most powerful families in Croatia. Although vassals of Venice, they ruled with a measure of independence until 1480, when the last member of the line put the island under the protection of Venice.

Although tourism is the dominant activity on the island, there are two shipyards in Punat and Krk for small-ship repairs, and some agriculture and fishing.

Getting There & Away

Krk is home to Rijeka Airport (p125), the main hub for flights to the Kvarner region, which consist mostly of low-cost and charter flights during summer.

The Krk toll bridge links the northern part of the island with the mainland and a regular car ferry links Valbiska with Merag (passenger/car 17/113KN, 30 minutes) on



Cres. Another ferry, run by Split Tours, operates between Valbiska and Lopar (37KN, 1½ hours) on Rab four times daily.

About 14 buses per weekday travel between Rijeka and Krk Town (50KN, one to two hours). About 11 of those go via Punat (56KN to 64KN, one to two hours). Two daily buses continue on to Vrbnik (23KN, 35 minutes) from Monday to Friday. There are 10 daily buses to Baška from Krk Town (27KN, 45 minutes). All services are reduced, if running at all, on weekends.

There are six daily buses from Zagreb to Krk Town (163KN to 183KN, three to four hours). Note that some bus lines are more direct than others, which will stop in every village en route. Make sure to ask about travel time before deciding which bus to take. Out of the summer season, bus services are reduced.

To go from Krk to Cres and Lošinj, change buses at Malinska for the Lošinj-bound bus that comes from Rijeka or Zagreb, but check the departure and arrival times carefully (at www.autotrans.hr) as the connection only works four times a day.

Getting Around

Bus connections between towns are frequent because the many buses to and from Rijeka pick up passengers in all the island's main towns.

KRK TOWN

On the island's southwestern coast, Krk Town clusters around a medieval walled centre and, spreading out into the surrounding coves and hills, a modern development that includes a port, beaches, camping grounds and hotels. The seafront promenade can get seriously crowded in summer with tourists and week-ending Croats from the mainland, who spill into the narrow cobbled streets that make up the pretty old quarter.

Minus the crowds, this stone labyrinth is the highlight of Krk Town. The former Roman settlement still retains sections of the ancient city walls and gates, as well as the Romanesque cathedral and a 12th-century Frankopan castle.

You won't need more than a couple of hours to see these sights, but from a base in Krk Town it's easy to hop on a bus to other island towns and beaches or take a boat trip around the island.

Orientation

The bus station (no left-luggage office) is on the harbour, only a few minutes' walk north to the historic town centre along the seafront. The main strip in the ancient quarter is JJ Strossmayera, lined with souvenir and ice-cream shops. Most hotels are east of the town centre, dotting the pine forests around the small sandy beach at Dražica cove.

Information

You can change money at most travel agencies; there are 13 in town.

Aurea (☎ 221 777; www.aurea-krk.hr; Vršanska 261; ☎ 8am-2pm & 3-8pm) Books private accommodation and excursions on the agency's very own boats.

Autotrans (☎ 222 661; www.autotrans-turizam.com; Šetalište Svetog Bernardina 3; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1.30pm & 6-9pm Sun) Conveniently placed in the bus station, this agency finds private accommodation and sells bus tickets.

Erste Banka (Trg Bana Josipa Jelačića 4) Changes money and has an ATM.

Hospital (☎ 221 224; Vinogradska bb)

Krk Sistemi (☎ 222 999; Šetalište Svetog Bernardina 3; per 20min 10KN; ☎ 9am-2pm & 5-10pm Mon-Sat, 5-10pm Sun) Free wireless internet plus terminals for those without a laptop.

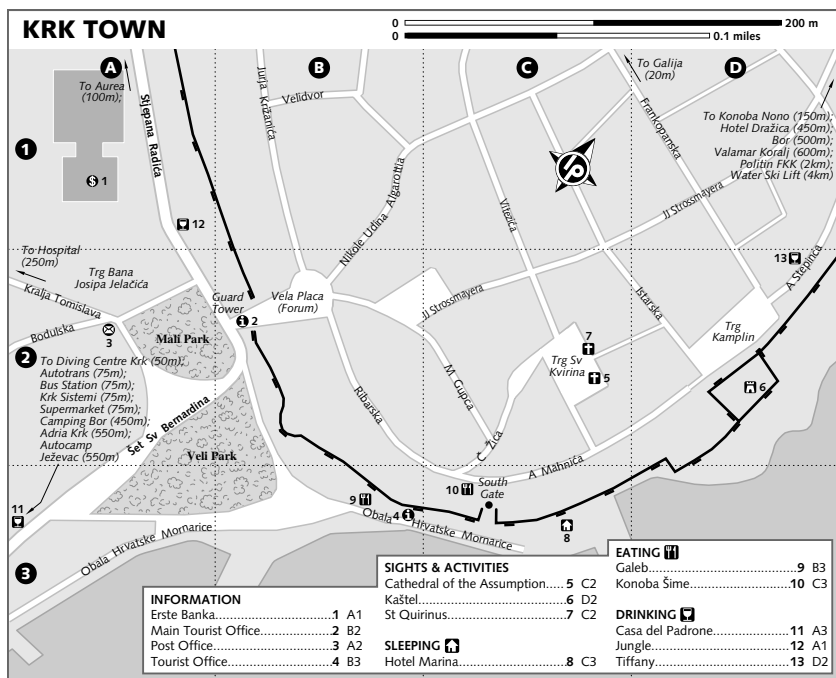
Post office (Bodulska bb; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 2.30pm Sat) You can get cash advances on your credit cards.

Tourist offices (☎ 220 226; www.tz-krk.hr, in Croatian) Obala Hrvatske Mornarice (Obala Hrvatske Mornarice bb; ☎ 8am-9pm Jun-Sep); Vela Placa (Vela Placa 1; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) The seasonal tourist office distributes brochures and materials, including a map of hiking paths. Out of season, go to the main tourist office nearby.

Sights

On the site of the 1st-century Roman baths and an earlier basilica, the **Cathedral of the Assumption** (Katedrala Uznesenja; Trg Svetog Kvirina; ☎ morning & evening Mass) is a Romanesque structure from the 12th century. Note the rare early Christian carving of two birds eating a fish on the first column next to the apse. The left nave features a Gothic chapel from the 15th century, with the coats of arms of the Frankopan princes who used it as a place of worship.

The 18th-century campanile topped with an angel statue is shared between the cathedral and the adjoining **St Quirinus** (Trg Svetog Kvirina), an early Romanesque church built of white stone and dedicated to the town's patron saint. The **church museum** (Trg Svetog Kvirina;



admission 5KN; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Sat) is a treasury of sacral art, with a silver altarpiece of the Virgin Mary from 1477 and a polyptych by Paolo Veneziano.

The fortified **Kaštel** (Trg Kamplin) facing the seafront on the northern edge of the old town has a 12th-century tower once used as a Frankopan courtroom and another round Venetian tower. The castle is now used as an open-air venue for summer concerts and plays.

Activities

A number of outfits organise diving trips around the island. Try **Diving Centre Krk** (☎ 222 563; www.fun-diving.com; Braće Juras 3) or **Adria Krk** (☎ 604 248; Creska 12). Popular dive sites include a sunken Greek cargo vessel and a variety of underwater caves, tunnels and coral walls around the island of Plavnik and as far as Cres.

Adrenaline junkies can get their fix at the **water ski lift** (☎ 091 272 7302; www.wakeboarder.hr; 5 rounds 50KN; ☎ mid-Apr-Sep), a 650m-long cableway for wakeboarding and waterskiing, running at a speed of 32km/h. Located between Krk Town and Punat, it has a restaur-

ant, a cocktail bar, a board shop and the surfer crowd.

Festivals & Events

Every July and August the **Krk Summer Festival** hosts concerts, plays and dances in the Kaštel (the otherwise closed Franciscan monastery northwest of the harbour) and on the squares of the old town. The tourist office has schedules. The **Krk Fair** is a Venetian-inspired event that takes over the town for three days in mid-August with concerts, people dressed in medieval costumes, and stalls selling traditional food.

Sleeping

There are three camping grounds and a range of hotel options in and around Krk Town. The old town has only one hotel, on the seafront; a large complex east of the town centre has all the others. The travel agencies listed under Information (p143) can find private accommodation. Prices are fixed by the tourist association and range from 210KN to 250KN for a double room in the high season (130KN to 170KN for a single). Two-person studios

go for between 210KN and 310KN in the high season.

Camping Bor (☎ 221 581; www.camp-bor.hr; Crikvenička 10; per adult/site 36/25KN; ☹ Apr–Oct) On a hill of olive groves and pine forests a 10-minute walk west of the seafroent.

Autocamp Ježevac (☎ 221 081; camping@valamar.com; Plavnička bb; per adult/site 44/56KN; ☹ mid-Apr–mid-Oct) The beachfront ground offers shady sites and places to swim. It's just a 10-minute walk southwest of town.

Politin FKK (☎ 221 351; camping@valamar.com; per adult/site 46/56KN; ☹ mid-Apr–Sep) Be happily nude at this recently expanded naturist camp on the wooded Prniba Peninsula, a short distance from town, with views of Plavnik and Cres islands. There's free wireless internet.

Bor (☎ /fax 220 200; www.hotelbor.hr; Šetalište Dražica 5; s/low-high 152-369KN, d 231-564KN; ☎) The rooms are modest and without trimmings at this low-key hotel right below the Dražica complex, but the seafroent location amid pine forests makes it a worthwhile stay.

Hotel Dražica (☎ 655 755; www.hotelikrk.hr; Ruzmarinska 6; s/low-high 188-608KN, d 290-840KN; ☎) If you don't mind the package tour experience, this large central hotel of the Dražica complex delivers quality and facilities – two outdoor pools, tennis courts and a fitness centre. The two annexes nearby, Tamaris and Villa Lovorka (same prices), are a touch more intimate.

Valamar Koralj (☎ 655 400; www.valamar.com; Vlade Tomašića bb; d low-high 420-912KN; ☎) Book a standard room and you may wonder why this hotel on a peaceful cove is marketed as 'romantic', but pay extra for one of the 19 new suites and it becomes clear. Each suite has a terrace or balcony and a living room, while the outdoor pool has a jacuzzi.

Hotel Marina (☎ 221 357; www.hotelikrk.hr; Obala Hrvatske Mornarice 6; s/d 760/1168KN; ☎) The most recent overhaul of this old town hotel boosted it to four stars. Now each of the 10 deluxe units sports sea vistas and modern trappings such as LCD TVs.

Eating

Konoba Nono (☎ 222 221; Krčkih Iseljenika 8; mains from 40KN) Savour local specialties such as *šurlice* topped with goulash or scampi, just a hop and a skip from the old town. The arched rustic interior covered with fishing nets houses a small olive oil production plant in the winter months.

Galija (☎ 221 250; Frankopanska 38; mains from 45KN) If you don't mind forgoing sea vistas, make a climb to this cavernous place on the northwestern tip of the old town. Open year-round, it's popular with locals for its bread-oven pizzas, as well as risottos, meat mainstays and fish.

Konoba Šime (☎ 221 426; Antuna Mahnića 1; mains from 45KN) While it's nothing to write home about, this popular *konoba* by the harbour serves a good selection of pastas and local meaty treats such as *čevapčići* (small spicy sausages of minced beef, lamb or pork). Dine inside in a medieval-type environment or out on the alfresco tables.

Galeb (☎ 221 261; Obala Hrvatske Mornarice 3; mains from 60KN) You'll pay mostly for the location here – the seafroent terrace is a great place to linger and people-watch. The food is unimaginative but decent; expect standard mainstays and pizzas.

You can pick up picnic supplies at the large supermarket across from the bus station, or at one of the small grocery stores on JJ Strossmayera in the old town.

Drinking & Entertainment

Casa del Padrone (Šetalište Svetog Bernardina bb) Krk partygoers crowd the two floors of this faux-Renaissance bar-club that hosts DJs on summer weekends. Daytime fun consists of lounging on the seaside tables while nibbling on cakes and sipping espresso.

Jungle (☎ 221 503; Stjepana Radića bb; ☹ May–Sep) The only veritable club in town draws a youngish set to its tropically themed dance floor where house music is king. The cocktail bar outside is more low-key.

Tiffany (Stepina 2) Perch on the town walls right outside this pub, beer in hand, and bop to the sound of old disco and pop hits. The views from the terrace are spectacular.

PUNAT

Eight kilometres southeast of Krk is the small town of Punat, frequented by yachters for its marina. The main attraction here is the monastery on the islet of Košljun, only a 10-minute boat ride away. The tiny island contains a 16th-century **Franciscan monastery** (admission 15KN; ☹ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Sat, to 12.30pm Sun) built on the site of a 12th-century Benedictine abbey. Highlights include a large, appropriately chilling *Last Judgment*, painted in 1653 and housed in the monastery church, and

the small museum with a display of other religious paintings, an ethnographic collection and a rare copy of Ptolemy's *Atlas* printed in Venice in the late 16th century. Take a little extra time to stroll around the forested island with 400 plant species. Although agencies in Krk Town organise excursions to Košljun, it's cheaper to take one of the frequent buses to Punat and then a taxi boat from the harbour (20KN return). These are more expensive if you're hiring the boat solo or as a couple, but there'll be plenty of interested parties in summer who you can share the costs with. Boats go regularly; try **More** (☎ 854 127; www.more-punat.com; Kovačiča 49).

With decent beaches on the outskirts, Punat can also serve as an alternative place to stay. There are two camping grounds: **Campsite Pila** (☎ 854 020; www.hoteli-punat.hr; Šetalšte Ivana Brusića 2; per adult/site 51/98KN; ☽ Apr–mid-Oct), just south of the town centre, and the naturist **FKK Konobe** (☎ 854 049; www.hoteli-punat.hr; Obala 94; per adult/site 51/98KN; ☽ mid-Apr–Sep), about 3km south down the coast. The 90-bed **youth hostel** (☎ 854 037; www.hfhs.hr; Novi Put 8; dm low-high 75–85KN, d 95–110KN; ☽ May–Sep) was recently spruced up, so book ahead.

VRBNIK

Perched on a 48m cliff overlooking the sea on the east coast of the island, Vrbnik is a beguiling medieval village of steep, arched streets. It was once the centre of the Glagolitic language and repository for many Glagolitic manuscripts. The language was kept alive by priests, who were always plentiful in the town since many young men entered the priesthood to avoid serving on Venetian galleys.

Now the town is a terrific place to soak up the vistas and sample the *žlahtina* white wine produced in the surrounding region. After wandering the tight-packed cobbled alleyways where local women sell wine, descend to the town beach for some swimming. The small **tourist office** (☎ 857 479; Placa Vrbničkog Statuta 4; ☽ 8am–3pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug) has limited info. If you get enchanted and wish to stay, **Mare Tours** (☎ 604 400; www.mare-vrbnik.com; Pojana 4) has details about private rooms, although many get snatched up ahead of the summer season.

Restaurant Nada (☎ 857 065; Glavača 22; mains from 55KN), with a covered terrace upstairs, is a good place to sample *šurlice* topped with meat goulash or scampi. At its dark rustic *konoba*

downstairs, you can snack on sheep's cheese, wine, prosciutto and olive oil.

Only two daily weekday buses travel the 12km from Krk Town to Vrbnik (23KN, 35 minutes) and back. Weekends are tricky, as there's only one evening bus from Vrbnik on Sunday.

BAŠKA

pop 816

At the southern end of Krk Island, Baška has the island's most beautiful beach, a 2km-long crescent set below a dramatic, barren range of mountains. It's no wonder that it's turned into an immensely popular resort. The location is indeed spectacular, and the swimming and scenery better than at Krk Town. However, there's one caveat should you visit in summer – tourists are spread towel-to-towel and what's otherwise a pretty pebble beach turns into a fight for your place under the sun.

The 16th-century core of Venetian townhouses is pleasant enough for a stroll, but what surrounds it is a bland tourist development of modern apartment blocks and generic restaurants. Facilities are plentiful, however, and there are nice hiking trails into the surrounding mountains, two recently added rock-climbing sites and more secluded beaches to the east of town, reachable on foot or by water taxi.

Information

Just down the street from the bus station, between the beach and the harbour, is the **tourist office** (☎ 856 817; www.tz-baska.hr; Zvonimirova 114; ☽ 7am–9pm Mon–Sat, 8am–1pm Sun Jun–mid-Sep, 8am–3pm Mon–Fri mid-Sep–May). It distributes a wealth of brochures and a map of hiking trails around the island's southern tip.

Sights & Activities

One of the hiking trails leads to the Romanesque **St Lucy Church** (Sveta Lucija; admission 10KN; ☽ 8am–noon & 2–8pm) in the village of Jurandvor, 2km away; this is where the 11th-century Baška tablet was found. What's inside is a replica, as the original is now in the Archaeological Museum (p79) in Zagreb.

Several popular trails begin around Camping Zablacé, including an 8km walk to **Stara Baška**, a restful little village on a bay surrounded by stark, salt-washed limestone hills.

There are also two **rock climbing** sites in the area; the tourist office has maps and information.

Sleeping

Private accommodation can be arranged by most agencies in town, such as **PDM Guliver** (☎ /fax 856 004; www.pdm-guliver.hr; Zvonimirova 98; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm Sun Jun-mid-Sep, shorter hr rest of year) and **Primaturist** (☎ 856 132; www.primaturist.hr; Zvonimirova 98; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat Jun-Aug) next door. There's a four-night minimum stay in summer (or a hefty surcharge) and rooms get filled up fast. Prices are a touch higher than in Krk Town.

Most hotels and the town's two camping grounds are managed by **Hoteli Baška** (☎ 656 111; www.hotelibaška.hr). During summer it is essential to arrange accommodation well in advance as the town swarms with Austrian, German and Czech tourists. Hotel space is booked solid by late spring, and accommodation is tight in the shoulder seasons as well.

The hotels managed by Hoteli Baška include the town's newest and fanciest – Atrium Residence Baška on the beach, with swanky rooms and all the upmarket trimmings. The tourist settlement about 1km southwest of town comprises a spa and fitness centre with an indoor and outdoor pool, as well as the four-star Hotel Zvonimir and the midrange Hotel Corinthia and Villas Corinthia, a small complex of villa apartments suitable for families. During the low season, singles range from 614KN to 768KN, while doubles hover between 494KN and 648KN. High season prices in single units start at 1304KN and go up to 1596KN; doubles range from 1184KN to 1476KN. There's a 20% surcharge if you stay under three nights.

Camping Zablacé (☎ 856 909; www.campzablace.info; per adult/site 45/95KN; ☎ Apr-mid-Oct) spreads along a long pebble beach. The shady naturist **FKK Camp Bunculuka** (☎ 856 806; www.bunculuka.info; per adult/site 45/95KN; ☎ Apr-Oct) is a 15-minute walk over the hill east of the harbour.

Eating

Restaurants are plentiful but there's not much variety.

Bistro Forza (☎ 856 611; Zvonimirova 98; mains from 38KN) A good cheap-bite option, this place dishes out pizza and the usual shebang of grilled meat, pasta and salads.

Cicibela (☎ 856 013; Emila Geistličica bb; mains from 60KN) This seafront restaurant still rules

the roost, especially for fish, seafood and excellent vistas.

RAB ISLAND

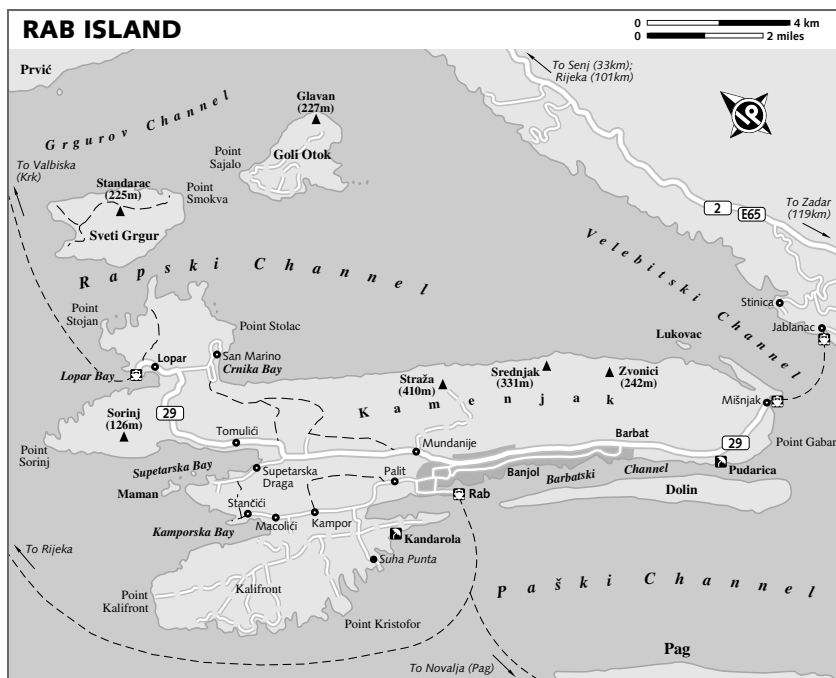
Rab (Arbe in Italian), between the islands of Krk and Pag, is the most enticing island in Kvarner when it comes to landscape diversity. The more densely populated southwest is pock-marked with pine forests, beaches and coves, while the northeast is a windswept region with few settlements, high cliffs and a barren look. In the interior is fertile land protected by mountains from cold winds, allowing the cultivation of olives, grapes and vegetables. The island's northeast tip is taken over by the Lopar Peninsula, which offers the best sandy beaches, while the northwest peninsula, which emerges from Supetarska Draga, is fringed with coves and lagoons that continue on to the Kalifront cape and the Suha Punta resort.

The cultural and historical showcase of the island is the enchanting Rab Town, characterised by four elegant bell towers rising from the ancient stone streets. Even at the peak of the summer season, when the island is overrun with visitors, you can still have a sense of discovery wandering around its old quarter and escaping to nearly deserted beaches just a quick boat ride away. In spring and autumn, Rab Island is a lovely place to visit, as the climate is famously mild – there are 2470 sunny hours per year – and visitors are scarce.

History

Originally settled by Illyrians, Rab underwent periods of Roman, Byzantine and Croatian rule before being sold to Venice, along with Dalmatia, in 1409. Farming, fishing, vineyards and salt production were the economic mainstays, but most income ended up in Venice. Two plague epidemics in the 15th century nearly wiped out the population and brought the economy to a standstill.

When Venice fell in 1797, there was a short period of Austrian rule until the French arrived in 1805. After the fall of Napoleon in 1813, the power went back to the Austrians who favoured the Italianised elite and it was not until 1897 that Croatian was made an 'official' language. The tourism industry



began flourishing among the Viennese elite at the turn of the 20th century. After the fall of Austria in 1918, Rab eventually became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Occupied by Italian and then German troops in the early 1940s, it was finally liberated in 1945. In the late 1940s, Goli Otok, off the Lopar Peninsula, served as a notorious prison camp under Tito's rule; Stalinist supporters were secretly shipped off to the islet and kept in dire conditions.

These days, tourism is the bread and butter of Rab, with several purpose-built settlements and faithful visitors who return year after year. Even during the 1990s war, Rab managed to hold onto its German and Austrian tourists.

Getting There & Away

The Split Tours ferry between Valbiska on Krk and Lopar (passenger/car 37/225KN, 1½ hours) operates four times daily, year-round. A car ferry by Rapska Plovidba shuttles back and forth nonstop in the summer months between Mišnjak on the island's southeastern edge and Jablanac (passenger/car 15/105KN, 15 minutes) on the mainland.

Rab Town has a daily connection with Lun (55KN, 40 minutes) on Pag; this Rapska Plovidba ferry departs daily, but day trips are only possible on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Jadrolinija has a daily catamaran service between Rijeka and Rab (40KN, two hours); it continues on to Novalja on Pag, from where you can proceed to Zadar.

The most reliable way to come and go is on one of the two daily buses between Rab and Rijeka (120KN, three hours). In the high season there are three direct daily buses from Zagreb to Rab (188KN, four to five hours). These services can fill up, so book ahead if possible. There's no direct bus from Rab to Zadar, but there are several daily buses that connect at Senj with Rijeka buses travelling to Zadar (195KN, five hours).

Getting Around

In addition to island tours operated from Rab Town (see p151), there's a water-taxi service between Rab Town and Suha Punta resort (25KN) that operates four times daily in July and August, leaving from the front of Hotel Padova. Private taxi boats will take you to any

island beach, including the nudist Kandarola (30KN per person), Pudarica (400KN return, up to five people) and anywhere else for 150KN per hour (up to five people).

From Lopar to Rab Town (23KN, 15 minutes, 13km) there are 11 daily buses (a few less on weekends) in either direction; some are timed to meet the Valbiska–Lopar ferry.

RAB TOWN

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Medieval Rab Town is among the northern Adriatic's most spectacular sights. Crowded onto a narrow peninsula, its four instantly recognisable bell towers rise like exclamation points from a red-roofed huddle of stone buildings. Uphill from the harbour leads a maze of streets dotted with richly endowed churches and lovely lookout points. It's a pure delight to meander through the narrow old alleys and shady Komrčar Park just to the west of the old town. In summer, a dose of culture can be had, too, as the churches often host concerts and art exhibitions. Once you've soaked up the town, there are excursion and taxi boats to whisk you off to plentiful beaches and coves scattered around the island.

Orientation

The old town lies directly across the bay from the marina. Narrow side streets climb up from the three main streets parallel to the harbour – Donja, Srednja and Gornja *ulica* (literally, lower, middle and upper roads). Trg Municipium Arba by the harbour is the old town's focal point.

A five-minute walk north of the old town is the new commercial centre, Palit, with the Merkur department store, some travel agencies and the bus station. The northwestern portion of the peninsula is given over to the 100-year-old Komrčar Park, bordered by the town's beaches. There are also beaches around the Padova complex on the other side, but better swimming can be found away from town.

Information

There is free wireless internet around Hotel Padova and in the commercial centre.

Digital X (☎ 777 010; Donja bb; per hr 30KN;

☎ 10am–2pm & 6pm–midnight Mon–Sat, 6pm–midnight Sun) Internet access.

Erste Banka (Mali Palit bb) Changes money and has an ATM.

Garderoba (Mali Palit bb; per hr 0.70KN; ☎ 5.30am–7.30pm) Left-luggage at the bus station.

Katurbo (☎ 724 495; www.katurbo.hr; Šetaliste Markantuna Dominisa 5; ☎ 8am–10pm Jun–Aug, to 9pm May & Sep) Private accommodation, money exchange, bike rental (per hour 20KN) and tours.

Kristofor (☎ 725 543; www.kristofor.hr; Mali Palit 70; ☎ 8am–1pm & 5–9pm Mon–Fri & Sun, 8am–10pm Sat) Next to the bus station, this friendly and efficient agency offers the full gamut of services.

Numero Uno (☎ /fax 724 688; www.numero-uno.hr; Šetaliste Markantuna Dominisa 5; ☎ 6am–midnight Mon–Sat, 8am–11pm Sun) Books private accommodation, has boat tours and rents bikes (55KN per half day).

Post office (Mali Palit 67; ☎ 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, to 2pm Sat).

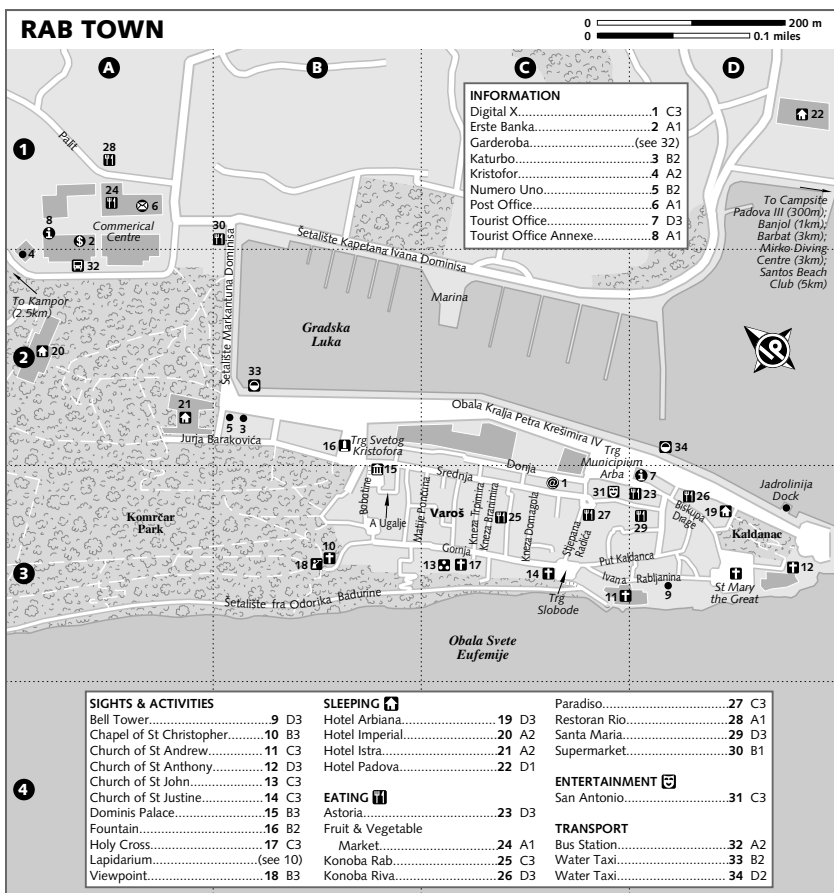
Tourist office (☎ 771 111; www.tzg-rab.hr; Trg Municipium Arba 8; ☎ 8am–10pm Jul–Sep, 8am–9pm May, Jun & Oct, 8am–2pm Mon–Fri Nov–Apr) An excellent source for maps, brochures and leaflets about the entire island. There's an annexe (open 8am to 10pm June to September) round the corner from the bus station.

Sights

Most of Rab's famous churches and towers are along Gornja Ulica, the upper road that turns into Ivana Rabljanina in the Kaldanac section of the old town. The churches are mostly open only for morning and evening Mass but, even when closed, most have metal grates over the front door, so you can have a glimpse of the interior.

Start your exploration from Trg Svetog Kristofora near the harbour. On the right side of the square as you face the old town is a **fountain** with sculptures of the two mythical figures Kalifront and Draga. Legend says the passionate Kalifront attempted to seduce the shepherdess Draga, who had taken a vow of chastity. Goddess Diana, to whom Draga had pledged purity, turned her into a stone statue to save her from the seducer.

Go up Bobotine and pause at the corner of Srednja to admire **Dominis Palace** on the left. Built at the end of the 15th century for a prominent patrician family who taught the public to read and write here, the facade has Renaissance windows and a striking portal decorated with the family coat of arms. Continue up Bobotine and at the top bear to the right to reach the Chapel of St Christopher (Svetog Kristofora), which houses a small collection of ancient stones inside its **lapidarium** (admission by donation; ☎ 10am–12.30pm & 7.30–9pm Mon–Sat, 7.30–9pm Sun summer).



A nearby passage leads to the beautifully landscaped **Komrčar Park**, a great place for a cool walk on a hot summer's day. For a fine vista of the church spires and mighty Velebit mountain range in the distance, take the stairs to the right before the park entrance to reach the **viewpoint** on top of the ramparts.

Continuing south along Gornja, you'll come to the **Church of St John** (Svetog Ivana), which probably dates to the pre-Christian era. Little survives of this Romanic basilica except the 13th-century bell tower next to it, which can be climbed for 5KN (although opening hours are sporadic). Next to the bell tower is the 13th-century **Holy Cross Church** (Svetog Kržiža), with a cross that Christ allegedly wept upon because of the town

residents' immoral conduct. Today it's the venue for summer concerts during Rab Musical Evenings (opposite).

Further along Gornja is Trg Slobode, with the **Church of St Justine** (Svete Justine) on the right-hand side. The church (currently under renovation) has a bell tower dating from 1572 and a collection of religious artefacts. The mighty oak tree in the middle was planted as a sign of liberation from the Italians in 1921. Pause at this beautiful little piazza and soak up the sea vistas stretching ahead.

Pass Trg Slobode bearing right and on your right you'll see the Benedictine monastery founded in the 11th century and the adjacent Romanesque **Church of St Andrew** (Svetog Andrije), which has Rab's oldest bell tower.

The tallest tower – and one of the most beautiful on the entire Croatian coast – is coming up on the right. Dating to the 13th century, the 26m-tall **bell tower** (admission 5KN; ☹ sporadic) is topped with an octagonal pyramid surrounded by a Romanesque balustrade and features a cross with five small globes and reliquaries of several saints. Climb it for views of the old town rooftops and the sea.

The extreme end of the cape accommodates the baroque **Church of St Anthony** (Svetog Antuna), with 17th-century inlaid marble and a painting of St Anthony decorating the altar. Adjacent is a working convent of Franciscan nuns who tend the garden, make lace tablecloths out of agave threads and live a quiet life by the sea.

Activities

Rab is criss-crossed with 100km of marked **hiking trails** and 80km of **biking trails**, several of which can be accessed from Rab Town. Pick up the map from the tourist office. From behind Hotel Istra, there's a trail that leads northeast to the mountain peak of Sveti Ilija. It only takes about 30 minutes on foot and the view is great. Bikes can be rented from several travel agencies listed under Information (p149).

Diving sites include various submarine caves and tunnels, as well as a protected amphora field off the cape of Sorinj. The small island of Čutin nearby is popular with divers for its submarine beauty. You can arrange to dive or take a course at **Mirko Diving Centre** (☎ 721 154; www.mirkodivingcenter.com; Barbat 710), in nearby Barbat.

Tours

Most travel agencies offer day tours of the island by boat, which include plenty of swim stops around Rab and at nearby islands such as Sveti Grgur and the infamous Goli Otok. These range between 100KN and 200KN, depending on the itinerary and trip length. Alternatively, take one of the taxi boats that depart from the harbour outside Hotel Istra and opposite Trg Municipium Arba (see p148). Travel agencies also offer excursions to other islands, such as Lošinj (160KN) and Krk (160KN), as well as to Plitvice (360KN).

Festivals & Events

For a few days each summer, Rab goes back to the Middle Ages during **Rab Fair** (Rapska

Fjera), when residents dress in period garb and the town comes alive with drumming, processions, fireworks, medieval dancing and crossbow competitions. Celebrated between 25 and 27 July, this tradition commemorates Rab's liberation from Venetian rule in 1364 and honours its patron saint, St Christopher.

Rab Musical Evenings take place from June to September and revolve around Thursday-night concerts (9pm) in the Holy Cross Church. Tickets (30KN) are available an hour before the concert.

Sleeping

Everything from camping to expensive hotels can be found in and around Rab Town. Most of the hotels and camping grounds on the island are managed by **Imperial** (www.imperial.hr). The travel agencies can organise private rooms, with prices starting at 145KN (up to 245KN) per double room in the high season. There's a surcharge for stays of less than three nights in summer.

Campsite Padova III (☎ 724 355; www.rab-camping.com; Banjol bb; per adult/tent 43/30KN; ☹ Apr-Oct) To sleep cheap, carry your tent around the bay and walk south along the waterfront to this camping ground about 2km from the old town. It's right on a sandy beach and has extensive facilities.

Hotel Istra (☎ 724 134; www.hotel-istra.hr; Šetalište Markantuna Dominisa bb; s low-high 300-420KN, d 458-696KN; ☹) From the outside, this freshly painted yellow building looks inviting, but inside the outdated rooms are calling for a facelift. The location, right on the harbour, is a serious bonus.

Hotel Imperial (☎ 724 522; www.imperial.hr; Palit bb; s low-high 370-505KN, d 560-760KN; ☹) Set back from town in shady Komrčar Park, some newer rooms have air-con, others balconies with sea views. The café terrace is lovely, bar the cheesy piano tunes.

Hotel Padova (☎ 724 444; www.imperial.hr; Banjol bb; s low-high 405-635KN, d 590-870KN; ☹ ☹ ☹) Facilities are the forte at this oversized concrete hotel complex across the bay in Banjol. There's a well-equipped wellness centre and balconies grace each of the recently renovated rooms.

Hotel Arbiana (☎ 724 444; www.arbianahotel.com; Obala Kralja Petra Krešimira IV 12; s 876KN, d 978-1300KN; ☹ ☹ ☹) Understated luxury seekers have gotten lucky with this recently refurbished

boutique hotel on the harbour. Most of the 28 colourful rooms and suites have balconies; each boasts wireless internet, LCD TV and bathrobes. There's a slow-food restaurant with a candlelit terrace.

Eating

Rab cuisine revolves around fresh fish, seafood and pasta. The quality and prices are generally uniform, with restaurants catering mainly to summer tourists.

Konoba Riva (☎ 725 887; Biskupa Drage 3; mains 40-90KN) Riva has tables on the harbour, an atmospheric terrace covered with fish nets and a small stone interior. The menu features fish and seafood, with some meat dishes thrown in.

Santa Maria (☎ 724 196; Dinka Dokule 6; mains from 55KN) The cool stone patio and upstairs terrace are the highlights at Santa Maria, and the food is decent, too. Try the tuna or shark steaks, seafood lasagne or one of the many meat dishes. There's a cocktail bar right next door, open till 2am.

Restoran Rio (☎ 725 645; Palit 57; mains from 57KN) This place is in the new part of town, at the back of the commercial centre, with a pleasant leafy terrace and a fish theme running through the decor and menu.

ourpick Konoba Rab (☎ 725 666; Kneza Branimira 3; mains from 65KN; ☹ closed Sun lunch) Some of the scrumptious specialities at this cosy *konoba*, such as lamb baked under *peka*, must be ordered in advance. Others don't need to be, including *rapska grot*a, a beef steak with cheese and prosciutto in a sweet fruit sauce (190KN for two).

Paradiso (☎ 771 109; Stjepana Radića 1; mains 70-130KN) Bundle art, wine and good food, offer it all in an ancient stone townhouse and you're close to paradise. This art gallery/winery/boutique restaurant-café has a patio out the back and a Venetian loggia up front. Try the dentex fillet in *traminac*.

Astoria (☎ 774 844; Trg Municipium Arba 7; mains 85-140KN) The classiest of the old town restaurants gets you a view of the harbour from the terrace. The *buzara* is superb, as is the Barbat beef fillet in red wine and thyme sauce.

There's a supermarket at the entrance to town on Šetalište Markantuna Dominisa. Another one is in the basement of the Merkur department store in the new part of town, where there's also a fruit and vegetable market.

Entertainment

San Antonio (www.sanantonio-club.com; Trg Municipium Arba 4) It has tables on the square filled with daytime crowds sipping cocktails, plus a popular disco that stays open till 6am.

Santos Beach Club (www.sanantonio-club.com; Pudarica Beach; ☎ 10am-dawn Jul & Aug) The owners of San Antonio are behind this seasonal beach club affair about 10km from Rab Town near Barbat (shuttles run at night). It's reminiscent of Zrće (see boxed text, p208) on Pag, with DJs spinning tunes to a party crowd. There are live concerts, foam parties and fashion shows, as well as beach volleyball during the day.

AROUND RAB TOWN

The **Franciscan Monastery of St Euphemia** (Samostan Svete Eufemije; ☎ 724 951; Kampor; admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-noon & 4-6pm Mon-Sat) and adjacent baroque church of St Bernardine are well worth the 2.5km walk northwest from Palit to Kampor. The Franciscan monks have a small museum here with old parchment books, stones and religious paintings, but it's the peaceful ambience that makes the monastery special. Check out the pleasant cloister and, inside the church, the ethereal painted ceiling, a stark contrast to the agony depicted on the late-Gothic wooden crucifix. Note also the 15th-century polyptych by the Vivarini brothers.

LOPAR

The tourist development on Lopar Peninsula occupying the northern tip of Rab Island has little charm, but there is a compelling reason to come here – a series of 22 sandy beaches that fringe the cape bordered by shady pine groves. Central European families flock here in droves in the summer months, as the sea is shallow and perfect for small children; this is particularly so on the 1500m-long **Paradise Beach** (Rajska Plaža) on Crnika Bay, right at the heart of town. As the island's most famous beach, it gets crowded, so head to nearby **Livačina Beach** for a quieter option.

If you wish to strip out of your bikini, **Sahara Beach** is a popular nudist spot in a delightful northern cove. It's accessible along a marked trail through pine forests; pass the San Marino hotel complex and pick up the trail from there. The beach is pretty remote – it takes about 45 minutes to get there. A closer nudist option is **Stolac Beach**, a 15-minute walk from Paradise Beach.

The town centre has a **tourist office** (☎ 775 508; www.lopar.hr; Lopar bb; 🕒 8am-9.30pm Jul & Aug, 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun Jun & Sep), which offers information about town and the beaches. For private accommodation, go to **Sahara Tours** (☎ 775 444; www.sahara-tours.hr; Lopar bb), which has double rooms from 230KN and two-person apartments from 360KN in the high season.

The unattractive settlement centred on Crnika Bay is comprised of **Camping San Marino** (☎ 775 133; www.imperial.hr; Lopar bb; adult/tent 43/30KN; 🕒 Apr-Oct), fronting Paradise Beach, the San Marino Hotel complex, a small commercial centre and several cookie-cutter restaurants. Should you wish to stay, book a room at **Epario**

Hotel (☎ 777 500; www.epario.net; Lopar 456a; s low-high 160-232KN, d 362-593KN; 📶 🚰 🚿 🚰), within spitting distance of Paradise Beach. Rooms are clean, comfy and come with wireless internet; most also have balconies.

If you get hungry, pick **Fortuna** (☎ 775 387; Lopar bb; mains from 50KN), slightly out of town opposite Hotel Lopar, which has a nice leafy terrace with palm trees. **Laguna** (☎ 775 177; Lopar 547; mains 40-120KN) is a more central choice, with an extensive menu of run-of-the-mill food such as grilled meats, pizzas and fish staples.

The ferry from Valbiska stops 1km from the town centre; there's a small train for foot passengers (adult/child 10/5KN).