

Croatia

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dubrovnik** The jewel of the Adriatic coast has glowing Renaissance architecture enclosed in a magnificent curtain of walls with dynamic nightlife and easy access to beaches (p262)
- **Hvar Island** 'Nightlife Central' on the Adriatic coast also offers daytime pleasures such as lush, green hills, Venetian-style architecture and a smattering of offshore islands for sunbathing (p260)
- **Korčula Island** At the end of this forested island is the compact old town, surrounded by walls like a mini-Dubrovnik (p261)
- **Best journey** Do the boat circuit from Split, to Hvar, Korčula and on to Dubrovnik, for the best of the Dalmatian coast (p258)
- **Off-the-beaten track** Get nekked with the other naturists amid the pine trees and discreet coves of Lokrum Island (p264)

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 56,538 sq km (about one quarter of Britain)
- **ATMs** Readily available in towns and transport hubs
- **Budget** 250KN per day
- **Capital** Zagreb
- **Country Code** ☎ 385
- **Famous for** neckties, war, Goran Visnjic
- **Language** Croatian
- **Money** kuna (KN); €1=8.35KN; US\$1=6.63KN; UK£1=12.45KN; A\$1=5KN; ¥100=6KN; NZ\$1=4.12KN
- **Population** 4.5 million
- **Phrases** *bog* (hello), *dovidenja* (goodbye), *hvala* (thanks), *pardon* (sorry)



- **Time** GMT/UTC + 1
- **Visas** None required for citizens of the EU, USA, Australia and Canada

TRAVEL HINT

Watch out for sea urchins in shallow water!

ROAMING CROATIA

Start in Zagreb, head down to Pula, then follow the coast south hitting Split, Hvar, Korčula and Dubrovnik.

Whether you call it the 'new Greece', the 'new Riviera', or the 'new Tuscany', Croatia has clearly become the latest European 'gotta go' destination. It's not surprising. With 6000km of coastline winding around innumerable bays and almost 1100 islands offshore, there's a dream spot for every taste. You can wander through unspoilt fishing villages, relax on a secluded cove or party till dawn in ancient cities.

Croatia's crown jewel is the magnificent walled city of Dubrovnik, which has the lovely islands of Hvar and Korčula within easy reach. Italian food, language and culture has permeated Istria, on Croatia's northern coast; and Zagreb, Croatia's capital, is a calm and gracious city with a wealth of Austro-Hungarian architecture. The unifying factor is Croatia's Slavic soul, especially apparent during festivals and celebrations when centuries-old songs, dances and costumes animate towns and villages around the country.

HISTORY

Modern Croatia is on the site of the ancient Roman province of Illyricum. Pula and Split were the two most important Roman towns. Slavs migrated into the region in the 7th century but political disarray tempted the Venetians to attack the coast. They established their first foothold on the coast in the 11th century and remained until Napoleon conquered Venice in 1797. In 1815 the Austro-Hungarian empire took control of Croatia, but with its defeat in WWI, Croatia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia). The Germans invaded in 1941 and tens of thousands of Croats joined the forces of Josip Broz, known as Maršal Tito.

After the war, Tito became prime minister of the new Yugoslav Federation. Croatia and Slovenia moved far ahead of the southern republics economically. By Tito's death in 1980, many Croats felt the time had come for autonomy. When recently deceased indicted war criminal Slobodan Milošević rose to power in Yugoslavia on a wave of Serbian nationalism, a fearful Croatia moved towards independence. Under the leadership of Franjo Tuđman, Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991 but the Serbian enclave of Krajina (from northeast to east of Zadar), fearful of their rights, proclaimed independence from Croatia.

Heavy fighting broke out in the Krajina and Serb communities in eastern Croatia. In six months of fighting, 10,000 people died, hundreds of thousands fled and tens of thousands of homes were destroyed.

A series of international peace plans halted the fighting until, in January 1993, the Croatian army suddenly launched an offensive in southern Krajina, recapturing much land. Their hold was consolidated in a new offensive launched on 1 May 1995, which essentially set Croatia's new borders. The facts on the ground were recognised by the Dayton Agreement of December 1995, which finally brought lasting peace to Croatia and a tenuous peace to the rest of the region.

Franjo Tuđman became Croatia's first president and presided over a regime that

became increasingly oppressive and corrupt. President Tuđman succumbed to cancer in 1999 and the 2000 election brought a centre-left coalition to power with Stipe Mesić elected president. The 2003 elections brought Ivo Sanader to power as prime minister presiding over a largely centrist government. Croatia has entered negotiations to join the EU and is expected to become a member by the end of the decade.

THE CULTURE

Before the war, Croatia had a population of nearly five million, of which 78% were Croats and 12% were Serbs. After the massive exodus of Serbs in 1995, today's population of 4.5 million includes just 201,000 Serbs, slightly less than 5%. The next largest ethnic group is Bosnians, followed by Italians, Hungarians and Slovenes. Small communities of Czechs, Roma and Albanians complete the mosaic.

Everywhere, you'll find an emphasis on keeping up appearances. People are well, if not flashily, dressed and it pains Croatians to see dilapidation anywhere.

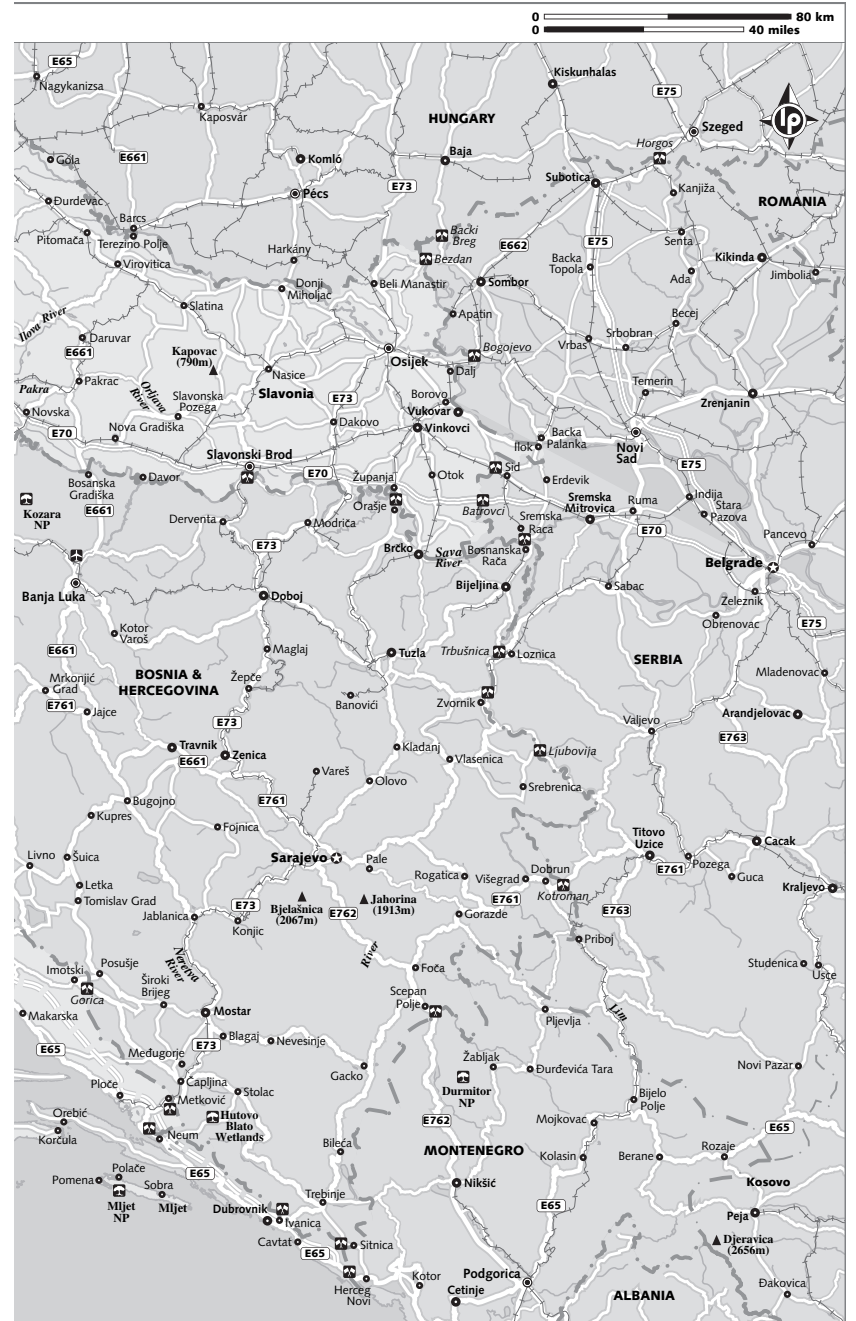
ARTS

Croatia's most famous artist is the sculptor Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962), whose work is seen in town squares throughout Croatia. Besides creating public monuments, Meštrović designed imposing buildings, such as the circular Croatian History Museum in Zagreb. Both his sculptures and architecture display the powerful classical restraint he learnt from the French sculptor Auguste Rodin. Meštrović's studio in Zagreb (p253) and his retirement home at Split (p259) have been made into galleries of his work. Another notable sculptor was Antun Augustinčić (1900–79), who created the Monument to Peace in front of the UN building in New York.

In literature, Croatia's most important writer was the 20th-century novelist and playwright Miroslav Krleža. His most popular novels include *The Return of Philip Latinović* (1932) and *Banners* (1963).



CROATIA



CROATIA

READING UP

Marcus Tanner's *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* is the most comprehensive recent account of Croatian history. From the Roman era to President Tudjman, the complicated struggles of Croatia are presented in a lively, readable style. For insight into the changes sweeping through Croatian culture, read Slavenka Dragulić's non-fiction: *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*, *Café Europa* and *They Wouldn't Hurt a Fly* deal with various aspects of Croatia from communism to war crimes trials in The Hague.

ENVIRONMENT

Croatia has an incredibly diverse topography that runs from the Pannonian plains of Slavonia between the Sava, Drava and Danube Rivers, across hilly central Croatia to the Istrian Peninsula, then south through Dalmatia along the rugged Adriatic coast. Of Croatia's 1185 islands and islets, only 66 are inhabited.

There are eight national parks and a generally high level of environmental consciousness among Croats. The lack of heavy industry in Croatia has left the country largely free of industrial pollution.

TRANSPORT**GETTING THERE & AWAY****Air**

The following are the major airlines flying into the country:

Adria Airways (code JD; ☎ 01-48 10 011; www.adria-airways.com)

Aeroflot (code SU; ☎ 01-48 72 055; www.aeroflot.ru)

Air Canada (code AC; ☎ 01-48 22 033; www.aircanada.ca)

Air France (code AF; ☎ 01-48 37 100; www.airfrance.com)

Alitalia (code AZ; ☎ 01-48 10 413; www.alitalia.it)

Austrian Airlines (code OS; ☎ 062 65 900; www.aa.com)

British Airways (code BA; www.british-airways.com)

Croatia Airlines (code OU; ☎ 01-48 19 633; www.croatiaairlines.hr; Zrinjevac 17, Zagreb) Croatia's national carrier.

ČSA (code OK; ☎ 01-48 73 301; www.csa.cz)

Delta Airlines (code DL; ☎ 01-48 78 760; www.delta.com)

Easyjet (code EZY; www.easyjet.com)

Germanwings (code GWL; www.germanwings.com)

Hapag Lloyd Express (code HLX; www.hlx.com)

KLM-Northwest (code KL; ☎ 01-48 78 601; www.klm.com)

LOT Polish Airlines (code LO; ☎ 01-48 37 500; www.lot.com)

Lufthansa (code LH; www.lufthansa.com; ☎ 01-48 73 121)

Mal'ev Hungarian Airlines (code MA; ☎ 01-48 36 935; www.malev.hu)

SNBrussels (code SN; www.flysn.com)

Turkish Airlines (code TK; ☎ 01-49 21 854; www.turkishairlines.com)

Wizzair (code W6; www.wizzair.com)

There are international airports in **Dubrovnik** (☎ 020-773 377; www.airport-dubrovnik.hr), **Zagreb** (☎ 01-62 65 222; www.zagreb-airport.hr), **Split** (☎ 021-203 506; www.split-airport.hr) and **Rijeka** (☎ 051-842 132; www.rijeka-airport.hr).

Boat

Regular boats from several companies connect Croatia with Italy and Slovenia. Companies and routes arise, change or disappear from season to season; it's important to check information carefully. Many routes operate during summer only and the schedules are usually not available until late spring.

Jadrolinija (www.jadrolinija.hr; Rijeka ☎ 051-211 444; Riva 16, Ancona ☎ 071-20 71 465, Bari ☎ 080-52 75 439), Croatia's national boat line, runs car ferries from Ancona to Split (€44, 10 hours) and Zadar (€41, seven hours), a line from Bari to Dubrovnik (€44, eight hours), a year-round ferry from Pescara to Split (€44, 10 hours, twice weekly) and a summer ferry from Pescara to Hvar (€44, nine hours, once weekly).

SEM (www.sem-marina.hr; Split ☎ 021-338 292; Gat Sv Dujce, Ancona ☎ 071-20 40 90) links Ancona with Zadar and Split, going on to Stari Grad (Hvar).

SNAV (www.snav.com; Ancona ☎ 071-20 76 116; Naples ☎ 081-76 12 348; Split ☎ 021-322 252) has a car ferry that links Split with Pescara (€69, 4½ hours) and Ancona (€63, 4½ hours) and Pescara with Hvar (€80, 3¼ hours). **Sanmar** (www.sanmar.it) does the same route for a similar price.

Venezia Lines (☎ 041-52 22 568; www.venezialines.com; Santa Croce 518/A, Venice 30135) runs passenger boats from Venice to the following destinations once, twice or three times weekly, depending on the destination and the month: Pula (€54, three hours), Opatija (€57, four hours) Rovinj, (€52, 3¼ hours) and Poreč (€52 2½ hours). The company also covers other Istrian destinations and runs some routes from Rimini and Ravenna.

Emilia Romagna Lines (www.emiliaromagnalines.it) is another company that has recently started running summer passenger boats from Italy to the Croatian coast for similar prices. Routes run from Ravenna, Cesenatico, Rimini and Pesaro to Rovinj, Poreč, Pula and Hvar.

Bus

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) runs buses to Zagreb from Vienna (€32, six hours, two daily). There are daily connections from Sarajevo (€22, five hours) and Mostar (€11, three hours) to Dubrovnik; from Medugorje, Mostar and Sarajevo to Split (€15.50, seven hours); and from Sarajevo to Zagreb (€28, eight hours) and Rijeka (€33).

Deutsche Touring GmbH (☎ 069-790 350; www.deutsche-touring.com; Am Romerhof 17, Frankfurt) runs many buses from major German cities to Croatia. Trieste is well connected with the Istrian coast. There are buses to Pula (€14, 3¼ hours, four daily). There are fewer buses on Sunday. To Dalmatia there's a daily bus that leaves at 5.30pm and stops at Split (€35.60, 10½ hours) and Dubrovnik (€64, 15 hours).

There's also a bus from Padua that passes Venice and Trieste, Monday to Saturday, and then goes on to Pula (€24, 3¼ hours). For schedules, see www.saf.ud.it.

There are six daily buses from Zagreb to Belgrade (€19, six hours). The border between Montenegro and Croatia is open to visitors, allowing US, Australian, Canadian and UK citizens to enter visa-free.

There's a daily bus from Dubrovnik to the Montenegrin border at 11am, from where a Montenegro bus takes you to Herceg-Novi (60KN, two hours) and on to Kotor (100KN, 2½ hours) and Bar (130KN, three hours).

Car & Motorcycle

There are numerous border crossings to/from Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Train

There are two daily and two overnight trains between Vienna and Zagreb (€64, 6½ to 13 hours) and three go on to Rijeka (€74, 11½ to 16½ hours). There are four daily trains from Zagreb to Budapest (€33, 5½ to 7½ hours). Between Venice and Zagreb (€44, 6½ to 7½ hours) there are two daily direct connections and several more that run through Ljubljana. There are five daily trains that connect Zagreb

with Belgrade (€18, seven hours). There are up to eleven trains daily between Zagreb and Ljubljana (€13, 2¼ hours) and four between Rijeka and Ljubljana (€12, three hours).

GETTING AROUND Boat

Year-round Jadrolinija car ferries operate along the Bari-Rijeka-Dubrovnik coastal route, stopping at Split and Hvar and Korčula Islands. Services are less frequent in winter. The most scenic section is Split to Dubrovnik, which all Jadrolinija ferries cover during the day. You must buy tickets in advance at an agency or Jadrolinija office, since they are not sold on board.

From Rijeka to Dubrovnik the deck fare costs €25 (there's a 20% reduction on the return portion of a return ticket) in high season local ferries connect the bigger offshore islands with each other and the mainland.

Bus

At large bus stations, tickets must be purchased at the office; book ahead to ensure a seat. Tickets for buses that arrive from somewhere else are usually purchased from the conductor. Buy a one-way ticket only or you'll be locked into one company's schedule for the return.

Car & Motorcycle

Motorists require vehicle registration papers and Green Card insurance (which proves drivers travelling through Europe have insurance that complies with the minimum insurance requirements of the places that they drive through) to enter Croatia. **Hrvatski Autoklub** (HAK; Croatian Auto Club) offers help and advice; contact the nationwide **HAK road assistance** (vučna služba; ☎ 987).

The large car-rental chains represented are Avis, Budget, Europcar and Hertz.

Hitching

Hitching is never entirely safe and we don't recommend it. Hitchhiking in Croatia is undependable. You'll have better luck on the islands, but in the interior cars are small and usually full.

Local Transport

Zagreb has a well-developed tram system, as well as local buses, but in the rest of the country you'll only find buses. On Croatian

islands, buses are frequent between ferry stops and major towns but connections between towns are spotty.

Taxis are available in all cities and towns, but must be called or boarded at a taxi stand. Prices are high (meters start at 25KKN).

Train

Train travel is about 15% cheaper than bus travel and often more comfortable, although slower. Local trains usually have only unreserved 2nd-class seats. Reservations may be required on express trains. 'Executive' trains have only 1st-class seats and are 40% more expensive than local trains.

ZAGREB

☎ 01 / pop 780,000

Too often overlooked by tourists making a beeline for the coast, Zagreb is a fascinating destination on its own, combining the best of Eastern and Western Europe. The sober Austro-Hungarian architecture in the town centre accommodates stylish boutiques, sleek cocktail bars and a smorgasbord of restaurants. The baroque buildings in the upper town are slowly being restored, lending Zagreb's oldest neighbourhood a look that recalls Prague. Stretching out from the train station is a long park with benches for picnicking and trees to nap under. No matter what the weather, there's a wealth of diversions in Zagreb. A proper pub-crawl could take weeks; there's an assortment of museums and galleries to explore, regular concerts for the culturally minded and enough fine shopping to max out a wallet-full of credit cards.

ORIENTATION

The city is divided into Lower Zagreb, where you'll find most shops, restaurants and businesses, and Upper Zagreb, defined by the two hills of Kaptol and Gradec. As you come out of the train station, you'll see a series of parks and pavilions directly in front of you and the twin neo-Gothic towers of the cathedral in the distance. Trg Jelačića, beyond the northern end of the parks, is the main city square.

INFORMATION

Internet Access

Sublink (☎ 48 11 329; Teslina 12; per hr 20KKN;

☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 3-10pm Sun) It was the first here and has a comfortable setup.

Medical Services

KBC Rebro (☎ 23 88 888; Kišpatičeva 12; ☎ 24hr) One kilometre east of the city, it provides emergency aid.

Money

There are ATMs at the bus and train stations and the airport, as well as numerous locations around town.

Atlas (☎ 48 13 933; www.atlas-croatia.com; Zrinjevac 17) The American Express representative in Zagreb.

Post

Main post office (Branimirova 4; ☎ 24hr Mon-Sat, 1pm-midnight Sun) Holds poste restante mail. This post office is also the best place to make long-distance telephone calls and send packages.

Tourist Information

Main tourist office (☎ 48 14 051; www.zagreb-touristinfo.hr; Trg Jelačića 11; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) Distributes city maps and free leaflets. It also sells the Zagreb Card (90KKN), which includes 72 hours of free transport and a 50% discount on museums.

Marko Polo (☎ 48 15 216; Masarykova 24) Handles information and ticketing for Jadrolinija's coastal ferries.

Tourist office annexe (☎ 49 21 645; Zrinjevac 14; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Same services but fewer brochures.

Travel Agencies

Dali Travel (☎ 48 47 472; travelsection@hfhs.hr; Dežmanova 9; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) The travel branch of the Croatian Youth Hostel Association (YHA), it can provide information on Hostelling International (HI) hostels throughout Croatia and make advance bookings. It also sells ISIC (International Student Identity Card) identification for 50KKN.

SIGHTS

Kaptol

The twin neo-Gothic spires of the **Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (☎ 48 14 727; ☎ 7am-7pm), built in 1899, contains elements from the medieval cathedral on its site, destroyed by an earthquake in 1880. Remnants include 13th-century frescoes, Renaissance pews, marble altars and a baroque pulpit. The baroque **Archiepiscopal Palace** surrounds the cathedral, as do 16th-century **fortifications** constructed when Zagreb was threatened by the Turks.

Gradec

From Radićeva 5, off Trg Jelačića, a pedestrian walkway called stube Ivana Zakmardija

leads you to the **Lotrščak Tower** (☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Sat) and a **funicular railway** (3KN), which was constructed in 1888, and connects the lower and upper towns. To the right is the baroque **St Catherine's Church**, with Jezuitski trg beyond. The **Galerija Klovičevi Dvori** (☎ 48 51 926; Jezuitski trg 4; adult/student 20/10KKN; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun) is Zagreb's premier exhibition hall. Further north and to the right is the 13th-century **Stone Gate**, with a painting of the Virgin.

The colourful painted-tile roof of the Gothic **St Mark's Church** (☎ 48 51 611; Markovićevo trg; ☎ 11am-4pm & 5.30-7pm) marks the centre of Gradec. Inside are works by Ivan Meštrović, Croatia's most famous modern sculptor. On the eastern side of St Mark's is the **Sabor** (1908), Croatia's National Assembly. To the west of St Mark's is the 18th-century **Banski Dvori Palace**, the presidential palace.

Nearby is the former **Meštrović Studio** (☎ 48 51 123; Mletačka 8; adult/concession 20/10KKN; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun), which now presents an excellent collection of some 100 sculptures, drawings, lithographs and furniture created by the artist. Of the area's many museums, the most interesting is the **Museum of the City of Zagreb** (☎ 48 51 364; Opatička 20; adult/concession 20/10KKN; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun), with a scale model of old Gradec.

Lower Town

Zagreb really is a city of museums. There are four just in the parks between the train station and Trg Jelačića. The yellow **Arts Pavilion** (1897), across the park from the station, presents changing contemporary art exhibitions. The second building north, also in the park, houses the **Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters** (☎ 48 95 115; adult/concession 10/5KKN; ☎ 10am-1pm & 5-7pm Tue, 10am-1pm Wed-Sun), with paintings by great European painters from the 14th to the 17th century. In the interior courtyard is the

GETTING INTO TOWN

The bus station is 1km east of the train station. Trams 2 and 6 run from the bus station to the nearby train station, with tram 6 continuing to Trg Jelačića. To walk to Trg Jelačića from the train station, head north for roughly 1km on the left side of the park. The airport is 17km southeast of town; take the Croatia Airlines bus (30KKN) to the bus station.

Baška Slab (1102), from the island of Krk, and one of the oldest inscriptions in the Croatian language.

The **Arheološki Muzej** (Archaeological Museum; ☎ 48 73 101; Zrinjevac 19; adult/concession 20/10KKN; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun) has a fascinating and wide-ranging display of artefacts from pre-historic times through to the medieval era. Behind the museum is a garden of Roman sculpture.

The **Museum Mimara** (☎ 48 28 100; Rooseveltov trg 5; adult/concession 20/15KKN; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am-7pm Thu, 10am-2pm Sun) houses a diverse collection amassed by Ante Topić Mimara and donated to Croatia. Housed in a neo-Renaissance palace, the collection includes icons, glassware, sculpture, Oriental art and works by renowned painters such as Rembrandt, Velasquez, Raphael and Degas.

SLEEPING

Zagreb is a pricey city to stay in but there are a few good hostel options. Private accommodation is a good bet, but you may find yourself south of the train station in the blandly modern Novi Zagreb section as there are limited rooms available in the town centre.

Hostels

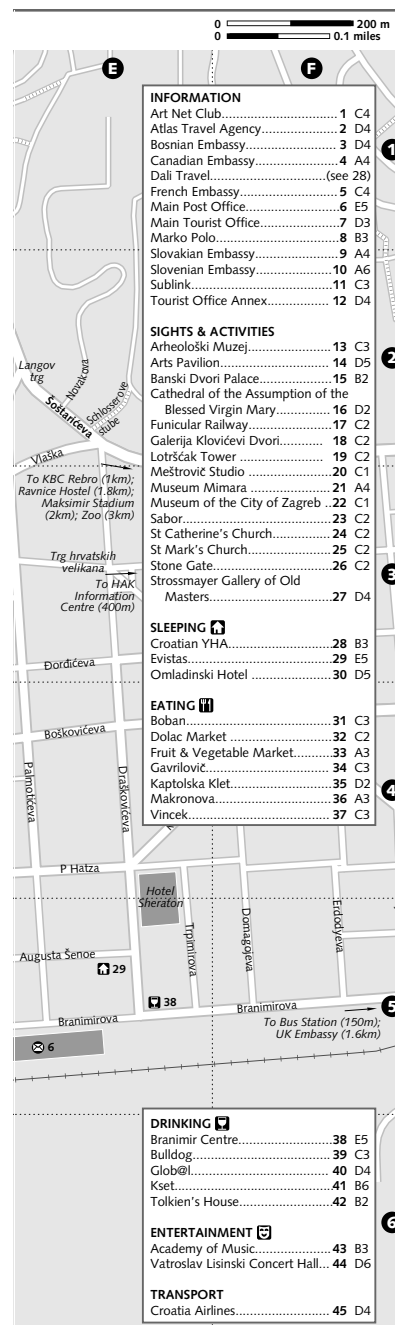
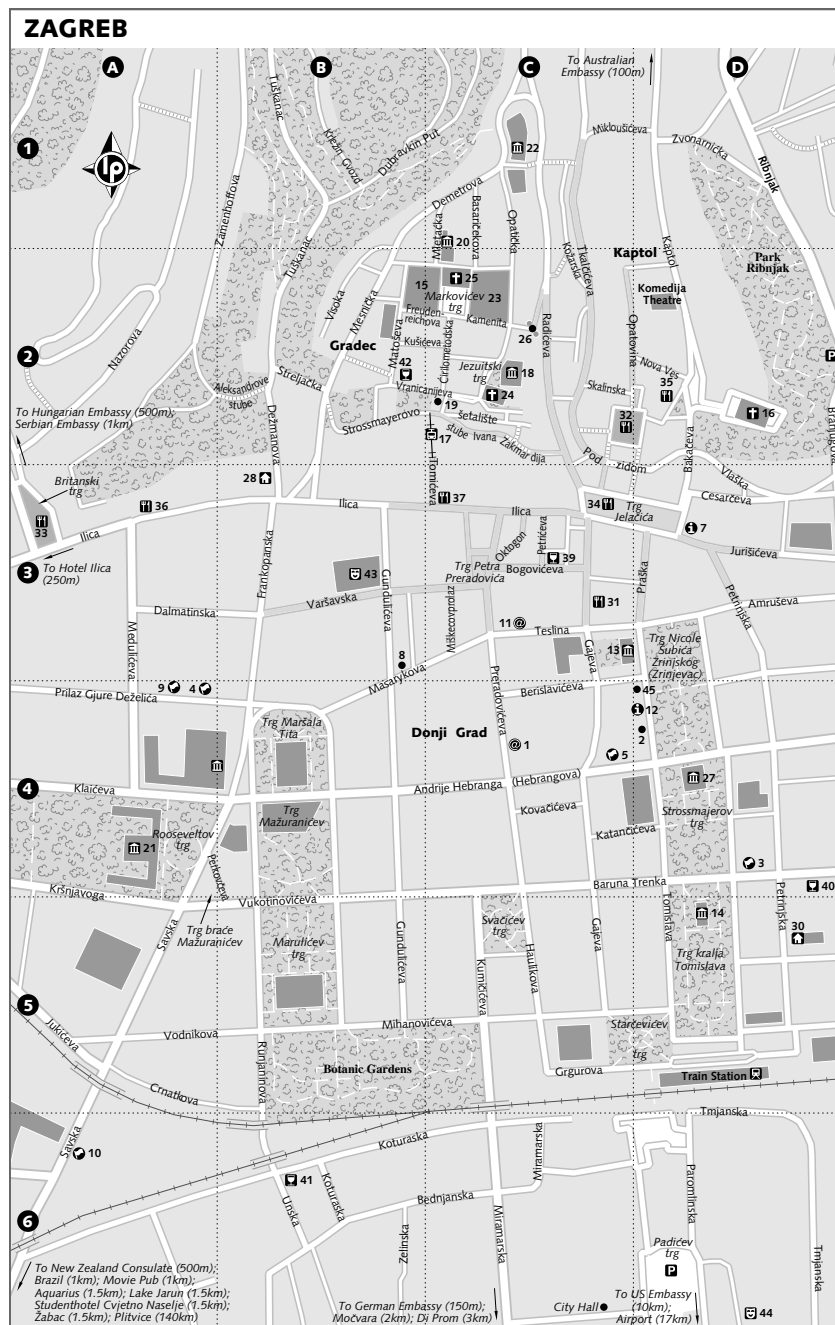
Ravnice Hostel (☎ 23 32 325; www.ravnice-youth-hostel.hr; Ravnice 38D; dm 125KKN; trams 4, 7, 11 & 12; ☎) Designed and run by an Australian woman, this really is a delightful option. Comfortable, clean rooms have two, four or 10 beds. It's just under 2km from the city centre.

Studenthotel Cvjetno Naselje (☎ 61 91 239; dm 125KKN; ☎ mid-Jul-Aug; trams 4, 14 & 17) Off Slavenska avenija in the south of the city, this dormitory-style accommodation has good rooms (each with a bathroom) that are available only in July and August. Get off the tram at the 'Vjesnik' stop.

Omladinski Hotel (☎ 48 41 261; zagreb@hfhs.hr; Petrinjska 77; 6-/3-bed dm 89/100KKN, d 257.50KKN) Although renovated in 2004, it's still no great shakes. At least it's in the centre of town.

Private Rooms

Doubles cost from about 250 to 280KKN and apartments start at 380KKN per night for a studio. There's usually a surcharge for staying only one night. **Evistas** (☎ 48 39 554; fax 48 39 543; evistas@zg.t-com.hr; Augusta Šenoje 28; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 3-8pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat) is closest to the train station. **Di Prom** (☎ 65 50 039; fax 65 50 233; Trmsko 25a;



(closed Sun) is south of the town centre with rooms in Novi Zagreb.

Hotels

Krovovi Grada (☎ 48 14 189; Opatovina 33; s/d/tr/q 200/300/450/600KN) If you yearn to stay in Zagreb's Upper Town, here's your chance. The restored older house is set back from the street and sleeps eight in two large apartments with shared bath.

Hotel Ilica (☎ 37 77 522; www.hotel-ilica.hr; Ilica 102; s/d/tw/apt 349/449/549/749KN; trams 6, 11 & 12; ♿ ♿) For small hotels, you can't do better than this stylish joint with comfortable rooms and friendly service.

EATING

What you've spent on lodging, you can save on meals; even the pricier places offer filling pasta or risotto starters for 35KN to 50KN.

Boban (☎ 48 11 549; Gajeva 9; mains 35-80KN) This Italian restaurant-bar-café offers sophisticated food at good prices. It has an outdoor terrace and an indoor lounge and terrace that is popular with Zagreb yuppies. Try the gnocchi made with squid ink and topped with salmon sauce.

Kaptolska Klet (☎ 48 14 838; Kaptol 5; mains 55-70KN) This inviting space is comfortable for everyone from solo diners to groups of noisy backpackers. Although famous for its meaty Zagreb specialties, it also turns out a nice platter of grilled vegetables and a vegetable loaf.

Makronova (☎ 48 47 115; Ilica 72; mains around 70KN; ♿ closed Sun) All very Zen and purely macrobiotic, and more than welcome for those of the vegetarian persuasion.

For dessert, slurp it up at **Vincek** (☎ 45 50 834; Ilica 18), famous for its ice cream. Pick up yummy fresh produce at the **fruit and vegetable market** (Britanski trg; ♿ 7am-3pm), **Dolac Market** (♿ 7am-2pm) and **Gavrilović** (♿ closed Sun), near Dolac Market, has cheese, smoked meat and cold cuts.

DRINKING

In the Upper Town, there's the chic Tkalčićeva with a bevy of bars. In the lower town, there's bar-lined Bogovičeva, just south of Trg Jelačića, which turns into prime meet-and-greet territory each evening. Branimir Centre is a shopping and entertainment complex that has a handful of shadowy bars with soft lighting, sleek furnishings and electronic music. The places listed below open around noon for café society and turn into bars at dinnertime.

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Bulldog (☎ 48 17 393; Bogovičeva 6) Belgian beer loosens up a crowd of young execs, sales reps, gophers and expats.

Tolkien's House (☎ 48 51 776; Vranicanijeva 8) This place is decorated in the style of JRR Tolkien's books. It's very Frodo.

Glob@l (☎ 48 76 146; Hatza 14) Gays and lesbians are more than welcome to take in the friendly, tolerant vibes at this café-bar.

Žabac (☎ 36 95 792; Jarunska ulica bb) Don't take your Mum here. The booze is cheap, the scene is rowdy and you're only steps away from Aquarius (below).

Movie Pub (☎ 605 50 045; Savska 141) This immensely popular pub has posters of movie stars on the wall staring with bemusement as their fans sample 30 varieties of beer.

CLUBBING

The dress code is relaxed in most Zagreb clubs but neatness counts. The cover charge is usually around 30KN.

Aquarius (☎ 36 40 231; Ljubeka bb; tram 17) On Lake Jarun, this is the night temple of choice for Zagrebians of all ages and styles. The design cleverly includes an open-air terrace on the lake and the sound is usually house. Take the tram to the 'Jarun' stop.

Moèvara (☎ 605 55 99; Trnjanski nasip bb) Housed in a former factory, this alternative space is where to catch up with the latest Croatian groups, from reggae to electronica.

Kset (☎ 61 29 999; Unska 3; ☎ 8pm-midnight, 8pm-3am Sat) It's now practically certified as Zagreb's coolest club, running programmes that range from cutting-edge jazz to the city's slickest DJs.

ENTERTAINMENT

Zagreb Events & Performances is available from the tourist office and contains complete listings of concerts and events.

Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall (ticket office ☎ 61 21 166; Trg Stjepana Radice 4; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) South of the train station, this prestigious venue holds regular symphony concerts.

Concerts also take place at the **Academy of Music** (☎ 48 30 822; Gunduličeva 6a), off Ilica.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Croatia Airlines (☎ 48 19 633; www.croatiaairlines.hr; Zrinjevac 17) operates flights between Zagreb and Split (475KN, one hour, up to four daily).

Domestic buses depart from Zagreb **bus station** (☎ 61 57 983; www.akz.hr, in Croatian), to most

major destinations in Croatia, including Dubrovnik (170KN to 196KN, 11 hours, seven daily), Korčula (195KN, 12 hours, daily), Pula (125KN to 183KN, four to six hours, 13 daily) and Split (90KN to 143KN, five to nine hours, 27 daily).

Domestic trains depart from Zagreb to Pula (119KN, 5½ hours, two daily) and Split (152KN to 143KN, six to nine hours, 27 daily). Reservations are required on fast InterCity (IC) trains and there's a supplement that costs 5KN to 15KN for fast or express trains.

GETTING AROUND

A *dnevna karta* (day ticket), valid on all public transport until 4am the next morning, is available for 18KN at most Vjesnik or Tisak news kiosks.

Buy tram tickets at newspaper kiosks for 6.50KN or from the driver for 8KN. You can use your ticket for transfers within 90 minutes, but only in one direction.

Zagreb's taxi meters begin at 19KN and then ring up 7KN per kilometre. All day Sunday and other nights from 10pm to 5am there's a 20% surcharge.

ISTRIA (ISTRA)

Sometimes called the 'new Tuscany', Istria (Istra to Croatians) is the heart-shaped 3600-sq-km peninsula just south of Trieste, Italy, with a landscape of green rolling hills, drowned valleys and fertile plains. The rugged and indented coastline is enormously popular with Italian tourists, comfortable with the excellent pasta and seafood on the menus and the fact that Italian is a second language for most Istrians. Pula with its Roman ruins makes a good base from which to explore the fishing ports of Rovinj and Poreč.

PULA

☎ 052 / pop 58,600

Pula's star attraction is its Roman amphitheatre, but there's also a wealth of other Roman ruins to explore. Nearby are some rocky wooded peninsulas overlooking the clear Adriatic waters, which explain the many resort hotels and camping grounds circling the city. Most residents head out to Verudela Peninsula for the nightlife and swimming coves, but stay in town for one of the many events at the amphitheatre.

Orientation

If arriving by bus or train, you can easily walk to the town centre. The train station is near the water about 1km north of town. From the train station, follow the waterfront south for about 20 minutes to reach the Forum (where the tourist office is). The bus station is 500m northeast of the town centre; walk west about 10 minutes and turn left at Trg Na Mostu.

Information

You can exchange money in travel agencies or at any post office. There are many ATMs.

Atlas (☎ 393 040; atlas.pula@atlas.hr; Starih Statuta 1) Finds private accommodation and organises tours.

Enigma (☎ 381 615; Kandlerova 19; per hr 20KN) Internet access.

Jadroagent (☎ 210 431; jadroagent-pula@pu.t-com.hr; Riva 14) Has schedules and tickets for boats connecting Istria with Italy.

Main post office (Danteov trg 4; ☎ to 8pm) Make long-distance calls from here.

Maremonti travel agency (☎ 384 000; bus station; www.maremonti-istra.hr) Changes money, finds accommodation, rents cars.

Tourist office (☎ 219 197; www.pulainfo.hr; Forum 2; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) With knowledgeable and friendly staff, it provides maps, brochures and schedules of upcoming events in Pula and around Istria.

Sights

Pula's most imposing sight is the 1st-century **Roman amphitheatre** (☎ 219 028; Flavijevska; adult/concession 20/10KN; ☎ 8am-9pm May-Sep, 8.30am-4.30pm Oct-Apr), overlooking the harbour and northeast of the Old Town. Built entirely from local limestone, the amphitheatre was designed to host gladiatorial contests and could accommodate up to 20,000 spectators. The 30m-high outer wall is almost intact and contains two rows of 72 arches.

The **Arheološki Muzej** (Archaeological Museum; ☎ 218 603; Cararina 3; adult/concession 12/6KN; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun May-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr), which presents archaeological finds from all over Istria, especially from the 2nd to 6th century AD, is on the hill opposite the bus station.

Even if you don't get into the museum, be sure to visit the large **sculpture garden** surrounding it and the **Roman theatre** behind the museum. The garden is entered through 2nd-century twin gates.

Along the street facing the bus station are **Roman walls** that mark the eastern boundary

of old Pula. Follow these walls south and continue down Giardini to the **Triumphal Arch of Sergius** (27 BC). The street beyond the arch winds right around old Pula, changing names several times. Follow it to the ancient **Temple of Augustus** and the **old town hall** (1296).

The 17th-century **Venetian Citadel**, on a high hill in the centre of the Old Town, is worth the climb for the view.

Festivals & Events

Around the end of July a **Croatian film festival** is held in the amphitheatre, and there are pop, jazz and classical events, often with major international stars, throughout summer. Ask at the tourist office for the schedule and ticketing information.

Sleeping

Maremonti and Atlas will find private accommodation (see left), but there is little available in the town centre. Count on paying from 110KN for a double room and up to 430KN for an apartment. Most hotel accommodation is outside town in the sprawling resorts on the Verudela Peninsula, which is about 6km southwest of the city centre.

Autocamp Stoja (☎ 387 144; fax 387 748; per person/camp site & car 50/105KN; ☎ Apr-Oct) Three kilometres southwest of the city centre, Autocamp Stoja is on a shady promontory, with swimming possible off the rocks. There are more camping grounds at Medulin and Premantura, which are coastal resorts southeast of Pula (take the buses heading southeast from town).

Youth Hostel (☎ 391 133; pula@hfhhs.hr; camp sites 72KN, B&B/half-board 118/154KN) Only 3km south of central Pula, this hostel overlooks a beach and is near one of the region's largest discos. Take the Verudela bus 2 or 7 to the 'Piramida' stop, walk back to the first street, then turn left and look for the sign.

Hotel Omir (☎ 210 614; fax 213 944; Dobričeva 6; s/d 450/650KN) Rooms are small but comfortable in this family-owned hotel and it's well located in the town centre.

Eating

The best local restaurants are out of town, but the cheapest places are in the centre and the eating isn't bad. You'll have a number of choices along Kandlerova.

Jupiter (☎ 214 333; Gastropola 38; mains from 28KN) This popular place serves up the best pizza in town and the pasta is good too.

Splendid Self-Service (☎ 223 284; Trg I Svibnja 5; ☎ 9.30am-8.45pm) It's opposite the vegetable market and is simple and cheap.

Drinking & Clubbing

The streets of Flanatička, Kandlerova and Sergijevaca are excellent people-watching spots, and the Forum has several outdoor cafés that fill up in the early evening; the trendiest is café-gallery **Cvajner**, with a stunning, art-filled interior.

There's no shortage of nightlife at any time of the year. Pula is famous for its raves, usually held at two venues in Verudela, Oasis and Fort Bourguignon. Keep an eye out for posters and flyers around town.

Entertainment

The amphitheatre hosts a full schedule of concerts in summer.

Getting There & Away

Buses from Pula run frequently from the **bus station** (☎ 502 997; Istarske Brigade bb) down the coast, including to Split (315KN, 10 hours, one daily) and Dubrovnik (454KN, 15 hours, one daily) plus the buses to Zagreb (152KN to 183KN, five hours, five daily).

There are two daily trains to Ljubljana (125KN, four hours) and two to Zagreb (134KN, 6½ hours), but you must board a bus for part of the trip.

Getting Around

The only city buses of use to visitors are bus 1, which runs to the camping ground at Stoja, and buses 2 and 7 to Verudela, which pass the youth hostel. Frequency varies from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes, with services from 5am to 11.30pm daily. Tickets are sold at newsstands for 10KN and are good for two trips.

DALMATIA (DALMACIJA)

Occupying the central 375km of Croatia's Adriatic coast, Dalmatia offers a matchless combination of hedonism and historical discovery. The jagged coast is speckled with lush offshore islands that are making Dalmatia one of the world's hottest tourist destinations. Roman ruins, spectacular beaches, old fishing ports, medieval architecture and historic cities make a trip to Dalmatia unforgettable.

SPLIT (SPALATO)

☎ 021 / pop 188,700

As the largest Croatian city on the Adriatic coast and a major transport hub, Split (Spalato in Italian) is more exciting than relaxing. With a massive port sending ferries out to the Dalmatian islands and beyond, Split is a nearly obligatory stop on a Dalmatian visit. Although ringed with apartment-block housing of stupefying ugliness, the remarkable Diocletian's Palace (a World Heritage site) makes a visit to the city more than worthwhile. As the sun goes down, all of Split turns out for a promenade along the harbour or a seat at one of the harbour-side cafés.

Orientation

The bus, train and ferry terminals are adjacent on the eastern side of the harbour, a short hop from the Old Town. Obala hrvatskog narodnog preporoda, the waterfront promenade, is your best reference point.

Information

DISCOUNT CARDS

Split Card (60KN) Available from Turistička Zajednica and Turist Biro, this card offers free and discounted admissions to Split attractions.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet Games & Books (☎ 338 548; Obala Kneza Domagoja 3; per hr 35KN) Luggage storage, information for backpackers, used books and an internet connection, near the ferries, bus and train station.

Mriža (☎ 321 320; Kružičeva 3; per hr 20KN) Internet access.

LAUNDRY

Laundry (Šperun 1) Self-service.

MONEY

Change money at travel agencies or the post office. ATM machines are around the bus and train stations.

Atlas (☎ 343 055; Trg Braće Radića 6) The American Express representative.

POST

Main post office (Kralja Tomislava 9; ☎ telephone centre 7am-9pm Mon-Sat) Has a telephone centre.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Hostelling International (HI; ☎ 321 614; Domilijina 8) Sells HI cards and is a good source of information about Croatian hostels.

Turist Biro (☎ 342 142; turist-biro-split@st.t-com.hr; Obala hrvatskog narodnog preporoda 12) Arranges private accommodation, and sells guidebooks and the Split Card.

Turistička Zajednica (☎ /fax 345 606; www.visitsplit.com; Peristyle; ☎ 9am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm Sun) Has informational materials on Split and sells the Split Card.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Daluma Travel (☎ 338 484; www.daluma.hr; Obala Kneza Domagoja 1) Near the ferries, this agency finds private accommodation.

Sights

The Old Town of Split is a vast open-air museum. Dating from the third century AD, **Diocletian's Palace** (entry Obala hrvatskog narodnog preporoda 22; admission free) is one of the most imposing Roman ruins in existence. Facing the harbour, the palace was built as a strong rectangular fortress, with walls measuring 215m from east to west and 181m wide at the southernmost point. It is also reinforced by towers. The imperial residence, temples and mausoleum were south of the main street, connecting the east and west gates. Its main features include the **Peristyle**, a picturesque colonnaded square; the open-area **Temple of Jupiter**, now a baptistry; and the **cathedral** (☎ 7am-noon & 4-7pm), originally Diocletian's mausoleum.

The west palace gate opens onto medieval Narodni trg, which is dominated by the 15th-century Venetian Gothic **old town hall**. Trg Braće Radića, between Narodni trg and the harbour, contains the surviving north tower of the 15th-century Venetian garrison castle, which once extended right to the water's edge. The east palace gate leads into the **market** area.

In the Middle Ages, the nobility and rich merchants built residences within the old palace walls; the **Papalic Palace** (Papalićeva 5) is now the town museum. Go through the north palace gate to see Ivan Meštrović's powerful **statue** (1929) of 10th-century Slavic religious leader Gregorius of Nin.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

The **town museum** (☎ 344 917; Papalićeva 5; adult/concession 10/5KN; ☎ 9am-9pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun Oct-May), east of Narodni trg, has a broad and well-displayed collection of artefacts, paintings,

furniture and clothes from Split. Captions are in Croatian.

The **Arheološki Muzej** (Archaeological Museum; Zrinjsko-Frankopanska 25; adult/concession 10/5KN; ☎ 9am-2pm Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun), north of town, is a fascinating supplement to your walk around Diocletian's Palace. The history of Split is traced from Illyrian times to the Middle Ages in chronological order, with explanations in English.

The finest art museum in Split is the **Meštrović Gallery** (Šetaliste Ivana Meštrovića 46; adult/student 15/10KN; ☎ 9am-9pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-4pm Tue-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun Oct-May). Here you'll see a comprehensive, well-arranged collection of works by Ivan Meštrović, Croatia's premier modern sculptor, who built the gallery as his home from 1931 to 1939. To get here take bus 12 to the gallery, one kilometre west of the town centre, from Trg Republike every 40 minutes.

Sleeping & Eating

Private accommodation is the best bet for budget travellers, as hotels in Split are geared towards business travellers with deep pockets. You could go to Daluma Travel (left), but there are usually packs of women at the bus, train and ferry terminals ready to propose rooms to travellers. Prices rarely exceed 140KN for a room but you'll be sharing the bathroom with the proprietor.

Hostel Split (☎ 098-987-13-12; www.hostel-split.com; Vukasovičeva 21; dm 117KN; ☎) Only a short walk from Diocletian's Palace, this friendly, family-run hostel is in an appealing stone building. Check-in is between 2pm and 8pm.

Hotel Bellevue (☎ 347 499; www.hotel-bellevue-split.hr; bana Josipa Jelačića 2; s/d 490/670KN) The Bellevue is an old classic that has seen better days. Rooms on the street side can be noisy but the location is good and the somewhat faded rooms retain a certain charm.

Bufet Fife (Obala Trumbičeva 11; mains from 30KN) Feast on Dalmatian home cooking side by side with the local fishermen.

Makrovega (Plinarska 12; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) Finally veggies and vegans have a place to call their own, at least for lunches and early dinners.

The enormous **supermarket-delicatessen** (Svačićeva 1) has a good selection of meats and cheeses for sandwiches. The market above Obala Lazerata has an array of fresh local produce.

Drinking

The bars, cafés and restaurants of the Bačvice complex are perennially popular food and watering holes for Split clubbers but there are also a few spots in the town centre. Try **Teak Caffé** (Majstora Jurja 11) for a drink on the terrace during the day or more intense socialising at night. Le Porta, next door, is renowned for its cocktails. Café Song and **Café Shook** (Mihovilova Širina) are shoulder-to-shoulder with young Split-sters at night.

Entertainment

Croatian National Theatre (☎ 515 999; Trg Gaje Bulata; best seats about 60KN) It's worth attending an opera or ballet performance here for the architecture alone.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Split airport (☎ 021-203 506; www.spli-airport.hr) is used by **Croatia Airlines** (Obala hrvatskog narodnog preporoda 9) for daily flights to Zagreb (around 400KN, 45 minutes, daily).

The bus to Split airport (30KN) leaves from Obala Lazareta 3 about 90 minutes before flight times, or you can take bus 37 from the bus station on Domovinskog (11KN for a two-zone ticket).

BOAT

Jadrolinija (☎ 355 399), located in the large ferry terminal opposite the bus station, handles the ferry lines to Hvar Island. The local car ferry is cheaper (32KN, 1½ hours) than the coastal line and there's a fast passenger boat to Hvar town (one hour) in July and August, as well as a passenger boat (24KN, two hours) that goes on to Vela Luka (35KN, 1¼ hours).

SEM (☎ 338 292) runs a catamaran between Vis and Split (26KN, 1½ hours, July and August).

For passenger ferries, buy tickets at the **Jadrolinija kiosk** (Obala Domagoja), near the train station.

Jadroagent (☎ 338 335), in the ferry terminal, represents Tirenna Navigazione for connections between Split and Ancona. There's also a SEM agency in the terminal selling tickets between Ancona and Split, Hvar Island and Vis, as well as **SNAV** (☎ 322 252), which has a connection to Ancona and Pescara (four hours). For information on connections to Italy, see p250.

BUS

Advance bus tickets are recommended. There are buses from the main bus station beside the harbour to Dubrovnik (118KN to 123KN, 4½ hours, 12 daily), Mostar 65KN to 95KN, three hours, four daily), and Zagreb (90KN to 140KN, five to nine hours, 27 daily).

TRAIN

There are services between Split and Zagreb (see p251) via Šibenik.

HVAR ISLAND

☎ 021 / pop 12,600

Beautiful Hvar Island is now a required stop for restless international trendspotters always alert to the latest island paradise. Hvar deserves the honour, for it is the sunniest and greenest of the Croatian islands. Called the 'Croatian Madeira', Hvar receives 2724 hours of sunshine each year. The stunning interior is a panorama of lavender fields, peaceful villages and pine-covered slopes.

Hvar Town

Within the 13th-century walls of medieval Hvar lie beautifully ornamented Gothic palaces and marble-paved traffic-free streets. A long seaside promenade, dotted with small, rocky beaches, stretches from either end of the harbour. Along the promenade there's a handful of bars and cafés that form the centre of Hvar's busy nightlife scene.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Car ferries from Split deposit you in Stari Grad but local buses meet most ferries in summer for the trip to Hvar Town. The town centre is Trg Sv Stjepana, 100m west of the bus station. Passenger ferries tie up on Riva, the eastern quay, in front of Pelegrini Travel.

Pelegrini Travel (☎ 742 250; www.pelegrini-hvar.hr) Finds private accommodation.

Tourist office (☎ 742 977; www.tzhvar.hr; cnr Trg Sv Stjepana; ☎ 8am-1pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-2pm Mon-Sat Oct-May) In the arsenal building.

SIGHTS

The flavour of medieval Hvar is best savoured on the backstreets of the Old Town. At each end of Hvar is a monastery with a prominent tower. The Dominican **Church of St Marko** at the head of the bay was largely

destroyed by Turks in the 16th century, but you can visit the **Arheološki Muzej** (Archaeological Museum; admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-noon & 8-11pm Jun-Sep) in the ruins.

At the southeastern end of Hvar, the interesting 15th-century Renaissance **Franciscan monastery** (☎ 10am-noon & 5-7pm Jun-Sep, plus Christmas week & Holy Week) has a collection of Venetian paintings in the church, and a **museum** (admission 15KN; ☎ 9am-noon & 5-7pm Jun-Sep).

In the middle of Hvar is the imposing Gothic **arsenal**, its great arch visible from afar. Upstairs off the arsenal terrace is Hvar's prize, Europe's first **municipal theatre** (admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-noon & 5-7pm Jun-Sep), built in 1612. On the hill high above Hvar Town is a **Venetian fortress** (1551), well worth the climb for panoramic views.

For more activity, hop on a launch to the **Pakleni Islands**, famous for nude sunbathing.

SLEEPING

Hotels in Hvar are expensive but Pelegrini Travel (see opposite) can find you a room for 180KN to 300KN in the town centre. If you show up in July and August without a reservation, you will almost certainly wind up far from town, perhaps even in an outlying village.

Jagoda & Ante Bracanović Guesthouse (☎ 741 416, 091 520 3796; virgilye@yahoo.com; Poviše Škole; s 100-120KN, d 190-220KN) This friendly place is close to the town centre and offers six spacious rooms with private bathrooms, balconies and kitchen access.

Green Lizard Hostel (☎ 742 560; www.greenlizard.hr; Lučića bb; dm 110KN; ☎ Apr-Nov) This privately run hostel fills an important gap for budget travellers to Hvar. Rooms are immaculate, there's a communal kitchen, and there are a few doubles available with private and shared facilities.

EATING

The pizzerias along the harbour offer predictable but inexpensive eating.

Bounty (☎ 742 565; fixed-price menu from 55KN) This relatively inexpensive place is a long-time favourite with locals and visitors. **Konoba Menego** (☎ 742 036; mains around 80KN) On the stairway over the Benedictine convent, this is also a good choice.

The **grocery store** (Trg Sv Stjepana) is a viable restaurant alternative, and there's a morning market next to the bus station.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Jadrolinija ferries between Rijeka and Dubrovnik stop in Stari Grad before continuing to Korčula. The **Jadrolinija agency** (☎ 741 132; Riva) sells boat tickets.

Car ferries from Split call at Stari Grad (32KN, one hour) three times daily (five daily in July and August) and there's an afternoon passenger boat from Split to Hvar town (23KN, 50 minutes) that goes on to Vela Luka on Korčula Island (22KN, one hour). Even more convenient is the daily passenger boat 'Kriilo' from Hvar to Split (33KN, 1¼ hour) and Korčula (33KN, 1½ hours). See p250 for information on international connections. Buses meet most ferries that dock at Stari Grad in July and August, but if you come off-season it's best to check at the tourist office or at Pelegrini to make sure the bus is running. A taxi costs from 150KN to 200KN.

KORČULA ISLAND

☎ 020 / pop 16,200

Besides the dense woods that led the original Greek settlers to call the island Korkyra Melaina (Black Korčula), Korčula is graced with indented coves, rolling hills and a walled old town. Swimming opportunities abound in the many quiet coves and secluded beaches, while the interior produces some of Croatia's finest wine.

Korčula Town

At the northeastern tip of the island, Korčula town is tucked into a small hilly peninsula. Within its round defensive towers are red-roofed houses along narrow stone streets designed to protect its inhabitants from the winds swirling around the peninsula. Korčula Island was controlled by Venice from the 14th to the 18th centuries, as is evident from the Venetian coats of arms adorning the official buildings.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The Jadrolinija ferry drops you off either in the west harbour next to Hotel Korčula or the east harbour next to Marko Polo Tours. The Old Town lies between the two harbours. Some car ferries land at Vela Luka on Korčula's western end and most are met by buses. The town bus station is 100m south of the town centre.

Atlas (☎ 711 060) Represents American Express, runs excursions and finds private accommodation.

Jadrolinija office (☎ 715 410) About 25m up from the west harbour.

Marko Polo Tours (☎ 715 400; marko-polo-tours@du.t-com.hr) On the east harbour. Finds private accommodation from 200KN and organises excursions.

Tino's Internet (☎ 091 509 11 82; Ul Tri Solara; per hr 25KN) Tino's other outlet is at the ACI Marina; both are open long hours.

Tourist office (☎ 715 701; www.korcula.net; Obala Franje Tudmana bb; ☎ 8am-3pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-1pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat Oct-May) On the west harbour. An excellent source of information.

SIGHTS

Other than following the circuit of the former city walls or walking along the shore, sightseeing in Korčula centres on Cathedral Square. The Gothic **Cathedral of St Mark** features two paintings by the Italian Renaissance master Jacopo Tintoretto (*Three Saints* on the altar and *Annunciation* to one side). The **treasury** (☎ 711 049; Trg Sv Marka Statuta; admission 10KN; ☎ 9am-7pm Jun-Aug), in the 14th-century Abbey Palace next to the cathedral, is worth a look. Even better is the **town museum** (☎ 711 420; Trg Sv Marka Statuta; admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-1pm Nov-Mar, 10am-2pm Apr-May, 10am-2pm & 7-9pm Jun & Oct, 10am-9pm Jul-Aug), in the 15th-century Gabriellis Palace opposite. It's said that Marco Polo was born in Korčula in 1254; for 10KN, you can climb the tower of what is believed to have been his house.

SLEEPING

The big hotels in Korčula are overpriced, but there is a privately run hostel and a wealth of guesthouses that offer clean, attractive rooms and friendly service. Atlas and Marko Polo Tours arrange private rooms (see p261). Alternatively, you could try one of the following options.

One Love Hostel (☎ 716 755; www.korculabackpacker.com; Hrvatske bratske zajednice 6; dm 100KN) No lock-out, no curfew, just parties and fun at this conveniently located hostel near the bus station. The vibe is great but don't expect to get much sleep.

Other guesthouses nearby for about the same price include **Peručić** (☎ /fax 711 458), with great balconies, and the homely **Ojđanić** (☎ 711 708; roko-taxi@du.hinet.hr). Guesthouse owner Ratko Ojđanić also has a water taxi and a lot of experience with fishing trips around the island.

Autocamp Kalac (☎ 711 182; fax 711 146; camp sites per person/per tent & car 45/68KN) This attractive

camping ground is behind Hotel Bon Repos in a dense pine grove near the beach.

EATING

Buffet-Pizzeria Doris (☎ 711 596; Ul Tri Solara; mains from 35KN) Simple but tasty dishes are served up indoors or outdoors on a shaded terrace. The grilled vegetable platter is a welcome vegetarian treat.

Gradski Podrum (mains from 65KN) It serves up local specialities, such as Korčula-style fish boiled with potatoes and topped with tomato sauce.

There's a supermarket next to Marko Polo Tours.

ENTERTAINMENT

From May to September there's exciting **moreška sword dancing** (tickets 80KN) by the Old Town gate every Thursday at 9pm, more often in July and August. Atlas and Marko Polo Tours (see p261) sell tickets.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

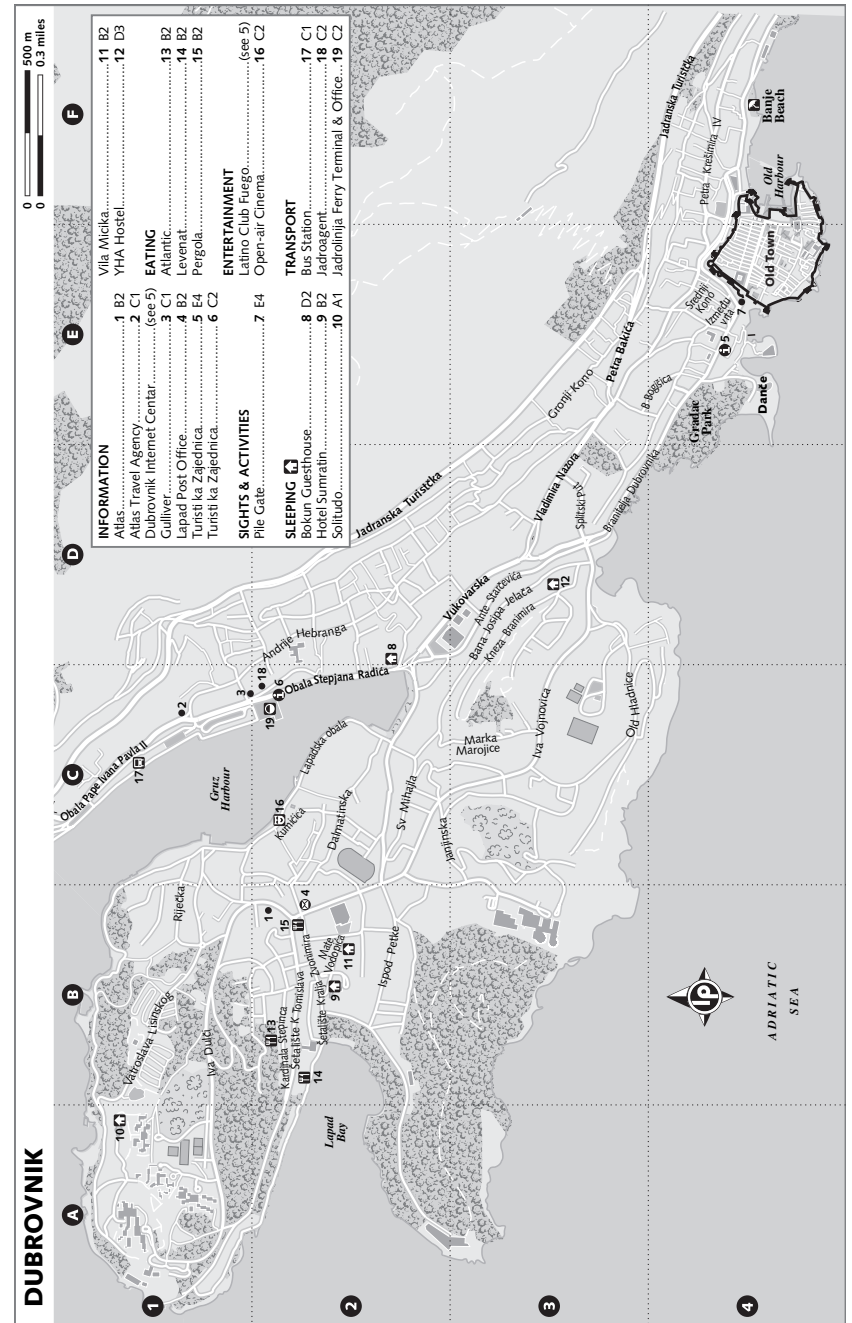
There's one bus every day from Dubrovnik (87KN, three hours), one from Zagreb (195KN, 12 hours), and one a week from Sarajevo (152KN, eight hours). The regular afternoon car-ferry that goes between Split and Vela Luka (35KN, three hours) stops at Hvar Island (Hvar to Vela Luka 23KN, 45 minutes) most days. Buses link Korčula Town to Vela Luka (28KN, one hour, six daily), but services from Vela Luka are reduced on weekends.

DUBROVNIK

☎ 020 / pop 43,770

Lord Byron was not overstating the case when he proclaimed Dubrovnik to be 'the pearl of the Adriatic'. It is clear that Dubrovnik is special. A magnificent curtain of walls surrounds marble streets and baroque buildings that exude a pearly light in the Adriatic sun. The main pedestrian thoroughfare, Placa, is a melange of cafés and shops with outstanding monuments at either end. The steep, stepped streets leading off Placa, harbour a diverse range of bars, cafés and restaurants.

Beyond the city lies a heavenly landscape of beaches, wooded peninsulas and a sea literally strewn with lush islands.



Orientation

The Jadrolinija ferry terminal and the bus station are at Gruž, several kilometres north-west of the Old Town. There's a bus stop outside the gates to the Old Town with buses to Gruž harbour, Lapad and Cavtat. The main street in the Old Town is Placa, which is also called Stradun. Most accommodation is on the leafy Lapad Peninsula, west of the bus station.

Information

You can change money at any travel agency or post office. There are numerous ATMs in town, near the bus station and near the ferry terminal.

Atlas Old Town (☎ 442 574; Sv Đurđa 1); At the harbour (☎ 418 001; Obala Pape Pavla Ivana II 1) In convenient locations, Atlas is extremely helpful for general information as well as finding private accommodation. All excursions are run by the agency.

Dubrovnik Internet Centar (☎ 311 017; Branitelja Dubrovnika 7; per hr 20KN; ☎ 8am-midnight)

Gulliver (☎ 313 300; www.gulliver.hr; Obala Stjepana Radića 32) Near the Jadrolinija terminal, Gulliver finds private accommodation, changes money and rents cars and scooters.

Main post office (cnr Široka & Od Puća, Old Town); Lapad (Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 21)

Tourist Information Centar (☎ 323 350; www.tic-stradun.hr; Placa 1) Across from the Franciscan monastery in the Old Town, this centre is privately run.

Turistička Zajednica (www.tzdubrovnik.hr) Outside Pile gate (☎ 427 591; Dubrovačkih Branitelja 7; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Oct-May); Old Town (☎ 321 561; Placa bb ☎ 8am-8pm daily); At the harbour (☎ 417 983; Obala Stjepana Radića 27) Offers maps and the indispensable Dubrovnik Riviera guide. The harbour branch has limited documentation.

Sights

You'll probably begin your visit at the bus stop outside **Pile Gate**. As you enter the city, Dubrovnik's wonderful pedestrian promenade, the Placa, extends all the way to the clock tower at the other end of town. Just inside Pile Gate is the huge **Onofrio Fountain**, completed in 1438, and the **Franciscan monastery**, with a splendid cloister and the third-oldest functioning pharmacy, dating from 1391, in Europe. The **monastery museum** (adult/concession 20/10KN; ☎ 9am-5pm) presents a collection of liturgical objects, paintings and pharmacy equipment.

In front of the clock tower, at the eastern end of Placa, you'll find the **Orlando Column**, which dates from 1419. On opposite sides of the Orlando are the 16th-century **Sponza Palace** (admission free; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) and **St Blaise's Church** (☎ for morning & late-afternoon Mass Mon-Sat), a lovely Italian baroque building.

At the end of the broad street called Pred Dvorom, beside St Blaise, is the baroque **Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin** (Poljana M. Dršica; ☎ for morning & late-afternoon Mass) and, between the two churches, is the Gothic **Rector's Palace** (☎ 426 469; Ped Dvorom 3; adult/concession 20/7KN; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Sat Oct-May, 9am-5pm daily Jun-Sep), built in 1441.

As you proceed up Placa, make a detour to the **Museum of the Orthodox Church** (Od Puća 8; adult/concession 10/5KN; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri) for a look at a fascinating collection of 15th- to 19th-century icons.

By this time you'll be ready for a walk around the **city walls** (adult/concession 50/20KN; ☎ 9am-7pm), which have entrances just inside Pile Gate, across from the Dominican monastery and near Fort St John. These powerful walls are the finest in the world and Dubrovnik's main claim to fame. The views are great – this walk could be the high point of your visit.

Whichever way you go, you will notice the 14th-century **Dominican monastery** (adult/concession 10/5KN; ☎ 9am-6pm) in the northeastern corner of the city, whose forbidding fortress-like exterior shelters a rich trove of paintings from Dubrovnik's finest 15th- and 16th-century artists.

The closest beach to the Old Town, **Banje Beach**, is outside Ploče Gate. There are also hotel beaches on the **Lapad Peninsula**.

An even better option is to take the ferry (services operate from 9am to 6pm) from the old port that shuttles half-hourly in summer to lush **Lokrum Island** (80KN return trip), a forested park with a rocky nudist beach, a botanic garden and the ruins of a medieval Benedictine monastery.

Festivals & Events

Dubrovnik Summer Festival (www.dubrovnik-festival.hr) From mid-July to mid-August, this is a major cultural event, with more than a hundred performances at different venues in the Old Town.

Feast of St Blaise (3 February)
Carnival (February)

Sleeping

CAMPING
Solitudo (☎ 448 686; Iva Dulčića 39; per person/tent 50/87KN) This pretty camp ground is within walking distance of the beach, north of Lapad Bay.

HOSTELS

YHA Hostel (☎ 423 241; dubrovnik@hfhs.hr; Vinka Sargrešana 3; B&B/half-board 129/160KN) It's not exactly restful but you'll have a lot of fun; there are bars and cafés close by.

PRIVATE ROOMS

Private accommodation is generally the best option in Dubrovnik, but beware of the scramble of private owners at the bus station or Jadrolinija wharf. Some offer what they say they offer; others are rip-off artists. Otherwise, head to any of the travel agencies or Turistička Zajednica branches (see opposite). Expect to pay from 200KN to 220KN for a room in high season.

Apartments van Bloemen (☎ 323 433; 91 33 24 106; www.karmendu.tk; Bandureva 1; apt 690-1000KN; ☎) This is the most personal and original accommodation, with a great location in the Old Town. All four apartments are beautifully decorated with original art. Three of them sleep three people comfortably.

Vila Micika (☎ 437 332; www.vilamicika.hr; Mata Vodapića; s/d 215/430KN) This is a simple, well-run establishment. The rooms are equipped with TVs and modern baths, there's a pleasant outdoor terrace and it's only 200m to the Lapad beaches. Prices do not include breakfast.

Bokun Guesthouse (☎ 357 290, 098 17 62 140; boni tokun@yahoo.com; Obala Stjepana Radića 7; d 200-300KN) Not far from Gruž harbour, this quiet, family-run guesthouse offers five rooms and an apartment that are simply but comfortably furnished.

HOTELS

Hotel Sumratin (☎ 436 333; www.hotels-sumratin.com; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 31; s/d 460/760KN) About 200m from the water, this calm hotel in Lapad offers good value for money.

Eating

There are dozens of places to chow down in the Old Town, but there's not a great deal of variety except in the toppings on your pizza or pasta. Still, the overall value for money is good.

Kamenice (☎ 421 499; Gundulićeva poljana 8; mains from 40KN) Portions are huge at this convivial hangout known for its mussels. Its terrace is one of Dubrovnik's more scenic squares.

Atlantic (Kardinala Stepinca 42; mains from 50KN) The homemade pasta and vegetarian lasagne in this Lapad restaurant are outstanding, even if the ambience is not terribly atmospheric.

Pergola (☎ 436 848; Šetalište Kralja Tomislava 1; mains from 50KN) This is a consistently satisfying place with an outdoor terrace and good seafood.

Drinking

Bunićeva square has a number of chic cafés and a young, local crowd fills the streets of Vetranovića, Zamanijina and Dropčeva every weekend from around 9pm until the wee hours. In Lapad, the pedestrian street, Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira, has a number of café-bars for relaxing after a hard day at the beach.

Pub Karaka (☎ 324 014; Od Polaca 7) The Emerald Isle is well represented here with Irish beer on tap, Irish music in the evenings and a happy hour from 3pm to 7pm.

Latino Club Fuego (Branitelja Dubrovnik 2) Despite the name, you'll find the gamut of dance music, including techno and pop, at this disco.

Entertainment

From mid-July to mid-August, Dubrovnik comes alive with music during the **Dubrovnik Summer Festival** (www.dubrovnik-festival.hr). See the website for the programme and reservations. There is also an open-air cinema in the Old Town on Za Rokum and one in Lapad on Kumičića. Ask the tourist office for the schedule.

Getting There & Away

Daily flights to/from Zagreb are operated by **Croatia Airlines** (☎ 413 777; Brsalje 9). The fare costs from about 300KN to 400KN one-way (one hour), and more in high season. The Jadrolinija coastal ferry travels north to Hvar, Split, Zadar and Rijeka. **Jadrolinija** (☎ 418 000; Stepjarta Radića 40) sells tickets and can provide information on coastal, international and local ferries. **Jadroagent** (☎ 419 009; fax 419 029; Stjepana Radića 32) handles ticketing for most international boats to/from Croatia.

Buses go daily from Dubrovnik to Korčula (87KN, three hours, one daily), Mostar (82KN, three hours, two daily), Rijeka (391KN to 309KN, 12 hours, four daily), Split (100KN to 111KN, 4½ hours, 14 daily) and Zagreb (170KN to 196KN, 11 hours, seven daily).

Getting Around

The bus system in Dubrovnik is extensive and relatively efficient. Bus tickets cost 10KN if you buy from the driver and 8KN if you buy from Tisak news outlets. Buses 4, 5, 6, 7b and 9 travel to Lapad, and buses 1a, 3, 7b and 8 travel to Gruž.

CROATIA DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Along the Croatian coast, accommodation is priced according to three different seasons. Generally October to May are the cheapest months, June and September are mid-priced, while the high season runs for a six-week period in July and August. Prices quoted in this chapter are for the high season, but do not include 'residence tax', which costs from about 4KN to 7.50KN depending on the location and the season. Deduct about 25% if you come in June, the beginning of July, and September; about 35% for May and October; and about 50% for all other times. Prices for Zagreb are constant all year. Many hotels on the coast close in winter.

The following organisations may be useful:
Croatia Camping (www.camping.hr) Croatia Camping Association
Croatian Youth Hostel Association (www.hfhs.hr)

Camping

Nearly a hundred camping grounds are scattered along the Croatian coast. Most operate from mid-May to September only, although a few are open in April and October. In May and late September, call ahead to make sure the camping ground is open before beginning the long trek out.

Hostels

The **Croatian YHA** (Map pp254-5; ☎ 01-48 47 472; www.hfhs.hr; travelsection@hfhs.hr; Dežmanova 9, Zagreb) operates youth hostels in Dubrovnik, Krk, Rijeka, Zadar, Zagreb and Pula, open to YHA members. Nonmembers pay an additional 10KN per person daily and receive a stamp on a welcome card; six stamps entitle you to a membership. Prices fall outside the high season.

Private Rooms

Private rooms in local homes are the best form of accommodation. Often you are greeted by

offers of *sobe* (private rooms) as you step off your bus and boat. Although they can be great value, if anything goes wrong (ie a sudden change in rate) you're on your own. In town, travel agencies will find accommodation. It's wise to call in advance during the high season. In the cheapest accommodation, you'll have a room in a family home and share the bathroom. In the most expensive, you'll have your own room or apartment with a private bath and sometimes TV. Breakfast is not included but can sometimes be arranged for an additional 30KN. If you're travelling in a small group, it may be worthwhile getting a small apartment with cooking facilities.

It makes little sense to go from agency to agency since prices are fixed by the local tourist association. You'll pay a 30% surcharge for stays of less than four nights, and sometimes 50% or even 100% more for a one-night stay, although you may be able to get them to waive the surcharge if you arrive in the low season. Prices in this chapter assume a four-night stay in the high season.

Hotels

Hotels are ranked from one to five stars with the vast majority in the two- and three-star range. One-star hotels have at least a telephone in the room. Prices in this chapter are for the pricey six-week high season. Breakfast is included in hotel prices.

ACTIVITIES

The clear waters and varied underwater life of the Adriatic have led to a flourishing dive industry along the coast. The real speciality in Croatia is cave diving; night diving and wreck diving are also offered, and there are coral reefs in some places but in rather deep water. You must get a permit for a boat dive: go to the harbour captain in any port with your passport, diving certification card and 100KN. Permission is valid for a year. If you

SPLURGE

For classic food in classy surroundings, there's no better address in Lapad than **Levenat** (☎ 435 352; Šetalište Nikai Meda Pučića 15; mains 80-120KN). Try one of the superbly grilled fresh fish plates with all the trimmings. Vegetarians can choose a mouth-watering array of grilled vegetables.

dive with a dive centre, it will take care of the paperwork. Most of the coastal resorts mentioned in this chapter have dive shops. See **Diving Croatia** (www.diving-hrs.hr) for contact information.

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual business hours are listed below, but along the coast, life is a little more relaxed; shops and offices frequently close around noon for an afternoon break and reopen around 4pm.

Banks ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat

Bars & clubs ☎ 8pm or 9pm-about 2am; many bars operate as cafés during the day, opening around noon.

Post offices ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat

Restaurants ☎ noon to midnight daily

Shops ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, until 2pm Sat

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Embassies & Consulates in Croatia

The following embassies and consulate are in Zagreb (see Map pp254-5).

Albania (☎ 01-48 10 679; Jurišićeva 2a)

Australia (☎ 01-48 91 200; www.auembassy.hr; Kaptol Centar, Nova Ves 11)

Bosnia & Hercegovina (☎ 01-48 19 420; Hatzova 3)

Canada (☎ 01-48 81 200; zagreb@dfait-maeci.gc.ca; Prilaz Gjуре Deželica 4)

France (☎ 01-48 93 680; consulat@ambafrance.hr; Hebrangova 2)

Germany (☎ 01-61 58 105; www.deutschebotschaft-zagreb.hr, in German; avenija grada Vukovara 64)

Hungary (☎ 01-48 90 900; Pantovčak 255-257)

New Zealand (☎ 01-65 20 888; avenija Dubrovnik 15)

Serbia (☎ 01-45 79 067; Pantovčak 245)

Slovakia (☎ 01-48 48 941; Prilaz Gjуре Deželica 10)

Slovenia (☎ 01-63 11 000; Savska 41)

UK (☎ 01-60 09 100; I Lučića 4)

USA (☎ 01-66 12 200; www.usembassy.hr; Ul Thomasa Jeffersona 2)

Croatian Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Australia (☎ 02-6286 6988; 14 Jindalee Cres, O'Malley, ACT 2601)

Canada (☎ 613-562 7820; 229 Chapel St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Y6)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-219 15 514; Ahornstrasse 4, Berlin 10787); Bonn (☎ 022-895 29 20; Rolandstrasse 52, Bonn 53179)

New Zealand (☎ 09-836 5581; 131 Lincoln Rd, Henderson, Box 83200, Edmonton, Auckland)

South Africa (☎ 012-342 1206; 1160 Church St, 0083 Colbyn, Pretoria)

UK (☎ 020-7387 2022; 21 Conway St, London W1P 5HL)
USA (☎ 202-588-5899; www.croatiaemb.org; 2343 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Mardi Gras Revived shortly after Croatian independence, this pre-Lent festival has gathered force in Croatia. Held in February.

Pula Summer Festival International pop and classical stars give concerts in the Roman Amphitheatre (July to August).

Dubrovnik Summer Festival From classical concerts to folklore shows and theatre, this festival takes place in venues around town and showcases Croatian performers (July and August).

HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day 1 January

Epiphany 6 January

Easter March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Corpus Christi 10 June

Day of Antifascist Resistance 22 June (marks the outbreak of resistance in 1941)

Statehood Day 25 June

Victory Day and National Thanksgiving Day 5 August

Feast of the Assumption 15 August

Independence Day 8 October

All Saints' Day 1 November

Christmas Day 25 December

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés are springing up everywhere. The going rate is about 20KN per hour, and connections are usually good.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The best starting point to plan your Croatian holiday is the website of the National Tourist Board at www.croatia.hr.

MONEY

The currency is the kuna (KN). Banknotes are in denominations of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and five. Each kuna is divided into 100 lipa in coins of 50, 20 and 10. Many places exchange money, all with similar rates. Exchange offices may deduct a commission of 1% to change cash or travellers cheques, but some banks do not. Hungarian currency is difficult to change in Croatia and Croatian currency can be difficult to exchange in some neighbouring countries. The euro is widely accepted as payment even though Croatia is not in the eurozone.

Although they are widely accepted in up-market places, don't count on credit cards to pay for private accommodation or meals in small restaurants. ATMs are available in most bus and train stations, airports, all major cities and most small towns. Many branches of Privredna Banka have ATMs that allow cash withdrawals on an American Express card. For more information on costs and money, see p268.

POST

Mail sent to Poste Restante, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia, is held at the post office (open 24 hours) next to the Zagreb train station. A good coastal address to use is *c/o* Poste Restante, Main Post Office, 21000 Split, Croatia. If you have an American Express card, most Atlas travel agencies will hold your mail.

TELEPHONE

To call Croatia from abroad, dial your international access code, ☎ 385 (Croatia's country code), the area code (without the initial zero) and the local number. When calling

from one region to another within Croatia, use the initial zero. The international access code is ☎ 00. Dial ☎ 901 to place an operator-assisted call.

To make a phone call from Croatia, go to the main post office. You'll need a phonecard to use public telephones. Phonecards are sold according to *impulsa* (units), and you can buy cards of 25 (15KN), 50 (30KN), 100 (50KN) and 200 (100KN) units. These can be purchased at any post office and most tobacco shops and newspaper kiosks.

VISAS

Visitors from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the EU and the USA do not require a visa for stays of less than 90 days. For other nationalities, visas are issued free of charge at Croatian consulates. Croatian authorities require all foreigners to register with the local police when they first arrive in a new area of the country, but this is a routine matter that is normally handled by the hotel, hostel, camping ground or agency that organises your private accommodation.