

MEDITERRANEAN

# Croatia Kayak/Sail Adventure

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*North Dalmatia*

10 day trip itinerary



# Croatia Kayak/Sail Adventure: North Dalmatia



## 10 day trip 7 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 trip along a section of the Dalmatian coast offers dramatic scenery, wonderful paddling plus historical and cultural experiences. We'll explore ruins and forts from Illyrian and Roman times, small fishing villages and national parks.

Designed for people with some paddling experience, we use a mother-ship, the *Vila Vrgade*, to help us explore and paddle the island archipelago including the Kornati Islands National Park.

The *Vila Vrgade* is ideally suited for loading and unloading our kayaks and enables us to paddle empty kayaks each day. We sleep and dine on board the boat, sometimes coming into shore to enjoy meals at select local restaurants. The clear warm waters of the Adriatic combined with the spectacular landscape of central Croatia makes this an adventure not to be missed!

**This is a voyage of exploration and may be subject to some deviations in the itinerary depending on local conditions.**

### A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Meet in Split. Overnight hotel.

**Day 2:** Morning in Split. Board the boat at 4pm. Sail to Brač Island. B • L • D

**Days 3-5:** Exploring Hvar, Vis, Šolta and Žirje Islands. B • L • D

**Day 6:** Paddling Kornati National Park. B • L • D

**Day 7:** Exploring Telascica Nature Park. B • L • D

**Day 8:** Sail to Sibenik and paddle the river canyon to Skradin. B • L • D

**Day 9:** Depart boat and explore Skradin and Kalpic. Overnight Kalpic. B • L • D

**Day 10:** Trip concludes with a transfer to Zadar (or optional river day trip). B

## Meeting Place and Time

We meet at our group hotel in Split (hotel details will be advised closer to trip departure). You can check into the hotel anytime after 12:00 noon. Hotel accommodation is based on twin share rooms but single rooms are available for an additional charge. The trip briefing will be held at 6pm. Dinner is not included on this night but after the briefing your guide can suggest a local restaurant to dine.

## How to Get There

Several airlines have flights to Split from European cities, including Easyjet from London. Croatia Airlines flies from Zagreb to Split several times a day. There are a number of 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 some 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 beginner paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip.

We require all participants to complete and return our kayak experience form shortly after booking.

It's important to recognise that the weather and wind will influence what we can and can't do. If it is too windy for paddling, we'll hop on the boat to seek out the most sheltered aspects along island corridors.

We predominantly use double kayaks on boat-based trips due to storage reasons, however single kayaks may be available to share. 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 a strong wind so you should be used to paddling in a variety of conditions. We paddle between three to five 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. The biggest advantage of using a mother-ship is that all our food and equipment will be carried on board, meaning we paddle empty kayaks. Our trip leaders are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional guides.

On the first day of paddling you will be given a thorough briefing on your kayak equipment and trip safety with time to adjust your individual boats.

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. We highly recommended participants become involved in regular exercise (paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics 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 to take advantage of any opportunities that arise, local weather conditions and preferences of the group.

**Please note that weather conditions, transport breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary. Charter of the *Vila Vrgade* is subject to availability. If not available, a similar vessel will be used.**

**Day 1:** Make your way to the group hotel in Split. Check in is available from 12noon. The trip briefing is held at 6pm in the hotel and will last about an hour. If your flight arrives after this, please advise our office so we can arrange an alternate time. During the briefing, your guide will issue watertight bags to carry day items while kayaking (the bags are about 20 litres in volume). Dinner tonight is not included in the trip cost but your guide will suggest a local restaurant where the group can enjoy a meal together.

**NO MEALS INCLUDED/HOTEL ACCOMMODATION**

**Day 2:** After breakfast at the hotel, your bags will be picked up around 10am for transportation to the boat. We have most of the day to explore Split including the old town markets and Diocletian's Palace. The group will head to Split harbour at around 4pm and board the *Vila Vrgade*. The captain will welcome us aboard, we'll settle in and then set sail. We cross to the port of Milna on Brač Island for a short practice paddle. If there's time, we'll explore the quaint fishing port of Milna before dinner on board the *Vila*.

**B - L • D /OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE**

**Day 3:** Today we start the paddle and cruising schedule that will make up our daily routine for the next six days. We endeavour to paddle after breakfast and board our vessel for lunch. We will motor over lunch and then paddle again in the afternoon to our nightly destination. Your guide will consult with the captain each day and change the route depending on the weather to give the best paddle options each day. Today we'll cruise to the island of Vis and kayak the northern coast and perhaps explore the abandoned military tunnels en route. The island of Vis served as a military base from the 1950's to 1989 and was cut off from visitors during this time. The isolation preserved the island from tourist development and today it is a beautiful getaway known for excellent wines and the freshest fish. Overnight anchor in Komiža Bay.

**B • L • D /OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE**

**Day 4:** Today we'll explore the beaches and bays around Komiža. The town of Komiža is home to 17th and 18th century houses, a 17th century church and a Renaissance citadel. In the afternoon we sail to Šolta Island and anchor.

B • L • D / OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE

**Day 5:** We explore Šolta, a lovely wooded island, before crossing to Žirje Island, a wonderful paddling playground with bays and islets to discover. The interior of the island is covered with vineyards, olive groves and plum orchards.

B • L • D / OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE

**Day 6:** From Žirje, we cross to the beautiful Kornati Islands and explore a few of the 147 mostly uninhabited islands, some part of the Kornati National Park. Our overnight anchor is along the island of Levrnaka.

B • L • D / OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE

**Day 7:** Today we travel from Levrnaka to Telascica Park of Nature and kayak beside the stark white limestone cliffs. We can visit the saltwater Mir lake, fed by underground channels that run through the limestone to the sea. The mud of Mir Lake is supposed to keep you young! We sail to Murter island for our overnight anchorage.

B • L • D / OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGADE

**Day 8:** After breakfast we sail to Šibenik. We'll aim to have time to wander through the town and its narrow streets before re-boarding and sailing on to the entrance to Krka river canyon where we will paddle to the town of Skradin. Our last night on board is celebrated with the captain and crew.

B • L • D / OVERNIGHT ABOARD THE VILA VRGARDE

**Day 9:** We farewell the *Vila* after breakfast and explore Skradin, with its narrow paved streets, stunning scenery and local cuisine. After lunch, the group will transfer to Kalpic and our Agriturismo accommodation for the night. The hotel is located in a rural area and we can spend the afternoon relaxing, swimming in the pool or riding one of the hotel's bikes along country lanes. Enjoy a hearty dinner at the hotel tonight.

B • L • D / PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

**Day 10:** After breakfast, the group will transfer to Zadar where trip arrangements conclude.

B / END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS

## Post Trip Activity

For those staying extra days in Zadar, 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. Please advise when booking the trip if you'd like to reserve this option. Minimum of four participants required. Price on application.

## 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. There may be a possibility of the occasional shower, however the weather is generally settled. Wind can be variable and sometimes unpredictable.

## Accommodation

The group spends seven nights on board the Vila Vrgade, a sailing ketch with four separate two-person cabins and four bathrooms. Bed linen is supplied including bath towels. You may like to bring your own beach towel to dry off after swims.

Split: Simple twin-share bed and breakfast accommodation.

Kalpic: Agriturismo in scenic rural setting.

## Food

Paddlers will eat well on this trip with food freshly prepared by the crew. Breakfasts typically consist of cereal, fresh fruit, bread and spreads. On some mornings, there will be cooked items such as omelettes and other egg dishes. Lunches are either cooked on board or, if we're out paddling, picnic-style, with a selection of cheese, cold meat, fresh vegetables, fruit, bread and/or salads. Dinners are two to three courses prepared with fresh ingredients and varied daily.

Alcohol is not included in any meals. You will be able to purchase some alcohol along the way and water and soft drinks are available for purchase on board.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary needs, please note your requirements on your medical form. Coeliacs should bring their favourite cereal and gluten free pasta for their own consumption as these products are sometimes hard to find locally.

## Expedition Staff

There will be up to 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. Boat staff generally include the captain and a cook.

## 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. 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 accommodation in Split and Kalpic on a twin share basis for the first and last night of the trip.
- Full charter of the Vila Vrgade (or similar vessel).
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Small dry-bags for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 10.
- Entrance fees to national parks.
- One group transfer to Zadar at the end of the trip.

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

- Any flights.
- Dinner in Split on the first night.
- Accommodation in Zadar at the end of the trip.
- Entry fees into historic sites.
- Some bottled water during the trip.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips.
- Items of a personal nature such as WIFI charges 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 (unless you're planning to spend it all in Croatia). 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, tips and any shopping you intend to do.

## Tipping

We recommend you put aside a little money for general tips for crew and in restaurants. Our kayak guides do not expect tips but if you're inclined to reward excellent service, then it will not be refused!

## 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. 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.

## 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.

## Medical Matters

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

For those aged 65 years and above, a letter from a doctor stating your fitness for a multi-day kayak trip is required.

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, however, 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.

## Luggage

It is recommended that luggage should be packed in soft bags rather than hard suitcases for on board storage.

## 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. Contact us if you have any questions.

### Essential Items:

- Lightweight waterproof rain jacket.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimming gear.
- One pair of sturdy sand shoes or running shoes/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 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.
- Towel.
- Personal toiletries.
- Good waterproof sun cream, lip balm and insect repellent (recommend RID).
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss.
- 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 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.
- Snorkelling gear (mask and snorkel only to save space or just swimming goggles).

### Optional Items

- Power points require a plug with two round pins.
- Cards/games, reading material.
- Lightweight clothesline.
- Binoculars.
- Camera –bring sufficient batteries and storage cards.

## 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.

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MG 23/10/18