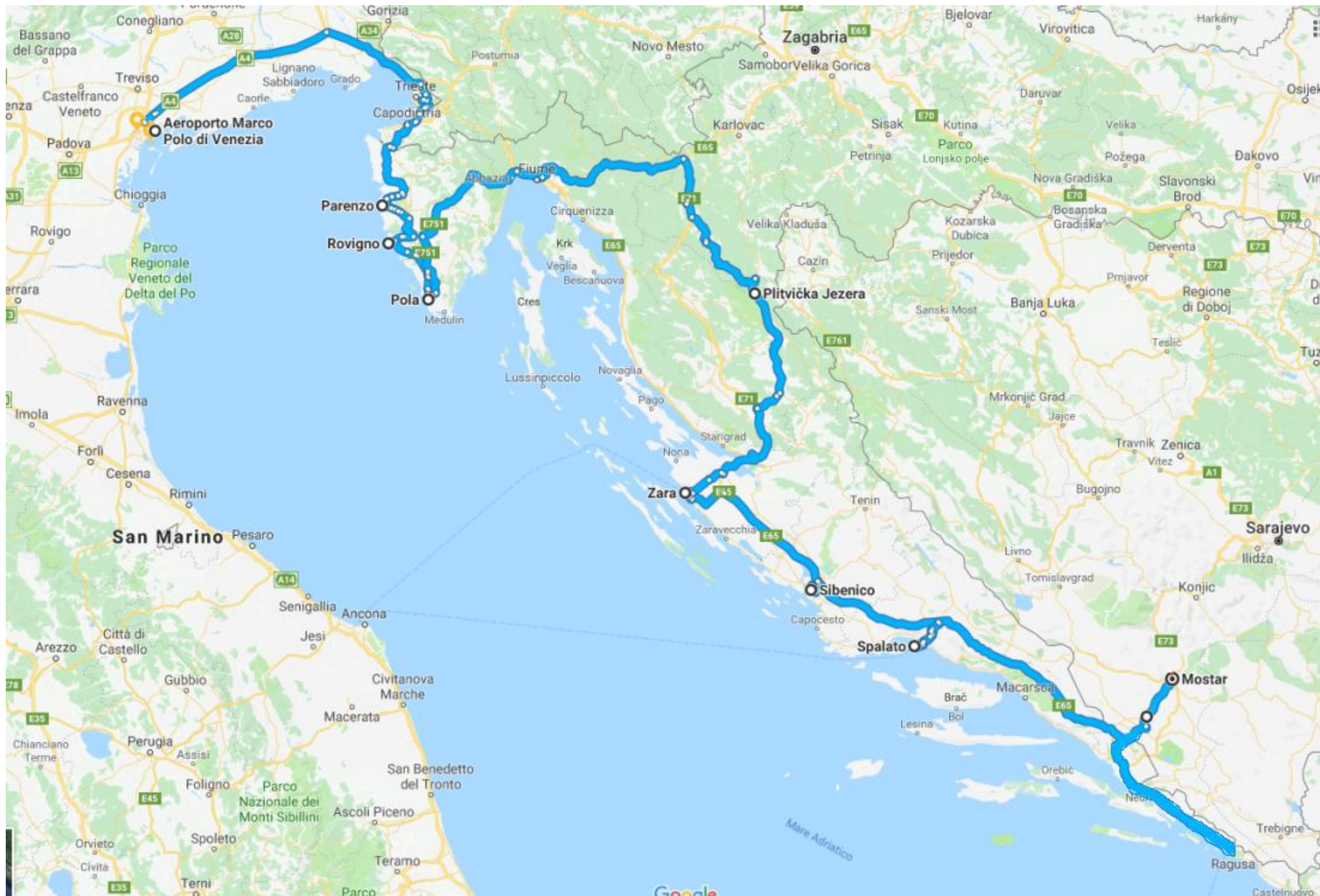

Croatia tour

Days

- P/UP 09:45 ISH AT VENICE AIRPORT > POREC > ROVINIJ > POLA
- POLA
- POLA > PLITVICE
- PLITVICE
- ZADAR > SIBENIK > SPLIT
- SPLIT > TROGIR
- SPLIT > MEDUGORJE > MOSTAR > DUBROVNIK
- DUBROVNIK
- DUBROVNIK



HOTELS

Town	Days	Hotel	Link
Pola	2	Hotel Galija	Link
Plitvice	1	16 Lakes Hotel	Link
Zadar	1	Teatro Verdi Boutique Hotel	Link
Split	2	Heritage Hotel Antique Split	Link
Dubrovnik	2	Pucic Palace	Link

POREC



Poreč developed on a small symmetrical peninsula long before the arrival of the Histrians, an Illyrian tribe. Today the centre of the old city is located on this small peninsula. With the arrival of the Histrians the area surrounding the present-day city was settled, and thanks to a naturally protected harbour the construction of a harbour-centre was enabled and Poreč could develop unhindered. Preserved records by Ancient Greek historians and geographers from the 6th and 4th centuries BC mention a small fishing village, and archaeological findings tell us of the homes of the people of the time.

A Roman settlement was constructed around the 2nd century BC which, with the natural harbour, developed into a military fort over time. The silhouette of a city is visible in the geometrically symmetrical placement of the streets. The City of Poreč has preserved this appearance with the main streets *Cardo Maximus* and *Decumanus* as well as the centrally located Forum. Poreč was granted city or *municipio* status, during the first half of the 1st century and was granted the name *Colonia Iulia Parentium*.

During Roman rule in the area of Poreč, in the 3rd century the first bishop of Poreč, Bishop Mavar, was a victim of one of the Christian persecutions. After a cruel martyr's death the Bishop was declared a saint and the City's patron.

Since then and until the present day Poreč has maintained its status as a diocese. In the 4th century an early Christian cathedral was built at the place where Bishop Mavar suffered his martyrdom. One hundred years later it was renovated and in the 6th century Bishop Euphrasius ordered the construction of a basilica - this basilica is today considered a famous building and is a true architectural treasure. Since 1998 it has been an UNESCO protected site.

Slavs settled in Istria, Poreč and its surrounding area in the 7th century. Poreč had a city-government as early as the 12th century and the first City Statute dates from around the year 1250. The longest ruler in Poreč was the Venetian Republic which ruled for about five hundred years. With the fall of Venice Poreč came under Austrian rule, and quickly after in 1805 came under French administration after Napoleon's conquest. From 1815 to 1918 Poreč came under Austrian rule once more. The City's reputation grew when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared Poreč the capital city of Istria and made it the seat of the regional government and the location of the Istrian Parliament.

Up until the middle of the 20th century a number of governments, monarchs and states changed hands. The area of Poreč was ruled by Ostrogoths, was the seat of Frankish rule, Aquileian Patriarchs, the Venetian Republic, Austria, Napoleon's Illyrians and the Kingdom of Italy. In 1943 Poreč and the rest of Istria were joined to Croatia, a constituent state of Yugoslavia which in 1990 became an independent state.

ROVINJ

Rovinj or Castrum Rubini was first mentioned in Cosmographia by the Anonymous from Ravenna. It is dated to the 7th century AD, with a number of geographic data pertaining to the 5th century AD from which Rovinj chronicler Benussi concludes that Rovinj was founded between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD.

Rovinj surroundings, according to archaeological findings, were inhabited in the prehistoric period - the Bronze and Iron Ages, when the culture of the Histrian tribe who lived in Istria and traded with the Greeks and Etruscans was at its peak. The most recent accidental finds indicate that the island where contemporary Rovinj is located (peninsula since 1763) was inhabited at the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BC.

After a peaceful reign of the Roman Empire, while running away from incursions of the Visigoths, Huns, Goths and Byzantines, the ancient Romans in search of safety inhabited the islands of Mons Albanus, St. Catherine, St. Andrew and Cissa. The island of Cissa was first mentioned by Pliny the Elder and allegedly sank during a major earthquake in the second half of the 8th century.

Castrum Rubini, located where today the Church of St. Euphemia is standing, formerly the Church of St. George, became Ruigno, Ruginio, Ruvigno and survived devastating attacks from land and sea: the Slavs (Domagoj in 876), the Narentines (in 865 and 887) and the Saracens (in 819 and 842).

After the period of Byzantine rule Rovinj first fell under the Longboards and subsequently passed under the rule of the Franks. In feudal Istria Rovinj lost much of the autonomy of the old Roman municipalities, however, as an important city, which is testified by the fact that as castrum it takes part in the Assembly of Rižana in 804, it managed to get certain exemptions.

From the side of the town facing the sea it was protected by rocky gorges and from the mainland by high walls. Despite the stone fortifications it was, as other towns in Istria, repeatedly ravaged and burned. Istria as a bridge between the Apennines and the Balkans was of great importance to great civilizations of the West and East in their fight for primacy. Charlemagne recognized the authority of the Aquileia patriarch and in 966 Rovinj was annexed into the Poreč bishopric, although, according to church organization, during the previous centuries it belonged to the Pula diocese.

During the 10th and 11th centuries Istria was ruled by the powerful feudal families of Germany who looked favourably on the political and economic empowerment of Venice.

Town administration, which comprised of the Citizens Council and the Assembly, led by a consul, struggled for autonomy as opposition to the feudal and ecclesiastical sovereign - the patriarch of Aquileia - who ruled since 1208, and Venice - an emerging naval force.

At one moment Rovinj sided with one power, and the next with the other, depending on the privileges they offered. In 1188 Rovinj signed a contract with Dubrovnik (*Renovatio Pacis*) in which both sides committed to trade and exchange goods.

During the 13th century Rovinj repeatedly clashed with western Istrian towns of Piran and Koper. Serenissima strengthened wishing to transform the northern Adriatic into Venetian Bay and Istria into its shield. Rovinj, with other Istrian towns, decided that the strong naval force will be a protector of its commercial and maritime interests, and, following the example of Poreč, Novigrad and Umag sided with Venice in 1283. Thus began the long period of Venetian rule. The Venetian Republic apparently gave communal freedom, but retained the right to nominate podestat, under whose jurisdictions were ecclesiastical, political, administrative, commercial, and other activities. Podestat was, of course, from Venice; Rovinj's autonomy was limited, and only a few privileged families had the opportunity to participate in the Council. Judges, elected by the Council, acted as civil and criminal authorities together with the podestat.

Social division was simple. The population was divided into nobles and plebeians (*nobili et popolani*). This division was the foundation of all municipal forms of government: the Council and the Assembly. Over time, the Council was limited to a few noble families who participated in it by the right of inheritance. The mandate of the podestat or praetor lasted for a year, then for two years and since 1306 for 16 months. The officers elected were appointed by the Venetian Senate. Already at the beginning of the 15th century Rovinj had its statute divided into three books: the first regulates the organization of the administration, the second comprises civil law, property law, land, livestock, grazing, and the third book criminal law, penalties and taxes.

Venetian economy was mainly mercantile, and as a result of the growth of trade Rovinj experienced typical urban change. Artisans, merchants, and sailors begin to appear along with the existing fishermen and farmers. First fraternities were formed in the 14th century: landowners and farmers, sailors, stone carvers, fishermen, etc. Rapid development of maritime economy resulted in competitiveness between the cities and even in armed conflicts. Venice fought with Genoa, who in 1379 devastated and conquered Rovinj. The Genovese even took the bones of the town patron from the sarcophagus, but they returned them in 1401.

Central Istria was in possession of the Counts of Gorizia and in 1374 it fell, as Pazin County, under the Habsburg rule. The interests of two great powers clashed which often led to conflict. The Middle Ages brought another great misfortune - the plague. Rovinj, however, was partly spared due to its favourable climate. Uskoks, while attacking Venetian possessions, penetrated into the town on two occasions (in 1579 and 1599), razed it and burnt it.

Coastal parts of Istria were settled by the refugees running away from Turkish incursions from central Istria, Bosnia, Dalmatia, and even from Greece and Albania, and the population of Rovinj grew rapidly. Emigrants from northern Italy came to Istria as well. In 1595 the town had 2800 inhabitants, in 1650 around 5000, in 1741 7966, and in 1775 the population increased to 13788. Hence the typical architecture of the old town centre: houses rose high, close to one another, leaning against the town walls. In each room, which has a chimney, lives a family.

Rovinj was an important seaport for merchant ships on their way from the Middle East to Venice, and Rovinj sailors were emphasized by their skill and courage. They proved in the battles that were waged by Venice against the Turks in the 16th century and the Candian War in 1648. The Rovinj pilots (peots) escorted merchant ships through the northern Adriatic and the Venetian lagoon. Three out of twelve Rovinj warship captains were awarded the medal of the Knight of St. Mark's. Garzotto, the central rise of the old town was named after one these captains.

During the conflicts with the Turks, Venice helped with the construction of fortifications, and the town walls were built: Porton del Ponte in 1563, and in 1590 Portizza (Sotto muro or Under the wall) was restored and solidified.

In 1650, as the risk of uskoc attacks decreased, the town expanded to the areas outside the town walls on the island, as well as opposed to it, on the land by the slope where the Franciscan monastery was located. The channel and a small bridge became an obstacle in communication with the hinterland, so the channel was cluttered in 1763 and Rovinj became a town on the peninsula. During the 17th and 18th centuries Rovinj was the strongest shipbuilding, fishing and maritime centre of Istria (the fleet of sailing ships), and the most important source of white and gray stone.

As Serenissima only appeared to respect town autonomy, while in reality it exhausted people with high taxes, harsh regulations in trade and customs, Rovinj became the largest nest of smugglers and organized many rebellions followed by Venetian interventions in 1767, 1769, 1774, and 1780.

When Austria declared Rijeka and Trieste free ports in 1719 the situation in Rovinj, formerly one of the leading maritime towns on the west coast of Istria, worsened.

The Great Council of Venice abdicated on May 12th, 1797; a democratic rule stabilized in Rovinj which is governed by 18 representatives elected by the Assembly. This self-government lasted during the brief Austrian rule until 1805, and also under the French - Napoleon's Illyrian Provinces - Provinces Illyriennes, from 1809 to 1813.

In 1813 Austrians, once again in power, broke all of the Napoleon's laws and abolished the Illyrian institutions. Rovinj, whose status of the town was confirmed in 1821, between the 1825 and 1860 belongs to the Istrian area, which, by the Imperial patent of February 26th 1861, became an independent province with the status of margraviate and its Provincial Assembly. Istria was divided into district captaincies, i.e. judicial districts, including Rovinj.

During the Austro-Hungarian rule Rovinj developed into the industrial, maritime and cultural terms. The development is reflected in better living conditions in the town: the whole area from the hill of St. Francis to the present-day tobacco factory was built.

In 1816 street-lights were introduced, from 1819 to 1840 - the old school, in 1847 a steam mill for pasta production was built, in 1850 the Commerce-Crafts Chamber for Istria was founded, in 1853 a lighthouse on the island of St. John was built, from 1854 to 1865 - a theatre, in 1852 - cement production facility, in 1859 - Large pier, in 1872 - tobacco factory, in 1878 - wax factory, in 1882 - glass and sardine factory, in 1888 - hospital, in 1891 - Institute of marine biology. Rovinj was connected by a railway line; the first train arrived from Kanfanar in 1876. The port of Valdibora was expanded, in 1905 town gas lights were introduced, and in 1906 the town telephone.

After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy Rovinj came under the Italian rule which lasted until the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, and by the end of the World War II the town remained under German occupation.

According to the Paris Peace Treaty from 1947 Rovinj was incorporated, along with other Istrian towns and islands of Kvarner, into Croatia within the Yugoslav state. In 1990 began the struggle for independence and separation from the communist Yugoslavia.

On June 25th 1991 according to the Constitutional decision on sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia and the Declaration on the establishment of the sovereign and independent Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Croatia proclaimed its sovereignty and independence. Rovinj today, in the maelstrom of democratic change and political struggle, strives to create good economic and urban conditions in order to secure the welfare of its inhabitants and visitors.

PULA

Pula was thus bound to Venetian economical and political aims, which defined its development for the next few centuries. During the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries Pula was attacked and conquered by Genoese, Croatian-Hungarian and Habsburg armies, causing the devastation of numerous medieval settlements and villages. Besides the war calamity, the population of Pula and Istria was decimated by numerous epidemics of plague, malaria, typhoid and small-pox.

As a result of the dilapidation of monumental buildings, ruined economy and decimated population Pula fell into disrepute. Nevertheless, due to its geographical position and the importance of its harbor for trade routes, Pula simply could not disappear. The town was saved by organized Croatian and South-Slav settling.

After the revolutionary year 1848, the Austro-Hungarian Empire realized the importance of Pula's harbor and started an intensive development of a huge naval port and shipyard. This resulted in the gradual settlement of Pula and within 50 years the population increased from 1,126 people to about 40,000.

Pula was still described as a village cut off from the rest of the world, but later on vast sums were invested in the sewage system and infrastructure. Eventually the investments transformed rural Pula into a prosperous town. With the new railway Pula gradually took over the role of Trieste and Rijeka as the main port for Dalmatia.

This enabled Pula to develop two functions at the same time – the military and trading one. Under the protectorate of Vienna the official language in Pula was German, but Italian remained the everyday language in use among numerous social classes, while the use of Croatian very soon completely disappeared. Such was the situation during World War II under the fascist rule, when Pula, as an antifascist town, organized its battle for the future under bomb raids and devastation, as well as reprisals over the historically defeated side. After the War and German occupation Pula came under the Anglo-American administration. In 1947 Pula finally turned to its natural hinterland – Croatia (according to the 1943 Resolution that defined Istria as a part of Croatia), and therefore Yugoslavia. This caused still another exodus of the malcontent domiciliary Italian citizens. It marked the beginning of a new period in the history of Pula that lasted until Croatia gained independence.

A university town and administrative centre of Istria. Known for its magnificent monuments of the Roman era when it was a colony. Destroyed by the Ostrogoths, base for the Byzantine fleet in C6 and C7, under Venetian rule in C12, revitalised when base for Austrian fleet mid-C17.

Amphitheatre – elliptical arena is one of the 6th largest Roman amphitheatres existing today. Could hold 23,000 spectators and had about 20 entrances. C15 some of the stone used to construct the castle. Restored 1932 and used for musical events and annual film festival. Four towers, 3 floors of wall, arches, underground area, interior.

Arch of the Sergians, Chapel of St Mary of Formosa, Temple of Augustus, Cathedral, Twin Gate, Gate of Hercules, Church of St Nivholas, Church of St Francis, Castle & Historical Museum, spectacular nature park 10km south on Premantura Peninsula.

Underground tunnels - Zerostrasse

The underground tunnels of Pula, Zerostrasse, stretch below almost entire Pula. They were built during the WW1 for sheltering people in case of air raids.

Below Pula is an underground tunnel world stretching almost across entire Pula, known as Zerostrasse. Pula's underground tunnels were erected during the WW1 to provide a shelter for people in case of air raids. The underground tunnel system consisted of shelters, trenches, galleries and passages, as well as ammunition storages and communication passages.

Each hill in the town's core was drilled and dug up, thus creating an extended tunnel network. The tunnels of Monte Zaro, Monte Ghiro and the Castel are the largest.

The Castle, used as barracks, observatory, storage and prison during the Austro-Hungarian rule, hides two tunnel storages below its slopes. One is below the fortress itself, while the other was located in the foot of the hill. It is about 400 meters long, and it was used primarily for establishing the connection with the town centre. In its centre is the single area, a meeting point of underground tunnels with entrances from four different sides underneath the Castle. Entrances were carefully planned to provide a regular air flow, which temperature is between 14 and 18 degrees Celsius throughout the year.

The width of the passage is between 3 and 6 metres, while its height is 2.5 meters.

The underground tunnels below the Castle alone could take about 6000 people, while the capacity of all shelters in Pula was more than 50,000 people, the number almost equal to the number of town's inhabitants. Such a capacity was achieved as a result of the permanent expansion of the tunnel network under the Italian rule and the continuous building of the fallout shelters during the WW2. One part of the tunnel is used today for holding various cultural and social events, from exhibitions to parties.

ZADAR

With its turbulent past, Zadar is sometimes said to be a microcosm of the history of Croatia. Here's a (very short) version of what happened.

Prehistoric races are thought to have been the first settlers here during **Neolithic** times (possibly as far back as **8000 BC**), and to have given the place its first name Jadera – probably something connected with water. Remains of these settlements can still be found in the present-day districts of Puntamika and Arbanasi.

In the **8th century BC**, an **Illyrian tribe** known as the **Liburnians** – great sailors and merchants – first settled the area, and by the 7th Century BC, Jadera had become an important centre for their trading activities with the Greeks and the Romans.

In the middle of the **2nd century BC**, the **Romans** began to gradually invade the outlying lands, and a hundred years later, probably during the reign of Julius Caesar, Zadar finally became a Roman colony. As usual, the Romans brought great civilisational advances, examples being hot air central heating in homes, and an aqueduct to Vransko lake 40km away, the remains of which are still visible in the eastern district of Arbanasi.

Many other relics of this era are preserved or lie abandoned in today's Zadar. The Roman colony lasted for several hundred years until waves of marauding tribes battered the region.

By the **5th Century AD**, the **Ostrogoths** ruled, and the city crumbled. The following century, what was left was devastated by an earthquake, and the Goths left in 537 to go home and listen to their Sisters of Mercy records. Although further waves of attacks by **Avar** and **Slav** tribes kept up the pressure, Zadar became the administrative centre of Dalmatia under **Byzantine** rule, since it was the only city which survived due to its protective belt of inland plains.

Forced to turn their attention seawards, the inhabitants of Zadar focused on shipping, and the city became a naval power to rival Venice. It was around this time that rebuilding began to take place. For example, at this time (the **9th century AD**), St. Donatus' Church was built.

Meanwhile, **the Croatian state** was forming inland, and trade and political links with Zadar began to develop. Croatian settlers began to arrive, becoming commonplace by the 10th Century. Zadar sought independence from Byzantium, and in **1069** was joined by treaty to Croatia under Croatian King Petar Krešimir IV. In 1102, the Croatian-Hungarian state was formed, and in 1105 Zadar officially recognised the authority of the Croatian-Hungarian kings.

The rivalry with **Venice** intensified, and at the end of the first millenium the Venetians began a series of onslaughts and occupations that were to last over three hundred years. In **1202** the Venetians launched a particularly bitter attack with the help of **the Crusaders**, whom the Venetian Doge used in his march towards Palestine. This ended in **1358**, when, in a peace treaty concluded in the Franciscan church, Zadar was handed over to the protection of the Croatian-Hungarian King Ludwig I of Anjou.

Despite all this violence, between the 11th and the 14th century a golden age of art and culture was nurtured behind the protective walls encircling the city. Zadar still played a key role in the administration of Dalmatia, and enjoyed growth in political and commercial life. Architecture dating back to this time includes the Cathedral of St. Anastasia, and many other churches, monasteries, convents, palaces and public buildings.

In the **15th century**, internal fights within the Croatian-Hungarian state resulted in its loss of influence in Dalmatia, and Zadar, together with much of the surrounding mainland and islands, were **sold to Venice** for 100 000 ducats. Although there was widescale repression of the local inhabitants, Zadar remained the capital of Dalmatia under Venice. It was the main port and naval base on the East Adriatic. Building continued – this was the late Gothic and early Renaissance period.

In the **16th century**, **Turkey** invaded inland Dalmatia, and Zadar retreated behind reinforced bastions, and, aided by the Venetian colonisers, became the

largest city-fortress in the Venetian Republic. Although trade withered, art and culture experienced a further period of blossoming. Plague, however, ravaged the city.

In **1699**, a peace was concluded with the Turks signalling the end of war. A century later, Napoleon's armies defeated Venice, and Zadar and Dalmatia were peacefully attached to the **Hapsburg Empire**, only to be handed back to **the French** in **1805**. Under the French, Zadar enjoyed eight years of social reform and awakening of public consciousness, until the Austrians took the city back again in **1813**.

The Austrians administered the region from Zadar for the next hundred years. The regime, although strict, was in many ways progressive. Museums were founded, road links improved, and the first modern city water system was completed in 1838. Croats in Zadar, with an ever-growing awareness of national identity, began to press for linguistic and political autonomy. The Dalmatian Parliament (Sabor) was founded in 1861. Peace reigned, and in 1868, some of the outer fortifications surrounding the Old Town were dismantled, giving the southern side (the Riva) its present promenade. Parks were built, and cultural life prospered once more. In 1898 Zadar was connected to the electricity grid – the first town in what is now Croatia.

In **1918**, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, and the 1920 **treaty** of Rapallo between Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes handed a section of the coast, including Zadar, to **the Italians**, who called it Zara. Zadar remained under Italian rule until it was occupied by the Germans, then liberated by the Allies in 1944, to become part of Tito's **Yugoslavia**. Unfortunately, in the process, they bombed 65 percent of the city to ruins.

However, in **the 1950s** an enthusiastic programme of **rebuilding** took place. Many of the buildings on Široka ulica (or Kalelarga) the beloved main thoroughfare of the old town, date back to this time. Industry developed and the population expanded fivefold from its post-war number of 6000. In the **1960s**, the importance of **tourism** grew.

Relative peace and prosperity began to fall apart during **the 1980s** when economic problems and the decay of the Socialist bloc led to national unrest. Croatia found itself in an untenable position within the borders of Yugoslavia, and Zadar in an even more uncomfortable position with a volatile Serb majority in the Krajina hinterland. During **the war of 1991-1995**, Zadar was under siege for three months, and bombarded from positions further afield for most of the duration of the war. The population was forced underground, surviving on inadequate supplies of food and water.

Though the scars of all these wars are still visible, rebuilding is now taking place in every sense. The city has changed quite dramatically in less than ten years since the last war ended. It feels as if the sun has finally come out from behind the stormclouds.

TROGIR

was settled by the Greeks in **IV-III century BC** during their hunts across Mediterranean.

In the **First century AC**, Trogir became Roman municipality "TRAGURIUM CIVIUM ROMANORUM" joined to Salona, center of Roman province of Dalmatia. Upon the fall of the Roman Empire in **Fifth century**, Trogir has been developed as a independent town.

In the **Sixth century**, the Croats settled in Trogir area and began creating works of art. Right from the beginning of the **Middle Ages** the old Greek town of Tragurion felt the fire of the new medieval culture. Builders and masons built churches and decorated it with interlaced ornamentation.

During the **Tenth century** citizens of Trogir renewed they old municipal life of the formal Roman "oppidum". In their struggle against the Venetians, the kings of Hungary got Trogir to their side in return for a guarantee of Independence. Its citizens could freely elect their city leaders and, already in the Eleventh century, the small community crowded on the fortified islet, had its own Bishop who was suffrage of the Bishop of Split.



At the beginning of the **13th century**, while they were still recovering from the raids of the Venetians, who had attacked them in 12th century during their war with Hungary for the attractive Dalmatian coast, Trogir citizens under Rector Ilija from the Kacic family built their new cathedral. Forty years later, RADOVAN carved its main portal in Seget stone.

Prospect of Trogir was brutally interrupted **1420**. when town was occupied by Venetians after long struggle, and it was badly devastated. Occupation lasted for almost four centuries, until **1797**. During that time, Trogir was rebuild again and many new palaces, houses, towers and fortresses were erected. After short period of independence, Trogir had fallen under Napoleon's domination which was remembered by significant communal and health - care reforms, and modernization of economy.



Austrians conquered town one more time (**1814 - 1914**) when citizens suffered illness, epidemics and hunger. After **1848**, process of democratization started, and very shortly, **1877**, Croats were rulers in their town. After **First World War**, Trogir, together with Croatia, became a part of State of South Slovenes, but agony of hunger and indigence wasn't finished.

Real improvement of standard and the way of life started in **1970**-ies when Ship industry and tourism were employing more then 50% of Trogir citizens. Further development was interrupted by aggression on Croatia **1991**, when people of Trogir and its economy suffered serious consequences. Ongoing integration processes in European Community started with UNESCO's acknowledgement of Trogir as a World cultural Heritage in **1997**.

Now, on the beginning of the new Millennia, Trogir becomes popular tourist destination as it was in '80-ies. Gorgeous old town set within medieval walls on a tiny island joined by bridge to mainland. Seaside promenade. Many beautiful Renaissance and Romanesque buildings from its age of glory C13 to C15. Maze-like marble streets. World Heritage listing.



SPLIT

The history of Split in its early days revolves around a Greek settlement founded in the area between the 3rd and 4th centuries. Its most famous historical development, however, came in 295 AD when Roman emperor Diocletian ordered a residence to be built there for his retirement, as it was close to the nearby large Roman settlement of Salona (present-day Solin, about 5km from Split).

Split in the Roman Empire

It took ten years to build this magnificent palace and Diocletian lived there until he died in 313 AD. After his death, many Roman rulers continued to use it as a retreat although by the later part of the 6th century it had fallen into disrepair.

The Peristyle today, which would have been the central square in Diocletian's Palace

In the 7th century, when the Roman colony of Salona (Solin) was abandoned, many of its inhabitants sought sanctuary behind the palace's high walls and their descendants continued to live there over the centuries.

Under Venetian Rule

During the 11th century and after, the city of Split grew considerably in the areas around the palace. The city enjoyed a good degree of autonomy between the 12th and 14th centuries before it was conquered by the Venetians in 1420.

After the fall of Venetian rule in 1797, Split was ruled by the Austrians, and briefly by the French.

20th Century Split

In the 20th Century, after the break up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Split became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that was formed in 1918. Much of its development occurred after 1920 when [Zadar](#), Dalmatia's official capital, became an Italian enclave, and Split took its place as the main city in the region.

In 1941, the city was occupied by the Italians and a very strong resistance movement soon evolved with the city first being liberated in 1943, after the capitulation of Italy. Although then becoming occupied by Germany, it was finally in the October of 1944 that Split was liberated again when the first people's government of Croatia was formed.

As part of Yugoslavia after World War II, Split experienced substantial growth as government investment in the city saw factories built for a number of different industries. Split had a large ship-building industry that saw Yugoslavia become one of the top countries in the world in that field; the city also became an important port.

Split did not suffer much damage during the war that broke out in 1991, despite the Yugoslav Navy and the Yugoslav Army's coastal district being based there.

Since Croatia's independence, Split suffered as its once strong industry entered into decline. However, it has recovered somewhat in recent years.

Croatia's 2nd largest city, always buzzing, dramatic coastal mountains as backdrop to turquoise waters of the Adriatic. Diocletian's Palace (World Heritage site) one of the world's most impressive Roman monuments. Not a palace or museum but built as a military fortress, imperial residence and fortified town. Labyrinthine streets packed with people, bars, shops and restaurants – 220 buildings within palace boundaries home to 3,000 people.

Cathedral of St Domnius built as a mausoleum for Diocletian 310AD, then Christians converted it into a church C5. Also Temple of Jupiter.

DUBROVNIK

The history of Dubrovnik is remarkable. An independent, merchant republic for 700 years (abolished by Napoleon in 1806), it traded with Turkey and India in the East (with a consul in Goa, India) and had trade representatives in Africa, in the Cape Verde Islands. It even had diplomatic relations with the English court in the Middle Ages. (There is a letter from Elizabeth I on display in the City Museum in Dubrovnik). Its status was such that powerful and rich Venice was envious of this Croatian-Slav city.



Inscription on an arch on the Old Town wall

Early History of Dubrovnik

The main history of Dubrovnik usually concentrates on a small settlement on the site of Dubrovnik in pre-historic times; this settlement, in fact, was on an island called Laus which was, at that time, separated from the mainland by a marsh. There was also a larger Greek settlement nearby in what was called Epidaurus (present-day [Cavtat](#)).

An invasion by Slavs in the 7th century destroyed Epidaurus and other communities in the area, causing inhabitants to flee to Laus. Laus eventually changed to Raus which in turn became Ragusa – which is the historic name for Dubrovnik. Around this time, Dubrovnik itself was founded by Croats (the name stemming from *dub* which means oak and *dubrava* which means wood – unsurprisingly, the settlement was by an oak forest).

Ragusa and Dubrovnik eventually merged when the marshland between them was filled in.

Another theory about Dubrovnik's history which is gaining weight is that there was in fact a large Greek settlement where Dubrovnik is situated today and that the city in fact has Greek origins.

Growth and prosperity

Dubrovnik expanded considerably from the 9th century onwards and as part of the Byzantine Empire, so by the 12th century it was even considered as somewhat of a threat to Venice and its Republic. It came under attack from Venice, and from 1205 to 1358 fell under its rule.

The old town was completed in the 13th century and remains virtually unchanged to the present day. Tall ramparts surround it and there are only two entrances to the old town which lead to Stradun, the city's promenade.

In 1358 the Treaty of [Zadar](#) saw Dubrovnik cease being under Venice's rule and instead become Croat-Hungarian, although it had a great deal of independence.

From the 13th century onwards, Dubrovnik experienced a number of important developments which increased its prominence. The Statutes of 1272 laid the groundwork for political and legal life in the city. From the 14th century trade with the local region flourished and the city also prospered industrially and culturally. Dubrovnik had a number of advanced establishments for that time – a pharmacy was opened in 1317 and an orphanage in 1432.

Fall of the Republic

Dubrovnik was hit by an earthquake on 6 April 1667, which killed about 5,000 inhabitants and destroyed much of the city, although the city walls remained standing. The city was much weakened, and when in 1806 Napoleon entered Dubrovnik there was little resistance. The Republic of Ragusa was officially dissolved in 1808 but, after Napoleon's fall, Dubrovnik became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1815.

Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia and Croatia

After World War I, Dubrovnik became part of Croatia which itself was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which became Yugoslavia after World War II.

Dubrovnik was subjected to considerable shelling by Serbs during the war in 1991/2 in a siege that lasted seven months. The Old Town suffered considerable damage, but was quickly restored to its former beauty.

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Renowned for the beauty of its monuments, its magnificent walls and welcoming atmosphere. Stradun (the Old Town's main street) made of marble with baroque buildings, ancient city walls.

Founded by refugees from Rome in C7, under Byzantine and Venetian rule 1205-1358, independence 1382. In C15 and 16 its fleet was 500 ships; flourished artistically and wealth influenced by discovery of America and new trade routes. Much of Old Town dates from the rebuilding after 1667 earthquake.

Relentless heavy bombing by Yugoslav troops 1991 to 1992 damaging some of the most significant symbols of Dalmatian culture – over half the houses and all the monuments were shelled. Economic activity declined for 4 years. After Erdut Agreement in 1995 UNESCO and EU set up commission for reconstruction of the city and much of the damage repaired.

Walls and ramparts C10, Pile Gate, Minceta Tower, Ploce Gate, Fort of St John, Big Fountain of Onofrio C15.

Cathedral Treasury, Church of St Blaise, Rector's Palace (now the Cultural History Museum), Sponza Palace, Dominican Monastery.

SIBENIK

The city of Sibenik was mentioned for the first time in the 11th century. However, archaeological traces indicate the human presence in this area in Neolithic.

Entrance to the city from the sea side has been possible only through a narrow sea channel. This extremely favorable geographic position have made Sibenik one of the naturally most protected harbours in the Adriatic, and therefore, very attractive for many invaders.

Various rulers have changed throughout the centuries - from Hungarian-Croatian to Byzantine, but the longest and the most influential rule was Venetian, from the 15th until the 18th century.

After the Venetian fall in 1797, Sibenik became a part of the Habsburg Monarchy until 1918, with the exception of the brief French rule during that period.



Historical attractions - what to see in Sibenik

Sibenik Cathedral - extremely beautiful Cathedral of St. James is a three-naved basilica built in the 15th and the 16th centuries. This impressive monument of Renaissance architecture has been recognized as UNESCO's World Heritage site since 2000.

The City Hall - this remarkable building, a valuable monument of the high Renaissance style, was built in the 16th century. It is located on the northern side of the main city's square, right opposite the Cathedral of St. James

Fort of St. Michael - the Fort of St. Michael dominates the horizon above the city. It was built of white cut stone from the 15th until the 17th century.

Fort of St. John - great and mighty fortification complex was built above the city in the 17th century as a protection against frequent Turkish attacks. In 1647, the Fort was a venue of tough battle against Turks, when Sibenik was defended successfully after the one-month siege.

Subicevac Fort - another imposant fortress, built the same time as the Fort of St. John to help defence of Sibenik. It is easily approachable by foot and provides the spectacular view of the town, the Channel of St. Anthony and the rest of the Sibenik archipelago.

Four wells - the four wells are situated on the plateau near the Cathedral of St. James. The city water tank was located under the plateau in the 15th century, in order to counteract the frequent water shortages during the Turkish attacks. Water was drawn from these four wells.

The underground space is today used as a wine bar, as well as ingenious multimedial showroom, that presents the riches of Sibenik cultural heritage.



Picturesque city with steep streets and arched passages. Ruled by the Venetians 1412 to 1797 – old centre has grand buildings and 3 large ports and bastions on island of St Nicholas. Sibenik became one of the liveliest cultural centres in Renaissance Croatia. French then Austria ruled till 1917. War in 1990s collapse of local industry and mass unemployment.

Church of St Francis, Church of St Barbara, Cathedral of St James, Old Loggia, Medieval Mediterranean Garden, Forts of St Michael, St John, St Nicholas, Barone Fortress.

Old Town – most of Ljubljana’s historic sites between Castle Hill and the Ljubljana River. Ljubljana Castle C16, on 375m hill (with funicular), St Nicholas’s Cathedral (baroque ceiling).

Central Market, farmer’s market (across Triple Bridge) with herbs and foraged wild mushrooms and forest berries and local produce. City Museum and National Museum of Slovenia. Dragon Bridge (Art Nouveau), Butcher’s Bridge (lovers’ padlocks). Cobblers’ Bridge, Fountain of the Three Rivers.

New Town – city’s architectural highlights and keynote museums. Both easily explored on foot.

National & University Library, black marble as you enter then ascend stairs to colonnade suffused with light.

•

From 1809 to 1813, it was included in Napoleon's Empire as part of the Illyrian provinces, then it came once again into the hands of the Austrian Emperor who returned Bled to the bishops of Brixen for the last time in 1838. With the abolishment of the feudal system ten years later, the estate lost its character of a feudal economic and social unit. In the second half of the 19th century, Bled changed considerably. The characteristic villages of Gorenjska, which had been autonomous units ever since the Middle Ages, were united. Income decreased, and in 1858 Brixen sold the Bled estate to Viktor Ruard, the owner of the Jesenice Ironworks. He kept the castle, the lake and the usable land around it, and sold the rest to the Kranj Industrial Company. In 1882 Ruard sold the estate to a Viennese wholesale merchant named Adolf Muhr, and in 1919 Bled hotelier Ivan Kenda bought the castle with the lake - for the first time the property passed into Slovenian hands. In 1937 it was taken over by the Associated Commercial Bank and finally bought by the Drava Province. During World War II, Bled was used to house the German military and civil headquarters, and in 1960 it acquired the status of a town.

Medugorje

1. St. James Church and attend the evening devotions

The Church of St. James is the symbol and the heart of the Parish of Medjugorje. This world-known, two-tower church, was under construction from 1934 to 1969. It is located in the center of the village and it is also the center of the liturgical life of the parish and its original size has never been changed. At the very entrance to the church grounds there is a beautiful Statue of Our Lady, the Queen of Peace. The statue presents Our Lady welcoming all Her children and desiring to take each one of them by the hand and take them to Her Heart, Her Son.



2. Apparition Hill - Pray the Joyful Mysteries to the Statue of Our Lady commemorating the spot where She appeared. The Hill of Podbrdo is the place where the Medjugorje events started. It is on this hill that Our Lady first appeared to six children back in

1981. After that, millions of pilgrims, in a special way, have encountered Our Lady climbing this hill. Ever since the first days of the apparitions, the hill is known as Apparition Hill. Along the steep, rocky path, that leads from the houses further up the Hill, there are 15 bronze reliefs which represent the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary. Climbing the Hill you have an opportunity to meet with Our Lady in the most special way, in the place that She has chosen and through Her favourite prayer, the Rosary. As you come to the top of the hill you will see the Statue of Our Lady which was erected there on the 20th anniversary of the apparitions in order to mark the Apparition Site.



3. Cross Mountain - Krizevac

Partake in the Stations of the Cross on Krizevac on Fridays with the Parish at 2.00 pm (4.00 pm Summer Time). The name of the mountain 'šipovac' (šipak = pomegranate) was changed into 'the Cross Mountain' when the Parish of Medjugorje erected the Cross on the top of it in 1934. Climbing the mountain pilgrims stop at the stations of the Way of the Cross to pray and reflect on Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. At the top of the mountain there is an 8.56 m high concrete cross in which the Relics of the True Cross received from Rome are embedded. The faithful pray at the foot of the cross, while they also enjoy the magnificent view of the entire village of Medjugorje. According to the visionaries, in the message of August 30, 1984, Our Lady said: *"The cross was also in God's plan when you built it."*



4. Via Domini (the Way of the Lord)

Is a pathway with 5 beautiful mosaics that represent the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. After contemplating the public life of Jesus, you will come to the end of the path where **the Statue of the Risen Savior** is located. This bronze statue is a work of Slovenian artist, Andrej Ajdič, and the parish of Medjugorje received it as a gift for Easter 1998. The part of the statue which is on the ground represents the tomb of Jesus, and the other part represents the Resurrection. The area around the statue is beautifully decorated for silent prayer, including also the Way of the Cross for people who can't climb Cross Mountain.

5. Blue Cross - *Spend some time in reflections and meditations at the Blue Cross* The Blue Cross is a special place at the base of Apparition Hill where Our Lady appeared to the children when they were hiding from the Communist police. It is here that Our Lady still appears to the visionary Mirjana at her monthly apparition (every 2nd of the month) and sometimes to the visionary Ivan when he has a meeting with his prayer group. Sometimes on those occasions all pilgrims are invited to be present at the apparition. The Blue Cross is an easy climb and a very special place for all those who can not climb Apparition Hill but still want

to be part of it.



6. Visit the Mother's Village and St. Francis Garden

Within the village of Medjugorje there is a beautiful settlement established to serve life. This is the village where many souls have found their comfort and sense of life. It consists of a few little communities, such as the Children's Village, the St. Francis Garden, the Art workshop 'Queen Catherine', the Merciful Father Community etc. All these communities are well organized and exist in cooperation with one another in order to provide support to children and adolescents without parental care, and to help lost boys and girls, men and women, to find a good way of life.



7. Local cemetery Kovacica - Visit the tomb of Fr. Slavko

A local cemetery in Medjugorje is a place where you can find not only local people praying, bringing flowers and lighting candles, but also many pilgrims. The reason for this is that the late Fr Slavko Barbaric is buried here. Father Slavko left a big imprint in the hearts of all parishioners and pilgrims of Medjugorje. Many people pray for his intercession because Our Lady said in Her message of Nov 25, 2000 : *' I rejoice with you and I desire to tell you that your brother Slavko has been born into Heaven and intercedes for you...'*



8. Candle park area - Light a candle

Here people light candles for their loved ones who have passed away, but also for the numerous intentions they bring to Medjugorje. They leave their burdens, hopes and prayers at the feet of the Crucified Jesus. The area is nicely decorated and convenient for silent prayer and meditations.

Mostar

Mostar, town, [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Mostar is the chief [city](#) and, historically, the capital of Herzegovina. It is situated in mountainous country along the [Neretva River](#) and lies on the Sarajevo-Ploče rail line. First mentioned in 1452, Mostar became a Turkish garrison town in the 16th century. In 1566 the Turks replaced the town's wooden suspension [bridge](#) over the Neretva with a stone arch one, whence the name Mostar (from Serbo-Croatian *most*, "bridge"). This stone bridge had a single arch 90 feet (27 metres) wide and was a masterpiece of Ottoman engineering. In November 1993, during the Bosnian civil war, the bridge was destroyed by artillery fire from Bosnian Croat forces. A major rebuilding project was undertaken to restore the bridge and nearby buildings that had also been damaged; the bridge reopened in 2004. The bridge and the surrounding area were added to [UNESCO's World Heritage list](#) in 2005.

The rebuilt stone arch bridge across the Neretva River at Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The original bridge, built in 1566, was destroyed by artillery fire in 1993. © *Lianem/Dreamstime.com*

The town served as a centre for crafts and trade, and its reconstructed coppersmith's bazaar is a tourist attraction. While under Austrian rule (1878–1918), Mostar became a centre for Serbian scholars and poets and for a strong nationalistic movement.

The [region](#) is noted for its quality wines (*žilovka* and *blatina*), tobacco, fruit, and vegetables. Počitelj, just south of Mostar, is famous for its Muslim architecture with a [mosque](#), madrasah (school), and Turkish houses. An aluminum works, completed in 1976, processes locally mined [bauxite](#), utilizing power from a nearby hydroelectric plant. Mostar University was founded in 1977. Pop. (1991) 75,865; (2005 est.) 63,500.



Mostar is one of the most frequented attractions in [Bosnia](#), thanks to its outstanding natural beauty, architecture, and, of course, its famous UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Stari Most. It is full of quintessential Ottoman architecture, with plenty of traditional [restaurants](#), market stalls, mosques and other historic buildings. It is also surrounded by stunning

landscape waiting to be explored. We discover the top things to see and do in and around Mostar.

Stari Most



One of Mostar's and also Bosnia's most famous sites is the Stari Most, or 'Old Bridge'. The bridge was built by the Ottomans in the 16th century and is exemplary of typical Islamic architecture and fine engineering. It crosses over the beautiful turquoise Neretva river, and is at the heart of Mostar's historic Old Town. During the civil war, however, the bridge was destroyed by Croat forces but it has since been rebuilt to its exact original specifications. It is now a [UNESCO](#) World Heritage Site, having received this status in 2005 soon after it was rebuilt, and it attracts thousands of tourists to Mostar every year.

Blagaj Monsatery

A short drive south of Mostar is the small village of Blagaj. Within Blagaj is the famous [tekija](#), or monastery, which was founded by Dervish monks in the 16th century. The monastery is nestled at the foot of a cliff face, looking over a beautiful pool, and exemplifies classic Ottoman architecture, with its wooden window frames and overhanging roof. Today, the monastery houses a restaurant with tables looking out over the water, which makes for a picturesque and tranquil lunch setting. It is also open to look around for a small entrance fee, but since it is still a functioning religious building appropriate clothing is required.



Blagaj Monastery

The 'Don't Forget' Stone



This small stone is found near to the Stari Most, and serves as a reminder of the civil war. As tourists visit the stunning town of Mostar, it is important not to gloss over the fact that terrible atrocities were committed here relatively recently, and that the city still feels the effects of a divided population. While tourism has ensured that Mostar has been able to thrive since the war, not long ago it was under siege, and many of the locals living in the city today would have lost friends and family members. The 'Don't Forget' stone serves to gently remind visitors to reflect on the city's tragic past.

A man sells cloth next to a 'Don't Forget' slogan, Mostar | [© Rick Mn/Flickr](#)

Čaršija

In the heart of Mostar's picturesque Old Town is its market, or *čaršija*. There is a market on each side of the river near to the Stari Most, due to the split between the Bosniak and Croat ethnic groups that inhabit the city, although the difference between the two is not noticeable to visiting tourists. The market has a distinctly eastern feel, thanks to the historic Ottoman influences, with stalls selling rugs, painted plates, copper items, and souvenirs. The market is busy with locals as well as tourists, and gives visitors a good glimpse at a traditional Bosnian way of life.



Bridge Diving

One of the key activities of life in Mostar naturally revolves around its famous bridge: bridge diving occurs mainly during the summer months, and involves trained professionals diving from the top of the Stari Most to entertain the crowds. The distance between the top of the bridge and the river below is about 20m, so must only be undertaken by professionals or by tourists who have taken a training class beforehand. There is even an official annual competition as part of [Red Bull's](#) cliff diving competition.





Kravice Falls

A short drive south of Mostar are the Kravice Falls, some amazing waterfalls near the small town of Kravice. The falls are currently not a well known attraction amongst tourists, meaning they are peaceful and not yet highly commercialised, although there is a small but useful boardwalk taking visitors closer to the falls. The best time to go is during the spring when there is the most water; but although there is less water during the summer, this means that visitors can swim right underneath the falls. A visit to the falls is a lovely day out away from the crowds of Mostar.

Muslibegović House

One of Mostar's best examples of Ottoman architecture is the protected national monument, [Muslibegović House](#). It was once inhabited by the noble Muslibegović family, and is now both a luxury hotel and museum. The interior is in keeping with traditional eastern styles, such as Ottoman rugs, white walls and wooden furnishings, with the museum exhibiting items such as books, manuscripts and handmade crafts. One of the highlights is the outer courtyard, which is shady and well kept with plenty of lush flowers and greenery. While the hotel can be considered quite expensive (it has been named one of the world's [top 10 hotels](#), after all), the small entrance fee for the museum gives visitors a good feel for the place.



Muslibegović House

Koski Mehmed Paša Mosque

This [stunning mosque](#) is not only an attraction itself, but is also a spot for some of the best views of the Stari Most. The mosque was built in the early 1600s by the Ottomans, and today it is one of the best preserved mosques in the area. There is a small entrance fee that includes the climb up the minaret for 360° views of the bridge, and a stroll around the outside courtyard which also offers amazing views. The interior of the mosque is small but features some lovely ornate decorations, although it is certainly worth a visit just for the views.



View from Koski Mehmed Paša Mosque

Inside one of Mostar's historic buildings is a [photo gallery](#), featuring shots taken in Mostar by a New Zealand photographer during the civil war. It is located right next to the Stari Most, and is housed in a traditional dwelling which matches the personal stories of Mostar locals told through the photos. The photos not only show the destruction of the war but also the daily struggles experienced by the local population, many of whom were simply trying to get on with their lives. The exhibition is a great opportunity to understand more about Mostar's history and what has shaped it.

Kriva Cuprija



For a smaller and less touristic version of the Stari Most, the Kriva Cuprija (or 'Crooked Bridge') is worth a visit. It is older than the Stari Most, and is thought to have been a test-run of sorts for the later construction of the larger and more famous bridge. It has only one arch so is relatively small, but still exemplifies typical Islamic architecture of the 16th century, and is a much more peaceful place to sit and enjoy a relaxing lunch at one of the nearby restaurants. The bridge was washed away by floods in the year 2000 but was rebuilt with aid from [UNESCO](#) a year later, and was relatively unscathed by the civil war.