

# Discover Croatia Sailing



**In the crystalline Mediterranean waters, six of us spent a week on a 42 foot chartered catamaran. Visiting four of the 1185 islands and islets, mooring in a different historical village each night, these islands truly showcase the wonderful Dalmatian coast of Croatia.**

**So impressed by what we saw, we vowed to return, not only to sail but also to see the rest of the country.**

**Kut, Vis**



## **A little history**

Prior to Croatia declaring independence in 1991, it was part of the old Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia was made with six regional republics, Slovenia Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. These republics were largely held together for several decades, by leader Marshall Tito.

Tito was viewed as a unifying symbol, but after his death in 1980, the tension between the Yugoslav republics increased and in 1991 the country disintegrated with a series of civil wars resulting in six independent nations, of which Croatia is one.

During the wars that lasted from 1991 to 1995 Croatia lost 25% of its economy and 20,000 people from both sides.

Yet today, despite this horrific destruction, Croatia has picked itself up. Tourism is booming and the Croatians are proud of what they have to offer.



## Croatia

The region of Dalmatia possesses one of Europe's most stunning and dramatic coastlines, as the barren grey wall of mountains rises behind the coast. The coastline itself is long and intricately indented, peppered with islands from top to bottom making it ideal for sailing. The islands directly out from Split where we were heading, are deemed by many to be the most beautiful on the Adriatic Sea.

## How to get there

Easy to get to, Split is a short flight from any of the major cities in Europe, and the Airport is a 20-minute taxi ride from the centre of town. The AIC Marina is in the heart of the city.

## Chartering a yacht

The ACI Marina in Split has many yacht charter companies and our travel advisors were very helpful in locating the yacht we required.



ACI Marina, Split

## Sailing Experience

Insurance companies and Port Authorities in Croatia demand that bareboat skippers must have an internationally recognised Sailing License and one of your crew members must have VHF license. The RYA Day Skipper Certificate is most readily accepted as it

is recognised internationally. Certificates of Competence such as a Boat Masters and Yacht masters Coastal Certificates are usually acceptable. Prior approval from the charter company before your departure from home is important. You **MUST** take your original Certificates with you to Croatia, as the Port Authorities can demand to see them at any time.



**You don't have to be a sailor.** Even if you are experienced sailors you can take a Skipper so you can totally relax, and enjoy his local knowledge for best anchorages and restaurants etc.

## Provisioning the yacht

Close to the ACI marina in Split are two local supermarkets. We purchased breakfast and lunch supplies, water, beer and wine. It is not necessary to fully provision as the islands have a great choice of restaurants and local stores.

Much of the Croatian wine is grown from grape varieties not familiar to us, and tough on our palate. When returning, we will look for a wine merchant in Split, choosing more familiar grape varieties.

## Moorings on the islands

The beauty of sailing in the Croatia is the islands are plentiful and close, with a great choice of authentic historical villages to moor.

Mooring facilities are predominately sheltered bays and can be booked in peak summer. Typically, a local harbour authority employee assists with the mooring; collect the fee ranging from NZ\$100 - NZ\$150 per night. Water and power are inclusive.

Alternatively you can drop an anchor or tie a mooring to one of the many buoys.

## The islands

We visited Brac, Hvar, Vis and Solta.

Brac, the third biggest of the Croatian Adriatic islands is only a short distance from Split. We motored to Milini bay on our first night, and dropped the anchor, enjoying the solitude with the bay to ourselves.

Early the next morning we sailed to the south coast of Brac, to the delightful fishing village, Bol, famous for the Zlatni rat. This horn shaped triangular spit of shingle reaches out into the sea. Despite its beauty and the wonderful beaches, be warned, it gets very busy in summer.

Vis, the farthest island from Split, was a military base until 1989 so tourists have only recently discovered it, which was largely appealing to us. We stayed at Kut, one of the less well known towns, east of the bay. This historical village of grey brown houses stretches around a deep bay, with 16th century narrow cobbled streets.

We commandeered one of the locals to take us around the island and as well as exploring some of the Venetian and Gothic architecture we walked the 200 steps to Tito's cave. It is this cave he called his headquarters while evading capture from the Germans in 1944. Wild sage and oregano grow all over the hills so on our way down the steps we picked bunches to take back to the boat. We sailed out of Vis cooking a great pasta dish with local chorizo sausage and the herbs we had collected.

Hvar, a long slim island with lush green vegetation, predominantly pines, heather and lavender is popular with the tourists. We spent three nights at different villages; Palmizana, Stari Grad and Jelsa. All were wonderful with their own personalities and attractions but our favorite was Stari Grad. Had the yachts been gondolas, it would have been easy to mistaken it for Venice as the houses with their brightly coloured shutters and terracotta roofs looked as though they were in the water.

Solta, the last island we visited is small and fertile with its economy rich from agriculture. With a couple of great swimming beaches we relaxed in the afternoon and meandered through the narrow alleyways.



Hvar, Hvar

## When to go

Croatia's coastal climate is that of the Mediterranean with warm summers and mild winters. July and August are considered the peak season on the Adriatic. We went in early June avoiding the crowds yet still experiencing superb weather, 24-26 degrees Celsius.



## Stari Grad

### Restaurants on the islands

We are all foodies and love to cook, eat and drink so finding a good restaurant in the evening was important. We asked the locals and did a bit of scouting ourselves and came up with these recommendations.

Most of the restaurants had a similar style of menu with meza, breads, octopus and calamari to start. Pastas, risottos, grilled meats and seafood, including mussels, clams and white fish, with condiments and salads to follow.

### Restaurant recommendation

**Vis** Jastozera Bako

**Hvar** Hvar town, Divino [www.divino.com.hr](http://www.divino.com.hr)  
Stari Grad, Jurin Podrum  
Jelsa, "Me and Mrs Jones"

**Solta** Stomorska, Nevera



## **We're coming back**

Visiting only four of the 1185 islands and islets we felt cheated. Clinking our glasses on our last night, in Stomorska we vowed to come back, not only to do more sailing but also to see the rest of this wonderful, hospitable country.



**Written by Jane Jeffries  
Freelance Travel Writer, October 2011**

**Travel organised by The Private Travel Company**