



## Republic of Croatia



*Croatia* is the Latinized version of the native name of the country: *Hrvatska*.

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### *Brief Historical Overview*



- The Croats are largely Slavic people who lived in an area of what is today Galicia (in northwestern Ukraine and southern Poland). From there they migrated further south to present-day Croatia during the 7th century. Nominally under East Roman and then Frankish authority, Croatia eventually became a strong independent kingdom under king Tomislav in 925, but in 1102 the Croats ended a decade-long dynastic struggle by agreeing to submit themselves to Hungarian authority.
- The Battle of Mohacs in 1526 led the Croatian Parliament to invite the Habsburg to assume control over Croatia. Habsburg rule eventually did prove to be successful in thwarting the Ottomans, and by the 18th century, much of Croatia was free of Turkish control.
- Following World War I, Croatia joined the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (comprising what is today, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia). Shortly thereafter, this joint state in turn formed a union with Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which eventually became Yugoslavia in 1929).
- Along with Slovenia, Croatia declared her independence from Yugoslavia on June 25, 1991, which triggered the Croatian War of Independence.
- Croatia is currently in the process of joining the European Union, accession negotiations started in December 2005.



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### *Traditions and Culture*



- The majority of people in Croatia are Croatian, but there are several smaller groups of different origins such as Serbs, Bosnians, Slovenes, Hungarians, and others. Croatians are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, while almost all Serbs--the largest of those smaller groups--are Eastern Orthodox. There are also some Muslim, Protestant, and Jewish communities in Croatia.
- Croatians love holidays and festivities. There are many festivals celebrated throughout the country almost year-round, like **jazz** festivals in Zagreb in spring and **pop music festivals** and Croatian music festivals in Dubrovnik in summer. Zagreb also hosts several international festivals, such as the International Festival of Animation, the International Folklore Festival, and EUROKAZ, a European theatre festival.
- Croatian folk music, just like other things in the country, developed under the influence by different styles. The "**kolo**"—a Slavic round dance popular in Croatia--is usually accompanied by Roma-style violin or tambura, a Croatian mandolin. The guitar music, very popular in Croatia, has a very clear Italian flavor.



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### *Major Holidays and Traditions*

#### **Traditional Christmas Greeting: "Sretan Bozic"**

Though families in Croatia have always decorated their homes with greenery, Christmas trees are a relatively recent holiday tradition. They are customarily ornamented with fruit, nuts and sweets as well as glass figures, colored thread, paper chains, lanterns and candles. Licitar hearts baked from dough also make up an important part of many Croatian Christmas trees.



In many parts of the country, Christmas celebrations begin on **December 13 with St. Lucy's day** when families plant wheat seeds in a plate of shallow water. They grow to be eight inches tall by Christmas Eve and are tied together with a red, blue and white ribbon called trobojnica.

**St. Nicholas** brings the first children their presents on December 6th and **St. Lucy** delivers gifts to others on the 13th. **Santa Claus and the baby Jesus** have also begun to make rounds in some parts of Croatia on Christmas day and Christmas Eve.



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### *National Dishes for Christmas*

- There are a number of different Croatian cuisines which can be grouped according to **three** main regions: Mediterranean cuisine, the mountain cuisine of the south, and the continental cuisine of the northern plains

#### **Here are a few typical dishes for Christmas Eve dinner:**

Cod fish - bianco and biudetto  
Smelts and salted sardines  
Girice i slane srdele  
Bakalar - bijeli i biudet

#### **Christmas Day dinner:**

Stuffed cabbage  
Sarma  
Turkey with Zagorje noodles  
Purica s mlincima  
Suckling pig  
Odojak





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### *Easter Traditions*

#### **"Klepetaljke" and "Cegrtaljke"**

One of the oldest traditions is making "klepetaljke" and "cegrtaljke" (very similar to rattles and clappers), particularly popular in central Dalmatia and the Konavle region. They vary from region to region, while those on the island of Krk are especially interesting: metal plates that hang at the end of a 30 cm board that has the width of a bookshelf produce strong sounds when the device is shaken. In other regions, "klepetaljke" were made differently: small wheels were attached to wooden boards and connected to metal sprockets; the whole device made a rattling noise when pulled.



**Eggs** in the southern part of Croatia are traditionally **colored in red and have white star or rosette** shaped decorations, while decorations such as pine branches, flowers, circles and spirals are more common in other parts of the country. Finally, there is one more custom related to Easter eggs - the so-called "**tuca**" (egg fight). Everyone would choose an egg from the basket and would hit it against their adversary's egg. The winner would be the person whose egg remained intact throughout the "fight".





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### *Beautiful destinations in Croatia*



- **DVIGRAD** - a city in which time stood still in 1631

The city of Dvigrad or Dvograd and even Dvagrada, as it is often referred to in documents, is a unique archeological locality of the Istrian region as well as all of Croatia and is colloquially known as the Croatian Pompeii.

- **HUM** - the smallest city in the world according to the Guinness Book of World Records

In the central part of Istria, 14 km southeast of Buzet is Hum, the smallest city in the world with a population of only 23 citizens. The small town was first mentioned in 1102 under the name Cholm, and as such is still known as Colmo in Italy to this day.

- **BRAC** - an island with a beach for surfers and a desert of stone palaces





## Republic of Croatia *Useful language*



- **Good morning!** **Dobro jutro!**
- **Good night/evening !** **Dobra vecer!**
- **Welcome!** **Dobrodosao/dobrodosli!**
- **Excuse-me !** **Izvinjavam se !**
- **Thanks!** **Hvala !**
- **Thank you very much!** **Hvala lijepa!**