

**W**ith that “wow!” factor at almost every turn, Croatia is a gem—its natural beauty, seascapes (including a sea organ...) and value for money are all superior benefits. **Take this Inside Scoop for serious tips and insights.**

**travel:** delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

**Trivia:** The Dalmatian is the country’s official dog.

### Coming Back

At [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html), click on the Travellers tab for “Bring Goods Across the Border.” Never bring back meat products/endangered species parts, plants or drugs. With connections, unless in checked luggage, buy duty free alcohol before your last flight into Canada (be aware of duty free exemption limits).

### Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- booking excursions ahead
- since you’ve paid the airfare, nearby side-trips
- insurance coverage.

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# LeGrow’s Travel

## Inside Scoop:

# CROATIA

**Know before you go: travel isn’t just your destination, it’s also the journey**

**A** true jewel of the Adriatic, Croatia is unique, surprising, largely unspoiled, stunningly beautiful, historically significant and a rare find—all that and much more describes the country across the sea from Italy. Besides being a country travellers consistently rave about, costs are reasonable. Some tips:

- Have a valid passport that will not expire six months before the end of your trip. [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp)
- While there are luxury hotels, it’s a fairly casual country, reflected in costs. Whatever your budget, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are only requests; unless you’ve paid for a sea view, upgrade fees apply.
- Croatian is the official language but most people working in hotels, restaurants and shops speak English. Download a translation app or listen to online pronunciations.
- Electricity: you’ll need a European grounded E or F, or non-grounded C adaptor
- Telephone and internet service is available at almost every accommodation. Before you go, contact your or cell phone provider (be aware of roaming charges)
- Currency is the Kuna (kn/HRK). The country’s in transition to Euros so order those from your bank to have cash on arrival and change to Kunas there; some sites accept Euros. Some smaller shops and restaurants only take cash/Kuna, no credit or debit cards. Note: ATM fees per withdrawal can be high (~\$5.) so don’t withdraw small amounts.

### Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black luggage so put coloured tape or ribbon on yours to spot them quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery and as medicine must be declared, bring prescription drugs in original containers or a doctor’s letter.

Items travellers pack in carry-on: pen/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg), a change of underclothes and shirt. Pack liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in a clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available a airport screening), then place it in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child younger than 2 years of age (0-24 months).

Permitted in carry-on: laptops, portable music players, cell phones, disposable razors, umbrellas, canes and nail clippers. Items you can’t take on: knives, corkscrews and sports gear.

Most hotels provide hair dryers so save space for souvenirs. For clothing, as with Canada’s climate, think layers. Even November, while chilly, sites are open and cheaper, being off-season.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience.

**In Croatian:**  
please is molim  
(pronounced *mo-leem*)  
thank you is hvala ti,  
(pronounced *hvah-luh-ti*)  
thanks is hvah-luh

### Must-See Areas

With four regions, the central area includes Zagreb. **Slavonia** to the east and northwest, **Istria** the beautiful peninsula with the city of **Pula** and a Roman arena. **Dalmatia** is the absolutely gorgeous narrow coastal region on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea that’s definitely (we mean for sure) an area you must go. Drive and/or take a boat tour or bus along the coast. With 1,244 islands and mountains, the area is breathtaking. Why? Think Italy, then think “across the sea” with reasonable prices. Renting a car is a great way to travel (highway tolls charged), otherwise bus and train travel is reasonably priced. Just be sure to take the coastal road along the Dalmatia

Can’t get that castle, island or famous-among-fans shaming walk scene out of your head? Then you must be a Game of Thrones fan, for yes, it was filmed partially around the islands, also in **Dubrovnik** and **Split**—ask your counsellor about booking tours of GOT filming sites and boat tours (with enough sheer beauty and history for those who are not fans).

## Your Airline

Sign up on your airline(s) websites for email or text notifications (as your flight could be delayed). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are usually on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and increased security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are assigned by the airline: first-come first-served. Check-in online is usually allowed from 24 hours before departure. Some airlines do reciprocal code-shares; your ticket is for one airline, you travel on the other).

**For check-in and carry-on baggage allowances and restrictions**, check your airline’s website, [www.catsa.gc.ca/home](http://www.catsa.gc.ca/home) or ask your counsellor. We strongly recommend LeGrow’s Travel medical and cancellation/interruption insurance to cover unanticipated issues.



“Get Packing Checklist” and “General Planning & Packing Tips” at [www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops](http://www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops)  
 Your sense of adventure & humour!

## Food & Beverage Specialities

We’ll start with the famous cream cake *kremšnita*, also try strudel filled with apples or cherries (especially good as sour cherries are bottled here, sold in some Canadian supermarkets!). For wine, Croatia’s most famous red grape is *Plavac* (where California’s deep red Zinfandel originates), the most common white *Graševina* (Welschriesling) is light and aromatic. *Burek* is crispy thin pastry stuffed with cheese or meat, slices from a huge pan (like pizza). **Tip:** If you book a “typical country meal” and are vegetarian, check the menu prior (they’re often chicken, pork and potato). While Bled Cream Cake (yum) is Slovenian, some pastry shops have a good variation.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

**Canadians:** Emergency? The Embassy of Canada is in Zagreb, (385) 1-488-1200, [zagrb@international.gc.ca](mailto:zagrb@international.gc.ca). See [www.canadainternational.gc.ca/croatia-croatie/contact-contactez.aspx](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/croatia-croatie/contact-contactez.aspx). Or, contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

## When You’re There

**Zagreb**, the capital city “has the biggest lounge”—in nice weather, people hang about in parks, markets, promenades and cafés, particularly around the **Green Horseshoe** and main square **Ban Josip Jelačić** (“**THE square**”). Its 925<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2019, its status culturally, historically and economically is well earned. Among 60 museums is the world’s first **Museum of Broken Relationships**, holding the bits and stories from relationships gone bad (and accepts donations), in Upper Town’s baroque **Kulmer Palace** (circa 1776, <https://brokenships.com>). Staircases connect the lower “down” town or off **Ilica St** (shopping) at the end of **Tomićeva St**, take a funicular ride. Don’t get too comfy—it takes 55 seconds. If you love open-air markets, head to the **Dolac** near the Gothic style **Zagreb Cathedral**.

**Plitvice Lakes National Park** is between **Zagreb** and **Zadar** with 16 connected lakes and waterfalls. On UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites since 1979, accommodation from camping to hotels is available, <http://np-plitvicka-jezera.hr/en>.

Depending where you go, you may see evidence of the **Homeland War** (1991 to 1995) when some 185,000 homes, churches and cultural sites were destroyed. A complicated time of civil and government unrest with military clashes, 20,000 people died and half a million were displaced (first use of the term “ethnic cleansing”).

Now, to the organ, on/in the **Adriatic Sea** in **Zadar**. With 9<sup>th</sup> century BC remnants of Roman inhabitants, this old harbour town is sheltered by a Venetian 16<sup>th</sup> century wall. Two modern sites are *essential* to see: the solar **Sun Salutation** of the planets set into stone by the sea (hint: look for blue circles of varying sizes) and the **Sea Organ**, both on the northwest corner of the **Riva** promenade. Listen. From the top step to the sea, look for holes in the pavement. Listen. Mournful harmonious sounds—depending on the wind and waves through this art installation’s 35 pipes—an organ with pipes of varying lengths (excellent YouTube video of both 2:42mins at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBhk5KFwLVc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBhk5KFwLVc)). **Split** is a terrific spot. Tour **Diocletian’s Palace**. Not a fan of ancient history? You will be. It’s a miracle of architecture and engineering (in 295AD!). The upper area where the emperor lived until residents threw him over now has gorgeous million Euro homes. The city is great for wandering and harbour café life.

You must visit **Dubrovnik**, Pearl of the Adriatic, UNESCO site, unofficial wonder of the world (King’s Landing for Game of Thrones fans). It’s stunning night or day. Old Town inside the walls is walking only (don’t wear heels). For beautiful views, all angles, walk ON the wall (almost 2kms with exits). Take a boat tour from the Old Harbour. See the **Museum of Croatian War of Independence** on the ground floor of **Srdj Imperial Fort** by cable car (go to top of the stairs for another great view). **Tip:** if you can’t make it to the museum there’s a room inside the Old Town off the **Stradun** (main street) honouring locals who died with information on the war. **Tip:** go past Dubrovnik to the lookout, back to the city—that’s the billion dollar view.

## Slovenia & Montenegro Intriguing Side Trips

Consider a side trip to **Slovenia**. In the time it takes to drive from Toronto to Oakville, Ontario in rush hour (1.5hrs), you could drive from Zagreb to **Ljubljana**—a beautiful strolling city, winding amid its older areas and bridges, perhaps find a festival. Be sure to try **pumpkin seed oil**; simply dip bread in for a flavourful snack. Buy a bottle for home salad dressings (don’t pack in carry-on bag, put in a plastic bag with lock top).

West of Ljubljana is **Bled Castle** on an island cliff in **Lake Bled**; if you eat anything, eat **Bled Cream Cake** (you’re welcome). Another super trip is **Montenegro**; the caves that hid war ships are still there. In **Kotor Bay**, **Perast’s** artificial island is the site of a shipwreck and **Lady of the Rocks** church, protector of sailors and fishers with marine art (one wife using her hair as embroidery thread while she waited for her husband to return from sea, the “thread” going from light brown to grey over the years...).

## Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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