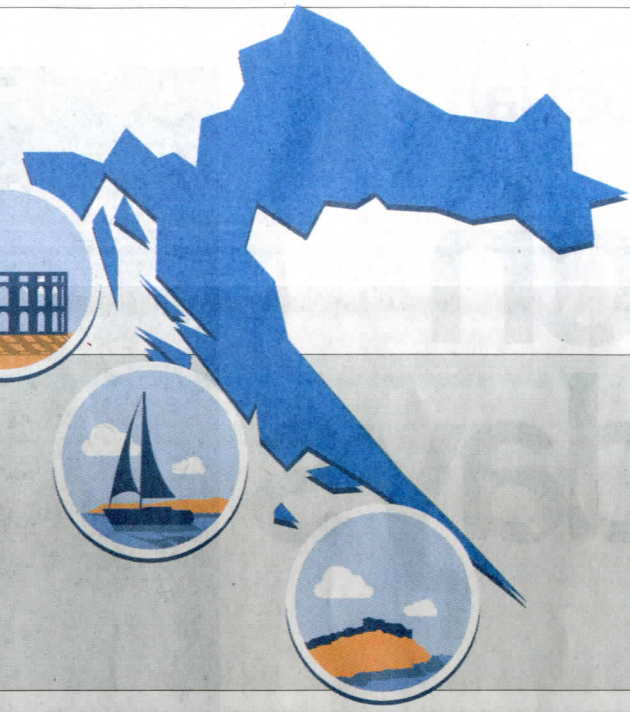


# Croatia 2015



- » Visitors from the UK in 2013: **409,025**
- » Number of islands: **1,185**
- » Most visited tourist site in 2013: **The old city of Dubrovnik**

## Your seven-page holiday guide

Including the five best: beaches, villas, cultural tours, activity breaks, and wine and food excursions

Dubrovnik's old town, where a 'Game of Thrones' tour is among the options



# Beach holidays



## 1 Paradise Beach Retreat, Brač

The Dalmatian island of Brač is best known for its stunning south coast beach, Zlatni Rat in Bol, backed by the rugged heights of Vidova Gora mountain. Just a 10-minute drive from Bol, close to the village of Murvica, Paradise Beach Retreat is a romantic stone cottage, set amid vineyards, on a hillside above its own secluded pebble beach. Tastefully furnished, it has a living room with fireplace and sleeps five. At the front there's a lovely covered stone terrace with a barbecue, dining table and stone sink. Nearby activities include snorkelling, diving, windsurfing, hiking, cycling and wine tasting. There's a good restaurant in Murvica if you don't want to cook.

» From £1,200 for one week (00 385 21 636 221; adriaticretreats.com).

Jane Foster

## Palmizana, near Hvar

Hvar is Dalmatia's most glamorous island destination, but sometimes it's good to escape the crowds. A 20-minute boat ride from Hvar Town, on the car-free islet of Sveti Klement, Palmizana is a complex of seven small villas and six bungalows, set in densely overgrown, centuries-old botanical gardens. The owner is an art collector, so villas and bungalows are decorated with colourful and eccentric contemporary paintings and sculpture. Palmizana overlooks a sheltered cove with a pebble

beach and two excellent open-air restaurants, popular with yachters.

» Bungalows (sleeping 2-3) from £550 weekly; villas (sleeping 4) from £1,100 (00 385 21 717 270; palmizana.hr). JF

## 3 Mulini Beach, Rovinj

Croatia's first Design Hotel, the minimalist-chic five-star Hotel Lone, opened in 2011. Situated on the coast, a 10-minute walk from Rovinj's old town, with 248 stylish

## Zlatni Rat beach in Bol, on the island of Brač in Dalmatia

rooms and suites, three restaurants and a vast wellness centre, it seemed to have everything – except a beach. That was fixed in June 2014, when the Mulini Beach in Lone Bay opened. The work of Zagreb-based architects 3LHD (3lhd.com), who also designed the hotel, it is approached along an elegant promenade, running from the ACI yachting marina to the bay. The bathing area, backed by lush planting, combines a pebble beach

with a pavilion housing a beach bar, a space for open-air concerts, and decks for sun beds and parasols.

» Double rooms from £150 a night (00 385 52 632 000; lonehotel.com). JF

## 4 Radisson Blu, near Dubrovnik

Combine Dubrovnik's history and culture with a beach holiday by staying at the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Dubrovnik Sun Gardens, a five-star resort set amid landscaped grounds, a few miles up the coast from the medieval city. Besides its 408 rooms, suites and residences, spa and choice of restaurants and bars, the resort has a pebble beach bordering the turquoise waters of the Adriatic. Here you'll find a range of water sports facilities, including sea kayaking, scuba diving, waterskiing, jet skis and banana boat rides, as well as sunbeds and umbrellas, making it ideal for families with active children.

» Doubles from £150 a night (00 20 361 500; radissonblu.com/resort-dubrovnik). JF

## 5 Camping in Peljesac

Croatia has more than 100 registered campsites (caravans mostly on the Adriatic coast). The nicest is Prapratno, located in a deep, sheltered bay with a pebble beach, overlooked by a fine olive grove. Facilities include bathrooms, hot showers, a communal kitchen, a restaurant, a shop, plus volleyball and basketball courts. Nearby Ston is known for its medieval fortifications, linked to the village of Mali Ston by a daily bus service covers the route from Dubrovnik to Ston.

» Tent pitch from £2.80 per person (£3.10 per person (00 385 20 444 444; dialaflight.co.uk) can advise on only tickets from major airports with tour operators; or book directly with Thomson Airway: thomson.co.uk) or Monarch (monarch.co.uk) or Croatian National Board (croatia.hr) Sophie Butler

## SPECIALISTS IN CROATIAN BEACH HOLIDAYS

» **Thomas Cook** (0844 412 5970; thomascook.com) has hotel options on the mainland and larger islands.  
» **Thomson** (0871 230 2555; thomson.co.uk) features resorts along the Dalmatian and Istrian coast plus Dubrovnik and nearby

islands. Its sister company, First Choice (0871 200 4455; firstchoice.co.uk) focuses on Cavtat and Tucepi.  
» **Saga** (0800 096 0074; travel.saga.co.uk) offers a range of packages to Dubrovnik and Solin (near Split).

» **Balkan Holidays** (0845 130 1114; balkanholidays.co.uk) offers a big choice of resorts for beach holidays in central Dalmatia, Istria and the Dubrovnik Riviera, including hotels, b&bs and self-catering accommodation. **SB**



## GETTING THERE

» **British Airways** (0844 493 0787; currently flies from Gatwick to Dubrovnik (with fares from £110 return) and Heathrow to Zagreb (from £110). A Heathrow to Split service is starting in 2015 (from £127).

» **Croatian Airlines** (croatiaairlines.com) flies to Zagreb from London Heathrow. EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies to Split from Gatwick, Stansted and Glasgow, from one-way; and from Dubrovnik from Stansted, Gatwick and Edinburgh from £37.99 one-way.

» **Ryanair** (ryanair.com) operates flights from Stansted to Pula, Zadar (the latter is served from Manchester).  
» **Jet2** (jet2.com) flies to Dubrovnik, Split and Zadar from regional UK airports, including Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, East Midlands, Edinburgh and Manchester.

» **DialAFlight** (0844 4444; dialaflight.co.uk) Charter Flight Centre (050 0100; charterflight.co.uk) can advise on only tickets from major airports with tour operators; or book directly with Thomson Airway: thomson.co.uk) or Monarch (monarch.co.uk) or Croatian National Board (croatia.hr) Sophie Butler