

MEDITERRANEAN

# Croatia: Explorer

*Kayak Wild Croatia*

11 day trip • 2017 Itinerary



# Croatia: Croatia Explorer



## 11 day trip 9 days kayaking

Croatia is home to one of Europe's largest archipelagoes with over 1,200 islands. Curving around Bosnia, the coastline stretches along the Adriatic from Slovenia in the north to Montenegro and Albania in the south. Our area of exploration is the Kvarner archipelago, in the northern Adriatic. We start our kayak trip from the island of Rab, paddling between six islands, each with wildly different landscapes. Each open channel crossing takes us to new surroundings, from moonscape barren ground to lush forests and sandy beaches. Forests are home to owls, mouflon (wild sheep) and deer, while overhead, Griffon vultures look down at us from cliff ledges. We visit ruins dating back to the 4th century and paddle in the first reserve for Adriatic dolphins in the Mediterranean. We take time out from paddling for coastal treks and daily swims.

Designed for people with paddling experience, this is a voyage of exploration and may be subject to some deviations in the itinerary, depending on the weather conditions we encounter. Overnight campsites include remote beaches, private islands and the occasional public campground. Join us for this challenging and exciting adventure!

### A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Meet at Zadar, transfer to Rab. Overnight in private accommodation. D

**Days 2-9:** Kayak through island chain. Camping. B • L • D

**Day 10:** Finish kayaking on Cres. Boat to Krk. Private accommodation. B • L • D

**Day 11:** Transfer to Rijeka or Zagreb. Trip concludes. B

## Meeting Place and Time

Meet your guide in Zadar at the old entrance of the town, called the FOŠA. Meeting time is 2pm on Day 1. Exact details will be confirmed closer to trip departure.

From the meeting point, the group will transfer to Rab, about a two hour trip.

If you're concerned with delays, we recommend you arrive in Zadar pre Day 1 to ensure you don't miss the meeting time. Zadar hotels located in the old town and recommended by past participants are:

Art Hotel Kalelarga <http://www.arthotel-kalelarga.com/en>

Anita City Apartments <http://www.anitacityapartments.com/location.htm>

Boutique Hostel Forum <http://hostelforumzadar.com/en>

## How to Get There

Several airlines have flights to Zadar from European cities, including Ryanair from London (Stansted) or Frankfurt and Lufthansa or German Wings from Munich, Frankfurt and Dusseldorf. Croatia Airlines flies from Zagreb to Zadar twice a day. There are several bus companies in Croatia with extensive networks around the country and a very good coastal ferry service. Your travel agent and/or internet research can provide timetables and costs.

## Sea Kayaking

This trip is designed for people with previous paddling experience. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can easily be practiced in waist deep water with a friend's help or under tuition. We are always happy to discuss your experience and can often suggest how intermediate paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip. We require all participants to complete and return our experience form shortly after booking.

We predominantly use single kayaks on this trip, but some doubles are available.

The degree of difficulty of the trip **will depend on the weather** we encounter. The wind in the Adriatic can vary from gentle puffs to strong gusts so you should be used to paddling in a variety of conditions. We paddle between three to six hours per day. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. All participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks we use are stable, easy to paddle and control. They are designed as expedition boats and it is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry all food and equipment. On Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on your equipment and trip safety, with time to adjust your individual boats. Please note, if you choose to use a double kayak then you will have less storage space and should take that into consideration when packing. Please refer to our equipment list for packing details.

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. We highly recommend participants become involved in regular exercise (paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, gym classes or swimming) some months prior to the trip.

## Proposed Itinerary

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only.

Our aim is to have a genuine Croatian adventure and a great time rather than being governed by a rigid schedule. Our program may change over the 10 days to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise, local weather conditions and preferences of the group. Paddling distances noted are approximate only.

**Please note that weather conditions, transport breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

**Day 1:** Meet your guide in Zadar and transfer to the island of Rab, The trip briefing is held at 7.00pm followed by a welcome dinner. Your guide will give out dry-bags to pack for the kayak trip (dry bag size is approximately 20 litres). Excess luggage not required on the kayak trip can be stored for you. A tour of the old city of Rab may be possible, depending on arrival time.

D / PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

**Day 2:** After breakfast, the group will transfer to the north east side of Rab to pack and adjust the kayaks. After a safety briefing we begin our paddle, exploring cliffs and caves before stopping the night in Njivice Bay.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 13KM

**Day 3:** This morning we continue to explore the Rab Geo Park, with the chance to jump into the colourful Bear Cave. Paddle along Lopar Bay and cross to the Island of Saint Grgur, a former political prison island. We continue paddling along the rugged east side cliffs and make camp in Main Bay.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 18.5KM

**Day 4:** Explore Saint Grgur Island before paddling to the island of Prvich, stopping to swim in beautiful Dubac Cove. Paddle below the lighthouse on Prvich and cross the Senjska Vrata channel to Croatia's largest island, Krk. Explore Krk's numerous beaches and coves before making camp in Stara Baska.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 19KM

**Day 5:** Heading north-west, we paddle the best bays Krk has to offer on this part of the island. We cross the 45th parallel and observe the landscape changing to greener scenery. We visit the old town of Krk before making camp alongside an oak tree forest.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 15 KM

**Day 6:** We continue paddling north, exploring the forested coastline and enjoying swim stops along the way. We pass the 15th century Glavotok Monastery before reaching our campsite where we can enjoy a shower and a cold drink.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 18.5KM

**Day 7:** Today we head south and cross to Cres Island, which is wilder and less developed than Krk. We arrive at the pebbly beach that lies under the town of Beli, with the town perched on a hill 130m above us. We explore 4,000 year old Beli and enjoy a restaurant lunch, looking out to a view of our previous paddling route. After lunch, we paddle into the Griffon vulture reserve and observe these magnificent birds nesting high above us on the colourful cliffs. Tonight's camp is on La Plaza beach.

B • L • D / CAMPING

PADDLING 13 KM

**Day 8:** Today we head south and enjoy paddling along the beaches and forested steep hills of Cres. Crossing the 45th parallel again, we reach the village of Merag where we cross to our 6th island, Plavnik. Tonight's camp is in a wild oak tree forest.

B • L - D / CAMPING

PADDLING 20 KM

**Day 9:** After breakfast, we cross back to the island of Cres and paddle a coastline inundated with caves, high cliffs and nesting vultures. We enjoy swim stops and camp in the bay of Mali Bok.

B • L - D / CAMPING

PADDLING 15 KM

**Day 10:** On our last paddle day, we continue south to finish at a large cave with a view to Rab. We will be picked up in a bay near Koromashna and transferred to Krk Island. Enjoy a tour of the town and a celebratory dinner. Overnight in B&B accommodation..

B • L - D / PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

PADDLING 13 KM

**Day 11:** Group transfer to Rijeka airport\* or Zagreb.

B / End of trip arrangements.

\*RIJEKA AIRPORT IS ON THE WAY TO ZAGREB.

## Pre Trip Activity

For those arriving in Zadar before the trip start date, we can organise a day trip to paddle the Zrmanja River. This beautiful jewel-like river cuts through a deep canyon and offers some delightful paddling. Aided by the current, we use two person sit on top kayaks ideally suited to manoeuvre the many twists and turns along the river. Travertine barriers create stunning waterfalls and the lush surrounds provide a lovely landscape. Cost will be advised on enquiry. Minimum of four participants required.

## Trip Organisation

Our paddling days will start early to make the most of each day. It's a good idea to pack your dry-bag before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tent so that loading for departure can be organised.

We mix up our campsites on wild beaches with public campgrounds to provide access to more facilities (although campgrounds may still be basic with cold-showers only).

On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your own boats and you and your partner will be responsible for your own tent or sleeping site. The guides will also appreciate your assistance in other camp duties. We find that people joining our trips alone soon make friends.

## Accommodation and Camping

Rab and Krk: Simple twin share bed and breakfast hotel accommodation.

Camping: We supply two-person tents, foam mats and communal camping equipment. You can either bring your own sleeping bag or rent one. If bringing your own sleeping bag, ensure it is compact to conserve space in the kayak. Rental charge is 20 euros for a sleeping bag. Please note, the ground can be



rocky so you should take that into consideration. We recommend bringing your own Thermarest and use in addition to the provided foam mat.

Electricity should be available every second to third day of the trip. Mobile phone coverage is quite reliable on the paddle route.

## **Food**

Our guides usually prepare meals in camp and your help is welcome. At some campsites we are able to eat local Croatian food at a nearby restaurant. Restaurant meals throughout the trip will be simple and provide variety and a taste of local cuisine. Alcohol is not included in restaurant meals.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary needs, please let us know at the time of booking your dietary requirements.

## **Water**

Bottled water is readily available in towns and preferable to tap water that, although chlorinated, is not as safe. Water for the kayaking will be provided throughout the trip but you will have opportunities to buy extra if you wish. We recommend about 3 litres per day per person and will be able to restock with water every 2-3 days.

## **Climate**

Summers in Croatia are hot and dry, especially in July and August. The months of May, June and September are a little cooler – still shorts and T-shirt weather at most times during the day, evenings a little cooler and with the possibility of occasional showers. The weather is generally settled but wind can be a factor.

## **Expedition Staff**

There will be two kayak guides (depending on group numbers). Our trip leaders are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional guides. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

## **Travel Insurance**

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation and delay due to weather or other reasons. Ensure your travel insurance covers expenses in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident.

Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim.

We strongly recommend you take out insurance at the time of booking. Please supply us with the policy details (insurance company name, policy number and insurance emergency assist phone number) at least a month before your departure.

## Conservation

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person take out everything they bring in, including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

## Photography

As we are paddling in a salt water environment, the delicate electronics in cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries as there is little opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity while camping. It is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it.

## Money Matters

### **Your tour cost includes:**

- Bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Rab and Krk on a twin share basis for the first and last night of the trip.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Two person tents and foam mats.
- 20 litre watertight dry-bag for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Specified group transfers.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 11.
- Group first aid kit.

### **Your tour cost *does not* include:**

- Any flights.
- Entry fees into historic sites.
- Some bottled water during the trip.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Airport taxes (if any) on departure from Croatia.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips.
- Sleeping bags (these can be hired at an extra charge).
- Thermarests are not provided but are highly recommended to bring.
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry.

## Money to Bring With You

The Kuna is the official currency in Croatia. The euro has not replaced the Kuna even though Croatia joined the EU in 2013. There are ATM machines in the main centres and this is the most efficient way to obtain Croatian Kuna. The Kuna does not have much value outside Croatia so it's best not to exchange a large amount and then have to cash it in. Credit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels. Traveller's cheques and cash can be changed at banks in the larger towns and cities but can be time consuming. U.S. dollars and euros are far easier to exchange than Australian, New Zealand or Canadian dollars within Croatia, but if you are traveling to Europe before or after it is better to have euros.



During the trip you will need money for alcohol, bottled water and soft drinks, entry fees to a few historical sites and any shopping you intend to do.

## Tipping

We recommend you put aside a little money for general tips in restaurants. Our guides do not expect tips.

## Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. You should carry your passport on the kayak trip but could leave other paperwork with left luggage in Rab. Theft is a consideration in Croatia (like at home) so it's always a good idea not to leave things unattended. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

## Medical Matters

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters. An expedition first aid kit is carried on the trip. We strongly recommend that you bring with you any required medicines and a small first aid kit for your own personal use. Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a dental checkup before departure.

## Passport

Make sure that you have a current passport and the validity will extend to six months after the date of your return.

## Visas

For most visitors visas are not required for stays in Croatia of less than 90 days. Your passport may be checked at hotels as all tourists are registered.

## Excess Luggage

Any excess luggage that you do not take kayaking will be stored in Rab and transferred to the hotel in Krk at the end of the trip.

## Clothing & Equipment: What You Need to Bring

Carefully check through all essential items. The dress code overall in Croatia is modest, but it is more relaxed on the Adriatic coast.

### Essential Items:

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- Lightweight waterproof rain jacket.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimming gear.
- One pair of sturdy sand shoes or running shoes or preferably a lightweight hiking boot.
- Lightweight socks.
- One pair of sport sandals (e.g. Teva or similar) or paddle booties.
- One pair of lightweight, quick drying, full length trousers.
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt is recommended in camp for protection from insects.
- Lightweight woollen jumper or fleece jacket.
- One long sleeved thermal or polyester top is recommended while paddling for sun protection or warmth in rainy conditions. Lycra rash vest is also suitable.
- Wide-brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Sun visors are inadequate. Choose a hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigidity in a breeze and a chinstrap to keep on in the wind. A scarf made from a light material such as silk, to protect your neck, is useful for sun protection.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal).
- Minimal personal toiletries (biodegradable salt water soap may be desired).
- Good waterproof sun cream, lip balm and insect repellent (recommend RID).
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss.
- Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner sheet . A sleeping bag may be hired for 20 euros if required. Be sure to let us know if you require a sleeping bag.**
- Small torch and batteries.
- A small daypack, bum bag or dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, etc. both for paddling and day walks.
- A small drybag is also useful for keeping a camera and valuables handy while paddling.
- A wetsuit vest is useful for swimming/snorkelling.
- 1 or 2, one litre water bottles (the type used by cyclists are good and inexpensive).
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you have not paddled recently.
- Small blowup pillow or pillowcase, this takes up little room and easily stuffed for a comfy sleep.
- Snorkelling gear (mask and snorkel only to save space or just swimming goggles).

### Optional Items

- Thermarest (highly recommended).**
- Power points require a plug with two round pins.

- Cards/games, reading material.
- Lightweight clothesline.
- Binoculars, camera –bring sufficient film, batteries, and storage cards for digital cameras.

## End of the Trip

The trip finishes in Krk after breakfast on Day 11. We can offer one group transfer to Rijeka or Zagreb. Please let us know of your departure details.

## Other Places to See in Croatia

It's worth considering extending your time in Croatia as there is a huge range of fascinating places to visit. Please contact our office for recommendations.

## Delays or Problems

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287. Your guide's contact number will be noted on your final trip itinerary.

### **SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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