

Croatia (Dalmatia)

The Vestibule of Paradise

Six-night tour: 3 nights in Split, 3 nights in Dubrovnik

HIGHLIGHTS

SPLIT – enjoy the silent beats of history (UNESCO)

TROGIR – a treasury cove of the historical and cultural monuments (UNESCO)

HVAR – the sunniest island in Europe

DUBROVNIK – the Pearl of Mediterranean (UNESCO)

KONAVLE – off the beaten path

ELAPHITI – islands forgotten in the tides of change

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

- Private tour of Mestrovic Gallery in Split with the museum's curator
- Private wine tasting at the famous Plenković winery on the island of Hvar
- Oyster tasting with a glass of wine in Bota – Šare restaurant in Ston
- Visit to the Novakovic family estate in Konavle, Dubrovnik hinterland

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.



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

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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 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



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promenade etc.

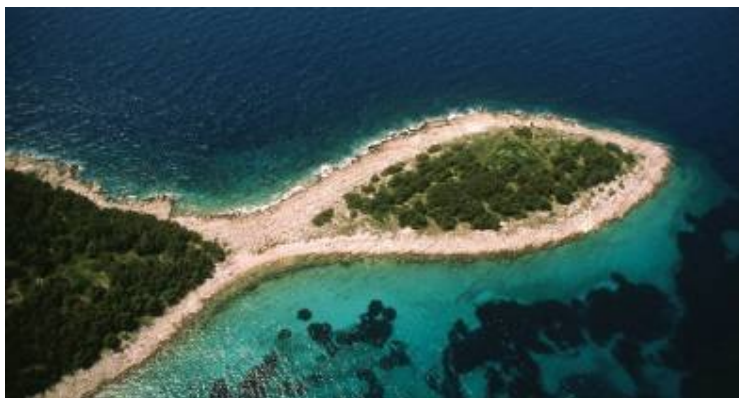
After some time on your own, your guide and driver will take you back to your hotel.

DAY 3: SPLIT - HVAR & PAKLENI ISLANDS - SPLIT

This morning you will meet your skipper in the hotel for a private motor boat tour of Hvar and Pakleni islands. 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. After the city tour, you will continue with your skipper towards the village of Sveta Nedjelja for a private wine tasting at the famous Plenković Winery. You may also wish to stay here for lunch.

Afterwards, you will enjoy the cruise towards the **Pakleni Islands**, a breathtaking archipelago with lush vegetation, beautiful bays and intact nature. Even though their name is popularly translated as Hells' islands (pakleni: hellish), it originally derives from paklina, which is the pine resin once used to coat ships. A chain of eleven playful islets watches over the entrance to Hvar port and shine like the jewels in the monarch's crown. Enjoy the azure waves, sandy coves surrounded by pine forests, endless fields of lavender and gentle breeze scented by aromatic herbs. Should you wish, you can stop for a swim in one of the hidden bays you will discover along the way. In the afternoon, your skipper will take you back to Split.



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DAY 4: SPLIT - STON - DUBROVNIK

Meet your driver for a private transfer to Dubrovnik. On your way, you will stop in Ston – small town 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. Ston was also 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 built 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.

Upon arrival to Dubrovnik, check in to your hotel – The Bellevue – and enjoy its splendid location, stunning views and chic ambiance.

DAY 5: DUBROVNIK & KONAVLE tour

This morning meet your guide and driver in the hotel lobby for a private full day exploration of Dubrovnik region – a true essence of Dalmatia. The region of contrasts and exceptional beauty, mountains and valleys, green hills and naked stone; inclines down to the cozy coves of small fishermen villages.



Your first destination is the ancient Mediterranean town of **Cavtat**. Like many Dalmatian towns, Cavtat began as a Greek settlement, called Epidaurus, and later became a Roman colony. Your guide will take you for a stroll through this picturesque little town – its cobbled streets with traditional red-roofed houses, narrow stairways and charming promenade along the shore. Your walk will take you to the top of the hill, where you will

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discover the extraordinary Mausoleum of Račić Family, a work of Ivan Meštrović, the most prominent Croatian sculptor. Then you will continue your exploration of the countryside of **Konavle**. In the village of Čilipi, the local family Novaković will welcome you at their humble estate that has a small ethno museum presenting Konavle region history, a tavern with a wine cellar and a variety of agricultural structures. You will taste their home-made products such as grappa, liquors and wine in a unique ambiance of a private vault of a stone-built house. While you enjoy their hospitality, they will serve a light snack of their home-made cheese, prosciutto and bread, dipped in a golden liquid of the finest olive oil.



After this light lunch, your guide and driver will take you back to **Dubrovnik** for a private walking tour of one of the most beautiful stone-built cities in the world. More than a thousand-year history is reflected in every part of this town-museum. 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. 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 day is at your leisure.

DAY 6: tour of ELAPHITI ISLANDS



This morning meet your driver in the hotel lobby for a short transfer to the port where you will board your private motor boat. You will enjoy the cruise towards the **Elaphiti Islands**, a breathtaking archipelago of thirteen lovely islands, the guardians of Dubrovnik seas. Blessed with lush woodland and white, rocky outcrops that enhance the deep blues and greens of the Adriatic, Elaphiti are the true

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gems of unique beauty. Cruise around the isles' many coves, hidden bays, sandy beaches and fishing villages, with ample opportunity for sunbathing and swimming in the crystal-clear waters. Only three islands are inhabited: Šipan, Lopud and Koločep. Others are just oasis for the seagulls seldom disturbed by the lonesome visitor in search for tranquil solitude. During the 15th century, many aristocratic Dubrovnik families built their summer manors on Elaphiti Islands. Today, they are just the remnants with a long history full of stories and legends that echo, forgotten in the tides of change.

In the afternoon, you will enjoy the cruise back to Dubrovnik.

DAY 7: DUBROVNIK - onward

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

We wish you a memorable journey...



RECOMMENDED HOTELS

SPLIT

Vestibul Palace Hotel

Marmont Hotel

Luxe Hotel

DUBROVNIK

The Pucic Palace Hotel

The Bellevue Hotel

Villa Dubrovnik Hotel

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