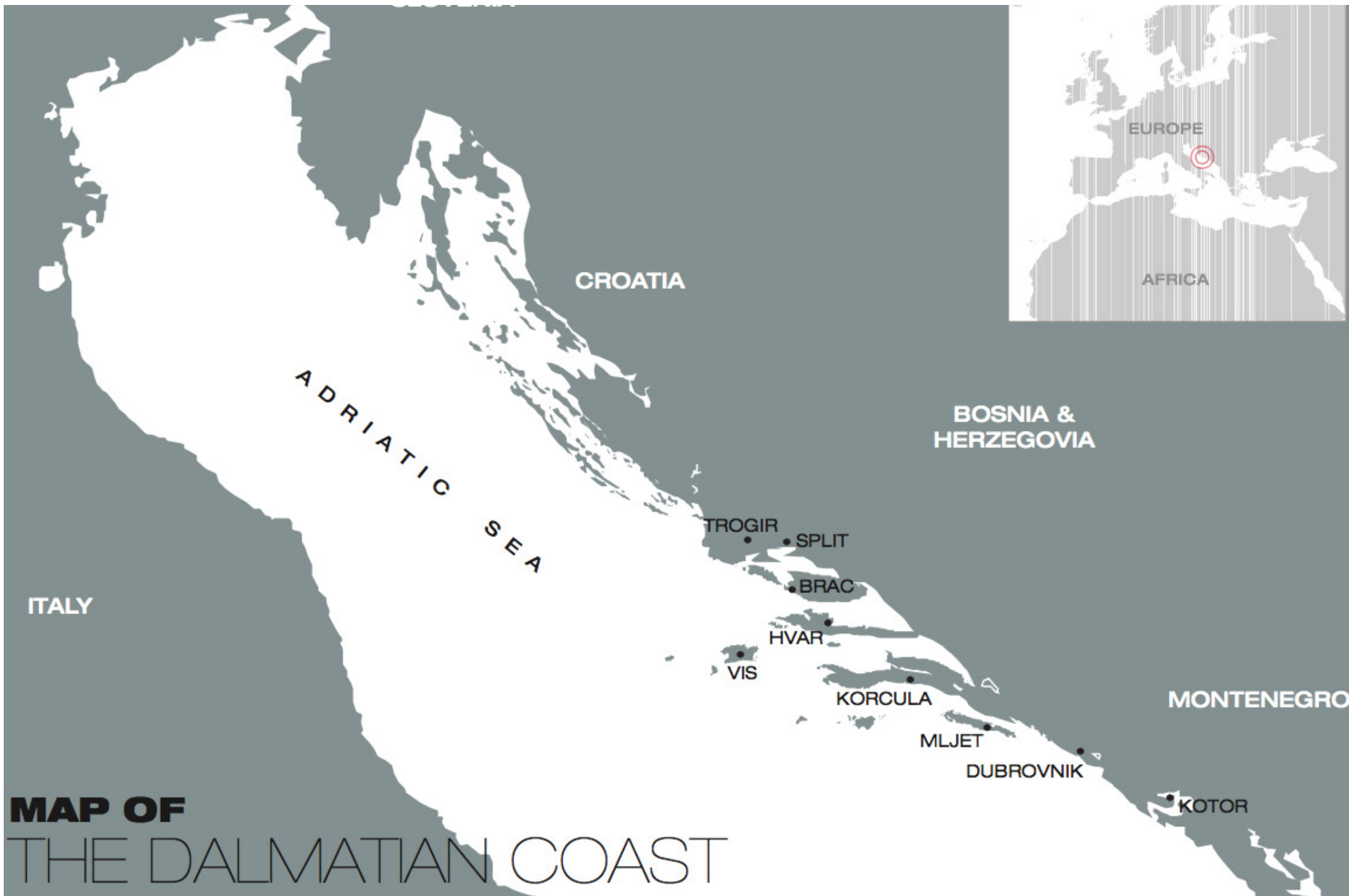




Croatia - The Dalmation Coast Cruising Guide



TROGIR

Trogir, also known as the Town Museum, is a beautiful old city with a fascinating 2,300 years of continuous urban tradition. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Trogir is the best-preserved Romanesque-Gothic complex not only in the Adriatic but in all of Central Europe. Trogir's medieval core, surrounded by walls, comprises of a beautifully preserved castle, a tower and a series of dwellings and palaces from the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods.

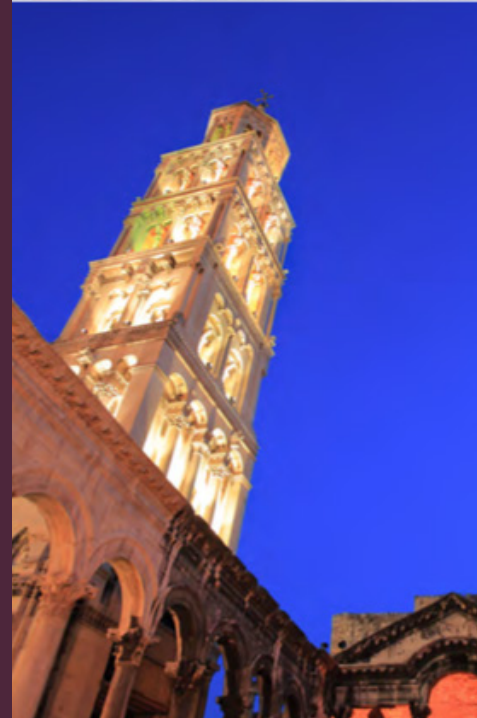


SPLIT

Approximately 2,000 years old, Split is the largest town in Dalmatia and has long been an important center of trade for the Adriatic and eastern Mediterranean. The city grew around the time of Roman Emperor Diocletian, who built a palace that remains the largest and best-preserved late-antique palace in the world.

Wander the city streets, and you'll see evidence of how harmoniously the annexing and partitioning that occurred in the later centuries of the Roman Empire shaped the city. This is exemplified by the Peristyle where, within the embrace of Roman columns and arcades, the Romanesque and Gothic facades, Renaissance and Baroque works of art and architecture were added, including the Romanesque bell tower, which gives the city its vertical axis.

Now, the city is still a blend of ancient and new, with the Roman aqueducts still providing water and lively cafés and bars lining the streets. Lounge on the popular city beaches, peruse fresh produce and handicrafts in the outdoor markets, explore ancient churches, dine on fresh seafood while overlooking the ocean, and make friends with locals and other travellers alike at the numerous bars and cafés.



BRAC

Home to Croatia's most famously beautiful beach, Zlatni Rat, or "Golden Cape" in Croatian, this third largest island in the Adriatic is an idyllic haven for those as interested in water sports as historic sights. In the lovely seaside town of Bol, explore the stone streets, peruse the lively outdoor market, and slow down to the island's pace. Sail around the island's picturesque, craggy coastline, dotted with historic towns and secluded, tree-lined coves, in search of quiet inlets from which to explore. Off the island, you'll find phenomenal diving and snorkeling among the waters long plied by Adriatic merchant ships.

Both in the towns and as you hike up through the rugged, rocky slopes that make up the center of the island, you'll notice the famous creamy white marble that has been used in famous buildings all over the world, from the Diocletian's Palace in Split to the White House in Washington. Near Bol lies the picturesque town of Milina, a typical Mediterranean town, where you'll find narrow streets and a number of cultural monuments. Between the two towns, you'll find the 16th-century Blaca monastery perched above the ocean, with a valuable library, works of art, and an observatory.



HVAR

The longest Adriatic island, Hvar holds the local record for the number of sunny days per year, and holds the international distinction of being the Dalmatian Coast's answer to St. Tropez. Anchor at any of the numerous picturesque inlets and bays along its coast to take advantage of the gorgeous waters and surroundings to swim, kayak, or water ski. Or head straight to the main harbour town for beautiful people, stylish cafés and restaurants, and a vibrant nightlife scene, all set against the backdrop of a well-preserved medieval landscape.

If you need to brush up on your Croatian history, pay a visit to the oldest community theatre in Europe, founded here in 1612, on one of the largest Renaissance squares. Visit the Renaissance cathedral with its original tower, authentic architecture, and paintings by old masters. Come in the summer and you'll find the inland areas blanketed in the soft purple of lavender in bloom. Visit the nearby St. Klement islands (Pakleni Islands), small, wooded islands with sandy beaches and a historic fortress overlooking a botanical garden.



VIS

One of the most unexplored islands along the Dalmatian Coast, thanks to its recent military past, Vis abounds with unspoilt scenery and ancient stone-walled towns. Spend your time visiting the island's famous vineyards, hiking along the spectacular coastline, and exploring the secluded coves and bays, including the lovely Scedro on the northern end of the island.

Just to the west, visit the small island of Biscevo to explore its numerous caves, particularly the famed Blue Cave, a grotto where when the midday sun reflects off the white sandy bottom and in through an underwater entrance to give a most spectacular effect. The area also offers some other excellent diving opportunities, including two ancient Roman shipwrecks and numerous others since then, all the way through World War II.



MLJET

The island of Mljet, one of the best known Croatian islands, was named a national park in 1960 in order to protect its unique woods around two spectacular salt lakes in the middle of the island. Explore this lush, completely unspoilt island for a day, wandering amongst the two sea lakes, dense forests of Aleppo pine and holly oak, cliffs, caves, and mineral springs. Take a picnic to the shores of the larger lake and enjoy the view before taking a boat out to St. Mary Island in the middle, home to a 12th-century Benedictine monastery.

Back on the shore, dive into waters known for their abundant coral reefs, deep sea crevices, and underwater caves. Sites like Goli Rat offer diverse marine life and an ancient shipwreck at the entrance to Lastovo Bay; Vanji Skoj reveals dramatic underwater terrain, including plateaus, craggy rocks, caves, and fissures and crevices in the rock through which you can swim. Seek out hidden caves accessible only underwater, like Odysseus' Cave and Rikavica. Watch for such sea life as octopi, jellyfish, moray eels, Mediterranean barracudas, and lobsters.



KORCULA

Korcula is the name of this picturesque, old fortified town. The island is renowned for its wine-making, and you could easily spend a few days relaxing in the pleasant town, full of winding side streets and excellent restaurants. Churches, streets and squares emphasise the harmonious ground plan inside the old town walls. Marco Polo even supposedly lived here, and you can take a tour of the house believed to be his. Note the importance of stone-cutting and shipbuilding here long the two major livelihoods in the town. If you're around in the summer, attend performances at the Festival of the Knightly Games, including the Moreska sword dance, performed on Mondays and Thursdays.

Explore the island further by venturing to the fishing outpost of Racisce, an unspoiled, historic town whose quiet streets winding down the hill feel entirely untouched. Inland, the town of Zrnovo houses one of the region's best restaurants, Gera, where garden views, fresh seafood, and house-made wine are the name of the game.



DUBROVNIK

Celebrities and mortals alike are flocking to the quiet stone streets of Dubrovnik, a walled city that after more than a half century in obscurity is making up for lost time, quickly transforming the Croatian coast from ragged backwater to fashionable seaside haven. If you feel like you've missed the golden age of the French Riviera, don't fret. The Croatian golden age is going on right now.

The beaches are a major attraction for good reason. The shoreline ranges from pebbles to white sand, and the shockingly clear water can be balmy even early in the year. After sunning for a bit, be sure to check out the city's cultural offerings. The Museum of Modern Art offers a cool, shady spot to unwind just a few steps from Banja beach. The building itself is a work of art: a vast neo-Renaissance villa originally built for one of the city's wealthiest residents. In the early evening before the sun goes down, walk on the old city's walls, as the best time to visit is when the pale light falls on the city's ochre rooftops.



BAY OF KOTOR

Located along one of Montenegro's most beautiful bays is Kotor, a city of traders and famous sailors, with many stories to tell. Perast is a tidy town on the Bay of Kotor, and essentially the Newport, R.I. of Montenegro. A Unesco-protected fjord., the waterfront is lined with stately Venetian style palaces and old merchant homes built by wealthy sea captains. In the morning, sip Turkish coffee off the aft deck as you look out to Our Lady of the Rocks, a beautiful church on an artificial island built by the townspeople of Perast. In the afternoon, take to the beach, stroll past 17th-century palaces, or tour the bay by speedboat. The bay lends itself well to watersports.

This country of 600,000 may serve as a mere way station to some on their journey into or out of Croatia. But on May 21, 2006, its citizens voted for independence from Serbia, thus dissolving the last remnants of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and it's Independence is only accelerating a process that began in 2003. Montenegro has defined itself in part as an "ecological" state, dedicated to preserving its natural environment — which to some makes this gem one of the finest in Dalmatia.







43 Berkeley Square
London
W1J 5FJ

E: uk@yachtmasters.com
T: +44 (0) 207 099 0941

www.yachtmasters.com