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**ACTIVE DISCOVER CROATIA**  
adventure program



Day  
**01**

Saturday

# Welcome to Zagreb



In Zagreb you can feel the atmosphere of the metropolis, but to the luck of its residents and visitors, you will also enjoy personal encounters. From the hotel to the theatre, around the Upper Town or along the narrow Lower Town streets, nothing has been lost in time... And you can visit it all on foot – it surely brings particular emotions.

There is something particular in the way the leaves rustle in autumn while you walk around Zrinjevac, in the light of gas lamps of the Upper Town and in the songs of street artists. There is something yours only in the atmosphere of Zagreb's cafes in the evening, while the sunset washes the last traces of daylight. There is something in the lights of candles of the Cathedral or the Stone Gates...

And while the fast and busy business rhythm disappears quietly in the game of light and shadow, another one arises inviting you to timeless or modern theatrical performances, concerts, restaurants or nightclubs. Zagreb is a special city, a story that is never finished, a story to which you too add some magic. Zagreb has its soul. And you, you have Zagreb...



# Gradec (Zagreb)

Gradec or Grič is the name for the old part of the city of Zagreb on the hills of Medvednica from which was developed, together with Kaptol, the modern city of Zagreb.

In 1242 king Bela IV gave the Golden Bull and declared the city “**a free royalcity on Gradec, thehillof Zagreb**”. Between 1242 and 1266 the city was fortified with walls and towers and its shape has not changed a lot until the present days. In the Middle Ages, only a small part of streets had names: Srednja (eng. Middle, today Ćirilometodska street), Blatna (eng. Muddy, today Demetrova), Mesarska (eng. Butcher’s, today Matoševa street), Duga (eng. Long, today Radićeva street), Popovska (eng. Priest’s, today part of the Opatička street). Gradec (Grič) is today a part of the city neighbourhood Upper Town – Medveščak.

## City Gates

The city had five, or rather six gates. Three bigger and two (three) smaller gates:

**Bigger gates** - Mesnička Gate (west), New Gate (later Opatička, north) and Stone Gate (east). **Smaller gates** - Poljska (next to Lotrščak Tower, south), Surovedverce (east) and small Mesnička Gate (west).

Bigger Gates (Stone, New and Mesnička) were big, foursquare towers through which you could enter the city. Smaller gates were much simpler and only the pedestrians could pass through them. The keys to the gates were held by the citizens who lived nearby. Before closing, the bell **Lotrščak** in the Tower in the City Hall would ring for quarter of an hour to remind people who were outside of the city buildings to come home immediately. Only the Stone Gates have survived until today.



## Cultural and historical buildings

The centre of Gradec is **St Marko's Square** with St Marko's Church (built in the 13th century in Romanesque style, restructured in the second half of the 14th century and then renovated between 1876 and 1882 after the earthquake in the Gothic Revival style, and Ban's Palace (Banski dvori) which is the headquarters of the Croatian Government, whereas the headquarters of the Croatian Parliament is on the other side of the Square. Ćirilometodska Street leads from St Marko's Square on the south, towards **Lotrščak Tower**, and in this street there are the Old City Hall, Greek Catholic Co-cathedral of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Museum of the Naive Art and the Museum of Broken Relationships.

Nearby there are St Catherine's Church (1620-31), Jesuit monastery (1641-45; today Klovićevi dvori Gallery), Jesuit academy (1607 gymnasium, 1662 academy), Zrinski Palace (17th century), convent

of the Poor Clares (1647-50; today Museum of the City of Zagreb), Baroque Palace Pejačević (1797; before a theatre, today Croatian Science Museum), Old City Hall that is the headquarters of the Assembly of the City of Zagreb, Palaces Dverce, Paravić, Magdalenić-Drašković, Walter, Amadé, Ratkaj, etc. Adja-

cent, but outside of the city walls, Kaptol's canons built a big, fortified Tower Popov in 1247. This was the place where they hid themselves and their treasure in case of the enemy attack.

Since 1903, Tower Popov is home to the Zagreb Observatory.

During WWII, tunnel Grič was built under Gradec. Gradec and Kaptol were united on 7th September 1850, which marks the beginning of the contemporary Zagreb. After organizing the city's administration in 1999, Gradec becomes a part of the city neighbourhood Upper Town – Medveščak.



# Nature Park Medvednica



Nature Park **Medvednica** is situated on the north of Zagreb. The highest peak is Sljeme (1033 m), a well-known skiing resort with well-equipped touristic facilities and the home of FIS race Snow Queen Trophy. Thanks to its extraordinary natural beauties and the proximity of the capital, it has become the favourite promenade of the citizens of Zagreb. Inside the park, there are eight forest reserves, while three trees are protected by the law as natural monuments – Gupčeva lipa (linden tree) in Donja Stubica, old yew tree on Šupljak and old yew tree next to Horvat's steps.

Medieval towns of **Medvedgrad and Susedgrad**, the mine Zrinski from the 16th and 17th century, and the castles Gornja Bistra and Golubovec represent some of the heritages of this nature park. There are also numerous mountain lodges, chapels and the cave Veternica – natural habitat of several types of bats. The visitors can adopt a bat for 150kn.

Besides numerous hiking, walking and cycling paths, in the Nature Park Medvednica there are also several educational paths, such as Miroslavec, Bliznec, Horvat's 500 steps and Bistra.

## Fortresses and castles of Medvednica

The most preserved fortress of Medvednica is Medvedgrad, built in the 13th century. It served for the defence of Kaptol and bishops' land.

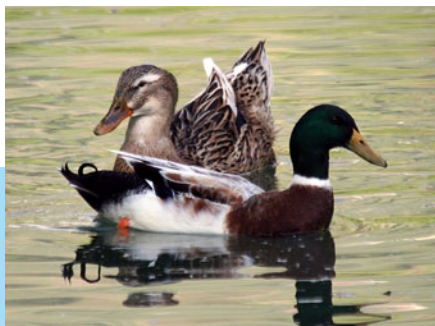
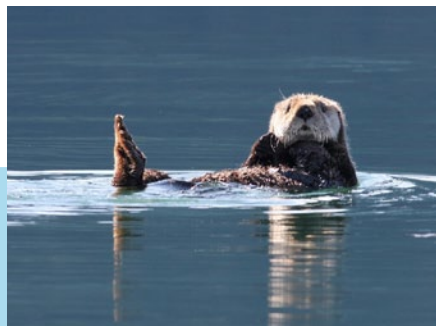
The second fortress is Susedgrad, also built in the 13th century. It is famous for a battle that occurred at the foot of its walls during the Peasants' Revolt. Also, next to Gornja Stubica there is the Castle Oršić built in 1756 on the remnants of a 13th century fortress. In 1973 the castle was turned into the Peasants' Revolt Museum.



# Nature Park Lonjsko polje



Link



Nature Park Lonsko Polje is the largest protected swamp area, not only in Croatia, but also in the whole Danube area, with the total surface of 50 650 ha. It is located in the alluvial plain of the River Sava in the central basin of the River Sava, between Sisak and Stara Gradiška. It consists of three fields: **Lonjsko polje**, **Mokro polje** and **Poganovo polje**. Although it is protected by the Ramsar Convention of February 3rd, 1993, Lonjsko polje is one of the most endangered swamp areas in the world.

The most significant environmental element in the Nature Park Lonjsko polje are floods that can happen at any time of the year, due to extraordinary constellation of the river Sava and its tributaries. Water waves are often very large and the park has a very important role as a system of flood protection for the local population. This micro-relief creates a mosaic of different habitats typical for the flooded areas, which results in a rich variety of different features, such as different kinds of wet forests, grasslands, meadows, various types of swamp areas and wetlands, as well as ditches and canals that are the result of years of human influence. The park area of about 12,000 ha of pastures is used by the cattle of the villagers. This is the last examples of the cultural landscape that stretched across central Europe until the late 19th century. With the highest concentration of indigenous breeds (Croatian Posavac, Turopolje pig, the Slavonian-Srijemgray cattle) in Croatia, they represent a unique way of managing the pastures.

At the same time, it is one of the most important habitats for many rare and endangered plants and animals.

According to the criteria of the guidelines for the birds of the European Union, the park belongs to the category of **important habitats for birds** (Important Birds Area - IBA). Among other species, there are white storks, spoonbills, white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), wild ducks, buzzards, corn crakes (*crex*) and small cormorants (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*). There are also some endangered species, such as prairie falcons (*Falco cherrug*), ferruginous ducks (*Aythya nyroca*), and others. In the park, there is the village Čigoč, where almost every house has „its own“ nest of storks, which is why the village was declared the „**European Stork Village**“ in 1994.

Lonjskopolje is the home of many other animals such as otters, Bechstein's bats (*myotis bechsteini*), the European pond turtles (*Emys orbicularis*), the European tree frogs (*Hyla arborea*) and Danube newts (*Triturus dobrogicus*). There are also several types of fish: the European mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*), sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*), Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*), Balkan Loach (*Cobitis elongata*), Danube gudgeon (*Romanogobio uranoscopus*), pigo (*Rutilus pigus*), schraetzer (*Gymnocephalus schraetzer*), streber (*Zingel streber*); and insects such as Large copper butterfly, the Blue ground beetle and endangered *Rosalia longicorn*.

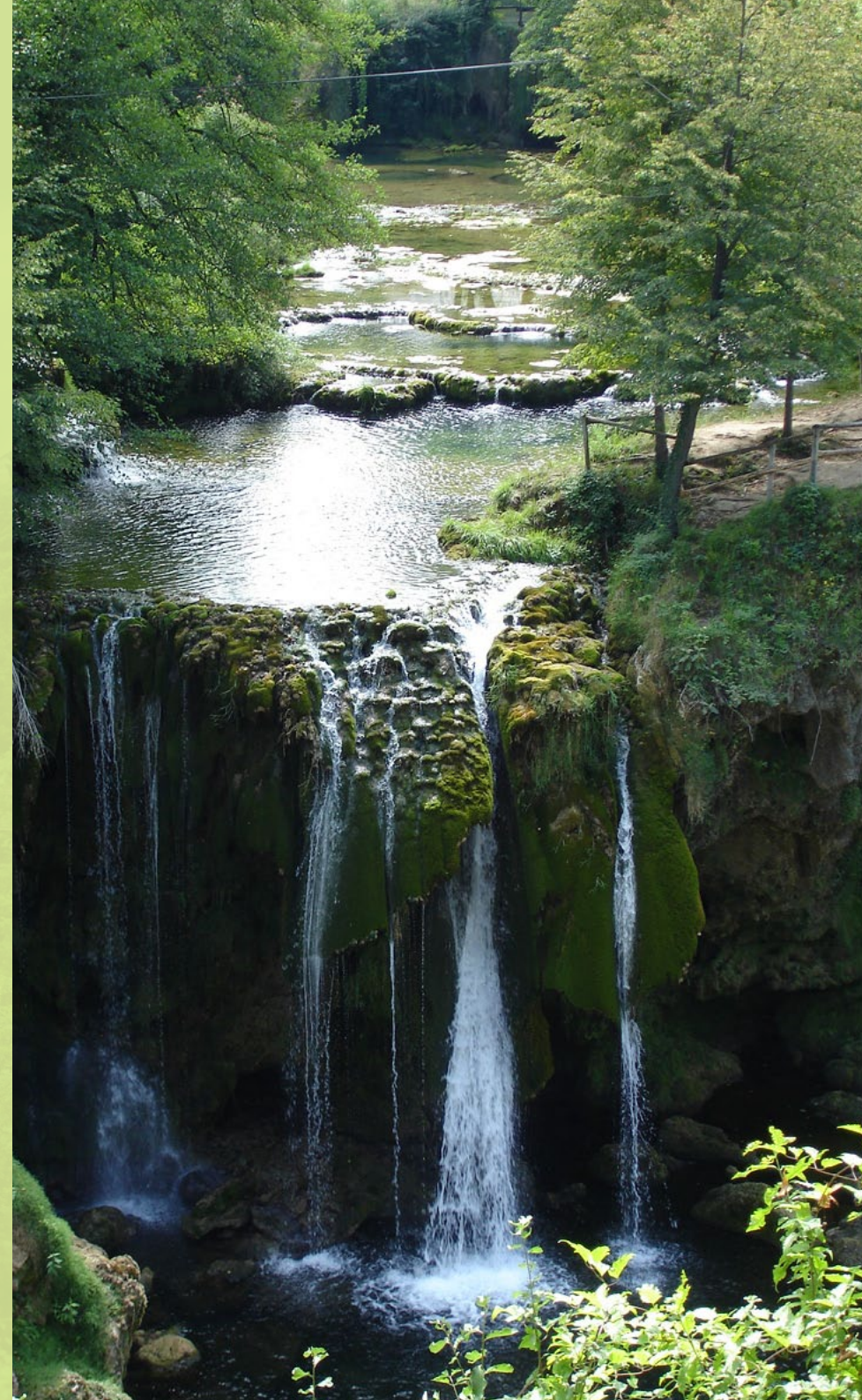
# Rastoke

Rastoke is a spectacular play of nature in the place where the river Slunjčica flows into the river Korana. The nature played with blue-green waters of the river Slunjčica and divided them into a number of small lakes, streams and waterfalls, the most beautiful of which are Buk, Hrvoje and Vilinakosa. In the holes of Rastoke limestones, there are now otters who came back after a long period of being absent.

Rastoke is in fact an introduction to Plitvice Lakes so it is often called “small Plitvice”. Unlike Plitvice, Rastoke is special because a human village was built there 300 years ago, and now there are mills intertwined with beautiful green islets and rocks. The first mill dates back to the 17th century, although it is assumed that it is even older. The highest number of houses was constructed at the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, mostly out of wood and tufa.

Tufa is a hollow-ish type of limestone that is created in the foot of rivers and serves as a great construction material.

What nature had been creating for thousands of years and what the man then added respecting the nature fit together perfectly – limestone rocks, old mills and the city of Slunj are an incredible and unique complex. Thanks to this historical, ethnographical and constructional cultural heritage, in 1969 Rastoke was included into a Registry of immovable cultural monuments of the Regional Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of the City of Zagreb.



Day  
**03**

Monday

# National Park Plitvička jezera

The Plitvice Lakes National Park is a special geological and hydrogeological karst phenomenon. It was declared a national park on April 8th, 1949. It is the biggest, the oldest and the most visited national park in Croatia. It includes an afforested mountain area with 16 lakes of different sizes, filled with crystal blue-green water. The lakes receive water from the nearby streams and creeks and are connected one to another with cascades and waterfalls. Travertine barriers that had developed over tens of thousands of years are one of the basic characteristics of this Park. The special geographical position and specific climate characteristics have amounted to the creation of numerous natural phenomena and rich flora and fauna. Limestone rocks have been forming sinkholes and sloughs in karst between the nearby mountain since the Pleistocene. Upper Lakes on the south consist mostly of dolomites, whereas the Lower Lakes on the north consist of limestone rocks.

Ample forests, outstanding natural beauties of lakes and waterfalls, lush flora and fauna, autumn colour contrasts, paths through woods, wooden bridges, etc. together make an incredible unity that was proclaimed UNESCO World Heritage in 1979, which makes it one of the first ever in the world to get this status.

The national park consists of **16 lakes** that overflow and pour one into another in an airline of 5460 m. The lakes are divided into Upper Lakes and Lower Lakes. Upper lakes are: Prošćansko jezero, Ciginovac, Okrugljak, Batinovac, Veliko jezero, Malo jezero, Vir, Galovac, Milino jezero, Gradinsko jezero, Veliki Burget and Kozjak. Lower Lakes are: Milanovac, Gavanovac, Kaluđerovac and Novakovića Brod.





Day  
**04**

Tuesday

# Plitvička jezera



The lakes are filled with water from the rivers Crna (= black) and Bijela (= white) and their tributaries, and the river Rječica with its tributaries. There are many sources and all are very rich with water. These are typical karst springs that developed at faults of various geological forms. The biggest lake is Kozjak with the surface of 81.5ha, while its depth of 47 m makes it also the deepest lake. Lake Prošćansko is the second largest lake that extends from the south to north in the length of 2,5 km.

Upper Lakes are mostly made of dolomites, while the Lower Lakes are made of limestone. There are around 30 caves. Tufa barriers that divide one lake from another developed from the precipitated limestone. Tufa barriers are very sensitive and easily breakable so it needs to be rigorously protected. The three main elements are: high amount of water, tufa generators and tufa. Without water there would be no lakes, no waterfalls and no lush vegetation. Tufa generators are plants that create tufa rocks and change the shape of the lakes and riverbeds.

The phenomena of the Plitvice Lakes are a result of hundred-years-long processes and limestone precipitation that is highly present in the waters of this karst area. Tufa rocks are created by sedimentation of limestone.

Another particularity of the Plitvice Lakes is the fact that the lakes are connected. It is not possible to analyse every lake itself due to constant changes. Water power of the Upper and Lower Lake complexes continuously change the lakes and the surrounding landscape. As a whole, this complex represents a very sensitive and instable system.



# Nature Park Velebit

Velebit Nature Park is the most significant endemic centre of flora and fauna in Croatia. On Velebit there are 1854 registered plant species, 79 of which are endemic. Just because of this, the area is often referred to as the „centre of endemism“. Their habitats are rocks and springs on the western slope of Velebit, the caves and the area along the rivers Krupa and Zrmanja, and alpine meadows and pastures. The most famous among the endemic species is surely *Degenia* (*Degenia velebitica*), but the rest of the species – such as *Sibiraea altaiensis* ssp. *Croatica*, *Campanula velebitica*, *Campanula fenestrellata*, *Primula kitaibeliana* or *Dinthus velebiticus* don't lack behind in their beauty.

The prevailing habitats are forests. Meadows and pastures are especially important because they guard the biodiversity. The most common are beech forests with large dead nettles, in the areas below 900 m.

At the altitudes above 800 m, there are beech-fir forests, while at the altitudes above 1000m there are beech forests with moor grass (*Sesleria autumnalis*-Fagetum) on rocky plateaus. Between there and the peaks on 1650 m of altituded, there are beech and sycamore (*Polysticholonchitis*-Fagetum) forests. This area is covered with snow, with a wind so strong that the trees bend. Velebit is the home of many beasts: brown bears (*Ursus arctos*), wolves (*Canis lupus*) and Eurasian lynxes (*Lynx lynx*), as well as the habitat of otters (*Lutra lutra*).

The Ornithological Institute of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences marked this area for inclusion in the European network Natura 2000 since as many as 18 species of birds meet the strict criteria. Here there are nesting places of the ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the Eurasian pygmy owl (*Glaucidium passerinum*), the Boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*) and the white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*).

Velebit Nature Park has its own separate, underground story. It is exciting to replace the daylight with caves, overhead landscapes with underground ones. Cerovac caves are the largest in Croatia. The complex consists of three caves, Lower, Middle and Upper, 5,5 kilometres of which have been examined.

Stalactites, stalagmites, columns, curtains, cascades and cave pearls are all fascinating decorations of the underground that cannot leave anyone indifferent. Even when you leave the cave, the impression remains, there, in the fascinating, underground world of the Nature Park Velebit.

The marine pearl of the Park is the Bay Zavratinica, always at the top of the list of Adriatic's most beautiful bays. The Nature Park Velebit is a place where you can go high in the sky and deep in the underground.



Link



Day  
05

Wednesday

# National Park Paklenica



Thanks to its unique natural base, exceptional geomorphological forms and outstanding forests, the area of Velika and Mala Paklenica was declared a national park already in 1949. The main reason was to protect the most preserved and the biggest forest system in Dalmatia. It needs to be mentioned that Paklenica was first declared a national park in 1929, but this law had to be revised every year, which of course wasn't done.

The National park Paklenica covers the area of 95 km<sup>2</sup>, on the southern hills of Velebit Mountain, below the highest peaks of Vaganski vrh (1757 m) and Sveto brdo (1753 m). It includes the area of rich flows of Velika and Mala Paklenica, or rather their well-known canyons carved into the southern slopes of Velebit, and a large surrounding area. In this national park, there are several caves and pits, the most famous and the biggest being the Cave Manita, a cave above the canyon of Velika Paklenica and the pit Vodarica between the canyons of Velika and Mala Paklenica.

On a relatively small area there are numerous, different geomorphological forms, lush flora and fauna, attractive landscapes and untouched nature. The diversity of the wildlife is conditioned by the climate and a rich and diverse geological history.

Famous landmarks of the National park Paklenica are indigenous black pine forests, several types of beech forests and deep canyons with streams – flows of Velika and Mala Paklenica. A larger space of NP Paklenica is characterized by a rich and diverse cultural heritage.



Day  
**06**

Thursday

# Nacionalni park Paklenica



Day  
07

Friday

# Zadar

The City of Zadar is the city with a 3000 year old history and outstanding cultural heritage, It is the city that will always offer something new and completely unique. Located in the heart of the Adriatic, Zadar is the urban centre of Northern Dalmatia, as well as administrative, economic, cultural and politic centre of the region in which there are 75000 people. The City of Zadar combines the beauties of its past and all the benefits a modern traveller could need into a number of touristic attractions.

Zadar is one of the most popular touristic destinations in Croatia that was declared **“the centre of the party on the Adriatic”** by the London Times, while the Guardian describes it as **“the new Croatian capital of cool”**. Day or night, Zadar will amaze you with its special atmosphere and rich life. In summer, Zadar hosts Musical Evening in St Donat, Zadar Summer Theatre Festival, Festival of Contemporary Music, Kalelarg Art – Street art festival, and an urban festival Zadar of your dreams. Surely you can enjoy the Night of full moon, Millennium Jump or some of the concerts of world famous stars.



Day  
08

Saturday

# Nature Park Telašćica

The Bay of Telašćica is situated in the central part of the eastern coast on the Adriatic Sea, on the south-eastern part of the Island of Dugi Otok. Thanks to its extraordinary beauty, richness and importance, this bay, surrounded with 13 island and islets and with 6 islets in the bay itself, was declared a nature park in 1988. It got the status of the protected area already in 1980 due to its incredibly valuable wildlife and vegetation, geological and geomorphological phenomena, valuable symbioses in the sea and interesting archaeological heritage.

The area of the Nature Park Telašćica is an area full of opposites and quiet and peaceful beaches. On one side there is a flat coast line and on the other side the coast is wild and steep. There are pine and oak woods on the one side and bare rocky ground on the other side, vineyards and olive groves and degraded vegetation that covers dry habitats.

Three basic phenomena represent the basic characteristics of this area: the unique Bay of Telašćica – the safest, most beautiful and largest natural bay on the Adriatic Sea in which there are 25 small beaches – steeps of the Island of Dugi Island or “stene”, which rise 161 m above the sea and descend 90 m in depth, and last but not least, the salt lake Mir with its healing properties. The most picturesque island is the Island of Karina and the most unusual one is for sure the Island of Taljurić. The total surface of this nature park is 70.50 km<sup>2</sup> – 25.92 km on the Island of Dugi Otok and the nearby islets, and 44.55 km<sup>2</sup> on the sea. Nearby there are beautiful meadows and on the slopes there is Mediterranean vegetation with around 500 plants and an equally rich fauna. Marine world has over 300 plants and 300 animal species.

More than 2500 sunny hours a year, average temperature of more than 7°C in January and average ye-

arly temperature of 16°C, these are the characteristics of this climate. In winter, the sea is on average 13°C and in summer 23°C. Telašćica has been inhabited since ancient times and the proof of this are the remains of Roman constructions in Mala Proversa, as well as numerous pre-Romanesque churches, the most beautiful of which is St John's Church in Stivanje polje. There is also a record about fishing from the end of the 10th century, which proves that fishing in Croatia originates exactly here.

In this nature park it is possible to scuba dive in several, attractive locations near the cliffs and walk around some interesting places, while the beautiful view from the Grpašćak cannot be missed. This and many more has been attracting and continues to attract visitors to the Bay of Telašćica, Nature Park of the Republic of Croatia which falls into the category of highly protected parts of nature. Surely, it deserves it.



Link



# National park Kornati



Link

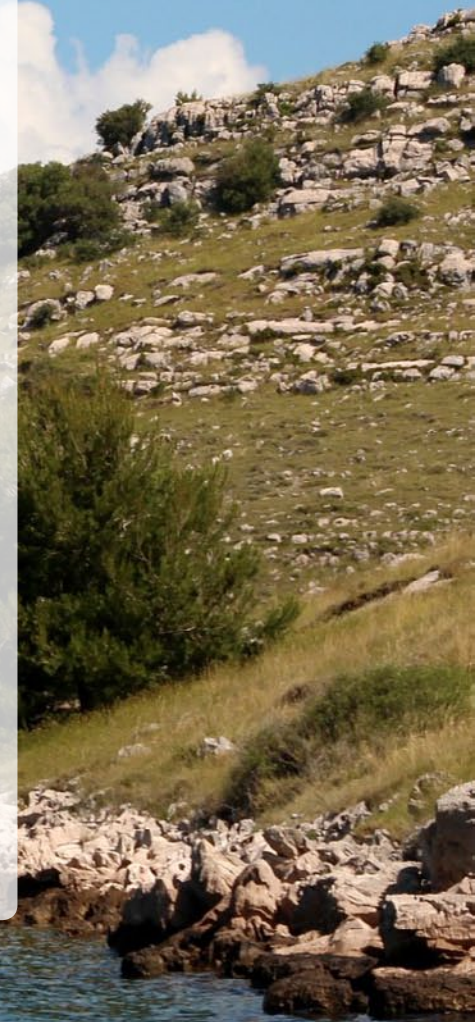


National Park Kornati is the biggest part of the Kornati aquatorium that was proclaimed a national park in 1980 due to its outstanding landscape, interesting geomorphology, rugged coastline and exceptional biodiversity of the marine system.

**The Kornati archipelago** is a separate and a unique group of islands located between Šibenik and Zadar. It covers the area of about 320 km<sup>2</sup> and includes 150 units of land, regularly or occasionally above-sea level. This most rugged island ecosystem in the Adriatic Sea, which includes as much as 12% of all Croatian islands (1264 islands, of which 67 are populated), and only 1% of the Croatian sea surface, has been drawing attention of many boaters, divers, hikers and other lovers of nature and what nature has to offer.

From Balabra to Samograd on a total length of 35 km or 19 NM (between the Island of Dugi Otok and the Islands of Žiraj) and from Mana to Gangarol in the width of 13 km or 7 NM (between the open Adriatic Sea and the Islands of Pašman, Vrgada and Murter) there are 4 series of islands divided into two groups: Upper Kornati – Sitski and Žutski series with total of 51 units of land, and Lower Kornati – Kornatski and Pučinski, or Piškersi, series with the total of 98 units of land. The northernmost islet of the Kornati archipelago is Mala Balabra ( 43° 56' 50" N, 15° 17' 00" E), the southernmost Južnji Opuh (43° 40' 29" N, 15° 30' 08" E), the westernmost Vela Aba (43° 52' 14" N, 15° 12' 42" E) and the southernmost Samograd (43° 41' 15" N, 15° 33' 42" E).

The average area of a Kornati island is only 0,47 km<sup>2</sup>, but it should be noted that the Island of Kornat (32,5 km<sup>2</sup>) and the Island of Žut (14,8 km<sup>2</sup>) account for 70% of the total land area. If we add Islands of Piškera, Levrnaka, Lavsa and Sita, this is 88% of the total land area of the Kornati archipelago (total area of 69 452 963 m<sup>2</sup>). Only 9 islands are larger than 1 km<sup>2</sup>, while there are 76 smaller than 1 ha. According to some data, the length of the coastline of the Island of Kornat is about 66 km, while the Lower Kornati (ie the NP „Kornati“), has the coastline of about 238 km. Given the aforementioned characteristics, we can surely name “rugged” as the most valuable asset of this labyrinth of land in the sea and sea in the land.



Day  
10

Monday

# National park Krka



Krka National Park became a national park on January 24th, 1985 and it is the seventh national park in Croatia famous for a great number of lakes and cascades. It got its name from the river Krka that flows through the park. This national park is located in central Dalmatia, downstream of Miljevac and only a few kilometres on the northeast of Šibenik. It covers the area along the river Krka which rises in the foot of the Dinara Mountain, flows through a 75 km long canyon and finishes in the Bay of Šibenik. The total area of the river is 142 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 25,6 km<sup>2</sup> are covered with water. Today the river Krka has seven tufa waterfalls and a total of 224 m long waterfalls. Its beauty represents a natural karst landscape that is best to visit in spring and summer when the nature is in full blossom and when you can take a bath in the crystal-clear water.

Skradinski buk, the longest waterfall on the river Krka, is one of the most famous natural beauties in Croatia. It is formed by tufa barriers, islan-

ds and lakes. It can be visited during the whole year thanks to a network of paths and bridges which enable a comfy and safe walk. On Skradinski buk there are renovated mills, rolling mills and water looms that have been using the power of water for centuries.

The hydropower plant Jaruga under the waterfall Skradinski buk is the second oldest hydropower plant in the world and the first one in Europe. It was built on August 28th, 1895, only three days after world's first hydro-power plant on Niagara Falls.

The island of Visovac is considered one of the most important natural and cultural heritages in the Republic of Croatia. Since 1445 there is a Franciscan Monastery of the Mother of Mercy and church of Our Lady of Visovac that, together with the beautiful landscape, creates a unique view and experience.





# Neretva Delta

Delta of the river Neretva is a valley on the south of the Croatian coast on the Adriatic Sea which river Neretva forms at its mouth. An initiative to protect the whole valley as a Neretva Delta Nature Park is in progress.

This delta covers the space of 12 000 hectares. From the city of Metković to the north and northeast part of its mouth, delta is surrounded by the hills of the mountain range Dinara, whereas in the south part there are Podgradinsko-Slivanjska hills. The most important cities are Ploče, Opuzen and Metković. Originally this delta comprised 12 tributaries, but after numerous and extensive land reclamation and cultivation of this agriculturally rich area, the number of tributaries has been reduced to just four, and

the previously swampy delta has largely been turned into a rich agricultural area, colloquially called **Croatian California**.

There are five localities in the area of the Neretva Delta that cover the surface of 1620 ha and are protected under categories of ornithological reserve (Pod Gredom, Prud and Orepak), ornithological-ichthyologic reserve (Neretva Delta) and protected landscape (Lake Desne, Modro oko). There have been noted 310 types of birds in the area of the Neretva Delta, 115 of which are nesting birds, whereas the city of Metković has the second largest ornithological collection in Europe.



Day  
12

Wednesday

# Ston



Ston is a medieval town whose history dates back to the early 14th century. This is the town with the longest stone wall in Europe (5.5 km), narrow and quiet streets, old elegant houses and traces of ancient cultures all over the city.

Its former value as a city of salt is confirmed even today in the world's oldest active saltworks, the one that stays true to its tradition and natural production of salt that remains the same as in the ancient times. Here we have the Bay Malo-

stonski with villages of Mali Ston, Hodilje, Luka, Duba and Zamaslina. Ston has been famous for cultivation of oysters and clams (mussels) ever since Roman times and Ston oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) brought glory to this region as a confirmed natural aphrodisiac. Not far from Ston there is a beautiful Bay of Prapratno with its centuries-old olive groves, Mediterranean maquis and a clean sandy beach. The Wall of Stone, a defence wall and one of the biggest medieval urbanistic fortifications has a total length of 5.5

km and about 40 towers and 5 fortresses. It connects Ston and Mali Ston.

The fortresses of Stone are without any doubt one of the greatest ventures of that time whose original length was 7000 m. It consists of the walls of Ston and Mali Ston and a Great Wall with three fortresses. The walls are fortified with 10 round and 31 square towers, and 6 semi-circular bastions. This complex defence system of Ston was built through almost four

centuries due to the adjustments to the terrain and development of arming. The walls had a major importance because they defended the saltworks – which brought 15 900 ducats to the Republic of Ragusa – shellfish farming and the city itself. In 1667, about 0.5 km of the walls was demolished in a terrible earthquake, and the walls were further demolished in the earthquakes of 1979 and 1996.

# Korčula

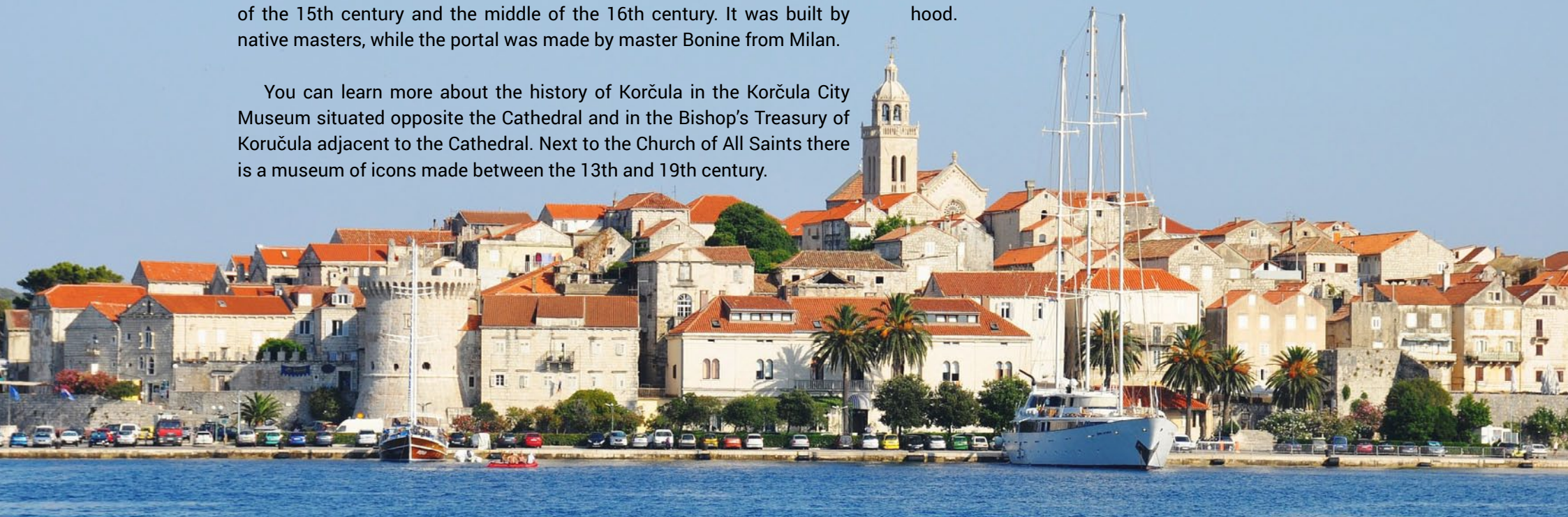
The City of Korčula developed on a small peninsula on the northeast part of the Island of Korčula, opposite the peninsula of Pelješac. Korčula is thought to be the most beautiful planned medieval city in Croatia.

The old part of the city is surrounded by medieval walls, while the streets are made in the form of fish bone. The urban design has been maintained until today, which is another special characteristic of the City of Korčula. Old Town used to be completely surrounded by high fortification walls with towers, and for a long period in history, it was connected to the mainland with a movable bridge. There are two entrances to the Old Town – Mainland Gates on the south and Maritime Gates on the west. Inside the Town there are 9 churches. The most beautiful examples of palaces and churches were made in the 15th and 16th century in the Gothic-Renaissance style. St Marko's Cathedral is in the most prominent part of the city, on top of a small peninsula, and it was constructed between the beginning of the 15th century and the middle of the 16th century. It was built by native masters, while the portal was made by master Bonino from Milan.

You can learn more about the history of Korčula in the Korčula City Museum situated opposite the Cathedral and in the Bishop's Treasury of Korčula adjacent to the Cathedral. Next to the Church of All Saints there is a museum of icons made between the 13th and 19th century.

In the Old Town you can visit the house of **Marko Polo** who is believed to have been born in 1254 in Korčula. He is also confirmed to have participated as a ship captain in a naval battle between Korčula and Venice (which at the time ruled over Korčula). He was captured by the Venetians and he spent the time in prison writing about his journeys to China. To honour that event, every year in the beginning of September there is a reconstruction of the battle called The Battle of Marko Polo.

One of the characteristics of Korčula, one that makes it recognizable in the whole world, is a knight-game *Moreša* in which a white and a black king, Osman and Moro, fight for the love of a girl – *bula*. This military dance has been present in Korčula for centuries. *Moreška* used to be present in many Mediterranean cities, whereas today it exists only in Korčula, and even though it is not an autochthonic tradition, it has become the symbol of Korčula, together with antique shipbuilding, stonemasonry and brotherhood.



Day  
**13**

Thursday

# National park Mljet



National park Mljet is the oldest marine park in the Mediterranean. It covers the northwest third of the island which is a total of 5375 hectares of protected land and the surrounding sea. This area was declared a national park in November 1960, while the marine part was included only in 1997. The status of the national park was awarded due to area's incredible cultural and historical heritage that includes the period of the Illyrian tribes, the Roman Empire and the Republic of Ragusa. However, the most important characteristic in achieving the status of the national park were the "salt" lakes, lush flora and fauna, a unique panoramic view of the "rugged" coast and its cliffs, rocks and island, and rich and always green

vegetation of the nearby hills which rise over the sea, hiding at the same time numerous karst valleys and ancient stone villages.

The salt lakes are a fascinating, unique, geological and oceanographic phenomenon in karst landscape, significant not only for Croatia, but for the world. The Large Lake that is 145 ha big and 46 m deep and the Small Lake that is 24 ha big and 29 m deep have been attracting scientist, nature lovers and tourist fascinated by the untouched nature for decades, not only because of its natural beauty, but also because of its yet-to-be-discovered secrets.

Day  
13

Thursday

# National park Mljet



From the open sea, through a barely visible strait (Soline channel), the sea enters in the land of the island and creates first the Large, and then the Small Lake through an even smaller strait. Although they are created by the sea water, they look like lakes so the residents gave them these names.

In the middle of the Large Lake there is yet another natural, cultural, historical and touristic treat – a picturesque **Islet of St Mary** with a church and a Benedictine monastery that date back to the 12th century. Due to its outstanding aesthetics and atmosphere, as well as a strong spiritual and cultural dimension, this islet became a symbol of the island and Mljet National Park.

Further more, the Island of Mljet is characterized by beautiful, rich, autochthone forest vegetation which could have been found all over the Mediterranean, whereas today it can rarely be found in its original state. This rich vegetation, especially in the third that is protected as the national park, is the reason why the island is called “the green island” ever since the antique times. The credits for the fact that today there are still five different types of woods go to the Benedictines who took excellent care of the island as they were for centuries its feudal lords. In fact, up until the late 18th centuries, they even forbid any inhabiting of the western part of the island, i.e. the one that today constitutes the biggest part of the national park.



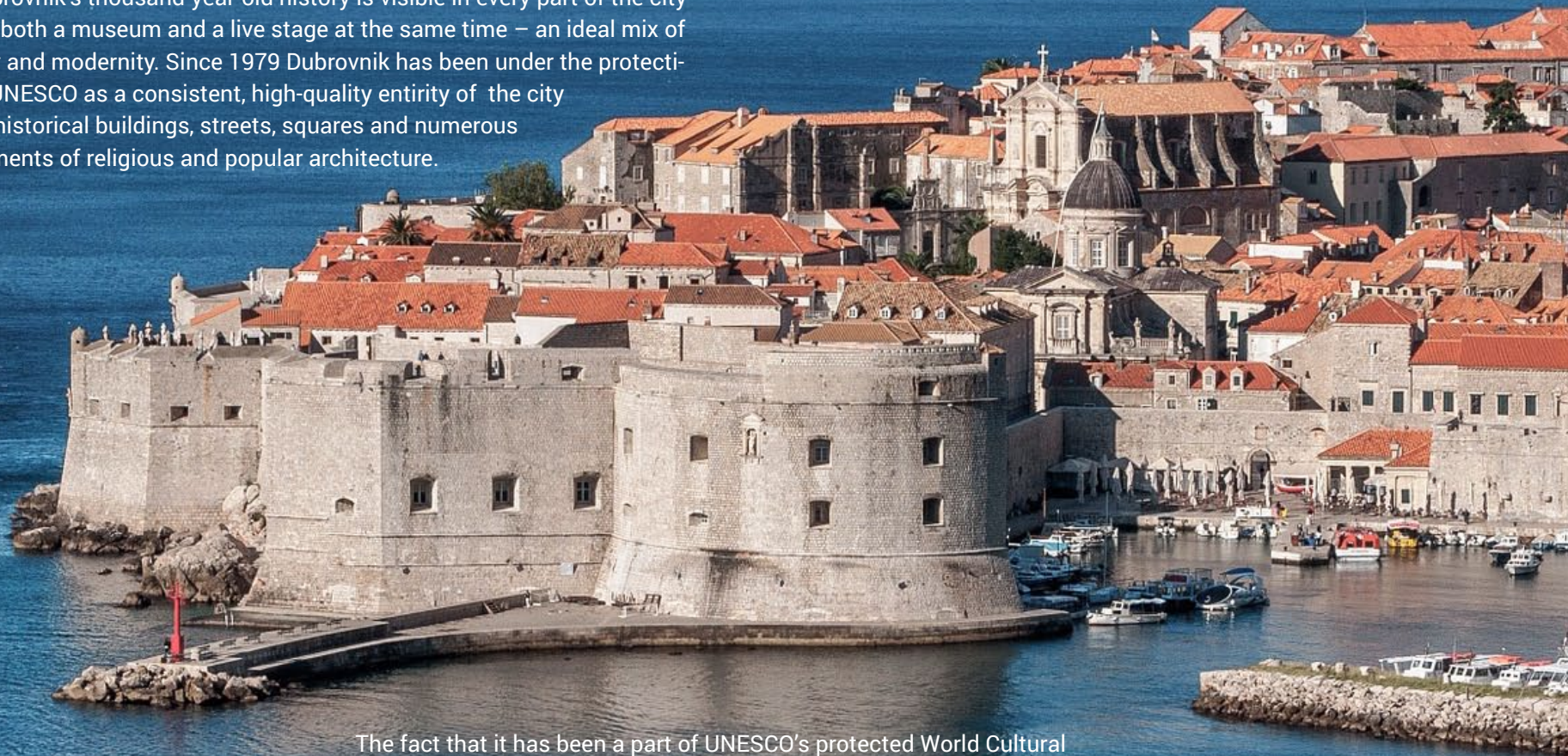
Day  
**13**

Thursday

# Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik's thousand-year-old history is visible in every part of the city that is both a museum and a live stage at the same time – an ideal mix of history and modernity. Since 1979 Dubrovnik has been under the protection of UNESCO as a consistent, high-quality entirety of the city walls, historical buildings, streets, squares and numerous monuments of religious and popular architecture.

The fact that it has been a part of UNESCO's protected World Cultural and Natural Heritage, as well as the fact that each and every part of the Old Town is a landmark or a monument and a part of the rich heritage left by our ancestors, makes Dubrovnik unique – it makes the city a live monument. This rich cultural heritage includes the historical Old Town with Stradun, Rector's Palace, St Blaise's Church, Sponza Palace, Orlando's Column and other interesting historical churches, cathedrals and city streets.



Day  
13

Thursday

# Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik is a **treasury and a museum** that has managed to uphold until the present day all its historical buildings and their beauty – a number of Baroque, Renaissance and Romanesque churches and palaces.

The city walls are one of the largest fortification monuments in Europe and an example of the development of fortification architecture. The construction of the first fortifications began as early as in the 8th century, but it was most intensive from the mid-15th to the late 16th century. The great earthquake of 1667 did not cause major damage. The walls girdle the city in the form of an irregular polygon, with the Minčeta tower on the highest, northwest corner of the city and the St. John's Fortress on the marine, south-east side. Strong fortresses like Lawrence Fortress at Pile and Revelin Fortress at Ploče, although separated from the walls, belong to the defence system. The wall is 22 m high in some places. The thickness of the wall on the mainland side is 4-6 m, and on the sea 1,5-3 m. On the land side, in front of the wall, there is a rampart with 10 semi-circular bastions, and in front of them, in the past, there was a ditch. The main wall has 14 square towers, two round towers, two angular fortifications and 4 bastions. There are three entrances to the city walls: on Stradun by the Pile Gate, at the St. John's Fortress and at the St. Luka's Fortress.

The prosperity of the City of Dubrovnik had always been based on maritime trade. In the Middle Ages, under the name of Republic of Ragusa, it became the only city-state on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea that could compete with the Republic of Venice. Thanks to each richness and diplomacy, the city reached an incredible degree of development, especially during the 15th and 16th century. Dubrovnik was one of the centres of the development of the Croatian language and literature and many significant Croatian poets, playwrights, painters, mathematicians, physicists and other scholars lived and worked here.



Day  
**14**

Friday

# Dubrovnik





Day  
**15**

Saturday

# Zagreb - Departure



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