

# Destination Spotlight: Croatia

photo by Ivo Pevan

## Coastal Calm

Croatia has to be one of the finest places in the Mediterranean to sail, particularly if you want it to be restful. In all, there are 1,244 islands, more than 80% of them uninhabited, and the water is some of the clearest in the Mediterranean.

These islands, along with the mainland, are rich in harbors and anchorages and if the weather is rough, there is always somewhere to shelter. There are few significant open-water crossings, plus a lot of other boats around in case of need, and plenty of secret places where you can drop anchor for a couple of hours and swim and sunbathe completely undisturbed.

Having your own boat gives you access to smaller more outlying islands such as Solta and Vis. Vis is relatively new to tourism, having been a military base for many decades. There is a distinctive island mentality here, with local rather than international prices.

The big island destinations such as Hvar and Korcula are attractive to island-hoppers on all types of craft, but all skippers should be prepared for quadruple parking along the dock during busy times.

Otherwise, the state-run Jadrolinija ferry network serves major islands and also runs a coastal service, traveling between Rijeka and Dubrovnik and even crossing over to Italy.

There are very few beaches, at least in the strictest sense of the word. The calm waters produce insufficient wave action for large quantities of sand, so with a few exceptions, “beaches” are almost all pebble, gravel or rock. Consequently, they do not attract crowds.

The latter certainly doesn't apply to the frequently photographed Zlatni Rat (Golden Cape) on the island of Brac, a shimmering spit of fine gravel whose tip moves with the tides and Croatia's most famous beach destination.

On the Dalmatian coast, there is a prime four-mile stretch of pebbly beach south of Split at Brela. Dotted with private coves backed by pine trees, this slice of the Makarska Riviera is lined with hotels, with lots of water activities to offer.

Further north, Croats head for the beaches around the resorts of Rovinj and Opatija—Skaraba Bay and Cape Rusi are ideal for adventurous bathers, with high rocks over deep swimming holes. There is also fine gravel in Kuvi Bay, Villas Rubin and Lone Bay.

## FastFacts

**Climate:** Thanks to its long coastline and accompanying breezes, summer temperatures in Croatia rarely rise above 86F. However, the islands have limited capacity and the more popular destinations quickly fill up in the peak months. Inland and further east, conditions tend to be more extreme.

**Getting there:** There are no direct flights to Croatia from the U.S., but plenty of airlines fly indirectly via European hubs.

**Getting around:** Croatia's road network is improving, but travel is slower here than in other Mediterranean countries. The terrain discourages trains, but bus services are widespread and car hire is inexpensive. Most coastal airports are near ports, from where car ferries and catamarans run to the islands.

**Geography:** Croatia is situated in central southern Europe on the Adriatic Sea, bordered by Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro.

**Ask your Covington Travel advisor to plan your trip to Croatia.**

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Images courtesy of the Croatian Tourism Board



photo by Milan Babić



photo by Juraj Kopac



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