

Dubrovnik, the Dalmation Coast & Montenegro
8 days £899 pp HB
Fly from Gatwick
Single Supplement of £159 pp
2Centre



Fully escorted tour includes:

- Return flights
- Seven nights three and four-star accommodation with half-board
- Tour of Dubrovnik, Pearl of the Adriatic
- Visit to Krka National Park and its stunning waterfalls
- Visit to Mostar, setting of the famous bridge
- Tour to Montenegro, one of the most beautiful countries of the Mediterranean
- Visit to Split and tour of the emperor Diocletian's monumental palace, the greatest Roman structure in eastern Europe
- Visit to medieval Trogir
- Services of Tour Manager

Croatia is simply one of Europe's best-kept secrets, with a recent past unique in European history. Within just five years it experienced the fall of communism, a war and then full independence. Today however, with the scars very much healed, this matchless blend of history, Mediterranean ambience and truly stunning natural beauty is, and rightly so, on the discerning traveller's map once again.

Ruled for 2,000 years by some of the greatest powers of their time: the Romans, Byzantines, Venetians and the Hapsburgs amongst others, and all have left their mark both architecturally and culturally. There are Roman palaces, amphitheatres, baroque churches, imposing civic buildings and even mosques. Dubrovnik in particular is a delight, almost a living museum, medieval in character with a heavy influence of the baroque period in the numerous churches and where life spills spontaneously onto its pedestrianised marble streets. Once the centre of a thriving

commercial empire, Lord Byron christened it 'Pearl of the Adriatic', whilst George Bernard Shaw thought it simply 'Paradise on Earth'. In our view - it is simply idyllic!

The Dalmatian coastline is legendary: one of the most dramatic in Europe, extending for hundreds of miles, where steep limestone cliffs plunge into sapphire-blue waters. Just offshore the mirror-like Adriatic is studded with countless islands, some tiny, some large, some inhabited, some not, but giving scenery almost reminiscent of a series of huge intertwining lakes. The hillsides are clad in a green carpet of lush pine-forests giving that instantly recognisable Mediterranean aroma to the air. Clinging to the coast or nestling in picturesque coves are medieval fishing villages, with tiny shops, refreshingly free from tasteless development, where the alleyways are simply pebbles set into the earth and overhead shutters precariously sway and squeak in the warm, gentle breezes. Life continues much as it has for centuries with the elderly still clad in the black so typical of southern Europe.

Whilst this is a unique country, the Croatians appear very much Mediterranean in character: effervescent, friendly and open. The cuisine really is superb too! Heavily influenced by nearby Greece and Italy, everywhere you find exquisite fish like sea bass, tuna and bream fresh from the sea and cooked in a variety of ways, but best simply grilled. Excellent meats abound too and fresh colourful Mediterranean vegetables such as peppers, aubergines and courgettes, which combined with olive oil, create tasty, healthy menus.

Then we visit Montenegro, one of the world's newest countries and if you can imagine what the Mediterranean was like thirty years ago then this is probably it! A stunning coastline with centuries old fishing villages, full of tiny streets where the eaves almost touch, interspaced by market squares with stalls creaking from the weight of local colourful local produce and dotted with intricately decorated Byzantine churches. Everywhere we visit on this tour is still so wonderfully undiscovered. It cries out to be explored and offers the privileged visitor a remarkable blend of wonderful scenery and fascinating places to visit: it truly is a journey back in time.

Day 1

You should arrive at the airport to take your flight to Dubrovnik. On arrival, you will be taken to the four-star rated [Hotel Plaza](#) in Omis or the four-star rated Hotel Quercus in Drvenik for three nights half-board. Omis is a lovely little village, dominated by two medieval fortresses with remnants of the old city walls still intact. Inside is a maze of old alleyways lined by stone houses and is a delight to explore. Drvenik is a lovely little village harmiously clustered amongst the scenery of a typical Dalmatian fishermans village.

The Quercus hotel is shaded by aromatic pine forests, and is set in a cove surrounded by one of the most beautiful coastlines in Dalmatia. The sea is invitingly crystal-clear and there is a welcome lack of development. The hotel itself has just been completely renovated and is just 50 metres from the shingle beach. It has a restaurant, bar, and a terrace overlooking the outdoor pool - ideal to watch the sun set after a hard day's sightseeing. The rooms themselves are extremely tastefully appointed in a very fresh, modern style, all with private facilities, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and hairdryer. The hotel is a perfect base for our programme of visits over the next few days.

The Plaza hotel itself is approximately a ten-minute stroll from the centre of Omis, extremely comfortable and has direct access to the beach. It has a wellness centre, restaurant, comfortable bar with a delightful terrace overlooking the beach - ideal to watch the sun set after a hard day's sightseeing. The rooms themselves are extremely tastefully appointed in a very fresh, modern style, all with private facilities, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and hairdryer. The hotel is a perfect base for our programme of visits over the next few days.

Day 2

After breakfast we take the drive inland to the Krka Valley where the river Krka flows through a series of

gorges, lakes and rapids before meeting the sea. The whole valley has been awarded national park status and today we will visit part of this stunning area. It is home to an eye-catching series of lakes where water cascades from one to the next in an extensive series of interlocking, dramatic waterfalls and cataracts. Due to minerals dissolved in the water, the colours change from turquoise to azure-blue and vibrant green to steel-like greys. With reflections of the surrounding majestic peaks and luxuriant forests dancing on the mirror-like lakes, it is impossible not to be awe-struck. We take a boat trip up to one of the most dramatic stretches of the river where several tiers of waterfall tumble magnificently into a broad, shallow pool where you may swim should you wish. We will spend some time taking in the beautiful surroundings before returning to our hotel during the afternoon.

Day 3

Today we drive north along the stunning coastline before arriving at the medieval citadel of Trogir, one of the most charming little ports in Dalmatia. The old-town is actually an island and a wealth of Renaissance and Romanesque buildings line a veritable maze of delightfully chaotic lanes, nestling behind its seemingly impregnable ramparts. The centre is the exquisitely decorated 13th century cathedral, but the real monument is the town itself. Just to wander where your feet take you, cast an eye over one of the antique shops or just enjoy a coffee in a pavement café is a real pleasure. This afternoon we visit nearby Split, principally famous for a single building, in fact one of the greatest structures of the Roman Empire - the huge palace of the Emperor Diocletian. No expense was spared in its construction, marble came from Italy and columns and sphinxes came from Egypt. What makes the palace so special is that during medieval times it was fully integrated into the fabric of the town with a jumble of buildings grafted onto it. This meant for example the temple of Jupiter became a baptistry. All the more fascinating is that today 3,000 people still live within its walls. You will find surprises at every turn: there are tall medieval buildings lining the streets but buttressed by unmistakable roman columns! This afternoon we will have a guided walking tour of this fascinating complex before returning to our hotel in time for dinner.

Day 4

This morning we depart Omis heading south, our journey hugging the beautiful coastline. We then traverse the river Neretva delta, a veritable haven for bird life before arriving at the ancient town of Mostar perched on lofty cliffs overlooking the turbulent river below. Once a provincial capital of the Ottoman Empire then annexed by the Austro-Hungarians, Mostar has changed little over the years and its appearance reflects this multitude of influences. There are 16th century mosques, Turkish houses and the fine 19th century town hall which could have been transplanted from central Europe! You can still see and hear skilled artisans making all sorts of metal goods in their tiny workshops much as they must have done for hundreds of years. Mostar's principal claim to fame is its amazing bridge linking the two halves of the old town. Constructed of stone centuries ago, it was damaged during the 1990's but has been totally reconstructed as a symbol of reconciliation. We then continue to Dubrovnik staying for four nights half-board. Our hotel is the excellent three-star superior rated [Argosy Hotel](#), a superb contemporary hotel and exceptionally well managed. It is situated on a rocky promontory into the Adriatic and therefore enjoys beautiful sea-views on three sides. All rooms have private facilities, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and hairdryer. The hotel provides us with an excellent relaxing base for continuing our tour.

Day 5

Dubrovnik, an independent city-state for much of its history, has evolved differently to the rest of Croatia. The city threw off its Venetian masters in medieval times and founded a commercial empire trading with the eastern Mediterranean, France, Spain and later the Ottoman Empire. As so often happens, the city started to reflect its resultant wealth. Today this wonderfully beautiful baroque city nestles behind its huge imposing ramparts in a situation of outstanding natural beauty. The main avenue, lined by unspoilt intimate cafes, is completely paved with marble, which dazzlingly reflects the midday sun giving credence to its description 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Throughout the city you will find a wonderful array of monasteries, beautifully decorated churches and civic buildings dating from the 14th century, reflecting Dubrovnik's outstanding artistic heritage. This morning we have a guided walking tour seeing all this and more, and during the afternoon you are free to explore at your leisure.

Day 6

Today you have a free day, so what is it to be? Enjoy a coffee on the main square, watching the world go by, take a relaxing cruise around the picturesque harbour crammed with luxurious looking yachts, take a stroll around the city walls, soak up the sunshine, enjoy a leisurely lunch or perhaps simply catch up on some reading. The choice is yours.

Day 7

Today we take the short drive south to Europe's newest country, the outstandingly beautiful Montenegro. We soon cross the border, still following the sapphire-blue coastline and prepare to be truly amazed by the views we take in en route! Our journey takes us around a huge inland sea, which resembles a lake with the topography rather reminiscent of Switzerland. Reflections of the surrounding mountains dance on the water whilst sleepy, picturesque and beautifully timeless fishing villages line the shoreline. Our first stop is the medieval town of Kotor, nestling below a mountainside, in probably Montenegro's most dramatic setting. Walled, with a labyrinth of cobbled streets surrounding its Orthodox Cathedral that radiate to quiet intimate squares, it really is a delight to explore. Its bustling market really is from yesteryear, with individual stalls selling local homemade cheese, cured hams, honey and Mediterranean vegetables of every colour, shape and size with a refreshing lack of standardisation! You can try some of the local wine too, which, despite its lack of international exposure, really is rather good - and exceptional value. We continue our journey visiting the medieval town of Budva and then cross the inland sea by boat returning to Dubrovnik at the end of the afternoon. UK passport holders do not require visas for this holiday. Please be aware however, that holders of other passports may require visas for entry into Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro as well as Croatia. We advise you to check with the relevant embassy prior to booking.

Day 8

Today a coach will return us to the airport at the appropriate time.

Price Includes

The price of this holiday is per person, based on two people sharing a twin room. Single rooms are subject to availability at the relevant supplement. The price includes 7 nights half board three and four-star accommodation as mentioned, return flights as indicated, all airport taxes, all touring as mentioned, guided visits of Dubrovnik and Split, all transfers, services of tour manager throughout.

Your Accommodation

Four-star rated Hotel Plaza in Omis. The hotel is shaded by aromatic pine forests, and is set in a cove surrounded by one of the most beautiful coastlines in Dalmatia. The hotel is approximately a ten-minute stroll from the centre of Omis, extremely comfortable and has direct access to the beach. It has a wellness centre, restaurant, and comfortable bar with a delightful terrace overlooking the beach – ideal to watch the sun set after a hard day's sightseeing. The rooms are extremely tastefully appointed in a very fresh, modern style, all with private facilities.

The excellent three-star superior rated Hotel Argosy, a superb contemporary hotel and exceptionally well managed. It is situated on a rocky promontory into the Adriatic and therefore enjoys beautiful sea-views on three sides. All rooms have private facilities, balcony, air-conditioning, mini-bar, safe and hairdryer.