

## **Croatia Discovery**

### ***Cultural and hiking tour***

#### ***(17-19 guests)***

#### **Day 1**

##### **Zagreb**

###### *Arrival day*

###### *Walking tour of Zagreb's historic center followed by welcome dinner*

Upon arrival of your flight at Zagreb airport, meet your tour leader and chauffeur for transfer to Hotel Dubrovnik 4\* - located in the very centre of Zagreb. Hotel Dubrovnik features a rich tradition of hospitality since 1929 and the hotel's prime location at Zagreb's main city square makes it a perfect choice for experiencing the heart of the city. Just a short walk from the hotel you will find the most important cultural, government and business institutions, the main shopping area, open-air market, lively cafes and taverns, historical upper town, parks and promenades. Within no time you will feel like a native city dweller! Settle in and relax after a long flight.

In the afternoon, meet your local guide for a private walking tour of Zagreb's historic center. Founded in the Middle Ages, Zagreb began life as two separate entities, Kaptol and Gradec, which today comprise the historic Gornji Grad (Upper Town). Centered around the city's landmark cathedral, Kaptol was a religious center, while Gradec was home to craftsmen and merchants. Outsiders collectively referred to the settlements as Zagreb (meaning 'behind the hill'), although they were not officially united as the City of Zagreb until 1850. Boom time followed with the late 19th century characterized by the arrival of the railways and the construction of Donji Grad (Lower Town).

After the tour, continue with your tour leader to one of the finest restaurants in Zagreb – Trilogija - for your welcome dinner. Return to hotel after dinner.

Hotel: Dubrovnik 4\* Meals: breakfast, dinner

#### **Day 2**

##### **Zagreb**

###### *Castles of Zagorje & Varaždin tour with traditional lunch*

Join your tour leader after breakfast and depart to Trakošćan Castle in the picturesque Zagorje region and Varaždin town. Zagorje is a hilly region filled with Medieval and Renaissance fortresses and numerous Baroque castles all blending into a memorable, romantic landscape. Explore the most famous of all Zagorje castles, Trakošćan, which was originally a small medieval observation fortress until it was turned into a castle for noble families. Today, Trakošćan features an impressive weapons collection, an ethereal music salon, integral architecture and décor of its noble times and innumerable picture-perfect moments throughout the estate.

Our tour further takes you down the baroque and rococo lane, in the lovely town Varaždin, the best preserved Croatian example of those lively times. A stroll through the Old Town reveals its baroque facades, parks and palaces, and the Old Castle, an old feudal fort, is the highlight of our visit. Contrasting the picturesque sceneries of Zagorje hills, the rural feel and an air of joy arising from the simple way of life, with remarkable architectural complexes of Trakošćan castle and Varaždin town, this tour is a unique insight into the rich history of this extraordinary region, much responsible for its present day allure. Enjoy traditional lunch in one of Zagorje's taverns. Return to hotel in the late afternoon hours and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

Hotel: Dubrovnik 4\* Meals: breakfast, traditional lunch

#### **Day 3**

##### **Zagreb – Zadar via Plitvice Lakes NP**

###### *Hiking tour of Plitvice Lakes National Park*

Check out after breakfast and join your tour leader for transfer to Zadar.

En route to Zadar, you will stop at the Plitvice Lakes NP for hiking tour of the lakes. According to legend, the Plitvice lakes were created after a long drought. The "Black Queen" took pity on the people and animals that cried

for water. Heavy rain began to fall and continued until they formed the lakes we see today. The natural attributes of the Plitvice Lakes NP, uniqueness and sensibility of that phenomenon, deserve the full attention of our visitors. The recreational aspect of a stay and the amazement with beauty of the area that conquers by its natural diversity and harmony of shapes and colors in any of the seasons, is based on many mutually conditioned natural characteristics. The Plitvice lakes, known as the "Falling lakes", have enjoyed the status of a national park since 1949 and since 1979 they have been under the protection of UNESCO.

Afterwards, continue to Zadar and upon arrival, check in to Hotel Kolovare 4\*. Hotel Kolovare is situated in a peaceful part of Zadar, offering modernly decorated rooms, free Wi-Fi internet access in the entire property and free parking on site. The restaurant seats up to 270 people, serving national and international cuisine. In the summer time you can dine on the pool terrace, which seats up to 500 guests. The Kolovare also houses a wine cellar with a wide selection of Croatian and foreign wines. You can benefit from the hair salon, massage parlour and outdoor swimming pools on site.

Dinner will be served in a local restaurant.

Hotel: Kolovare 4\* Meals: breakfast, dinner

## Day 4

### Zadar

#### *Hiking tour of Paklenica National Park with picnic lunch*

In the morning hours join your tour leader and depart to Paklenica National Park, the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and a favorite hiking and climbing destination in this part of Europe. Lying on the southeast slopes of the Velebit Mountain near the coast and cut by two awe-inspiring gorges, Mala Paklenica and Velika Paklenica's scenery is one of the most pristine in the Mediterranean. The lofty peaks making up this range offer magnificent views of both coastal and mountain scenery. The Park area contains 150-200 km of trails and paths, from those intended for tourists, leading from Velika Paklenica Canyon to Manita pec cave, Lugarnica forest cottage and the mountain hut, to those intended for mountaineers, leading to the highest peaks of Velebit. A picnic lunch will be served during the tour.

Return to Zadar in the late afternoon and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

Hotel: Kolovare 4\* Meals: breakfast, picnic lunch

#### *OPTIONAL EXTRA: Spelunking adventure in Modrić Cave*

On your way to Zadar, you will stop in Modrić Cave. Spelunkers have described caving in the amazing Modrić cave as one of the best experiences in Europe! This small (only 840 meters) long cave is so beautifully decorated that each step is a unique discovery. The cave is *not* accessible for large groups of tourists and this ensures a very personal caving adventure. So prepare to crawl and squeeze your way through the magic of Modrić, lit up by the carbide light on your safety helmet!

## Day 5

### Zadar

#### *Hiking tour of Krupa Canyon with picnic lunch*

Meet your tour leader after breakfast for hiking tour of Krupa Canyon. The hiking trail begins in the village Ravni Golubić, from where it leads us through Vratolom ridge to the mouth of Krupa into Zrmanja with wonderful views of Krupa waterfalls, under Babin Grad. The trail leads further up the River Krupa. Immediately in front of Kuda Bridge, the trail ascends to the edge of the canyon with a wonderful view of particular sections of Krupa canyon from a 150-meter high rock that vertically ascends from the river. Kuda Bridge is the only place where you can cross on the left side of Krupa. This old bridge is a zero-category historical monument woven from 13 arches that are masterfully formed from travertine. As part of the Kuda Bridge hiking tour, you will visit the Krupa monastery that is situated near the spring of the River Krupa, and was built in 1317. A picnic lunch will be served during the tour.

Return to Zadar in the afternoon and spend the remainder of the day at leisure.

Hotel: Kolovare 4\* Meals: breakfast, picnic lunch

## Day 6

### Zadar – Trogir

#### *Hiking tour of Krka Waterfalls National Park*

Check out after breakfast and join your tour leader for transfer to Trogir.

En route to Trogir, you will visit the Krka Waterfalls National Park and enjoy a hiking tour of the area (approx. 1,5 hour). On its green path, River Krka has seven falls, the last one being the amazing Skradinski buk. Thanks to the constant process of travertine building, the Krka River is a karst phenomenon, carving a spectacular canyon on its 70 kilometers journey from the foothills of Dinara Mountains to the amazing estuary under the walls of historic Sibenik. Visit famous Roški slap and if of interest you can also visit Skradinski buk (more crowded area).

After the tour, continue to Trogir. Upon arrival, check in to Hotel Pašike 4\*, a historic family home, which has been carefully renovated and transformed into a charming inn. Each of the seven rooms feature antique furniture, private, modern bathrooms, air conditioning, satellite tv, and internet connection. The owners pride themselves on friendly service.

Dinner will be served in a local restaurant in Trogir.

Hotel: Pašike 4\* Meals: breakfast, dinner

## Day 7

### Trogir

#### *Private guided walking tour of Trogir and Split*

After breakfast, join your tour leader and meet your local guide in the lobby for walking tour of Trogir. Walk along beautiful narrow streets and travel through time with the stories and legends of the past. This island oasis connected to the mainland with a bridge is filled with Greek, Roman and Venetian history. The entrance to St. Lawrence cathedral is decorated by the Romanesque portal of Radovan, the most significant of its kind in this part of Europe. Visit the Palace of Cipico, home to one of Trogir's most prominent families and the Tower of Kamerlengo, which served as the Venetian governor's palace. Discover the masterpieces of local sculptors and others who participated in creating the magnificent visual history of this charming town.

Afterwards, meet your chauffeur and continue with your guide to Split. Split is one of the Adriatic's most amazing seaports and also Croatia's second-largest city. Diocletian's Palace, as the ancient heart of Split, is one of the best-preserved Roman royal residences on the planet. Originally the palatial walled summer residence of the Emperor Diocletian, Split became a city after Salona, the Roman capital of Dalmatia just 6km north, was sacked in 7<sup>th</sup>C. Fleeing refugees were given asylum inside the two-meter-thick walls of the palace and over the next 1000 years, the "city" of Split was such a safe haven, it never grew beyond the same walls that exist today! As a result, the remarkable ensemble of Roman, Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance and other architectural remains are all still here—and so are more than 3,000 people still living inside these ancient walls. But Split is more than its walled palace; it's about enjoying the local way of life.

After the tour, your guide will escort you to one of the best restaurants in Split for your lunch.

Return to Trogir after lunch and enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure.

Hotel: Pašike 4\* Meals: breakfast, lunch

## Day 8

### Trogir

#### *Dalmatian Hinterland private hiking tour with picnic lunch*

Meet your tour leader after breakfast for a memorable hiking tour of the Dalmatian hinterland. Explore the rugged terrain and beautiful countryside while cycling on the paths, fields and hillsides of the Dalmatian hinterland to discover the interior and land surrounding the Cetina river spring which is considered as the first area inhabited by the Croats. Hike across the paths, fields and landscapes of the Dalmatian hinterland, along the Peruća Lake and through the Cetina river canyon at the base of Croatia's highest mountain, Dinara to the source of life – the Cetina river spring. The entire region to be covered during this adventure is one of Croatia's richest archaeological areas

with great historical and cultural significance. Memorable picnic lunch will be served at the end of the tour! A return transfer to your hotel will follow after the tour.

Hotel: Pašike 4\* Meals: breakfast, picnic lunch

## Day 9

### Trogir

#### *Hiking day tour of Brač Island with lunch*

Meet your tour leader after breakfast and board a public ferry for Brač Island. First, you will visit historic picturesque village Dol and start your hiking towards Škrip - one of the very few continuously inhabited localities in all Europe! It is also a village where museum of Brač is located – the supposed crypt of mother of Constantine the Great is kept here! Then you are off to the highest peak of the Croatian islands (Vidova Gora), making your way to the hidden hermitage in the mountainside now known as the Blaca monastery which was found in 1551 by Glagolitic monks from Poljica Republic. This small Republic, behind Omiš, was wedged between the Venetian and Ottoman Empires. The monks, fearing Turkish raids, fled to Brač in the 15th Century and later received permission to build their monastery in its current, well-hidden location. Lunch will be served at the local tavern during the tour.

Return to Trogir in the late afternoon hours for the remainder of the day at leisure.

Hotel: Pašike 4\* Meals: breakfast, lunch

## Day 10

### Trogir

#### *Hiking tour in Truše followed by traditional dinner (afternoon departure)*

Enjoy your morning at leisure.

If you are seeking for a place that is on the edge of being forgotten and yet- it has so many stories to be heard and breath taking moments to be seen, our tour in Dalmatian hinterland you must not miss to breath in. In the afternoon, we'll take you to the hinterland till the very special and ancient village called Truše. In the very end of village stands a house, two hundred years old, a hundreds of little pieces of history full, and maintained and cared with love by local chef Rino. We will show you and tell you the piece of history that will take away the time and space around you and return to the past, get the feeling of the old way of living in a traditional Dalmatian village, and see the old stone block houses typical for ancient Dalmatian architecture.

We will also take a walk till the clear water source right from the mountain and to the very top of the mountain, easily walking till the unforgettable view on the coast and islands on the one side, and hinterland and old villages on the other side.

You will enjoy by the open fireplace, called 'komin'- the most important place for any household in rural Dalmatia. You can poke the fire and drink few sorts of domestic wine, taste homemade smoked ham, bacon, cheese and specialty 'soparnik' which gained a title 'Croatian brand', because it originates from this region called Poljica, along with other local specialties that our Rino will prepare in front of you and- only for you.

Return to Trogir in the early evening hours.

Hotel: Pašike 4\* Meals: breakfast, traditional dinner

## Day 11

### Trogir – Dubrovnik

#### *En route visit to Ston city walls and lunch in Rizman winery*

Check out after breakfast, join your tour leader and depart to Dubrovnik.

En route to Dubrovnik, you will stop in the Rizman winery in the Neretva valley for a traditional lunch with wine.

After lunch, continue your journey to Dubrovnik and make another stop, this time in the sleepy town of Ston, famous for its magnificent city walls fortification complex dating back to the 14th century.

Upon arrival in Dubrovnik, check in to Hotel 4\*

Enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

Hotel: 4\* Meals: breakfast, lunch

## Day 12

### Dubrovnik

#### *Private guided walking tour of Dubrovnik old town and city walls followed by cable car ride to Srdj Hill for lunch*

Join your tour leader after breakfast and meet our local guide for a pleasant walk through Dubrovnik Old Town. Famous George Bernard Shaw was enchanted by this beautiful city, about which he said "those who seek paradise on Earth should come to Dubrovnik and see Dubrovnik", as well as, famously, describing it as "the pearl of the Adriatic". Dubrovnik truly is a stunning city with its amazing Old Town, which became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979. 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 mélange of cafés and shops with outstanding monuments at either end. Churches, monasteries and museums ornamented with finely carved stone recall an eventful history and a vibrant artistic tradition. Of course, Dubrovnik experience would not be completed without exploring magnificent Old city walls!

After the tour (approx. 2,5 hours long), take the cable car ride to the top of Srdj Mountain. Resting high above the Old Town, this is the ideal spot for a spectacular panorama view of the town and surrounding islands that is guaranteed to take your breath away! Along you will visit the Croatia Civil War Museum located up there. Enjoy lunch in a restaurant on Srdj hill.

Return to hotel in the afternoon hours and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Hotel: 4\* Meals: breakfast, lunch

## Day 13

### Dubrovnik

#### *Private hiking tour of Konavle valley followed by lunch in Lovorno*

Meet your tour leader after breakfast and depart to picturesque Konavle valley for hiking tour. The excursion starts at the village Gruda in Konavle. The trail takes you through orchards, corn fields, vineyards, blueberry fields and also cross the bridges of Ljuta and Konavočica rivers. Occasional short breaks are made for getting acquainted with the historical and natural characteristics of the Konavle region (visit to Franciscan monastery, old mills in Ljuta village). That makes Konavle so intriguing is how its folk traditions and way of life have remained so intact.

At the end of the tour you will visit small village of Lovorno where you will meet Mujo family in their 500-year-old farmhouse and enjoy private lunch that will teach you about local gastronomy as well as Croatian culture and history. Return to Dubrovnik after lunch

Hotel: 4\* Meals: breakfast, traditional dinner

## Day 14

### Dubrovnik

#### *Departure day*

Check out after breakfast and meet your chauffeur for a private transfer to Dubrovnik airport for your outbound flight.

Farewell until we meet again!

Hotel: \* Meals: breakfast

#### The program price includes:

2 nights in Zagreb, Hotel Dubrovnik 4\* -

3 night in Zadar, Hotel Kolovare 4\* -

5 nights in Trogir, Hotel Pašike 4\* -

3 nights in Dubrovnik, Hotel 4\* TBA

Breakfast daily, taxes and VAT included

24-hour emergency service

English speaking tour leader

Professional English speaking chauffeurs and local guides for your transfers and tours

All transfer as per itinerary  
Basic travel insurance coverage

Walking tour of Zagreb's historic center followed by welcome dinner  
Castles of Zagorje & Varaždin tour with traditional lunch  
Hiking tour of Plitvice Lakes NP  
Hiking tour of Paklenica NP with picnic lunch  
Hiking tour of Krupa Canyon with picnic lunch  
Hiking tour of Krka Waterfalls NP  
Walking tour of Trogir and Split (entrance tickets to 3 museums included)  
Dalmatian Hinterland hiking tour with picnic lunch  
Hiking day tour of Brač Island with lunch  
Hiking tour in Truše followed by traditional dinner  
En route visit to Rizman winery with lunch and visit to Ston  
Walking tour of Dubrovnik old town and city walls followed by cable car ride to Srdj hill for lunch (entrance tickets to 2 museums and City Walls included)  
Hiking tour of Konavle valley followed by lunch in Lovorno at family run farm

**The program price does not include:**

Meals and drinks not included in the cost (other than those listed)  
Air fare, Insurance  
Gratuities  
Personal expenses