



# Croatia Active Adventure

9 Days



## Day 1 | Zagreb

### A Genuine Cakewalk

Meet your fellow Wild Women in the Dubrovnik Hotel lobby at 1 p.m. for welcome drinks and apps. We take a group shuttle to the verdant Samobor Highlands to check into our accommodations before taking an easy guided walking tour through Zumberak.

This riverside village is a showcase of Baroque and Art Deco architecture and equally impressive giant sycamore trees. We learn about the square's water fountain and locally treasured heart-shaped ginger cookies (and the love story attached to them).

In Samobor Highlands Nature Park, the remains of the immense stone fortress of the Samobar castle and moat offer a perfect bird's eye view of Slovenia, just 3 miles (5 km) away.

The afternoon is sweetened by espressos and slices of the famed Samoborska kremšnita, a traditional custard cream cake sandwiched between two flaky pastry layers. Afterwards, we return to our hotel to chill out before dinner together.

#### Included Meals

Dinner

#### Accommodations

Livadic Hotel



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## Day 2 | Plitvice Lake National Park

### Say Cheese!

Today we visit a local farm for a lingering lunch of wild boar sausage, several cheeses (pumpkin cheese!), chestnut honey and warming plum brandy.

We drive south to experience the wonder of Plitvice Lakes National Park to walk sections of the 11 mile-long (18 km) boardwalk that winds through the park.

Plitvice Lakes is the oldest and largest national park in Croatia. The unique karst terrain, old growth beech forest, travertine barriers, caves and surreal limestone and dolomite-bottomed lakes are otherworldly. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is divided into more than sixteen upper and lower lakes—they shift in color from aqua to teal to slate as they spill into each other. Waterfalls magically pound into every single one in torrents or thin streams or cascade over rocks. The tallest waterfall in Croatia is found here!

We return to our hotel via electric boat ferry, the park’s “train” system and shuttle.

### Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

## Accommodations

Ento Garden

## The Hike

Depending on the group's pace and activity level, we can walk 5 to 7.5 miles (8 to 12 km).



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# Day 3 | The Velebit Mountains

## A Spirited Walk

We transfer two hours south to Paklenica National Park. We hike through a diverse mix of beech, black pine and downy oak trees. Old stone water mills appear like ghosts in the greenery. We learn about the funeral rites of residents whose graves were marked by head and footstones that indicated their height. Their bodies were moved to a lower village, but their souls remain in the mountains.

After a challenging rock-strewn climb of gradual elevation, we have a hearty lunch at a family-owned alpine hut. Everything is delivered to the remote hut on foot or by mule.

Nourished, we hike to Velika Paklenica, a giant valley with knock-out views of the Velebit mountains. Paklenica is known for its international rock climbing competitions and mountaineering history. The park is busy with colorful climbers ascending coveted routes.



Tonight's dinner will be at our hotel in Starigrad, located adjacent to the park.

### Included Meals

Boxed breakfast, lunch and dinner

### Accommodations

Hotel Rajna

### The Hike

The linear trail to Velika Paklenica is approximately 7.5 miles (12 km) return on mixed gravel and stone stair terrain with a 1,969 foot (600 m) elevation gain. Hiking poles and hiking shoes or boots are recommended due to the rock. If you would like to opt out of the hike, there is a tunnel complex under the mountain dubbed the “Bunkers” with a cafe, indoor climbing wall, museum and interactive displays on knot-tying, alpine history and the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service.



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## Day 4 | Split

### Pottery and the Promenade

After breakfast, we drive two hours further south to the splendor of Split. Lunch will be in a classic taverna in the city—expect the catch of the day! Think marinated sardines, grilled sea bass and fish pâté.

Later, we meet a talented local potter for a bowl-making workshop. We dive right in and have fun exploring the transformative properties of clay and learn about the glazing and firing process. You may opt for free time to explore Split independently during the pottery session.

Before dinner, we wander around the grandeur of the city and the palm-lined Riva promenade and harbor of bobbing boats. For *Game of Thrones* fans, you will recognize many of the filming locations, especially the tunnel under the Diocletian Palace (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Croatia's second largest city is a giant and remarkable step back in time (305 A.D.).

#### Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

#### Accommodations

Hotel Peristil



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## Day 5 | The Paklinski Islands

### Paddle and Unwind

We board a ferry to Hvar Island (one hour) where we unpack for the next three nights.

Later, a water taxi takes us to Zdrilca Bay for an introduction to tandem kayaking. There are numerous coves and bays to poke around. We also have time to swim in the Adriatic, snorkel or chill out with an even chillier drink at the beach bar. We slowly kayak back to Hvar in the late afternoon; expect to be in the saddle for three to four hours.

After returning from our paddle, we are free range chickens! Our Wild Women guide will have recommendations for the best secret places to hang out over tapas and wines. The alleys come alive and aglow at night with locals and the lure of all the kitchens preparing fish, scampi and gnocchi. Be sure to enjoy the local plonk—Plavac Mali wines!

#### Included Meals

Breakfast and lunch

#### Accommodations

Villa Nora

#### The Paddle

3 to 4 hours

Note: In the event of inclement weather, a tour of Saint Clement Island will replace the kayaking activity. Among the vineyards, forests of cacti, strawberry trees and fragrant wild rosemary are signs of the elusive wild boars. You'll learn about historic shipwrecks and the discovery of rare cave artifacts on the isle too!



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## Day 6 | Hvar Island

### An Open-Air Apothecary

After breakfast, we explore the abandoned villages of Velo and Malo Grablje and learn about the rich foraging opportunities of the island. Lavender and rosemary are still distilled here.

This area is an open-air apothecary with numerous medicinal plants and herbs like wild mint, sage, agave and Dalmatian oak. Mediterranean species abound: fig, almond, mulberry, mandarin and wild pistachio.

Malo Grablje is abandoned except for Berti Tudor's 100% charming family-run taverna. We will taste his homemade wine; he's usually distilling something! Lunch will be traditional of course. Expect grilled meat and customary plates of sardines, prosciutto, salami, capers, olives and cheese to start.

After lunch, we will walk 4 miles (7 km) along the coast back to Hvar. It's impossible to not take a dozen photos of the metallic sea and iconic artist-occupied lighthouse.

Tonight, we can dine where we wish and take in the vibrant buzz and twinkle of Hvar.



### Included Meals

Breakfast and lunch

### Accommodations

Villa Nora

### The Hike

We hike 4 miles (7 km). The coastal trail back to Hvar has rocky beach sections, some single-track trail and cobblestone stairs.



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## Day 7 | The Island of Vis

### Mamma Mia, Here We Go Again!

This twee 12th-century fishing village was closed to visitors until just 25 years ago as it served as headquarters for the Yugoslav military. For ABBA fans, this is where *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again* was filmed!

Vis is a designated UNESCO Global Geopark that celebrates wine, food, tradition and deeply-steeped history. We travel by speedboat to Vis harbor and jump in Jeeps with local



guides to learn more about the island's traditional stone villages, fertile fields and military remains.

Lunch at Roki's is a dream. Stewed fall-off-the-bone lamb and veal are baked in cauldrons covered in hot ash. Local white, red and rose wines flow like the conversation around the fire! This is a merry place with a quirky trophy collection, snoozing dogs and an Elvis-heavy playlist.

We return to Hvar for another free evening. Don't miss the syrupy sunset from the hotel's rooftop!

### **Included Meals**

Breakfast and lunch

### **Accommodations**

Villa Nora



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# Day 8 | Dubrovnik

## Medieval Memories

We board the catamaran ferry to Dubrovnik and transfer to the cypress-spiked hinterland Konavle by van. The pastoral landscape is dotted with old mills, countless vineyards, farms and a Franciscan monastery.

After drinking in the view, we stop for a wine and liqueur tasting at ZlatoVišće. The vintner will walk us through samples of sage, walnut, carob, loquat, cherry and plum brandy.

Later, in Dubrovnik, we have two options: Take a shuttle back to the hotel or explore the marble roads of the medieval city. In the evening, we reconnect for an Old Town city tour and dinner.

The grand stories of earthquakes, executions and lepers is an engaging dose of the Old Town's evolution and resilience. In 1991, over 600 missiles were launched, damaging 90% of the city's terracotta roofs.

Dinner is an extravagant affair—there will be champagne! It's a celebratory night: reflect and swap stories, highlights and inside jokes!

### Included Meals

Breakfast, boxed lunch and dinner

### Accommodations

Hotel Lapad

### Travel

Catamaran ferry (3 hours), shuttle (40 minutes to Konavle, 40 minutes to the Old Town)



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## Day 9 | Departure

### Twists and Turns

After a relaxed breakfast at the hotel (and maybe a swim), you can extend your stay and continue to explore the city's twists and turns independently or depart for home.

We have a group airport transfer provided in the morning. If you wish to stay longer, a taxi or bus (not included) to Dubrovnik (DBV) airport is easy to arrange and a reliable 30-minute transfer.

On your flight, if you have a window seat, you'll have an aerial view of some of the islands that we visited! Warning: you will be pacing to get back to them!

### Included Meals

Breakfast





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## Trip Details

### Know Before You Go

For all of the logistical details you'll need to know prior to departure—including the packing list, arrival and departure details and suggested tipping information, click [HERE](#).

Itinerary version as of April 4, 2024.