

Croatia (Dalmatia) & Montenegro

The Essence of Dalmatia and Montenegro

Eight-night tour: 2 nights in Split, 1 night in Hvar, 1 night in Korčula, 2 nights in Dubrovnik, 2 nights in Sveti Stefan

HIGHLIGHTS

SPLIT - the Vestibule of Paradise (UNESCO)

HVAR - the sunniest island in Europe

KORČULA - where the Silk Road begins...

DUBROVNIK - the Pearl of Mediterranean (UNESCO)

KOTOR - mediaeval city of sailors and traders (UNESCO)

BUDVA - the jewel of Montenegro

SKADAR - precious gift of nature

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

- Private tour of Mestrovic Gallery in Split with the museum's curator
- Private wine tasting at the famous Tomic winery on the island of Hvar
- Oyster tasting with a glass of wine in Bota - Šare restaurant in Ston
- Private ride with a small traditional boat to the island of Our Lady of the Rock in Montenegro

DAY 1: arrival to SPLIT

Arrival to Split airport; flight details

TBA.

Meet your driver right outside the customs for a private transfer to the Vestibul Palace - luxury boutique **hotel** situated in the heart of the historic Diocletian's Palace in Split. You will have a unique chance to stay in the former suites of the Roman emperor.

Overnight in Split.



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DAY 2: tours of SPLIT & TROGIR



Meet your guide in the hotel lobby for a private sightseeing tour of **Split**, a 1700 years old town with famous Diocletian's Palace, included in the UNESCO's World Heritage list. The first inhabitant of Split was the Roman emperor Diocletian who started to build his palace in this friendly bay around 293 AD. After his abdication he withdrew to this luxurious palace to enjoy the rest of his days. Your guide will take you for a walk through this living monument and all its

magnificent sights. You will discover the basement halls of the Palace and their unique role in the history of Split. Then you will continue to the Peristyle, the main square of the Palace that preserved the cult of emperor as the son of god. You will visit the Cathedral of St. Domnius, the patron-saint of Split, the temples of the Palaces, as well as the suites of the Emperor. You will explore the waterfront promenade of Split, the lively open green market and the monuments not only from antiquity, but also from the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque.

After some time at your leisure, your driver and guide will take to **Meštrović Gallery**, in the elite part of the town by the sea shore. The gallery celebrates one of the most famous Croatian artists of the 20th century – sculptor Ivan Meštrović. Even as a youngster in rural Croatia, Mestrovic showed a unique talent for molding clay. This talent was later honed in Zagreb and Vienna from which emerged an exquisite artist whose brilliant creativity translated itself into sculpture. The artist was known for immortalizing womanhood in pieces such as Maternity and the History of Croatia. The gallery in Split was the original residence of the artist.

Then you will continue to **Trogir** – a treasury cove of cultural and historical monuments dating as far back as the 4th Century BC. Set on a small island just off the mainland, Trogir is a tiny charming town surrounded by impressive fortress walls. As you enter the fortified town through the Land Gate, you will stroll along its narrow streets, flanked by ancient stone houses. Take pleasure in wandering through the streets and noticing the small wonders around you: interesting details of pretty windows, charming balconies all around; worn carved-stone lintels; glimpses into



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courtyards and stairways... Your guide will walk you through all the magnificent monuments of this picturesque town: St. Lawrence Cathedral, a masterpiece of mediaeval architecture, with a magnificent Romanesque portal, carved by the Dalmatian sculptor Master Radovan in the 13th Century; the Old City Hall from the 15th Century, the city walls, the Kamerlengo tower, the relaxing waterfront promenade etc.

After some time on your own, your guide and driver will take you back to your hotel.

DAY 3: SPLIT - HVAR



This morning you will embark a public catamaran boat to the island of Hvar (optional supplement for a private motor boat transfer). Upon arrival, meet your local guide for a private tour of Hvar – the sunniest place in Europe and one of the most beautiful islands in the world.

Hvar is a unique fusion of the luxurious Mediterranean nature and the remarkable cultural and historical heritage. The name of the island derives from the Greek word PHAROS, meaning the lighthouse. Since Hvar lies in the heart of all the main sea routes since the ancient times, many different cultures left their traces to the present day. A Greek colony in the 4th century BC, Hvar gained its glory and power during the Middle Ages being an important port within the Venetian naval empire. New meets the Old in the perfect harmony of the town of Hvar. Your guide will take you for a stroll through the inexhaustible

treasury of the cultural heritage of Hvar. You will visit the largest square in Dalmatia, the town loggia and the Gothic and Renaissance palaces, one of the oldest theaters in Europe, the mighty Arsenal, the glorious Cathedral of St. Stephan, as well as the impressive Franciscan Monastery, that today houses a collection of lace, manuscripts and books. Spend the afternoon at your leisure. Overnight in Adriana – a chic boutique hotel in the heart of the old town of Hvar.

DAY 4: HVAR - KORČULA

Enjoy the morning at your leisure. In the early afternoon, meet your guide and driver in the hotel for a half day tour of the island of Hvar.

You will start your day with a visit to the Hvar Fortress, a 16th century citadel built in the time of the Venetian rule. Perched on a hill above the ramparts, it dominates over the town and offers spectacular views of Hvar and the Pakleni islands. Then, through the beautiful landscape of vineyards, olive-groves and lavender fields you will come to Jelsa, a small town with a long winemaking tradition. For as early as the 4th

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century BC, the Ancient Greeks brought the grape vine to this sunny island and planted it in the fertile plain of the ancient town Pharos. Throughout the centuries of rich and turbulent history, people on Hvar cultivated their vineyards with great skill and care, blessed with the lushness of Mediterranean. Today you will enjoy a private wine tasting at the Tomić family winery in Jelsa. Following the tradition of their ancestors, Tomić family has dedicated their life to producing high quality wines and promoting wine culture. They believe that Hvar, with its authentic varieties, exceptionally favourable climate and location of vineyards, can preserve the long tradition of winemaking, enriching it continually with new products. After the wine tasting, your guide and driver will take you to **Stari Grad** (Old Town), the former Greek colony of PHAROS and the first settlement of the island. A thousand years of



history have left many traces in the urban structure of the Town. The Town Walls of Pharos, built by the Greeks the 4th century BC, the Roman mosaics, the early Christian church of St. John, the mediaeval streets and above all Tvrđalj - the Renaissance fortified castle are all the signposts through a millennium long life of the town. A stroll through the town centre, its narrow streets and small squares will bring you the whisperings of the foregone times.

In the late afternoon, you will embark a catamaran boat to Korčula (optional supplement for a private motor boat transfer). Upon arrival, you will meet the luggage porter who will take you to the Lesic Dimitri Palace Hotel - a unique property that tells an extraordinary tale of Marco Polo and his Silk Road...

DAY 5: KORČULA - STON - DUBROVNIK

Meet your local guide in the hotel for a private tour of the Old Town of **Korčula**. This secluded part of the world is known as the home town of Marco Polo - the first world traveler. This is where his silk road began.



But the visitors often joke that it can't be true - after all, if the famous explorer has indeed been born here, he would have never left... Let the sheer beauty and the priceless cultural heritage of Korčula seduce you and get under your skin forever. With more than 2000 years of history, the former Greek colony of the "Black Korčula" (Korkyra Melaina)

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resisted the sieges of centuries and remained a living monument that is now yours to discover...

Through the narrow cobblestone streets you will come to the Cathedral of St. Marko, an architectural masterpiece in Gothic and Renaissance style. Its construction is an admirable testimony of the artistry of the local stone masons and the excellent adamant stone of the island. The Cathedral's abbatial collection abounds with exhibits from Greek and Roman period, as well as with peculiar artifacts of the recent history. You will visit also the Town



Museum of Korčula, with its interesting exhibits illustrating the island's glorious naval history. Your stroll will finally take you to Marko Polo's childhood home - a modest mediaeval house from which originates this great Venetian merchant, writer and traveler. The mediaeval city walls have surrounded the town since the 14th century and its mighty fortification deterred many invaders.

In the early afternoon, you will embark a small public boat to Orebić, a town on the mainland. Here you will meet your driver for a private transfer to Dubrovnik. On the way, you will stop in Ston for a brief sightseeing tour with your guide. Ston was an important military fort of the Ragusan Republic, which was well protected by massive city walls and used Pelješac to build another line of defense. At Pelješac's narrowest point, just before it joins the mainland, a wall was build from Ston to Mali Ston. With over 5 km of length; the mediaeval walls from the 14th century are the biggest city walls in Europe. The wall meant to protect the precious salt pans that contributed to Dubrovnik's wealth, which are still being in use today. The history of the salt works in Stone lasts for more than 4,000 years. It is the oldest salt mine in Europe, and among the working ones, also the oldest in the world. Ston is also known as the paradise for sea food lovers. Famous Ston oysters are known as the best aphrodisiac from the Roman period. You will get a unique opportunity to try these delicacies in one of the best sea food restaurants in Croatia - Bota Šare. Enjoy **oyster tasting with a glass of wine** and should you wish, stay for lunch and try the wide palette of seafood plates prepared as per original local recipes.

Upon arrival to Dubrovnik, check in to your hotel and spend the evening at your leisure. You will enjoy the Bellevue Hotel - the splendid location, stunning views and chic ambiance.

DAY 6: tour of DUBROVNIK

This morning meet your local guide for a private walking tour of **Dubrovnik**, one of the most beautiful stone-built cities in the world. A town-museum is a one-of-a-kind destination which makes you fall in love it and come back to it over and over again in an endless pursuit of unique experiences. More than a thousand-

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year history is reflected in every part of the town. An important maritime port and a one-time state, it has always been a cultural metropolis. As one of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Dubrovnik owes its special charm to the historic monuments which testify to its rich history. The works of artists, writers and scientists of Dubrovnik have been woven into the texture of the town. You will experience the splendour of its stone and the redness of its roofs, the walk through its lively streets and the unforgettable



beauty of this living monument. While strolling with your guide down Stradun, the main street, you will stop to visit the Franciscan monastery of the “Order of Little Brothers” that preserves one of the three oldest pharmacies in Europe. You will continue down to Orlando Column and the Sponza Palace and visit the Church of St. Blasius, the patron-saint of the town. You will also discover Rector’s Palace, the magnificent structure of the dukes of Dubrovnik, and the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary with a treasury containing the originals by Tiziano and Rafaelo and many other valuable relicts.

The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to explore this stunning town on your own. Dubrovnik is full of charming cafes, boutiques and local curiosities, nestled in the intricate network of the cobblestone streets. We recommend you to take a walk along the city walls (2500 m around the old town), visit one of the numerous museums or take a funicular ride to the top of the Srđ hill.

Overnight in Dubrovnik.

DAY 7: DUBROVNIK – KOTOR – BUDVA – SVETI STEFAN

This morning meet your driver in the hotel lobby for a private transfer to Montenegro – a mystical land of wild beauties. Your local guide will welcome you at the borderline of Croatia and Montenegro. You will ride through Boka Kotorska, the only fiord in the Mediterranean, surrounded by high cliffs that reflect in the deep blue sea.

Your first destination is the old town of **Perast**, a sleepy baroque place on the seashore. The strong merchant navy tradition represents the best preserved baroque entity in the Adriatic. At that time seafaring was growing and captains built magnificent villas that even today



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capture you with their beauty. Perast also abounds in sacred monuments, such as the Church Sveti Nikola and Our Lady of the rocks, built on the artificial island just opposite of Perast. Following your visit to Perast, your guide and driver will take you to the Old Town of **Kotor**, listed on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List and protected by the UNESCO. The architecture of Kotor, a post-modern mix of the different epochs and its position at the bottom of

the sharp cliffs of the Lovcen Mountain, makes it different from any other Mediterranean town. It is a city of traders and famous sailors, with many stories to tell. The Old City is a well preserved urbanization typical of the Middle Ages, built between the 12th and 14th century. Through the entire city the buildings are criss-crossed with narrow streets and squares. At one of them there is the Cathedral of St. Trifun, a monument of Roman culture and one of the most recognizable symbols of the city. You can also visit the Maritime Museum, situated in the Baroque palace Grgurin, which preserves the fame of Boka navy. The memories on those long gone glorious days, on the successes of the famous Kotor sailors, ship builders and crafts man are all today kept in this museum.

Then you will continue to **Budva**, considered to be one of the oldest settlements in the Balkans. According to Greek mythology, Cadmo, the son of the Phoenician King Agenon, established Budva. After his expulsion from Thebes, Cadmo arrived in this area by ox-drawn cart, and founded Budva. This ancient town lies on a little island that was linked to land by a sandbar, and in time became a peninsula. You will get a chance to marvel at its surrounding 15th-century ramparts and medieval fortification system consisting of city gates, defense walls and towers. Inside the walls, you will find the town to be a combination of narrow streets and little squares, with superb monuments of the different Mediterranean cultures marking its development.

After the tour, you will check in to the superb property of Aman Sveti Stefan and enjoy the evening at your leisure.

**DAY 8: SV. STEFAN - SKADAR LAKE -
PODGORICA - CETINJE - SV. STEFAN**

This morning meet your driver and guide for a full day exploration of Montenegro. Your first destination is the marvelous Skadar Lake. Of all the breathtaking scenery that Montenegro has to offer



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nothing can quite prepare you for what awaits you in this secluded corner of the Balkans. The peacefulness of the lake and its numerous islands led medieval feudal lords to erect on them fortifications and monasteries whose architecture is a true rarity today. From the small fishing village of Virpazar you will take a private panoramic boat ride which reveals the numerous attractions of the lake, extraordinary birds, water lilies in bloom, secluded beaches... With many monasteries, churches and fortifications, the cultural and historical significance of the islands on Lake Skadar is also very impressive. You will continue to **Podgorica** – the capital of Montenegro. Podgorica is a mixture of architectural styles reflects the turbulent history of the city and country: as one régime replaced another, the corresponding style was introduced. As part of the Ottoman

Empire until 1878, Podgorica has many examples of Turkish architecture. The oldest parts of the city, Stara Varoš (Old town) and Drač are typical of this, with two mosques, a Turkish clock tower and narrow, winding streets. When the city was incorporated to Montenegro, the urban core shifted to the other bank of the Ribnica River, where the town developed in a more European style: wider streets with an orthogonal layout. This part of the city is today traditionally regarded as city centre, and is called Nova Varoš (New town).

Next, the tour will proceed along the road to the town-museum of **Cetinje**, the one-time center of Montenegrin Rule. Situated beneath the summit of Lovcen which towers to an impressive 590 meters (1900 feet) above sea level, Cetinje is an oasis of peace and tranquility, natural beauty and ample fresh air. It scents with the architecture from 18th and 19th century that comes from rich greenery of this small city. During King Nikola's reign many embassies were built that give it today's specific looks. Upon arrival, you will visit the Museum of King Nikola and St. Peter Monastery – and will be able to see the famous reliquary "right hand with three fingers of St. Joan Baptist".

In the late afternoon, your guide and driver will take you back to your hotel.

DAY 9: SVETI STEFAN – onward

This morning meet your driver for a private transfer to the airport for and your flight onward.

We wish you a memorable journey...

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RECOMMENDED HOTELS

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| SPLIT | Vestibul Palace Hotel |
| | Marmont Hotel |
| | Luxe Hotel |
| | Le Meridien Lav Hotel |
| HVAR | Adriana hotel |
| KORČULA | Lesic Dimitri Palace |
| DUBROVNIK | The Pucic Palace Hotel |
| | Bellevue Hotel |
| | Excelsior Hotel |
| | Villa Dubrovnik Hotel |
| SVETI STEFAN | Aman Sveti Stefan |
| | Aman Sveti Stefan's Villa Miločer |

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