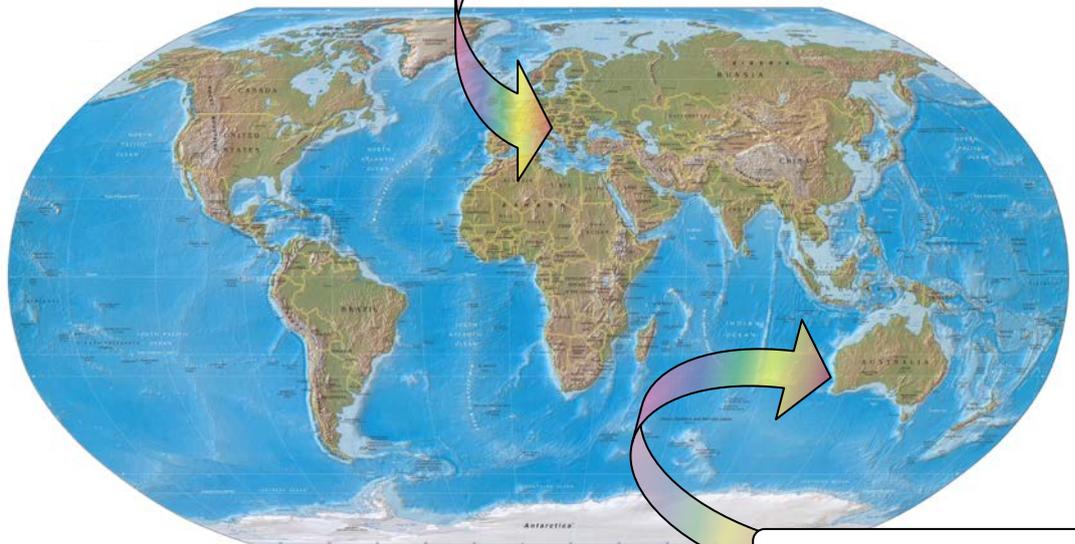


# CROATIA



We were there



Now we are here

## **FACTS:**

- **Full name:** Republic of Croatia
- **Population:** 4.4 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Zagreb
- **Area:** 56,594 sq km (21,851 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Croatian
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 71 years (men), 78 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 kuna = 100 lipa
- **Main exports:** Machinery and transport equipment, clothing, chemicals
- **GNI per capita:** US \$8,060 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Internet domain:** .hr
- **International dialing code:** +385

## **Croatian Community in WA**

**Croatian Centre Caversham Inc.** Lot 1 Benara Rd, Caversham WA 6055 ph: 9274 7674

**Croatian Community Centre** Alfred Rd, North Fremantle WA 6159 ph: 9335 8729

**Croatian Heritage Radio Programmes of WA Inc.** 79 Hanworth St, Balcatta WA 6021  
ph: 9344 6760 mobile: 0412 676 788

**Croatian House Incorporated** 2 Wishart St, Gwelup WA 6018 ph: 9446 2588

**Croatian Welfare Association** 243 High St, Fremantle WA 6160 ph: 9335 9588  
Mail: PO Box 1633 Fremantle WA 6959

**Hrvatski Kuglacki Klub Jedinstvo Swan (Croatian)** 71 McDonald Rd, Millendon WA 6056  
ph: 9296 4000

## **Overview of cultural groups**

The ethnic structure of the population of the Republic of Croatia exhibits both a high and a stable homogeneity. The majority are Croats 3,736,356 or 78.1%. Other ethnic groups or minorities accounting for a low proportion are: Serb 581,663; Muslim 43,469; Slovenian 22,376; Italian 21,303; Czech 13,087; Slovakian 5,606; Ruthenians 3,253. Some Croatian citizens are Albanian, Austrian, German, Ukrainian, Gypsy, Jewish, etc. by origin.

The rights of all minority groups are regulated by a special constitutional law; all ethnic groups are entitled to cultural autonomy and are represented in the Diet (Sabor) as well as in other governmental bodies.

## **Language/dialects spoken**

The official and common language in Croatia is a South Slavic language, using the Latin alphabet. Less than 5% of the population cites other languages as their mother tongues: Serbian 1%; other and undesignated 2.9% including Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, and German.

## **Dietary preferences**

Croatian cuisine is varied and is therefore known as "the cuisine of regions". Its modern roots date back to Proto-Slavic and ancient periods and the differences in the selection of foodstuffs and forms of cooking are most notable between those on the mainland and those in coastal regions. Mainland cuisine is more characterized by the earlier Proto-Slavic and the more recent contacts with the more famous gastronomic orders of today - Hungarian, Viennese and Turkish - while the coastal region bears the influences of the Greek, Roman and Illyrian, as well as of the later Mediterranean cuisine - Italian and French.

Many Croatian traditional festivities are distinctly linked with food independently of whether they are related to:

- strenuous labor - crop harvesting or threshing, the grape harvest and Christening of wine, the completion of a house
- religion - mostly Catholic Christmas, Easter, pilgrimages, local saints days
- or to memorable moments in an individuals life - baptism, wedding, birthday, name-day, funeral wakes, etc.

Some festivities are typically of a public character, such as the Dionysian St. Martin's Day, celebrated in private farmhouses, wine cellars and restaurants. Other festivities are almost exclusively family reunions - weddings, baptism, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Easter, etc.

Every holiday has its typical dish. **Pork and potato stew** is eaten on pilgrimages and at fairs. **Cod** is prepared for Christmas Eve and Good Friday. **Pork** is eaten on New Year's Day. **Doughnuts** are an inseparable part of carnival festivities and in the south they prepare a similar fried sweet dish known as **hrostule**. **Ham and boiled eggs** with green vegetables are served at Easter, while desserts comprise traditional cakes (e.g. pinca). **Kulen** – hot pepper flavored sausage is served at harvest time. **Goose** is prepared for St. Martin's Day. **Turkey** and other fowl, as well as **sarma** (meat-stuffed cabbage leaves) are served on Christmas Day.

At weddings a variety of dishes with dozens of cakes and biscuits are served including **breskvice**, shortbread bear paws, gingerbread biscuits, fritule - plain fritters, etc.

The favorite meals of very many people on all occasions include: **spit-roasted lamb, suckling pig, grilled fish**, calamari cooked in various ways. The favorite barbecue dishes are: **raznjici, cevapcici, fish stew, prosciutto** and sheep's cheese, or smoked ham and cottage cheese with sour cream.

Croatia is justifiably proud of its broad palette of high quality: wines with protected geographic origin, brandies, fruit juices, beers and mineral water. In the south, people drink with their food "bevanda" - heavy, richly flavored red wine mixed with plain water. In north-western regions "gemisht" - dry, flavored wines mixed with mineral water.

## **Religion/spirituality/observances**

The majority of the population of the Republic of Croatia are Roman Catholic 76.6%, followed by Orthodox 11.1%, Muslim 7.2% and atheist 3.9%. Today the Catholic church in the area of the Republic of Croatia is territorially divided into 11 archbishoprics forming three metropolitan provinces: the Zagreb, the Split and the Rijeka provinces and one independent archbishopric the Zadar.

### **Public Holidays:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>English Name</b>	<b>Local Name</b>
June 22	Anti-fascist struggle day	Dan antifašističke borbe
June 25	Statehood Day	Dan državnosti
August 5	Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day	Dan pobjede i domovinske zahvalnosti
August 15	Assumption of Mary	Velika Gospa
October 8	Independence Day	Dan nezavisnosti

## **Customs/traditions**

Culture, art, and many traditions of Croatia were influenced by the different ethnicities and backgrounds of its people. For example, the coastal areas were always greatly influenced by Italy and Italian art, since these areas of the country were once a part of the Roman Empire. Other areas in the country's inland experienced the influence of the neighboring countries, such as Austria, Hungary, and central Europe. That influence can be found in Croatia almost everywhere--architecture, language, religion, etc. Many cities and towns of Croatia, including Zagreb (the country's capital), Dubrovnik, Rovinj, Split, and others, feature a great mix of architectural styles from the ruins of ancient Roman palaces to medieval castles, Goth churches, and modern buildings. One of the districts in Dubrovnik - Stari Grad (Old Town) is considered by many as one of the most beautiful towns in Croatia.

Many Croatian holidays are religious events, but Croatians also celebrate their traditional culture through local and national festivals. Each Croatian town holds its own carnival, which features local songs, crafts and dances featuring traditional folk costumes. Some festivals go on for days and also feature parades with floats, as well as much feasting. While some festivals occur during the summer, many are held in the winter before the beginning of **Lent**, the Christian period of fasting before Easter. **Easter** is a generally a more solemn holiday observed with processions and church services. People also decorate easter eggs called pisance which are painted with homemade dyes and given as gifts. In the summer and early autumn, catholics celebrate the **Feast of the Assumption and the Birth of the Virgin** by going to special church

services and making pilgrimages. **All Saints Day** (November 1) is an important time for families who visit the graves of their relatives and light candles there. **Christmas** is the most important holiday of the year. Celebrations begin on **St. Nicholas' Day** (December 6) when children leave out stockings and receive small gifts for being good although they are also warned of a visit from the devil krampus who kidnaps bad children in his bag. December 13 is the feast of **St. Lucy**. By custom, the mother of the family "plants" wheat grains in a round dish. By Christmas Eve, green shoots have sprouted and are tied with the Croatian tricolour ribbon of red, white and blue. Three candies are placed in the centre of the sprouting wheat and this remains the

centerpiece of the Christmas table until the **Feast of the Three Kings** (January 6). The Christmas tree, a borrowed urban custom, is decorated on Christmas Eve, while Christmas Day is a time for feasting and visiting family.

## **Recreational activities**

Distinguished cultural and art institutions of the Republic of Croatia include: the Dubrovnik Summer Festival, the Split Summer, the Music Biennial in Zagreb, the Croatian Film Festival in Pula, the International Children's Festival in šibenik, the Folklore Show in Zagreb, etc. There are many archives in Croatia today as well as museums, galleries and church collections (more than 200), and libraries (over 500). Today the Republic of Croatia has several professional and amateur theatres; secular theatre emerged in the 16th century in northern Croatia, and Dubrovnik and Hvar were the theatrical centres during the Renaissance period.

Development of the Croatian sport intensified at the end of the 18th century (the first shooting societies) and in 1874 when the sports society "Hrvatski Sokol" was established. At that time sports were introduced into the schools. The first track-and-field race and the first soccer match took place in 1905; the first tennis match in 1904; the first basketball match in 1929; the first handball match in 1930. Today, the Croatian sports occupy the leading positions in the world in tennis, water-polo, handball, basketball, soccer. The umbrella sports organization is the Croatian Olympic Committee.

## **Environment**

Croatia is a medium-size European country considered in its position both Central European and Mediterranean, as well as Pannonian-Adriatic. Its constitutional tradition dates back to the medieval duchy from AD 791 to AD 924 and kingdom from AD 925 to AD 1102. The contemporary Republic of Croatia was proclaimed on 25th June 1991.

Croatia is a former Yugoslav republic on the Adriatic Sea. It borders with Serbia in the north-east 241 km, Hungary in the north 329 km, Slovenia in the north-west 501 km, with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the total length of the lower part of the crescent 932 km, with Montenegro in the extreme south 25 km and with Italy and Slovenia on the sea approximately 930 km.

Croatia is half-way to the North Pole and the Equator. It has three climate zones. The prevailing climate in the country's interior is moderately rainy. On the highest peaks a forest climate with snow falls while the areas along the Adriatic coast have a pleasantly mild Mediterranean climate with a large number of sunny days. Summers are dry and hot. Winters mild and wet. Average temperatures in January (-2) to 9°C, somewhat lower at the highest altitudes; in August about 20°C to 25 °C.

Sea temperature in winter is 2°C and in summer about 25°C.

## **Your Notes and Comments:**