

Croatia: Brač, Korčula & Mljet National Park

Tour-Only Itinerary

Lounging beneath the pergola, you take another sip of homemade walnut liqueur and turn to thank your Croatian host. Today's scrumptious lunch of *paštica*—Dalmatia's signature beef stew—has been delightfully satisfying, yet you want more. The same can be said of this morning's walk through the grapevines and olive groves of Brač Island.

Everything about this gorgeous stretch of Adriatic coast makes you want to dive in deeper: old stone villages steeped in Greek, Roman, and Venetian history; pine-dotted limestone outcrops, sandy beaches, and translucent turquoise coves. Your island-hopping week ahead on this walking tour in Dalmatia promises more great walks and memorable meals. For the moment, you're happy to just sit, sip, and soak it all in.

Highlights

Trek across lush countryside to a secluded cove (perhaps taking a dip in the crystalline waters) as you explore the resort island of Hvar.

Hike to Brač's stunning, cliffside monastery—originally a hermitage founded in 1551 by Glagolitic priests during the Ottoman advance.

Discover the birthplace of the legendary Marco Polo as you walk the charming, medieval streets of Korčula's Old Town, guided by a local expert.

Sip homemade walnut liqueur under the pergola after a tasty lunch of *paštica* at our friend Mate's house on Brač.

Sample Croatia's indigenous grk grape variety at an organic winery on Korčula.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures. It is rated easy to moderate, with most walks more on the moderate side, an average of 4 to 6 miles per day, with options on some days. There are daily ascents and descents, with climbing time on the ascents ranging from about 15 to 45 minutes. The terrain varies from paved and cobblestone streets (during organized city tours and other easy village exploration) to uneven, single-track trails with loose stones or gravel, rocky coastal paths, ancient ruins, and sets of ancient stone steps. The trails are often exposed to the sun. Days are quite full on this tour due to the inclusion of travel by ferry and catamaran in order to island hop.

DAY 1

Join your *Croatia: The Dalmatian Coast* tour. Walk to Split port for ferry to Brač. Transfer to Postira and easy walking tour of town

1-2 miles, easy

Your guide(s) will meet you at the Hotel Park in Split at 1:00 p.m. (after lunch on your own) in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for city walking.

You gather in the lobby of the meeting-point hotel for a brief orientation followed by a short walk to the nearby ferry terminal. Reaching the port, you board the (50-minute) public ferry to the Brač—the longest island which also has the highest elevation. You disembark in Supetar, a vibrant little town on the island's north side dominated by a church.

Brač, the third-largest island in the Croatian archipelago, is best known for its luminous white stone, from which both Diocletian's Palace and elements of the White House in Washington, DC, were constructed. It's also famous for its olives, including the rare Buhavica olive found only on the northeastern side of the island. A short minibus transfer along the tranquil northern coast brings you to your hotel, a comfortable property with a pool overlooking the sleepy village of Postira. After getting settled, you gather for a welcome meeting and stroll along the town's pretty waterfront to a favorite restaurant, where you can savor the first of many delicious dinners featuring the bounty of this distinctive coast.

Accommodation: Hotel Lipa, Postira, Brac

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

Postira to Splitska and Škrip, and Lovrečina cove to Postira

5 miles, easy to moderate, 800-ft. elevation gain; 3 miles, easy

Today's walk takes you along a pine-clad northern coastal path from Postira to the fishing village of Splitska. A steady ascent winds through olive groves and cultivated terraces, culminating at the village of Škrip, the island's first settlement, founded by the Illyrians in 1000 BC. Remains of the original city wall can still be seen around the citadel. You stop for a brief visit to the tower and Roman mausoleum, today a museum dedicated to the history of the island. Your lunch today is *pašticada*, a traditional Dalmatian specialty of slowly braised beef served with homemade gnocchi.

The afternoon presents two options. Join your guide(s) along the *lungomare*, or seaside trail, from Lovrečina cove to Postira past ruins of a Roman basilica en route to your hotel. Or, you may opt to return to the hotel via minibus. Either option allows you time to relax poolside before dinner on your own at the hotel or one of the many waterfront eateries.

Accommodation: Hotel Lipa, Postira, Brac

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

Blaca Monastery, Zlatni Rat beach, and Vidova Gora summit. Transfer to Hvar Island

3-5 miles, moderate, 1,400-ft. elevation loss

After a breakfast of fresh fruit, homemade bread, cheese, and yogurt, you set out to explore some of the island's finest attractions. A 45-minute transfer by minibus takes you to the trailhead. A rocky dirt path descends gradually to the 16th-century Pustinja Blaca, originally a hermitage founded in 1551 by Glagolitic priests during the Ottoman advance. You stop for a visit to the monastery before continuing to a secluded cove. Here, a short transfer by private boat brings you past the famous Zlatni Rat, or "Golden

Cape,” one of the most picturesque beaches in all Croatia. Afterward, you proceed to a former shepherd’s hamlet for a traditional *peka* lunch (meat and vegetable stew simmered slowly over hot coals beneath a dome-shaped lid).

This afternoon, you take a drive to Vidova Gora, the highest point on Brač, for a panoramic view over the islands you will explore during your journey.

Later today, you board a catamaran ferry for a short transfer to your next island—chic Hvar, famous for its lavender production. After you check into your comfortable seaside hotel, the evening is yours to stroll the promenade and admire Hvar town’s main historical buildings, including the old theater—the first in Europe to be open to the public. For dinner, you are free to choose from among the many restaurants and cafés, with recommendations from your guides and hotel staff.

Accommodation: Hotel Adriana, Hvar

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4

Hvar’s northern coast: Vidikovac Lavanda to Stari Grad. Independent exploration of Hvar

5.5 miles, easy to moderate with challenging sections, 1,200-ft. elevation loss

After a buffet breakfast of fresh fruits, cereals, *prsut* (Dalmatian smoked ham), and eggs, you embark on a scenic excursion to the island’s northern coast. Today’s exploration begins with a short transfer to your trailhead at Vidikovac Lavanda. From this vantage point, you take in stunning views of the island of Brač to the north and the Pakleni islands to the south. You descend steadily for approximately two and a half hours along a rugged hiking trail, the final portion of which includes some challenging, rocky terrain before reaching the tranquil town of Stari Grad (literally Old Town). Considered one of Croatia’s oldest towns, Stari Grad dates to the 4th century BC when it was a Greek colony called Faros. It lies on the edge of a UNESCO-preserved agricultural plain in a deep and protected cove. Upon arriving in town, you visit the fortified castle of Croatian poet Petar Hektorovic before an independent lunch at a *konoba* (tavern) or café of your choice.

Returning to Hvar by minibuss, a free afternoon affords several options for you to explore Hvar

independently, on land or by sea.

A walled, medieval port town with stunning beaches, Hvar is a delight to explore. The surrounding waters are home to picturesque islands, while the city's Old Town features elegant Renaissance architecture.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Embark on the short (steep) climb to the Španjola Fortress, a medieval castle occupying the site of an ancient Illyrian settlement dating to 500 BC. The trail to the citadel rewards you with a bird's-eye view of the picturesque harbor and the nearby Pakleni islands. (Route Notes provided.)
- Indulge in a soothing facial or a relaxing massage treatment at your hotel's luxurious Sensori Spa. The spa spans six indoor and outdoor levels and boasts four types of saunas as well as a rooftop saltwater swimming pool with stunning views of the town below. (Treatments not included.)
- Rent a kayak (or join a guided excursion) for a paddle through the narrow straits and into the hidden coves of the nearby Pakleni islands. These 14 islands just off the coast of Hvar town are a tranquil haven of pine woods and pebble beaches, surrounded by turquoise waters. (Rental and excursion fees not included.)
- Explore vibrant Hvar town on a self-guided tour. Visit the elegant Cathedral of St. Stephen or visit the town's impressive 17th-century theater (the first of its kind). Consider popping into the Benedictine convent where, over the centuries, the convent's nuns perfected the art of lacemaking—a small on-site museum showcases their handiwork. (A map of the town noting the location of noteworthy attractions is provided. Entry fees not included.)

This evening, reunite with your guides for a festive dinner of traditional Dalmatian specialties at one of our favorite *konobas*.

Accommodation: Hotel Adriana, Hvar

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5

Brusje to Milna. Milna to Hvar (optional and ferry schedule dependent). Transfer to Korčula Island

3-4 miles, easy to moderate and 5.5 miles, moderate, 600-ft. elevation loss

This morning, after a copious breakfast, perhaps on the harborside terrace, depart for a walk through the surrounding villages. A short minibuss transfer takes you inland to just outside the former shepherds' settlement of Brusje, where you'll find your trailhead. The rocky path winds past terraced hillsides dotted with olive trees, lavender, and drystone walls. You reach the abandoned village of Malo Grablje (its name derives from "malo" meaning "lower" and "grab" meaning "hornbeam bush"), recently restored and turned into a wonderfully preserved open-air museum of sorts. Take time to explore the village before continuing to the peaceful cove of Milna, where you may opt for a swim in the turquoise sea. A light lunch refuels you before transferring (or walking, depending upon ferry schedule) back to Hvar town, where you have time for a stroll or perhaps a gelato before you bid the island farewell. Spend a late afternoon relaxing on a scenic public ferry (catamaran) transfer to Korčula Island, the sixth-largest Adriatic island. Settle in at your seaside hotel and base for the next two nights. This evening, dinner is on your own, either at the hotel or at one of the many *konobas* in town. (Your guides and hotel staff will provide you with suggestions!)

Accommodation: Hotel Liburna, Korčula

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6

Žrnovo to Lumbarda, Independent exploration of Korčula

5 miles, easy to moderate, 450-ft. elevation loss

After breakfast in your hotel's panoramic dining room, you set out to explore the wooded hills above Korčula, an island blanketed in vineyards and olive groves and sprinkled with picturesque villages. Traditional culture has been preserved on this island, from religious festivals to folk music to dancing to shipbuilding. A short transfer brings you to Žrnovo, where you explore the village and St. Martin's Church before continuing along a wide, rocky path dotted with cypress and aromatic Mediterranean *maquis* (low-lying vegetation). As you emerge from the wooded trail, you spy beautiful views of the Peljesac Peninsula just across the channel. A special lunch at a nearby winery rewards your efforts.

This afternoon affords free time to enjoy an activity of your choice in or around Korčula's UNESCO-preserved Old Town.

Known for its vineyards and olive groves, Korčula is also home to ancient Croatian traditions and an impressive medieval Old Town. One of the most picturesque of the Adriatic islands, it's surprisingly

uncrowded, offering delightful opportunities for exploration.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Take to the water, and admire the view looking back at Korčula from the sea. You can rent a kayak, SUP (stand-up paddleboard), or windsurfer, and take a self-guided tour of the nearby waters (Rental fees not included).
- Unwind with a well-deserved massage or an aromatherapy treatment at the wellness center of the nearby Marko Polo Hotel, the Liburna's next-door sister property. You may choose to relax in a Finnish or Turkish sauna, a hydromassage in the whirlpool, or enjoy the view as you take a dip in the outdoor swimming pool. (Spa treatments not included.)
- Discover Korčula town's small museums, including the Town Museum and the Icon Museum, or explore the narrow alleys leading off of the main street dotted with charming boutiques and art galleries.

Later, reconvene as a group for an (optional) guided walk through Old Town—often referred to as a miniature Dubrovnik for its beautiful medieval buildings and stonework. Dinner is a special affair this evening at a friend's restaurant up in the hills above Korčula. A traditional feast awaits, featuring a seasonal menu that may include prawns, calamari, grilled meats, and a salad of sheep's cheese and olives, paired with a local wine or beer. Returning to town, you may have enough energy for an after-dinner stroll along the enchanting streets of Korčula town, providing perfect closure to the day.

Accommodation: Hotel Liburna, Korčula

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7

Peljesac Peninsula: Viganj to Orebic. Transfer to Dubrovnik. Your Croatia: The Dalmatian Coast tour concludes

5 miles, easy to moderate, 700-ft. elevation gain and loss

After breakfast, you bid farewell to Korčula to walk the hills along the Peljesac Peninsula. This area is home to some of the best beaches in southern Dalmatia, with wide, sandy coves bordered by groves of tamarisk and pine. After a short boat transfer to the tiny town of Viganj, you ascend a rocky trail for approximately 20 minutes. You are quickly graced with gorgeous views across the channel to Korčula before descending to Orebic. Once an important maritime center, the town is now home to a small

maritime museum. Enjoy lunch and a stroll through town on your own. Afterward, you proceed to magnificent Dubrovnik, where your tour ends at approximately 5:00 p.m. Continue your independent adventure or make connections for your next destination.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations

13 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 3 dinners

Local guides with you throughout land tour

Local wine and/or beer with dinner

Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary

Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz