

# Croatia

**Official Name:** Republic of Croatia

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** Citizens of the United States do not require a visa to travel to Croatia for up to a 90 day stay. Passport is required and it needs to be valid for at least six months from the arrival date to Croatia. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

**Capital:** Zagreb

**Population:** 4.4 million (UN, 2010).

**Ethnic Make-up:** Croat 89.6%, Serb 4.5%, other 5.9% (including Bosnian, Hungarian, Slovene, Czech, and Roma).

**Languages:** Croatian is the official language nationwide. German and English are the most common second languages. French, Italian, Czech and Hungarian are also spoken.

**Predominant Religions:** Around 87% of the population defines itself as Roman Catholic, nearly 3% as Orthodox, 2.1% atheist and only 1.1% Muslim.

**Currency:** Kuna (kn); 1 Kuna = 100 Lipa.

**Time Zone:** Croatia is one hour ahead of Greenwich Medium Time (+1 GMT). Croatia observes Daylight Saving Time from March to October.

**Voltage Requirements:** Croatian electricity is 220v, 50Hz; the two-prong European plug is standard. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adapter in order to use U.S. appliances.

**Telephone Codes:** +385 - International Country Code; +1-Zagreb; + 20-Dubrovnik; +21- Split.

**Water:** The faucet water is safe to drink though you may want to stick with bottled water for drinking. Bottled water is widely available.

**Climate & Weather:** The climate is Mediterranean along the Adriatic coast, meaning warm dry summers and relatively mild though sometimes wet weather winters. With 2,600 hours of sunlight on average yearly, it is one of the sunniest coastlines in Europe! Average temperatures during summer should lie in the mid-to-high 20s °C/77-86°F, although it is more likely that you'll have temperatures well into the 30s °C/high 80s or low 90s °F. Winters are obviously cooler, although temperatures never really get below about 5°C/41°F. The interior of the country has a continental climate with hot summers and cold, snowy winters and average temperatures range from near freezing in January to about 25°C/77°F in August.

**History:** Croatia has a long and eventful history. Greek colonies were present on its coast and islands, Celtic tribes are thought to have settled inland, it formed part of the Roman Empire for several hundred years, and was gradually colonized by the Slavs from the 6th century AD. An independent Croatian state was established in the 10th century, but lasted less than 200 years. Over subsequent centuries it was alternately ruled by Hungary, Venice, Napoleon and Austria. After World War I, a new 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' was created in 1918, and following the Second World War, Croatia became part of Tito's Yugoslavia along with Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia, and Macedonia. On 25 June 1991, Croatia declared itself independent from Yugoslavia, a move that resulted in the Homeland War (1991-1995), which saw Croatia pitted against the might of the Yugoslav army and Serb irregular forces. In December 1991 the German government recognized Croatian independence, with the rest of the world quickly following suit. The death of the country's first democratically elected president, Franjo Tudjman, in December 1999 heralded a new era of Croatian politics; Stjepan Mesić stepped into the fold and Croatia adopted a more conciliatory approach at home and abroad. In July 2013, Croatia became a part of the EU.

**Geography:** Croatia serves as a gateway to Eastern Europe. It lies along the east coast of the Adriatic Sea and shares a border with Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovenia. The republic swings around like a boomerang 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. The coastline is highly indented, with over 1100 islands and islets lying offshore.

**Currency Exchange** Foreign currency can be exchanged at post offices, banks, and exchange offices. Numerous hotels and travel agencies also will exchange currency, but beware of the service charges, which can be as high as 3 percent. Credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs (aka Bankomat in Croatia) are readily available in all resorts, towns and cities in Croatia, in banks, supermarkets, airports and elsewhere. The exchange rate you'll receive at ATM will be fairly good, and there may be a small service charge, which depends on your bank back home. Local banks may also charge an operating fee on top of this. \*Although Croatia did join the EU on 1st July 2013, there are no concrete plans to adopt the Euro as the country's official currency

#### Currency Exchange Rates:

US Dollar	Kuna
\$10	62.44
\$20	124.89
\$30	187.33
\$40	249.77
\$50	312.21
\$60	374.66
\$70	437.1
\$80	499.54
\$90	561.99
\$100	624.43

\*Rate used: 1.00 USD = 6.24 Kuna

\*\*This Table has been produced as a guide. Rate fluctuations may apply.

**Tipping:** A 10 percent to 15 percent gratuity is expected in upscale restaurants. Otherwise, it is considered polite to leave any coins from your change on the table in cafes and restaurants. A 10 percent tip for other service providers (taxi drivers, hotel personnel, and others) is the norm, as is a tip for anyone who helps you carry your luggage or conducts a tour.

**Dress Code:** Lightweights and beachwear (including sun protection) for summer. Medium weights clothing for winter with heavy, warm clothing for inland areas. It is a good idea to pack waterproofs at any time of year.

**Cuisine:** Croatian food draws upon a variety of major European influences. On the northern coast of Istria there is a heavy Italian vibe, further down the coast in Dalmatia there are sea food specialties to die for. In contrast there are influences off the filling Strudel and Schnitzels that you find in central Europe. Following are items you'll find nearly everywhere in Croatia: *Burek* -Throughout former Yugoslavia, this heavy cheese, meat or apple pastry was the breakfast of choice for farmers and fishermen. You'll see big trays of the stuff in gracing the windows of pastry shops and fast food joints. *Cevapcici* (pronounced Chev ap chee tse)- Croatia's answer to the hamburger, this meatball is made of spicy beef or pork. *Raznjici* (pronounced razh nyee chee)-Another quick treat, this is a sort of shish kebab. *Palacinke* (pronounced pala chink eh)-This crepe-like dessert is a pancake often stuffed with walnuts or chocolate and sometimes served with ice cream. *Blitva*-Swiss chard boiled and served with olive oil, potatoes and garlic is a simple and delicious side dish that's served throughout Croatia. *Pag Cheese*-Made on the island of Pag, this sharp, sheep's milk cheese is a delicacy throughout Croatia. It's often served as an appetizer, thinly sliced with olives on the side. *Bakalar*- Dried cod is prepared a variety of ways and is traditionally served on Christmas Eve. *Pizza*- Even if it wasn't invented in Croatia, the quality of the pizza on offer is excellent. The dough is usually homemade and tends to be thick and bread-like.

## **For More Information**

### **Tourist Offices**

Croatian National Tourist Office: 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4003, New York 10118. Telephone: 1-800-829-4416 toll-free in USA; Fax: (212) 279-8683. Website: <http://croatia.hr/en-GB/Homepage>.

### **Croatian Embassies**

**U.S.:** Embassy of Croatia: 2343 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., 20008. Phone: (202) 588-5899 (voice), (202) 588-8937(fax), web: [washington@mvep.hr](mailto:washington@mvep.hr).

### **US Embassies/Consulates in Croatia**

US Embassy in Zagreb : Ulica Thomasa Jeffersona 2, 10010 Zagreb, Croatia. Telephone: 385-1-661-2200., website: <http://zagreb.usembassy.gov>.

\*In Case of Emergency: If you are an American citizen with an after-hours emergency, please call the emergency number- +385 1 661 2400 (if calling from outside of Croatia), 01 661 2400 (If calling from within Croatia).

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### **Recommended Guidebooks**

- DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Croatia by DK by Leandro Zoppe
- Top 10 Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian Coast by James Stewart
- Lonely Planet Croatia (Travel Guide) by Lonely Planet