

# *Dalmatia*

# *Delights*

**A Rough Guide to the Tour**

# *Dalmatia Delights*

## Preface

This guide (entirely and unashamedly lifted from other sources, mostly cited) tries to follow the Dalmatian Delights itinerary for the Ferris Wheels tour. Its purpose is to present in one place some highlights of the tour; and, hopefully, save participants from buying several guide books, although there is at least one book (Western Balkans, Lonely Planet) that covers a lot but not all of the itinerary.

First, a little introduction to *Dalmatia*. As I noted on my [Dalmatia](#) page, the term is a loose way of referring, partly to *Dalmacija*, a region in Croatia, but then, loosely, to surrounding regions spanning coast, hinterland and mountains in parts of Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and, for good measure, the Passo di Stelvio in the Italian Dolomites. So don't get too hung up on the name.

More strictly speaking, Dalmatia (Croatian: *Dalmacija*), is an historical region on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea and is situated in [Croatia](#). It spreads between the island of [Rab](#) in the northwest and the [Bay of Kotor](#), in [Montenegro](#), in the southeast. The hinterland, the Dalmatian Zagora, ranges from fifty kilometers in width in the north to just a few kilometers in the south. The [Dalmatian dog](#) gets its name from Dalmatia. In antiquity the Roman province of [Dalmatia](#) was much larger than the present-day region, stretching from Istria to historical [Albania](#). Dalmatia signified not only a geographical unit, but it was an entity based on common culture and settlement types.

Secondly, Dalmatia came before the dog! The dog got its name from its association with Dalmatia. If you believe the coast got its name from the dog, you'd likely be taken for a ride by anyone.

The headings indicate the day according to the published program, noting that we don't actually start riding until Day 3.

## *Ljubljana*

### Days 1-2

Ljubljana, also known as Laibach, its German name, is the capital of [Slovenia](#). As the legend goes, it was created by the Greek hero Jason who stole the golden fleece from king Aites and escaped with his friends the Argonauts through the Black sea and the Danube river to the Sava river and all the way to the Ljubljanica river where they dismantled their ship and carried it to the Adriatic sea. On their way to the sea they stopped by a big lake and a swamp. That swamp was the home of a big monster that Jason fought bravely and killed. That monster was Ljubljana's Dragon that symbolizes Ljubljana nowadays. It is said that Jason was also Ljubljana's first inhabitant.

### Main Attractions

**Old Ljubljana** is Ljubljana's historic part. It has the city hall, monuments, and well-preserved old buildings and churches. It also has local designer shops, and several popular cafes and restaurants. It is located immediately below the city castle and on the eastern side of Ljubljanica river, across the Triple Bridge. Cross the Triple Bridge and go straight ahead for 50 metres until you reach the Roba Fountain in front of the city hall. Old Ljubljana begins there. Turn right into the narrow street surrounded by medieval houses. You will discover interesting squares, lanes and buildings. The street is called Mestni trg, and later it changes to Gornji trg.

**Triple Bridge** ("Tromostovje" in Slovenian), Ljubljana's trademark central bridges designed by Jože Plečnik. Tromostovje consists of three separate picturesque bridges located next to one another. This is the central location of downtown Ljubljana. Here, you can see the statue of France Prešeren, Slovenia's greatest poet. You can also catch a tourist train taking you to the castle. Or cross Ljubjanica and turn left for Open Market and the Dragon Bridge, or go straight and then right for Old Ljubljana.

**Zmajski Most (Dragon Bridge)** - This is one of the main bridges in Ljubljana. It is guarded by four detailed dragon statues, which have become a symbol of the city. Look out for the dragon motif throughout the city. Be careful around the Dragon Bridge area, as it is on a major busy road and near misses (and worse) between inattentive tourists and traffic are common. The dragon bridge is located at the end of the Ljubljana Open Market, just a block or two down the river (north-east direction) from the Triple bridge.

**Ljubljana Castle** - You can catch the "tourist train" from the Triple Bridge to the castle, or walk up the (steep!) hill to the castle, or take the Funicular Railway (€3/2 (adult/concession), the lower station is at the top of the main Open market). Entrance to the Castle Courtyard, Chapel and Gift shop is free, but there is a charge for access to the tower. The tower has magnificent views all over the city. You can also see the Sava River and Kamnik Alps in the distance. Included is a 3D Movie of the history of Ljubljana from a pre-historic settlement to Roman Empire to modern times.

**Square of the Republic** - Where crowds gathered as Slovenia announced its independence from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991. The square has significant importance for Slovene history, as it was a place of important public gatherings (and demonstrations) in the past. Across the road is the Slovene Parliament. Its facade is decorated with artistic nude statues of Slovenes at work and leisure. The square also houses the International Business Centre.

**Roman Ruins** - a short walk west of the centre of town are the remains of the Roman City Walls, including a number of pillars from an entrance gate.

**Krakovo** - a village-like part of the city connecting the centre to the Trnovo suburb.

**Metelkova City** - is a self-declared autonomous culture place to gather for alternative artists, many subcultures and youth. What used to be a military barracks is now full of underground artists, bars and nightclubs. Metelkova can get crowded on Fridays and Saturdays. It is within 5 minute of walk from main Train Station, and it is home to a renowned hostel Celica. (Wikitravel)

## *Plitvice National Park*

### Day 3

#### Introduction

The Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia's most popular tourist attraction, was granted [UNESCO World Heritage](#) status in 1979. Located roughly halfway between capital city Zagreb and Zadar on the coast, the lakes are definitely a must-see. (As confirmed by the many emails we've received!).

The beauty of the National Park lies in its sixteen lakes, inter-connected by a series of waterfalls, and set in deep woodland populated by deer, bears, wolves, boars and rare bird species. The National Park covers a

total area of 300 square kilometres, whilst the lakes join together over a distance of eight kilometres. There's also quite an altitude difference - the highest point is at 1,280m, the lowest at 380m - although the total height difference between the lakes themselves is only 135m. (Veliki Slap, the largest waterfall, is 70m tall.) (Visit-Croatia)

## Plitvice Lakes

Plitvicka Jezera (Plitvice Lakes) is Croatia's well known national park. Plitvice Lakes are also listed in UNESCO's Register of World Natural Heritage. Plitvice Lakes is a group of sixteen small lakes - Proscansko Jezero, Labudanovac Lake, Ciganovac Lake, Galovac Lake, Kozjak Lake... - mutually connected with numerous large and smaller waterfalls. Plitvice waterfalls are created by deposition of travertine - a kind of limestone that created this unique and attractive wonder of nature.

Plitvice National Park is the area surrounded by dense forests of beech, fir and spruce, watered by various springs of the Korana River. Plitvice National Park is decorated with several caves and flower meadows too. Brown bear found, among other animal species, their home in Plitvica Lakes too.

Area of Plitvice Lakes is paradise for walkers and hikers as well as nature lovers. Lakes are lovely and cool in summer, icy and calm in winter, yellow and ocre in autumn, green and fresh in spring - any time of the year it is a privilege to be around those lakes! Plitvice Park is conveniently located near the main road that connects Zagreb and Croatia Adriatic Coast. It is easily accessible by public transport as well as by bicycle, from Karlovac, Zagreb or Split. Due to its popularity among Croatian as well as other visitors, there are various accommodations available in and around Plitvice Lakes. (Find-Croatia)

## Plitvice Lakes Incident

The Plitvice Lakes incident of March 1991 (known in Croatian as "Plitvice Bloody Easter", *Krvavi Uskrs na Plitvicama / Plitvički Krvavi Uskrs*) was an incident at the beginning of the [Croatian War of Independence](#). It was a clash between heavily armed Croatian policemen and special police (the Croatian army was still being formed and organized at that time), the forces aiming to create the independent [Republic of Croatia](#), and lightly armed Serbs, supported by Belgrade and the [Yugoslav People's Army](#). It resulted in two deaths – one on each side – and contributed significantly to the worsening ethnic tensions that were to be at the heart of the subsequent war. Today, it's a symbol of the Croatian fight for freedom and homeland and contains a memorial of the first Croatian man to fall in a battle for his homeland in the war. (Wikipedia)

## Sarajevo

### Days 4-5

**Sarajevo**, the capital of [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), is a lively city of 400,000 people, nestled in a valley, mainly within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with parts in the Republika Srpska entity.

Sarajevo is one of the most historically interesting cities in Europe. It is the place where the Western & Eastern Roman Empire split; where the people of the Roman Catholic west, Eastern Orthodox east and the Ottoman south, met, lived and warred. It has been both an example of historical turbulence and the clash of civilizations, as well as a beacon of hope for peace and tolerance through multi-cultural integration.

Today the city has physically recovered from most of the war damage caused by the Yugoslav Wars of the 1992-1995. Sarajevo is a cosmopolitan European capital with a unique Eastern twist that is a delight to visit.

The people are very friendly, be they Bosniaks, Croats, or Serb. There is very little crime. Also there are not nearly as many tourists as on the Croatian Dalmatian coast and a wealth of architecture (not to mention history) to see.



The bridge in Sarajevo is directly across the street from where Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand was killed by a Serbian assassin that set in motion the beginning of WWI. A historical marker is located at the bridge entrance on the left side of this picture. Another marker is on the building adjacent to the spot where the assassination took place across the street.

## Main Attractions

- **City tour** - The local tourist information has a free brochure called 'A day in Sarajevo', it offers a city tour route and descriptions along that route.
- **Old Town** - The cobbled streets, mosques and oriental style shops at the heart the city are a world away from Europe, and when the call-to-prayer starts, one could be forgiven for thinking that they were actually in the Middle East. The most interesting thing (you call it the most amazing thing as well) is that you could actually be walking by a Catholic church, Orthodox church and a Synagogue and hear the Islamic call to prayer at the same time.
- **Latin Bridge** - This bridge bears a plaque commemorating the assassination of Archduke of the Austrian Hungarian empire Franz Ferdinand, the event that sparked the beginning of World War I. On the Bridge itself was a memorial to the assassin Gavrilo Princip, but this was removed during the 1992-1995 War. Bosnia was at the end of World War Two the biggest haven for Balkan and European Jews who found a perfect environment to build their society back.
- **Sarajevo Art Gallery** - Small but pleasing gallery. On the third floor of the building south of the Orthodox Cathedral (entrance is down a side street next to the municipal government building, look for the number 8 above the door). Free.

Sarajevo's museums are not in a great state of repair, due to disputes over which arm of the government is responsible for funding them. However they are still worth visiting.

- **Bosnian Historical Museum**- The moving display on the siege of Sarajevo is a must-see - if you are able to cope with the pictures of the maimed citizens after shelling of markets. Wonder at the photos of an ineffective UN providing armored vehicles citizens could wait behind before risking sniper fire to cross the street. And you will be heartbroken by the pictures drawn by children. In a modern building across the road from the Holiday Inn.
- **National Museum** - Statistic displays of the natural and human history of Bosnia and Herzegovina - most interesting is the traditional Turkish style homes of Sarajevo prevalent in the nineteenth century. In a classical building across the road from the Holiday Inn. Closed Mondays.

**Sarajevo Tunnel Museum** - This museum shows the tunnel which was used to ferry supplies into the besieged city during the conflict and is next to the airport. Taxi from the center city costs around 17KM one

way. Entrance to the museum is 5KM. It is open 7 days a week from 9 to 5. Get the number three (3) tram to the end of the line from the city center. Then get a taxi to the Tunnel Museum and walk back to the tram station if it's a nice day (takes about half an hour). The tunnel itself is in the garden of a house so don't be worried if you think you're headed into suburbia! Alternatively, the tourist office in the city center offers Tunnel tours for €12 or 24KM, with transportation to and from the city center included. After seeing the tunnel, they also take you on a drive through the part of the city that is in the Republika Srpska, which you can't get to via the tram.

**Sarajevo City Museum** - Newly opened in the Old Town, the museum traces Sarajevo's development from pre-historical times through the Roman, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and modern times.

**Svrzina kuca (Svrzo house)**, Glodina ulica 8 (200m north of the old town). A beautiful old Ottoman house built in the 18th century shows how Svrzo family lived there 3 KM. [edit](#)

**Stara pravoslavna crkva (Old Orthodox Church)**, Mula Mustafe Baseskije (Old town). [edit](#)

**Careva dzamija (Emperor's Mosque)**, Obala Isa bega ishakovica. [edit](#)

**Vijecnica (City Hall)**, Obala Kulina Bana. [edit](#)

**Crkva Sv. Ante (St. Anthony's Church)**, Franjevacka. Modern Catholic church with beautiful stained glass windows [edit](#)

**Morica han (Morica Inn)**, Saraci (Old town). The only preserved Ottoman Inn in Sarajevo. The first floor used to contain 43 rooms for travellers, mostly traders, houses nowadays a carpet shop and a traditional restaurant with engravings of Rubaiyat of Umer Khayam, the famous 12th century Persian poet. [edit](#)

**Sebilj (Fountain)**, Bascarsilja (Old town). [edit](#)

**Spanish/Latin Bridge** For history buffs, this is a must see. It's on the river in downtown Sarajvo. This bridge is where on 28 June 1914 Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand of Austria (and his wife Sophie) were assassinated. Historians widely hail this event as the catalyst that began World War I.

Sarajevo's **surrounding hills** offer fantastic views over the city, but some landmines from the war still exist on some of them. To be safe, stick to paved roads and sidewalks and do not walk into fields, grass, or wooded areas. Also be alert for stray (and possibly rabid) dogs when venturing out of the city. The hills also offer a taste of suburban Bosnian life, including some of the surviving wooden mosques from before the war.

If walking up these hills seems too much like hard walk, simply walk up to the old bastion wall and get a view over town from there. Follow the river towards the hills and, where it makes a right hand bend and the main road goes through a tunnel, there's a slip road that goes up, over the tunnel and doubles back towards the bastion. Alternatively, find your way through the war cemetery at the top of the old town.

There is now a walking guide to Bosnia's 2000m peaks. It is called Forgotten Beauty and is available from the 'Buy Book' book shop in the centre of Sarajevo (In English and Bosnian).

## The Siege of Sarajevo

The **Siege of Sarajevo** is the longest [siege](#) of a [capital city](#) in the history of modern warfare. [Serb](#) forces of the self-proclaimed [Republika Srpska](#) and the [Yugoslav People's Army](#) besieged [Sarajevo](#), the capital city of [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), from April 5, 1992 to February 29, 1996 during the [Bosnian War](#).

After Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared independence from [Yugoslavia](#), the Serbs, whose strategic goal was to create a new Serbian State of [Republika Srpska](#) (RS) that would include part of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, encircled [Sarajevo](#) with a siege force of 18,000 stationed in the surrounding hills, from which they assaulted the city with weapons that included artillery, mortars, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, heavy machine-guns, multiple rocket launchers, rocket-launched aircraft bombs,<sup>1</sup> and sniper rifles. From May 2,

1992, the Serbs [blockaded](#) the city. The [Bosnian government defence forces](#) numbering roughly 40,000 inside the besieged city were poorly equipped and unable to break the siege.

It is estimated that nearly 10,000 people were killed or went missing in the city, including over 1,500 children. An additional 56,000 people were wounded, including nearly 15,000 children.<sup>[9][10][11]</sup> By 1995, killings and forced migration had reduced the city's population to 334,663 - 64% of its prewar size.<sup>1</sup>

After the war, the [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#) (ICTY) convicted two Serb generals of numerous [crimes against humanity](#) in their conduct of the siege. [Stanislav Galić](#) and [Dragomir Milošević](#), were sentenced to life imprisonment and to 33 years imprisonment, respectively.

## Mostar

### Day 6

**Mostar** is a city in [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), formerly one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country, and today suffering geographical division of ethnic groups. The city was the most heavily bombed of any Bosnian city during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the break up of then-Yugoslavia. At the beginning of the war, the city lost many important buildings and structures through air strikes; later, once the formerly-aligned forces turned into enemies, a thorough destruction of this old city began, including the destruction of Mostar's architectural (as well as cultural and spiritual) heart: The Old Bridge (Stari Most). Mostar has been most famous for this beautiful historic Ottoman-style bridge, which spanned the Neretva river in what is considered the historic center of the city. Through combined efforts with the international community, The Old Bridge has been rebuilt (completed in 2004, almost 11 years after its destruction), using some of its original pieces recovered from the Neretva river. A significant portion of the city has been rebuilt, but the visitor will easily notice the many remnants of Mostar's troubled recent history.

Other than the bridge there isn't much to see and do in Mostar for the tourist, other than take photos of war damaged buildings. Staying overnight is not essential.

### Main Attractions

- **The Old Bridge** (Stari most) is the highlight of Mostar and was built by the Ottoman Turks in 1566. It was destroyed during the recent war by Croatian HVO forces, but was rebuilt in 2004. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A museum has opened up next to the bridge (entrance 5KM / 2.5 Euro). It includes exhibits on the history of the bridge, a panoramic view from the top, and entrance into the excavations below, along with a video detailing the reconstruction of the bridge.

- **Pocitelj** is on the left side of the road to Dubrovnik. You may take the yellow bus to [Capljina](#) (number 41) and after some 45 minutes you are at this historical village. There are a few good Ottoman buildings dating from a few centuries ago. Pocitelj is also nice with its excellent Neretva view. Pocitelj is city with croatian inhabitants.

- **Blagaj** is counted within the city limits and is reachable by public buses in fifteen minutes or so. The bus may leave from the road opposite the main station, not the bus station itself. elagicevina (the Velagic family House)

In Blagaj there is complex of the Bosnian oriental houses owned by the Velagic family, the old family from Blagaj. It was built in XVII century and is a beautiful example of the Ottoman residential architecture, a one-story structure with typically extended porches. In the vicinity there are also old flourmills that were in the

old days powered by the strong River Buna. All this surrounded by large flower gardens and reflected in the calm water. Within the complex there are two guesthouses that were built to accommodate unexpected travellers offering them accommodation and food. The family now owns a hotel and a family business of honey production. In Blagaj there are good samples of Ottoman mosques, bridges and tekija which is on the right bank of the River Buna at its source.

- **Muslibegovica House** is National Monument of Bosnia. It is one of Mostar's most precious architectural treasures constructed 300 years ago. Experts for Ottoman architecture consider Muslibegovic House as most beautiful house from Ottoman period in Balkans. National monument "Muslibegovic House" is located near the Karadoz - Bey's Mosque, and is one of the most representative monuments of the Ottoman residential architecture. House is comprised of separate quarters for women (women's courtyard – haremluk), and men (men's courtyard – selamluk). Unlike earlier architectural styles, this house resembled a four-storey house built around the centre. Double-arched entrance with the central pillar reveals Mediterranean influence. The house preserved authentic monumental structure, items and documents providing an insight into the life of a wealthy bey family from the time. In addition to museum exhibition, visitors are invited to take traditional beverages or cookies, or spend a night in this authentic surrounding.

House – museum is open for visitors 15 April – 15 October from 10AM-6PM.

- **History Museum of Herzegovina** Open 8-16. Closed Mondays.

- **Koski Mehmed Pasina Dzamija (Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque)** Old town. Small but simply pretty Ottoman mosque built in 1618. Climb to the minaret to see a great view over the town. Fee 3KM, with minaret 5KM

- **Karadozbegova Dzamija (Karadjoz-Bey Mosque)** Old town. A modest Ottoman mosque built in 1557. Fee 3KM, with climbing to the minaret 5KM.

**Cemetery** next to Karadjoz/Bey Mosque in the Old town. When Mostar was surrounded by troops and all the Muslim cemeteries unreachable in the other side of the front line in 1993, this little park was turned into a cemetery.

**Biscevica** house on Biscevica Street. An Ottoman house, where you only can see the few rooms in upstairs. 4KM

**Diving off the Old Bridge.** During the day, the Mostar Diving Club will have members dive off the bridge into the emerald green waters. For the daredevils among us you can also dive the 21 meters into the Neretva River and receive a certificate from the **Mostar Diving Club** (25 Euros).

Anyone doing this should be warned that the waters of the Neretva - 'Green Goddess' River are at a constant 12 degrees centigrade and going suddenly from 30C to 12C can cause a heart attack amongst even the fittest. The young local men diving on the day I was there would hose themselves down first in order to lower their body temperature before diving.

Walking along the former **Front-line** on Bulevar Revolucije where in 1993 the city was divided between Croats on the West and Muslims on the Eastern side. It is a surreal and sobering experience to see the bombed out buildings which still stand in this area.

## Zabljak

### Day 7

The town of Zabljak is situated in the north-west of Montenegro, in the heart of the Durmitor region, 1450 meters above sea level, making it thus the highest urban conglomerate in the Balkans. Right in the middle of the Durmitor region, Zabljak is surrounded by 23 mountain peaks over 2200 meter high, with 18 mountain lakes, and with the canyon of Tara river, the deepest in Europe, nearby. In Zabljak and in nearby villages some 4500 inhabitants live.

The first Slav name of the place was “Varezina voda” possibly because of the strong source of drinkable water nearby, making urbanity possible. Later, the urbanity was renamed “Hanovi” or originally “Anovi” because there caravan took a rest. The today's name is from the year 1870, when in one and the same day the building of a school, of a church and of a captain's home was begun. In the days of War and war rages all of the old buildings were destroyed. Left was only the old church of Sv. Preobrazenje (Holy Transfiguration), built in 1862 as a monument to the victory in the battle against Turks. Right after Zabljak was established as a town, a few retail stores and a few cafes were opened, also. Thus, in the nineteen eighties Zabljak already was some kind of a market-place making it in time also the regional administrative center. In the period shortly before WW II, Zabljak was a small town with the typical mountain architecture. Right in this times the unique nature starts to draw attention of tourists from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but also from abroad. Very often numerous guests from Italy – because of very close ties between Montenegro and Italy – came. Beside the fantastic beauty of this region the richness of this region in animal life, and also all the favors of hunting and fishing beacons to lovers of such life. During WW II the small town was burnt right to its foundations. Everything was left to flames, the homes, the monuments, the buildings. Left were only the smoky sites of fires. The war ended, Zabljak rebuilt itself and became the Center of winter sports in Montenegro. The unique and varied nature in such a small region recommended Zabljak as the ecological capital of the first ecological state on this planet. The deputies of the Folk Assembly of Montenegro, intoxicated with the fresh mountain air, in an out-of-order Assembly, right here, under the blue skies brought forth the Declaration unisonous, making Montenegro the first ecological state on this planet, and made Zabljak its capital.

## Petrovac

### Day 8

**Petrovac** ([Montenegrin Cyrillic](#): Петровац) or **Petrovac na Moru** ([Montenegrin Cyrillic](#): Петровац на Мору, [Italian](#): *Castellastua*) is coastal town in [Montenegro](#), within the [Budva](#) municipality.

Petrovac is located on the coast between [Budva](#) and [Bar](#), where the old mountain road from [Podgorica](#) reaches the coast. It has a 600 metre long sandy beach and it is a popular tourist destination. Petrovac is seen as a somewhat "calmer" resort, in contrast to the lively and developed nearby towns of [Budva](#) and [Sutomore](#).

The history of Petrovac began in Roman times, when a couple of villas were built at Krs Medinski: a 4th century [mosaic](#) floor, remains of a villa and baths have been found behind St Ilija's church. After that, the Slovaks built a village. At the northern end of the bay is a 16th century [Venetian](#) fortress, Kastel Lastva, intended to discourage pirates.

In the bay are two islets, one of which is topped by a small chapel, built in thanksgiving for a shipwrecked sailor's life<sup>[1]</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Petrovac had about 300 inhabitants.

In World War II, British agents were landed at nearby Perazica Do. They intended to establish contact with [Yugoslav partisans \(Operation Hydra\)](#).

Petrovac is a popular summer beach resort, its visitors coming predominantly from Montenegro and [Serbia](#). Tourist accommodation has expanded greatly in recent years, although less obtrusively than at Budva. The main attraction is the mainly sandy beach and there is also a night club in the old castello.

## Dubrovnik

### Days 9-10

**Dubrovnik** is an old city on the Adriatic Sea coast in the extreme south of [Croatia](#). It is one of the most prominent tourist resorts of the Mediterranean, a seaport and the center of the Dubrovnik-Neretva county. Its population was about 47.000 in 2009. Dubrovnik is nicknamed "Pearl of the Adriatic" and is listed as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) since 1979.



The city of Dubrovnik (*Latin name Ragusa*) was built on maritime trade. In the Middle Ages it became the only city-state in the Adriatic to rival [Venice](#). Supported by its wealth and skilled diplomacy, the city achieved a remarkable level of development during the 15th and 16th centuries. Furthermore, Dubrovnik was one of the centres of the development of the Croatian language and literature, home to many notable poets, playwrights, painters, mathematicians, physicists and other scholars.

Today Dubrovnik is the proudest feather in [Croatia](#)'s tourist cap, an elite destination and one of the most beautiful towns in the Mediterranean. Dubrovnik used to be an independent republic, surviving mostly on trade. It managed to survive many centuries, with constant threats to its territory, particularly from the mighty Ottoman Empire and [Venice](#). As early as 19th century, it was discovered by celebrities as a place to be seen. George Bernard Shaw once said that "those who seek paradise on Earth should come to Dubrovnik and find it". Royalty, presidents and diplomats have all favored the city. The late Pope John Paul II was a fan of Dubrovnik and was even made an honorary citizen. Out of the 18 top luxury hotels in Croatia, 11 are located in Dubrovnik.

Dubrovnik is steeped in stunning architecture and sculptural detail, and boasts spectacular churches, monasteries, museums, fountain. A multitude of typical towns and excursions include: The Elafiti Islands, the attractive town of [Cavtat](#), [Mljet Island](#), [Korčula](#) Island and Peljesac Peninsula. The neighboring towns of [Kotor](#) in [Montenegro](#) or [Mostar](#) in [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) also make for intriguing day trips.

Dubrovnik was heavily bombed during the Croatian War of Independence from 1991 to 1995. Almost all of the damage has been covered over but if you look closely around the old town you can still see the damage from mortars in the cobblestone streets and bullet marks in the stone houses.

## Main Attractions

- **Roland's Column**, in front of the Bell Tower, A slender stone flag staff of the legendary knight. Also known as Orlando's Column. Ever since its foundation in 1950, the Dubrovnik Summer Festival is officially opened by raising a flag (carrying the city's motto LIBERTAS) on Orlando's staff.
- **Bell Tower**, after the Ploče entrance to the city, On top of the tower are the famous 'Zelenci' (The Green Ones), bronze statues which strike the gigantic bell every hour. They have been recently replaced with copies and the originals are in the atrium of the Sponza Palace.
- **Sponza Palace**, west of the Bell Tower, Gothic Renaissance palace, one of the few buildings that has maintained its form from before the catastrophic 1667 earthquake. Hosts historic archives. Memorial room of defenders. Open 10AM-10PM. 20 KN
- **Rector's Palace**, Pred dvorom 1, +385 20 321 437 +385 20 321 437. Formerly the palace of the Major Council, now houses a museum dedicated to the city's history.
- **War Photo Limited**, Antuninska 6. An exhibition center of war and conflict photography. Exhibits change during the season. Stunning images by world renowned photo journalists. Open 9AM-9PM
- **Pile Gate**, at the beginning of the Placa Thoroughfare (Stradun) (*Old town*). The most convenient starting place for your stroll through the City is Pile. Before entering the Old City, Lovrjenac Fort is the first among many sites worth seeing in Dubrovnik. [edit](#)

**Placa Stradun**, (*Old town*). The Stradun (Placa) is the central street of the city of Dubrovnik and is the place where the old city comes to life. During the day, explore the shades of the perpendicular streets and alleys on its sides, and during the night, take walks up and down the Stradun with an ice-cream in hand. The uniform Baroque architecture of the houses in Placa, with shops on the street level and their 'knee-like' entrances, got its present-day form in the restoration of the City taking place after the disastrous earthquake in 1667, when a large number of luxurious Gothic and Renaissance palaces had been destroyed. The architectural design of Placa reveals effective solutions and the business sense of the Dubrovnik Republic in those difficult times. Today, Placa is still the shopping centre and venue of major events. [edit](#)

**Big Onofrio's Fountain**. In the western (Pile) entrance of the old town, The fountain stairs are nowadays a favourite meeting place of the youth, where both the tourists and pigeons take rest and refresh themselves with cool water. [edit](#)

**Old Port**. A part of the Old Town of Dubrovnik. [edit](#)

**Old City Walls**. Walk on the walls around the old town, great views! Warning - it's extremely recommended to visit the walls during the early morning hours or the late afternoon hours, as it can become hot during the day! Dubrovnik is surrounded by City Walls which are 2km long and for which it is famous all around the world. Through the history City Walls were protection from the enemy, today Dubrovnik City Walls brings the visitors from the whole world who want to see this city- museum. There are 3 entrances to the City Walls: on Stradun by the Pile gate, by fort Saint John's and at the Custom's House gate. Within the City Walls you will see Fort Minceta and Fort St. John's on the south-eastern side. Also, within the City Walls

are Fort Lawrence at Pile and Fort Revelin at Ploce. The main entrance to the City Walls is by the Inner Pile Gates. Except the amazing view to the whole Dubrovnik in price is also included sightseeing of some forts and towers inside the walls: Minceta Fort is one of the most beautiful cultural attractions in Dubrovnik. It is situated on the northwest side of the city inside the City Walls. It was built according to the design of Renaissance builder Juraj Dalmatinac. St. Luke's Tower you can see walking along the landward side of City Walls up to Ploce Gate. St. Luke's Tower through the history protected the entrance to the Dubrovnik harbour. St. John's Fort was constructed in 16th century and it is really worth of visiting- on its ground floor you can visit the Aquarium, and on first and second floor you can visit Maritime Museum. (more about it at the end of the page). Bokar Fort is situated on the seaward of City Walls. It was designed by Florentine architect Michelozzi in the 15th century. [edit](#)

**Fort Lovrijenac.** The monumental fort rises above 37 meters high rock. It changed roles in the course of history. The main purpose of its construction was defense, and the main idea was to protect the freedom of Dubrovnik. [edit](#)

**Franciscan Monastery,** Placa 2 This beautiful monastery with Baroque Church, houses a Romanesque cloister and the third oldest pharmacy in the world.

**Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary** Kneza Damjana Jude 1, This impressive building is in the Poljana Marin Držić. Supposedly, the original church was built with money donated by Richard the Lionhearted who survived shipwreck on his way home from the Third Crusade. The current Roman Baroque cathedral dates from the 18th Century.

## *Korčula*

### Day 11

The **central-Dalmatian island of Korčula** (pronounced: 'Korchula') stretches parallel with the nearby mainland in the west-east direction. It is 46.8 km long, its average width is 5.3 to 7.8 km, it covers an area of 270 km<sup>2</sup>, and is the sixth largest **Adriatic island**.

The Peljesac Channel, which separates it from **Peljesac peninsula**, is 1,270 m wide at its narrowest point. The shoreline of the Korčula island is 182 km long, and the shorelines of the nearby islets another 54 km. Korčula is very indented with a large number of bays and coves. Its **north shore** is rather low and easily accessible with several natural harbours sheltered from the jugo and easterly winds: **Korčula, Banja, Racisce, Vrbovica, Babina, Prigradica**.

The south shore is more indented but steep in places, with cliffs rising up to 30 m out of the sea in places. There are many anchorages and bays sheltered from the northern but open to the southern winds: **Zavalatica, Rasohatica, Orlandusa, Pavja luka, Pupnatska luka, Prizba, Grscica, Brna** etc., and is sheltered from both the bura and the jugo. The island also includes the towns of **Vela Luka** and **Blato** and the coastal villages of **Lumbarda** and **Racisce**, and in the interior **Zrnovo, Pupnat, Smokvica** and **Cara**.

Like most of the Croatian islands, the Greeks, who gave it the name **Korkyra Melaina** or '**Black Corfu**' for its dark and densely wooded appearance, first settled Korčula, in the 6th century before Christ, at first next to today's Vela Luka.

Today, the island of Korčula represents a unique fusion of **beautiful nature**, thousands of years of **cultural tradition and history**, and **modern tourism**. Numerous **beautiful beaches and bays, luxurious hotels and**

**summer houses**, centuries old olive groves and vineyards, and ancient towns and villages on the island which seem as if they have remained lost in some long past time attract tourist from all over the world to this island.

The vicinity of **Dubrovnik** as well as **island Mljet** gives visitors to Korcula unique opportunity to spend time at this unspoiled Island as well as to visit effortlessly **Mljet national park**, Dubrovnik, **Makarska Riviera**, UNESCO's city or **Mostar** and **Neretva River**. Good **ferry connections** with themainland and other islands, offers lots of possibilities for those that want to explore Central and Southern Dalmatia.

## Main Attractions

There are eight main places-villages on the Island of Korcula. Start from the east (right on the map) + **more places on Island of Korcula**



**KORCULA TOWN** - the main town on the island, with population of about 3000 inhabitants. With it's numerous buildings and monuments, cafes, hotels, restaurants, galleries, cinema etc, Korcula is very popular for visitors as central location from which they explore the rest of the island. Korcula is an administrative center of the area, where most of pleaple from surrounding villages come to work at daytime..(more about Korcula Town)



**LUMBARDA** - a little fisherman's village 10 min bus ride from town of Korcula. Lumbarda is very well known for its finest vineyards and production of unique white wine called 'GRK'. Lumbarda is very popular tourist spot as the only sandy beaches on Korcula - the beach of Vela Przina and Bilin Zal are situated in close vicinity (map). It's a pretty place and nice location for lazy afternoons ice-creams and coffee in numerous small cafes. (More about Lumbarda) + *Lumbarda Guide*



**VRNIK** - tiny inhabited island in the Korcula archipelago, easy reached by taxi-boats from Korcula main harbor. It is well known for it's deep stone quarries dating back from Roman times. Vrnik is worth to go and visit during the day as it has a lot of secluded small swimming spots where water is so blue and clear. This is one of favorite Sunday excursion destinations for local Korcula people. (map) (More about Islands Skoji and Vrnik...)



**ZRNOVO** - a five minutes bus ride from Korcula town, there is a village of Zrnovo well known for its old cypresses, terraced vineyards, stone houses, bell towers of Zrnovo, its churches and olive groves. There is a nice walk route from Korcula Old Town or Zrnovska Banja to Zrnovo too (20 min) - (Zrnovo map). Pretty bays on the southern side of the Island- Orlandusa, Rasohatica and Pavja Luka are on walking distance from Zrnovo (up to 40 min) - a nice choice for swimming in clear and clean waters. (More about Zrnovo) + *Zrnovo home page*



**RACISCE** - a twenty minutes bus ride from Korcula town there is a fisherman and seaman village of Racisce, situated in the one of the northern Korcula bays. It is quite small place, with only about 500 inhabitants, mostly sailors and their families.

The bays Vaja and Samograd, with its prehistoric cave, are both attractive for swimming and sunbathing. For more ambitious, there is a nice walk route from Racisce and Kneze to the village of Pupnat - read more about Racisce



**PUPNAT** - the oldest settlement on the island dating back from Illyrian times. Well preserved village architecture is worth not to miss. Pupnat is probably best known for it's bay of Pupnatska Luka -one of the most beautiful pebble beaches on the Island (map). In the summer, this beach is very busy so try to come and get a good

spot as early as possible. (More about Pupnat ) + [Pupnat home page](#)



**CARA** - village about 20 min bus ride from Korcula town (25km) right in the middle of the Island. Cara is well known, together with Smokvica, for its famous white wine Posip which is cultivated here, as well as in Smokvica for long years. Nearby bay of Zavalatica and Zitna are good swimming locations where there are a couple of restaurants with a nice sea-view. (map) .. read more about Cara ..

**KORCULA TOWN** is the main town on the island, with population of about 3000 inhabitants. Korcula town is a walled town with it's numerous buildings and monuments, cafes, restaurants , hotels, galleries, cinema etc, Korcula is very popular for visitors as central location from which they explore the rest of the island and its surroundings. Korcula Town is also an administrative center of the area. Note: Korcula is pronounced "kor-chula"

### Sightseeing in Korcula Town

**Korcula Old Town** is the main attraction of Korcula Town - a medieval walled city positioned on a oval-shaped swelling of land pointing deep into Peljesac Channel. The Old Town itself is grooved with a succession of narrow streets that branch off the spine of the main street like the fish bone. Fish bone shape was used in Korcula Old Town design to reduce effects of wind and sun and provide citizens with sheltered and comfortable accommodation. The architecture in the Old Town is mainly influenced by Venetian Renaissance. The Old Town center is dominated by the splendid **St Mark's Cathedral** built in the Gothic-Renaissance style, completed in 15th century at the place of other church from 13th century.

There is a local legend that **Marco Polo** was born in Korcula Town and Marko Polo's alleged house of birth is worth visiting. Despite its rather featureless interior, the houses' tower (loggia) allows for a panoramic vista of Korcula, stretching from east to west. The house is under the protection of the Korcula Town Hall and it will soon be turned into a Museum of Marco Polo.

The **Korcula Town Museum** is also interesting to visit as it gives insights to Korcula's history, as it displays Korculan stonecarvings, Lumbarda Psephism and Ancient Greece artefacts , shipbuilding historical items, Renaissance Architectural Carvings and Coats of Arms Exhibits etc..

At night well known **Moreska Sword Dance**, a colorful, choreographed sword dance is also worth seeing.

## *Peljesac Peninsular*

### Day 12

**Pelješac** is a peninsula in southern Croatia, in the Dubrovnik -Neretva county, just about an hour and a half drive from Dubrovnik. It is around 70 km long and is connected with Croatian Mainland at Ston.

The Pelješac Channel divides the peninsula from the island of Korčula. Scattered like breadcrumbs across the foothills of the dolomites, the hamlets and villages of southern Peljesac evoke an ancient past. The rocks, the vegetation, the groves of pine and cypress - everywhere a sense of timelessness prevails. On the hills above the sea, abandoned villas and gardens, stone walls and columns lie crumbling in the sun. Lemon, fig and almond trees, herbs and wildflowers surround the villages gardens and fields.

The historical sea captains' town of Orebic - with its shops, market, cafés and restaurants is on the bottom of the Sveti Ilija Mountain. A footpath into the mountains to the summit of Sveti Ilija begins near Viganj too - Croatia's windsurfing capital. There, seaside restaurants and pebbly beaches attract a lively crowd in summer months. The island of Korcula and Mljet are just across the channel.

The geographic position of Peljesac, situated between 2 regional city centers of central and southern Dalmatia – Split and Dubrovnik, the mouth of the Neretva River, the island of Korcula and Mljet, gives it a particular geographic and tourist importance.

## *Hvar Island.*

### Days 12-13

[Hvar](#) is an island off the coast of [Croatia](#).

Gently rolling hills painted a brilliant purple by the fertile flowers, lush vineyards nestling at the foot of ragged mountains, gorgeous beaches with tiny inlets and secluded coves, luscious restaurants, boutiques, and a vibrant nightlife amidst the medieval streets of Hvar Town are just a few of the treats to enjoy on this dream of an island.

Imposing fortifications hover above the fluid blend of grey stone and orange cascading roofs. The remains of walls built by a long list of invaders descend towards the wide promenade edging the brilliant blue sea and the quaint fishing harbor. Marble streets reveal one of the largest squares in Dalmatia, Trg Sveti Stjepana as well as the prized Cathedral of St. Stjepan and the Renaissance theatre.

Hvar Town may be the most stunning town on the island but Starigrad, the oldest village on the island, and Jelsa, as well as a smattering of small villages, dotting the coast or nestled in the lush interior are well worth a visit.

[Island Hvar](#) and especially [Hvar town](#) is one of the most popular destinations in the Adriatic. During the season (May to September) it can be very busy, especially during August when large numbers of Italians visit. Hvar was relatively cheap, without an extensive tourist infrastructure, and it attracted a lot of young people. However, this is changing as large five star hotels are being built and the standard of living in Croatia is rising.

The Town Square in Hvar is among the most beautiful and the largest in Croatia. The square measures 4500 square meters, and the town has developed around this square, starting north of the square in the 13th century and then circling to the south of the square in the 15th century. There is also a fortress at the top of the hill with walls that encompass parts of the city. It's an easy walk, although uphill, to the fortress...it's worth the trek however because of the wonderful views you have of the harbor and surrounding areas. Don't forget to bring your cameras. There is a small eatery in the middle of the fortress where you can purchase drinks and snacks.

The Cathedral of St. Stephen dominates one end of the Town Square, and was built during the 16th and 17th centuries. The bell tower of this cathedral is four-stories high, with each level more elaborately decorated than the last. The cathedral was built over a previously existing cathedral that was destroyed by the Turks. Parts of this older cathedral can be seen inside the church, but most of the interior was rebuilt.

Unique ceramics decorated with spiral ornaments in red, yellow, brown, and white were found at a Neolithic archeological site, Grapčeva špilja, near Hvar Town. Since such ornaments and engraving methods have only been found on the island of Hvar, archeologists have named this kind of Neolithic art "hvarska kultura" (Hvar's Culture). The island of Hvar also has the tradition of making lace, but from the threads of agava leaves. Nuns from the Benedictine monastery in Hvar are masters of this unique craft.

## *Primosten*

### Day 14

Primosten is one of the most popular tourist resorts in Dalmatia (tourism has been developing in an organized way since the sixties) and ranks among the most picturesque small towns on the Adriatic, with a number of typical narrow streets in the old town core on a small, hilly peninsula. On the other small peninsula, north of the centre, are the hotels Slava/Zora and Raduca, while on the southern side is Hotel Marina Lucica and, farther to the south, Kremik Marina.

Apart from nice beaches in the town and in the vicinity of the hotels, there is also a nudist beach on the island of Smokvica. Various sports and recreational opportunities include tennis, table tennis, bowling, beach volleyball and yachting. Yachting and diving schools are also provided. Visitors may choose between 50-odd restaurants, taverns, etc. The most famous local speciality is spiny lobster a la Primosten. The discotheque Aurora is the largest one in Dalmatia. In 30-odd villages and hamlets of Primosten Burnji, in the hinterland of Primosten, tourists are offered board and lodging. Very interesting is a large selection of home-made food: prosciutto, cheese in olive oil, lamb, roasted meat, wholesome and macrobiotic food - chickpea, olive oil, lentils, and other traditional dishes.

Tasting of the famous local red wine, Babic, is a must. Babic is produced from the autochthonous wine sort in the famous vineyards of Primosten, located in the rocks. These vineyards are granted the official status of a monument to human efforts and their representation is also found in the lobby of the -United Nations building in New York. Excursions are regularly organized: Primosten Wine Trail (sightseeing tour through the villages of Primosten Burnji), visits to Krpanj (Museum of Sponge Collecting) and Zlarin (so-called "coral tours"), etc. Numerous cultural events and entertainment programs take place in the summer months, such as the Primosten fiesta and usages (the first week in August). Important religious feasts include the feast days of Our Lady of Loret (9th and 10th of May) and Our Lady of Porto (27th of July), when a big procession around the town and on the sea takes place. Primosten also features the Art Colony "Sea - People - Coast", the Music School "Primo Primores", the Summer Baroque Music School, the Art Gallery "Rudina", the Ambience Gallery "Stone Spheres". Kremik Marina has 250 berths in the sea and 140 places on the land; it also has a charter (non-schedule) fleet.

PRIMOSTEN, a small town and harbour on a small peninsula between the coves of Raduca and Primosten, 30 km southeast of Sibenik; population 1,745. Economy is based on farming, growing of vines and olives, fishing and tourism. Primosten is protected from the northerly winds and has a very mild climate. The coves of Vela and Mala Raduca, Primosten and Peles feature large beaches. The town is located on the main road (M2, E65). In the 16th century a bridge was constructed so as to connect the settlement on the islet with the mainland. The islet featured also two towers and walls, pulled down at the end of the 19th century. The parish church of St. George, erected on top of the elevation in the 15th century, was thoroughly reconstructed in 1760. It keeps the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary with silver adornments and a representation of St. Mary with Sts. Luke and George, a work by Master Cusi from 1719. The entrance into the town features a Baroque chapel from 1790. - The hamlet of Krusevo features the mediaeval church of St. Martin (tombstones on the cemetery), in Siroka is the church of St. Jerome from 1460 and in Prhovo the mediaeval church of St. George, later reconstructed.

## Pag Island

### Day 14

**Pag** is an island in the northern Adriatic Sea, off the coast of Croatia. It is the fifth largest island on the Croatian coast, and the one with the longest coastline.

In addition to the two towns on island, Pag and Novalja, there are many smaller villages and touristic places. The island is administratively divided; the northern part belongs to Lika-Senj County and the southern part which belongs to Zadar County.

Pag belongs to the north-Dalmatian archipelago and it extends northwest-southeast along the coast, forming the Velebit channel. The island has an area of 305 km<sup>2</sup> and the coastline is 302.47 km. It is around 60 km long (from northwest to southeast), and between 2 and 10 km wide.

The southwestern coast of the island is low (the Pag Bay with the large *Caska* Cove), and the north-western is steep and high: (*Stara Novalja* Bay). Most of the island is rocky; smaller areas are covered with Mediterranean shrubs. The southeast of the island contains karst lakes Velo Blato and Malo Blato. The island's highest peak is *Sveti Vid* (St. Vitus, 348 m).

Grapes (the authentic *žitica*), vegetables and fruit are grown in the valleys and fields. The northern area of the *Lun* peninsula is mostly under *olive-groves*. Most communities on the island are connected by a road. From the southern part of the island a 300m-long arch bridge connects the island to the mainland. From the northern part of the island the *Prizna - Žigljen* ferry connects the island to the mainland. The island of Pag has two towns, Pag and Novalja, and many smaller villages and communities including *Lun, Stara Novalja, Gajac, Kolan, Mandre, Šimuni, Metajna, Dinjiška, Vlašiči, Poveljana* and others.

The island of Pag is quickly earning a reputation as a party destination from its increasingly bustling nightlife, a good deal of which is centered on Zrće beach.

## Škocjan Caves

### Day 15

This exceptional system of limestone caves comprises collapsed dolines, some 6 km of underground passages with a total depth of more than 200 m, many waterfalls and one of the largest known underground chambers. The site, located in the Kras region (literally meaning Karst), is one of the most famous in the world for the study of karstic phenomena.

Due to their exceptional significance, the Škocjan Caves were entered on UNESCO's list of natural and cultural world heritage sites in 1986. International scientific circles have thus acknowledged the importance of the Caves as one of the natural treasures of planet Earth.

Ranking among the most important caves in the world, the Škocjan Caves represent the most significant underground phenomena in both the Karst region and Slovenia.

From time immemorial, people have been attracted to the gorge where the Reka River disappears underground as well as the mysterious cave entrances. The Reka River sinks under a rocky wall; on the top of it lies the village of Škocjan after which the Caves are named.

Archaeological research has shown that people lived in the caves and the surrounding area in prehistoric times – from the Mesolithic, the Neolithic, the Bronze and Iron Ages through Antiquity and the Middle Ages to the present; altogether for more than 5,000 years. The finds from this area testify that the Škocjan Caves had not only local but regional importance in prehistoric times. Pioneering research of Karst and karst phenomena began in this area in the 19th century. The international karstological terms "karst" and "doline" originate here

Collapsed dolines and their surroundings are home to rare and endangered birds and several bat species. Due to particular geo-morphological and microclimatic conditions, an extraordinary ecosystem has developed here in which the Mediterranean, Sub-Mediterranean, Central European, Illyrian and Alpine biogeographical elements co-exist. Rare cave fauna are preserved in the underground system of the Reka River.

## *Corvara or a Day (or two) in the Dolomites*

### Days 16-17



Corvara in July 2007 with Mount Sassongher in the background

**Corvara** (German: *Kurfar*; Ladin: *Corvara*; Italian: *Corvara in Badia*) is a *comune* (municipality) in the province of Bolzano-Bozen in the Italian region Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, located about 80 km northeast of Trento and about 40 km east of Bolzano. As of 31 December 2004, it had a population of 1,267 and an area of 42.2 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>[1]</sup>

Corvara borders the following municipalities: Badia, Canazei, Livinallongo del Col di Lana, San Martin de Tor, and Sëlva (Selva di Val Gardena).

Corvara is the main center of Alta Badia, a prestigious tourist area located at the top end of the Val Badia valley, surrounded by the peaks of the Dolomites mountains. Because of its geographic position in the heart of the Dolomites, Alta Badia gradually transformed itself into an avantgarde tourist area keeping intact its alpine character.

According to the 2001 census, 91.00% of the population speak Ladin, 4.58% German and 4.42% Italian as first language.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Ötzi the Iceman

**Ötzi the Iceman**, **Similaun Man** or **Man from Hauslabjoch** are modern names of a well-preserved natural mummy of a man from about 3300 BC. The mummy was found in September 1991 in the Schnalstal glacier in the Ötztal Alps, near Hauslabjoch on the border between Austria and Italy.<sup>[1]</sup> The nickname comes from *Ötztal* (Ötz valley), the region in which he was discovered. He is Europe's oldest natural human mummy, and has offered an unprecedented view of Chalcolithic (Copper Age) Europeans. The body and his belongings are displayed in the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, northern Italy.

Ötzi was found by two German tourists from Nuremberg, Helmut and Erika Simon, on 19 September 1991. The body was at first thought to be a modern corpse, like several others which had been recently found in the region. Lying on its front and frozen in ice below the torso, it was crudely removed from the glacier by the Austrian authorities using a small jackhammer (which punctured the hip of the body) and ice-axes using non-archaeological methods. In addition, before the body was removed from the ice, people were allowed to see it, and some took portions of the clothing and tools as souvenirs. The body was then taken to a morgue in Innsbruck, where its true age was subsequently ascertained.

Subsequent surveys in October 1991 showed that the body had been located 92.56 meters inside Italian territory. Since 1998 it has been on display at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy between Corvara and the Passo dello Stelvio).

By current estimates, at the time of his death Ötzi was approximately 1.65 metres (5 ft 5 in) tall,<sup>[4]</sup> weighed about 50 kilograms (110 lb; 7.9 st)<sup>[5]</sup> and was about 45 years of age.<sup>[4]</sup> When his body was found, it weighed 38 kilograms (84 lb; 6.0 st).<sup>[4]</sup> Because the body was covered in ice shortly after his death, it only partially deteriorated. Analysis of pollen and dust grains and the isotopic composition of his tooth enamel indicate that he spent his childhood near the present village of Feldthurns (Velturmo), north of Bolzano, but later went to live in valleys about 50 kilometres further north.<sup>[6]</sup> Analysis by Franco Rollo's group at the University of Camerino has shown that Ötzi's mitochondrial DNA belongs to the K1 subcluster of the mitochondrial haplogroup K, but that it cannot be categorized into any of the three modern branches of that subcluster.<sup>[7]</sup> Rollo's group published Ötzi's complete mtDNA sequence in 2008.<sup>[8]</sup>

A Map of the Dolomite Day is [here](#).

## Passo dello Stelvio

The Passo dello Stelvio is the highest pass in Italy. It is situated in the Alps Retiche, to the north-west of the Montuoso group of the Ortles-Cevedale. Many consider it scenically the nicest of all the Alpine passes. It is possible to climb the Stelvio from two different sides; from Bormio and from Prato, both in Italy. However, it is also possible to reach the Stelvio from Switzerland, namely from St. Maria; see the Passo Umbrail (2501 m). From the starting point Bormio, one can go to Mazzo di Valtellina, the starting point of the Mortirolo.

The Passo dello Stelvio is situated in Lombardy. Starting from Bormio, the Passo dello Stelvio is 21.5 km long. Over this distance, you climb 1533 heightmeters. The average percentage is thus 7.1 %. Look for other sides to climb the Passo dello Stelvio .

The original road was built in 1820-25 by the Austrian Empire to connect the former Austrian province of Lombardia with the rest of Austria, covering a climb of 1871 m. The engineer and project manager was Carlo Donegani (1775-1845). Since then, the route has changed very little. Its sixty hairpin turns, 48 of them on the northern side numbered with stones, are a challenge to motorists. Even Stirling Moss went off the road here during a vintage car event in the 1990s, with an onboard video of his incident being shown on satellite TV.

Before the end of World War I, it formed the border between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Italian Kingdom. Even the Swiss had had an outpost and a hotel (which was destroyed) on the *Dreisprachenspitze*. During World War I, fierce battles were fought in the ice and snow of the area, with gun fire even crossing the Swiss area at times. The three nations made an agreement not to fire over Swiss territory, which jutted out in between Austria (to the north) and Italy (to the south). Instead they could fire down the pass, as Swiss territory was up and around the peak. After 1919, with the expansion of Italy, the pass lost its strategic importance.

The Stilfser Joch retains an importance for sport when it is open from June to September. Countless cyclists and motorcyclists struggle to get to the highest stretch of road in the Eastern Alps. The Giro d'Italia often crosses the Stilfser Joch (it was crossed by the Giro for the first time in 1953, when Coppi beat Koblet).

Bormio regularly hosts World Cup ski racing; its *Pista Stelvio* is among the most challenging men's downhill courses on the circuit.

The Stelvio Pass was also picked by the British automotive show *Top Gear* as its choice for the "greatest driving road in the world", although their search was concentrated only in Europe. This conclusion was reached after the team went in search of a road that would satisfy every "petrolhead's" driving fantasies in the premiere of the show's 10th season. However, in Season 14, after visiting the Transfăgărășan Highway in Romania, also known as "Ceașescu's folly", presenter Jeremy Clarkson claimed they had made a mistake in naming the Stelvio Pass as the best road in the world.

In 2008, Moto Guzzi started selling a Stelvio model, named after the famous mountain pass.

## *Julian Alps and Bovec*

### Day 18

**The Julian Alps** – named in honour of Caesar himself – form [Slovenia](#)'s dramatic northwest frontier with [Italy](#). Triglav National Park, established in 1924, includes almost all of the alps lying within [Slovenia](#). The centrepiece of the park is, of course, Mt Triglav (2864m), [Slovenia](#)'s highest mountain, but there are many other peaks here reaching above 2000m, as well as ravines, canyons, caves, rivers, streams, forests and alpine meadows.

**Bovec** is a small town and municipality in northwestern [Slovenia](#). The town of Bovec lies in the Bovec Basin in the [Soča](#) Valley below the [Kanin](#) mountain in the [Julian Alps](#).

Bovec is one of the 210 [municipalities](#) of [Slovenia](#). It is situated close to border with [Italy](#), 136 km from the capital [Ljubljana](#), at an altitude of 434 m. Bovec has been traditionally part of the [Goriška](#) region, but nowadays only a minority of locals share this regional identity, preferring to identify with the wider region of the [Slovenian Littoral](#).

A part of the Bovec municipality is located within the [Triglav National Park](#), but not Bovec itself.

Bovec was first mentioned in 1192. Initially, it was part of the [Tolmin](#) County, and later changed hands between the [Republic of Venice](#) and the [Counts of Gorizia](#), before being included in the [Habsburg Monarchy](#), like the majority of [Slovene-speaking territories](#). With the exception of a brief period between 1809 and 1813, when it was included under the [Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy](#), it remained under the [Austrian](#) rule until 1918.

During the [Austro-Hungarian](#) period, the town was included in the [Austrian Littoral](#), and was strongly influenced by [German culture](#). Many locals preferred the use of [German language](#) over [Slovene](#) until late 19th century, when Slovene prevailed and ultimately completely replaced German as the language of everyday communication.<sup>[1]</sup>

During World War One, the area was the theatre of the [Battles of the Isonzo](#), fought between Italy and [Austria-Hungary](#). In 1918, the whole area was occupied by the Italian Army, and in 1920 it was officially annexed to Italy, and included in the [Julian March](#) region. Between 1922 and 1943, Bovec and the neighbouring villages, which had an exclusively Slovene-speaking population, was submitted to a policy of violent [Fascist Italianization](#). Numerous locals joined the underground [militant anti-fascist](#) organization [TIGR](#), which fought against the Italian [Fascist regime](#), while many others emigrated to the neighbouring [Kingdom of Yugoslavia](#) (among them, the renowned literary scholar [Anton Ocvirk](#)).

Between 1943 and 1945, the area was occupied by [Nazi German](#) forces, and units of [partisan resistance](#) were active in the area. After the liberation by the [Yugoslav People's Army](#) in May 1945, Bovec came under joint British-U.S. occupation. Between June 1945 and September 1947, Bovec and the whole right bank of the Soča river was included in the Zone A of the [Julian March](#), which was under Allied military administration, with the [demarcation line](#) with the Yugoslav occupation zone running just a few kilometers east of the town.

In September 1947, the [Paris Peace Treaties](#) gave the town to [Yugoslavia](#), namely to the [Socialist Republic of Slovenia](#). With the [breakup of Yugoslavia](#) in 1991, Bovec became part of the independent Slovenian state.

Bovec was heavily damaged by the [1976 Friuli earthquake](#). Another major earthquake with a magnitude of 5,6 on the [Richter scale](#) shook the town in April 1998, and a weaker one occurred in July 2004, with a 4,9 magnitude.

Several natural sights are included in the Bovec municipality, such as the source of the River Soča, the 106 m high [Boka](#) waterfall, the [ski resort](#) Kanin, and the [Trenta Valley](#), connected to Bovec with a tourist trail. The municipality has a well developed tourist industry, centered in the town itself, with numerous hotels, and an airfield ([LJBO](#)).

In 2007, a part of the movie, [Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian](#), was shot close to Bovec.

The town has a population of 1,300, while the whole municipality has a bit more than 3,000 inhabitants.

## *Return to Ljubljana*

**Day 19**

*Carpe diem!*