

Croatia

9 car tours • 90 long and short walks



GPS

This is a sample from the
PDF edition of
Landscapes of
CROATIA

a countryside guide
Fourth edition



Sandra Bardwell

This shorter sampler includes some of the introductory text, the introductions to each of the main sections (Picnicking, Car Touring and Walking) with an example of each. There is a total of 176 pages, plus two pull-out touring maps, in the full book.



SUNFLOWER BOOKS



Contents

Preface	5
Acknowledgements; Recommended reading;	
Useful contacts	8
Travel	9
Car touring	10
Car tour 1: DUBROVNIK AND BEYOND	12
Car tour 2: CENTRAL DALMATIA	16
Car tour 3: BRAČ	18
Car tour 4: HVAR	20
Car tour 5: VIS	22
Car tour 6: LAKES, WATERFALLS, CANYONS	25
Car tour 7: THE KVARNER GULF	28
Car tour 8: LOŠINJ	30
Car tour 9: CRES	32
Picnics and short walks	34
Walking (● see explanation of grading symbols on page 45)	45
Grading, waymarking, maps, GPS	45
Equipment and safety	46
Weather	47
Where to stay	49
Nuisances	49
Country code	49
Croatian for walkers	50
Organisation of the walks	52
THE WALKS	
ELAPHITI ISLANDS: Introduction	53
● 1 Lokrum: tour of Lokrum from Portoč	54
● 2 Koločep: tour of the island from Donje Čelo	57
● 3 Lopud: highlights of the island from Uvala Lopud	59
● 4 Mljet: Zakamenica viewpoint and Vratsolina from Pomena or Polače	62
Panel: MLJET NATIONAL PARK	65
● 5 Mljet: Montokuc summit from Pomena or Polače	66
● 6 Mljet: Soline from Pomena or Polače	69
Panel: JOSIP BROZ TITO	70
● 7 Pelješac peninsula: Svete Ilija summit from Orebić	72
Panel: KARST LANDSCAPES	75
ADRIATIC COAST: Introduction	76
● 8 Makarska Riviera: from Makarska to Baška Voda	77
● 9 Makarska Riviera: from Baška Voda to Uvala Luka and return	79
	3

4 Landscapes of Croatia

● 10 Makarska Riviera: Biokovo Botanic Garden from Makarska	81
● 11 Makarska Riviera: Vosac viewpoint from Makarska	84
BRAČ: Introduction	87
● 12 Brač: from Bol to Svete Lucija and Gornje Smokovje	88
● 13 Brač: Vidova Gora summit from Bol	90
● 14 Brač: Blaca Monastery from Murvica	92
HVAR: Introduction	95
● 15 Hvar: Stari Grad Plain	96
● 16 Hvar: from Velo Grablje to Hvar town	98
● 17 Hvar: Svete Nikola summit from Stari Grad	101
● 18 Plitvice Lakes National Park: circuit of the lakes and falls	104
Panel: TRAVERTINE	105
PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK: Introduction	108
● 19 Paklenica National Park: Velika Paklenica and Planinarski Dom Paklenica	109
● 20 Paklenica National Park: A short walk through history and Mala Paklenica	112
● 21 Paklenica National Park: Manita Peć	115
KVARNER GULF: Introduction	117
● 22 Kvarner Gulf: from Volosko to Lovran via Opatija	118
● 23 Kvarner Gulf: Lužinski Breg from Dobreć	121
● 24 Kvarner Gulf: Vojak summit from Poklon	123
● 25 Kvarner Gulf: Lovranska Draga	126
RAB: Introduction	128
● 26 Rab: From Lopar to San Marino via Sahara Beach	129
● 27 Rab: From San Marino to Matkici along a geotrail	132
● 28 Rab: Kamenjak summit from Rab town harbour	135
KRK: Introduction	137
● 29 Krk: Zakam, Jurandvor and Vela Rika from Baška	138
● 30 Krk: Obzova summit from Baška	141
Panel: GLAGOLITIC SCRIPT	143
● 31 Krk: Hlam summit from Baška	145
● 32 Krk: Bag summit from Baška, with optional detour to Rt Škuljika	147
● 33 Krk: Prniba point from the Krk Camping Resort access road	149
LOŠINJ: Introduction	151
● 34 Lošinj: from Nerezine to Osor via the Televrin summit	152
● 35 Lošinj: Planinarski Dom Svete Gaudent from Osor	155
● 36 Lošinj: across the island's spine	157
CRES: Introduction	160
● 37 Cres: Svete Salvatur and Gavza	161

Transport information: ferries and buses 164

Index 166

Fold-out area maps *inside back cover*



Travel

The quickest and most direct means of travel to Croatia is by **air**. Scheduled flights from Britain land at Zagreb, Split, Pula, Zadar and Dubrovnik; charter airlines link London and UK regional airports with Dubrovnik, Split and Rijeka, while there are budget airline flights to Pula, Rijeka International (on island Krk), Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik. Regular **coach** services link Zagreb and the main coastal towns with other European capitals. Trains operate between Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Zagreb, and on to Rijeka and Split. Croatia Airlines operates flights between Zagreb and Dubrovnik, Pula, Split, Rijeka and Zadar.

Driving to Croatia from the UK takes at least two days, most directly via Eurotunnel, Brussels, Germany and Austria to Ljubljana, then down to Rijeka. (Citizens of western European countries, Canada and the US do not need a visa.) To use Austrian and Slovenian motorways, you'll need to purchase a *vignette* at the border crossings. Major international and some local hire car companies are widely represented, though car hire is comparatively expensive and fuel costs are on a par with Western Europe. Good car hire deals are available online. **Fly/drive packages** may be a worthwhile means of cutting down costs. Remember that summer traffic is nightmarish and parking an expensive problem almost anywhere. Another possibility is a package holiday at a major resort such as Dubrovnik or Makarska, both good walking centres.

Ferries are part of the experience of travelling in Croatia. Jadrolinija operates the majority of services; off-season timetables are geared to the needs of local people commuting to and shopping on the mainland; additional summer services make it easier to avoid *very* early sailings. Car ferries serve almost all islands; many also enjoy the speed and comfort of hydrofoils and catamarans. Car ferries are expensive, but fares for foot passengers are good value.

Local **buses** meet most ferries and serve outlying towns and villages. The enviable long-distance services operate throughout the Adriatic coast and beyond and are generally frequent, reliable and comparatively inexpensive.

Indeed, such is the extent and frequency of public transport that by astute choice of one, two or even three bases, it's possible to enjoy a car-free holiday.



Car touring

I have outlined nine flexible tours which can be linked in part or whole to suit your own particular interests or time available. The itineraries show how best to use the range of car ferry routes available and are designed to help you plan a holiday of up to a fortnight. The linking thread is the 'Jadranska Magistrala', the coastal Adriatic highway (route 8) between Dubrovnik and Rijeka, from where it is an easy hop to any of the walking bases.

Bridge near Šibenik (Car tour 2, Itinerary 2)



The tours start and finish at places where accommodation is available; other places to stay en route are noted. For detailed information about local sights, track down the official tourist information office (*Turistički Ured*; the staff almost always speak English), as distinct from accommodation agencies which commonly display the 'Information' logo.

Croatia's ever-expanding network of toll motorways is built to high standards — as are all the new main roads everywhere; nevertheless, be prepared for occasional pot-holes, tight bends, wandering stock and wild boar. Tolls are charged on all Croatian motorways, payable at **toll gates** (see the touring maps); reckon on paying an average of 40kn/100km. For more information go to www.tolls.eu.

Mule and cart-width roads through small towns challenge skill and patience! Many Croatians are given to driving fast and often recklessly, and are fond of driving while using their mobiles; **defensive driving** is recommended. On the islands **petrol stations** are scarce; on the mainland you'll find them on the outskirts of towns. Generally they're open daily, from 7am to 7pm or longer. Contact the Croatian Automobile Association (HAK; tel 1987) in emergencies.

The pullout touring maps are designed to be held out opposite the touring notes and contain all the information you need en route. The map key explains the **symbols** used in the text. (At a larger scale, the Freytag & Berndt 1:200,000 map, 'Croatia Coast Istria — Dubrovnik', is recommended.) The satnav in your car would be most useful in town centres.

In built-up areas the **speed limit** is 50km/h, outside built-up areas 90km/h, on major roads 110km/h (100kph through tunnels), on motorways 130km/h. However, your average touring speed is likely to about 55km/h. Main roads bypass the centre of towns (where parking is almost impossible); should you wish to stop, park as indicated in the notes! Routes to and from car ferry terminals are always clearly signposted.

You'll always find a café or restaurant on or very close to the main roads; shopping for a picnic may be less convenient, so set out with all you'll need.

Please keep in mind the Country code on page 49.

Car tour 1: DUBROVNIK AND BEYOND

Four itineraries, covering Mljet island, the Pelješac peninsula and the coastal route from Dubrovnik to Split

En route: Picnics 1-9, Walks 1-11

Dubrovnik's restored old town *is* Croatia for many travellers and undoubtedly worth a lingering visit. It is also the base for exploring the nearby island of Lokrum and the three Elaphiti islands, Koločep, Lopud and Šipan, which are served only by passenger ferries, and the port of departure for car ferries to the island of Mljet (Itinerary 1).








To reach the town of Orebić on the Pelješac peninsula, the next mainland walking base in this tour, you *can* take a ferry direct from Mljet to Prapratno. But Itinerary 2 describes the route via the 'Jadranska Magistrala' (the coastal highway or E65) — as scenic a drive as you'd wish, winding along the steeply sloping coastal fringe. The road across the Pelješac peninsula is one of the outstanding highlights of travelling through southern Croatia, awesomely scenic. From Orebić I propose six choices for your onward journey.













Itinerary 1: Mljet








33km/20.5mi, 45min driving (to Polače); 38km/23.5mi, 50min driving (to Pomena)

En route: Picnic 6; Walks 4-6

Access:  to Mljet

From the **Sobra ferry terminal** () there's a two-way road for about 2.5km; turn right at a junction into **Sobra** () and there along the waterfront. Continue up to a good two-way road.

At the following junctions, continue towards GOVEDARI and/or POLAČE (the signs vary); there are no scenic lookouts or lay-bys where you can safely pull off. The main road bypasses the main town of **Babino Polje** (, where there are many old houses and churches dating from the 9th century and later). It leads on, past the entrance to the **Mljet National Park** (Picnic 6; Walks 4-6; map pages 62-63), to **Polače** (). About 1km beyond the village ignore the junction on the left for Govedari













(though it is quite an attractive village; ) and continue to **Pomena** ().

The most convenient route to the Pelješac peninsula is the Jadrolinija ferry from Sobra to Prapratno on the south coast of the peninsula (see Transport page 164); from the port it's 3km to the main road; Orebić is 53km further on.

Itinerary 2: Dubrovnik • E65 • Zaton Doli • Ston • Orebić

118km/70.8mi; 2h15min driving

En route: Picnics 1-5; Walks 1-3 (reached from Dubrovnik); Picnic 7, Walk 7 (from Orebić)

From your accommodation in **Dubrovnik** () reach the coastal highway by following signs to SPLIT. The highway is carried across the Rijeka River on the elegant suspension bridge named after Croatia's highly controversial first President, Franjo Tuđman; there's parking at the far end for one last view of Dubrovnik.

The arboretum at **Trsteno**★ (24km 🗺️🗺️🗺️), dating from the 15th century, is definitely worth a visit; otherwise, apart from a few lookouts beside the highway (🗺️ at 27km, 34km, 47km and more), there's little to detain you all the way to the Pelješac peninsula junction at **Zaton Doli** (59km; 🗺️ 300m further on), where you turn left. There are wild boar warning signs ahead!

Only a short distance along, shellfish (especially mussels) may be on sale at a roadside stall. Indeed, if you enjoy shellfish, it's worth diverging to **Mali Ston**, renowned for its seafood restaurants and local wine★ (64km 🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️). Nearby **Ston**★ (65km 🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) is surrounded by a fortified wall more than 5km long and with 20 of the original 40 towers still standing. Dating from the 14th century, it was built mainly to protect the lucrative salt pans. You can walk along the top of the wall (see photo overleaf) by paying a fee at Mali Ston or Ston. There is a large car park in the town centre. For dining with a magnificent view, the Restaurant Bella Vista, just past the Prapatno turn-off, is well named (68km).

Through more vineyards with spectacular views down the north-east coast you come to the seaside village of **Drače** (91km 🗺️🗺️). Then, in the village of **Janjina** (93km), you'll probably find local wine for sale. The road swings across to overlook the west coast and more dramatic scenery. Past the turn-off to Trstenik (97km 🗺️🗺️🗺️) there's an impressive drive up the side of a steep valley, leading back into vineyard country, past a large World War II resistance monument on the crest close to the

village of **Pijavičino** (103km). Near **Potomje** (105km 🗺️) the Dinjač winery offers a temptation, then there's another winery at **Prizdrina** (108km).

Just past the turn-off to Trpanj (110.5km 🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) you start the awesome descent to the coast, including two steepish sections, to **Orebić**★ (118km 🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️; Picnic 7; Walk 7).

From Orebić you have five choices for the onward journey (see also Transport page 164):

1) return direct to Dubrovnik;
2) return to the A8 at Zaton Doli and continue north and west along it to Split, via Makarska (163km/101mi; 2h45min driving: see Itineraries 3 and 4);

3) 🗺️ from Trpanj (🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) on the peninsula's north coast to Ploče (🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) on the mainland, 43km southeast of Makarska via the A8. The turn-off is 13km from Orebić, and the port 9km further on;

4) cross to Korčula (🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) and drive to Vela Luka (🗺️🗺️🗺️🗺️) at the western end of the island (48km) for a 🗺️ to Split;

5) cross to Korčula town for the Dubrovnik/Rijeka 🗺️.

Itinerary 3: Zaton Doli • Neum • Ploče • Drvenik • Makarska

104km/62.4mi; 1h30min driving

En route: Picnics 8, 9; Walks 8, 10, 11

This is a varied and interesting drive — through a narrow strip of Bosnia and Herzegovina (its only access to the sea and for which you need just your passport), the rich agricultural lands around the River Neretva, past industrial Ploče, the ferry port of Drvenik and on to the Makarska Riviera.

14 Landscapes of Croatia

Heading west from **Zaton Doli**, the first presentation of passports is at a gate on the northwestern side of Uvala Bistrina (6km 🏠🚧🚗). The highway passes through **Neum** (18km), a large town blighted by concrete hotels. The second passport presentation is at the northwestern border (23km). To bypass the two Bosnia and Herzegovina border crossings, a bridge linking Drače on the Pelješac peninsula to the A8 coastal highway at Duboka (between Neum and Opuzen) is scheduled for completion by July 2021. Access roads at both ends will follow eventually. Meanwhile,

the existing road through Ston will not be affected.

The highway swings inland to skirt the vast delta of the **River Neretva**, covered with fruit and vegetable plots and where citrus fruits are a specialty. Pass a minor road to the left, to Mala Neretva (38km 🚧🚗). Continue through the junction of the road to Mostar (39km 🚧🚗). The highway then closely parallels the River Neretva for about 8km; along here look out for roadside fruit stalls. **Ploče** (54km 🚧🚗🚚🚛), an industrial and commercial centre, has little to offer other than the terminal for the ferry serving



Trpanj on the Pelješac peninsula.

Where the highway returns to the coast northeast of Ploče, there's a magnificent view, especially of the Pelješac peninsula and Svete Ilija (Walk 7), from a roadside lay-by (61km 📍). Overlooking the headland of Rt Kukuljica a large sign welcomes visitors to the 'Makarska Riviera-Gradac' at a scenic lookout with seats (63km 📍). The village of Zaostrug (72km 📍) could be worth a stop — and there's a nice beach at Gornja Vala, just south of Drvenik (76km 📍), the port for the car ferry to Hvar. Beyond

Podgora (🏠🏠🚧) just below the road, the various seaside towns virtually merge into one all the way to Makarska★ (104km 📍); Picnics 8 and 9; Walks 8, 10, 11). Although the highway bypasses the centre of the town, the access road is clearly signed.

Itinerary 4: Makarska • Omiš • Split*

65km/39mi; 1h driving

En route: Picnics 8, 9; Walks 8-11

The first part of the drive from Makarska via Baška Voda (Walks 8 and 9) to the large town of Omiš is very scenic, especially around Uvala Vrujla, where there's a fine lookout (19km 📍) and another approaching the Marušići turn-off (25km 📍). Omiš (39km 📍) is dramatically located near the mouth of the southern side of the River Cetina just downstream from its rugged gorge. Car parks are on the seaward side of the road, before and beyond the sea front.

The rest of the way is through an almost continuous succession of unattractive towns to suburban and downtown Split★ (65km 📍), which is always busy and congested. The route to the ferry port is well signposted from the highway.

*Consider taking the car ferry from Makarska to Sumartin on the eastern tip of Brač (see Transport, page 164): drive across the island (Car tour 3) to Supetar, then board one of the frequent car ferries to Split. This takes longer than the coast road but is far more enjoyable.

Ston's fortified walls and the salt pans (Itinerary 2)





Picnics and short walks


The beaches, secluded coves and inlets, the shady woodlands, the scenic mountaintops of Croatia's Adriatic coast and islands all offer opportunities for outdoor dining. Picnic grounds, with tables and other facilities, are quite common, especially in some national parks, but still be prepared with something to sit on.

All the picnic spots recommended in this section are easy to reach; some follow parts of walks described elsewhere, others are fine short walks in their own right. None is more than 50 minutes from a safe parking place or public transport, the majority are much closer (times shown are out and *back*).

The location of each picnic is shown by the symbol **P** (printed in green) on the relevant walking or touring map, and some are illustrated. The symbol (○) indicates a site in full sun. For transport details by bus or ferry, see pages 133-134. **Please keep in mind the Country Code on page 41.**


Fill your pack with oven-fresh bread, *pršut* (Croatia's gourmet ham), cheese (especially the dry, slightly salty *paški sir* from the island of Pag), locally grown olives, pickled vegetables, fresh lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, stone fruit or figs from an outdoor market ... and a bottle of local wine or beer.

1 Lokrum (map page 56, photographs pages 54-55)

 to Lokrum. 50min on foot. Follow the Short walk on page 54; picnic on the rocks (○) or in shade on the **northern shore** by **7** or south of **8**, or have lunch at the secluded restaurant in the former monastery.


A short ferry trip from busy Dubrovnik to the peace of historic Lokrum, a special forest reserve.

2 Bige, Koločep (map page 57, photograph page 58)

 to Koločep. 55min on foot. Follow Walk 2 (page 57) to **Bige** (**8**); return the same way.


A beautiful secluded cove with crystal-clear turquoise water, shaded by tall graceful pines.

3 Svete Ivan, Lopud ○ (map page 60, photograph pages 60-61)

 to Lopud. 20min on foot. Follow Walk 3 (page 59) to **Svete Ivan** (**1**); retrace steps to the harbour. The only shade is from the chapel walls.


A short climb to one of the oldest chapels on the island; superb views of islands and mountains to the north.

4 Benešin Rat, Lopud (map page 60, photograph pages 60-61)

 to Lopud. 1h on foot. Follow the promenade (Obala Ivana Kuljevana) round the harbour. Past the hotel and houses, a track leads to a **rotunda** (**9**) at the island's south-western wooded tip.

An easy, level stroll to the point, with lovely views of the island of Sipan.

5 Velji Vrh Vidikovak, Šipán (touring map, no photo)




 to Sudurad. From there catch the local bus to and from Luka; check return times carefully).

1h50min on foot, an easy to moderate walk, with 243m/ 800ft of ascent on paths, tracks, and very quiet roads with signposts. Set out along a lane beside house 93 about 40m to the right of the Information Centre in Luka Šipanska.

Nearby is an information board with a map showing the network of paths. Bear left at a fork (3min); pass house 83 Luka on the right and go through an olive grove to a wide concrete path. Bend left beside a derelict building and go up steps to a road. Turn left; keep to this road past two junctions, then go right along a gravel track (33min). After 10 minutes, a distinct path (marked by a small cairn) leads up left to the communications installations on the **Velji Vrh Vidikovak summit** (55min).

Islands dominate the view westward, Mljet being the most prominent. Return the same way. *This is the highest point on the most remote of the Elaphati islands, with an uncommercialised, old world atmosphere.*




6 St Mary's Island, Mljet (map pages 62-63, photograph page 65)

 (Car tour 1) or  to Pomena or Polače. The Park entry fee includes boat to the island, north of  on the map. Here you'll find Restaurant Melita, open daily May to end September and an information centre, in the 12th-century Benedictine monastery. At least 30min on foot. Walk up steps to the **Church of the Assumption** of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which should be open, its interior austere beautiful. It has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries. Then follow a path along the north

side of the church, up to the site of some **Roman ruins** and a more recent stable, on the **island's high point**. Descend steps to the lower path and turn right. You pass two small **chapels** (St John and St Benedict) and a **cemetery** and soon find yourself back at the restaurant and ferry jetty.

A picnic or a restaurant lunch in an historic setting where peace and tranquillity acquire new meanings.

7 Franciscan monastery, Orebić (map page 74, no photo)

 (Car tour 1) or  to Orebić. 1h10min on foot. Follow Shorter walk 7-1 (page 72) to the 15th-century **Franciscan monastery** and Church of our Lady of the Angels (); there is a small museum in the monastery. Possible sunny picnic spots near the monastery. Return the same way. *An undemanding walk up to a first-class vantage point for views of old Korčula town, the scenic local coast and the mountains.*

8 Svete Petar, Makarska (yellow highlighting on the maps on pages 78 and 82, photo overleaf)

 (Car tour 2) or  to Makarska. 30min on foot. From the marina at the western end of Makarska harbour (), walk past Hotel Miramare, then bear right up a minor road which becomes a track below an imposing statue of **Svete Petar**. Continue through pine woodland. From time to time you'll find display boards featuring the colourful work of **Antun Gojak**, a significant 20th-century Makarskan painter. From a junction go up steps and through an archway to **Svete Petar church**, from the 15th century, later rebuilt and renovated. Continue through another archway, then bear left down steps to the shore and turn right. There are plenty of seats on the way to **Svete Petar lighthouse**

36 Landscapes of Croatia

(1884), another excellent viewpoint. Nearby is an intriguing installation, under construction at time of writing, using mainly prepared slender pine stems, rope and basket work. Follow the paved path back to the hotel and marina. *Explore the smaller of the two headlands guarding Makarska harbour; and the tranquil setting of Svete Petar church; views of the mountains and islands of Brač and Hvar.*

9 Osejava Forest Park, Makarska (best shown on the map on page 82, photo page 76)

🚗 (Car tour 2) or 🚘 to Makarska. 55min on foot. Walk south along the promenade (Ulica Marineta), past a car park and across to wide steps on the seaward side of Hotel Osejava. On a bend go right up steps below a house. At a junction turn right along the wider upper trail in open pine woodland. Continue up to the **meteorological station** and communications tower and follow the trail to the left. At an intersection go straight on, then on a left bend, go right, just past an information board featuring the forest park. Descend to a junction (35min) with benches for a picnic. Here you have a choice. Either turn right, or turn left to **Plaža Nugal**, a small, peaceful cliff-lined beach, FKK in season and another picnic venue (add 30 minutes and return to the junction to continue along the broad path ahead). Soon there's a 10m-long rope barrier on the left above a sheer drop, but there's no danger! Go past a junction below the communications tower and, at the next junction turn left, after 300m rejoining your outward path, and so back to the start.

Osejava, the wooded headland southwest of Makarska's harbour, is a cool

haven on a warm day, with superb views of the harbour and Brač.

10 Vidova Gora, Brač ○ (map page 90, photograph page 91)

🚗 (Car tour 3). 20min on foot. From the car park at the end of the road to Vidova Gora, walk up the road to the **summit** (7) with its masts, large cross and a restaurant with one of the finest outlooks imaginable. On the way up, there are sunny picnic spots to the left of the road, close to the plateau rim. The panoramic view embraces the islands of Vis, Hvar, Korčula and Lastovo (poking up above Korčula); the Biokovo range, Pelješac peninsula, and Bol and Zlatni Rat below.

Magnificent views from the highest summit in the Adriatic islands.

11 Uvala Podstine, Hvar ○ (yellow highlighting on the map on pages 98-99, no photo)

🚗 (Car tour 4) or 🚘 and 🚘 to



Svete Petar peninsula (Picnic 8)



Walking

Croatia's coast, the nearby mountains, and many of the islands — from one end of the Adriatic Sea to the other — offer a remarkable variety of walks. They range from easy strolls along promenades — in the best Mediterranean tradition of the *passaggiata*, to energetic ascents of spectacular mountain peaks. Many of the walks follow ancient paths and trails through beautiful beech and oak forests, olive groves and vineyards where the rocky countryside has been laboriously terraced to make cultivation possible. You may find yourself in landscapes where little has changed for centuries — not least the skilfully built paths, which still make traversing rough ground fairly easy. Some walks pass or visit sites bearing witness to the abiding significance of religious belief, others to the country's long, often turbulent history. The magnificently scenic coast is intricately indented with innumerable coves and beaches, supremely peaceful, seemingly remote, yet easily accessible.

This book features 37 main walks, some with alternatives, and almost all with at least one shorter version. They are grouped by island, by national or nature park, or by the most convenient base. Eleven islands, four national parks, two nature parks, the Pelješac peninsula and the Makarska Riviera are covered. In the 'Picnics and short walks' section you will find another 16 walks ranging in duration from 45 minutes to 1h50min. With a total of 90 long and short walks, this book should suit all tastes and abilities. Whichever walks you choose, I hope they whet your appetite and that you will return to this ceaselessly fascinating country and its exceptionally beautiful and diverse landscapes.

G Grading, waymarking, maps, GPS

The walks are **graded** according to distance, amount of ascent, roughness of the going underfoot and specific challenges. There is a quick overview of each walk's grade in the Contents. In the Contents the grade assigned is generalised in favour of the lower grade, eg some parts of moderate walks may be easy. The introductory remarks provide more detailed information. Here is a brief overview of the four gradings:

- easy — more or less level (perhaps with a short climb to a viewpoint); good surfaces underfoot; easily followed

46 Landscapes of Croatia

- easy-moderate — ascents/descents of no more than 300m/1000ft; good surfaces underfoot; easily followed
- moderate-strenuous — ascents/descents may be over 500m/1800ft; variable surfaces underfoot — you must be sure-footed and agile; possible route-finding problems in poor visibility
- very strenuous — only suitable for very experienced hillwalkers with a head for heights; difficult terrain underfoot. None of the walks in this book require rock climbing skills and only two have a short section of fixed rope.

Half the main walks are graded blue, almost one-third are red, and the rest green.



Signposting on Walk 5

All the walks follow paths, trails or tracks, almost all of which are **signposted and/or way-marked** with paint marks, usually red and white strips or circles; other colours appear occasionally.

The **maps** in this book are based on Openstreetmap mapping (see page 2). Most are at the scale 1:50,000 and are adequate for the walks described, but if you wish to venture further afield, you should obtain

the relevant map (see details at the top of each walk for my suggestions) and, possibly, a compass or GPS tracks from a reliable source. Routes of other walks are also shown on many of the brochures available from tourist information and national park offices, and from The Map Shop (see page 8) for SMAND and Croatian Mountain Rescue Service maps.

Free **GPS tracks** are available for all these walks: see the Croatia page on the Sunflower website. Please bear in mind, however, that GPS readings should *never* be relied upon as your sole reference point. Conditions can change at any time. Those of you who don't use GPS on the ground may nevertheless enjoy opening the GPX files in Google Earth to preview the walks in advance!

Equipment and safety

E For each walk, only *special equipment* is mentioned, eg walking poles, and whether walking shoes or trekking sandals will be suitable. The contents of your pack must take

52 Landscapes of Croatia






























rt/rat	headland	rain	kiša
samostan	monastery	river	rijeka
sedlo/prijevo	pass	road	cesta
šetalište	path/walkway	sea	more
slap	waterfall	spring	izvor
špilja/pećina	cave	square	trg
staza	path	stream	potok
šuma	forest	street	ulica
sunce	sun	summit	vrh
svjetionik	lighthouse	sun	sunce
trajekt	car ferry	thunderstorm	grmljavina
trg	square	trail	put
ulica	street	valley	dolina
uprava	administration/ office	valley (shallow)	draga
uvala	bay	viewpoint	vidikovak
vidikovak	lookout/viewpoint	walkway	šetalište
vjetar	wind	waterfall	slap/vodopad
vodopad	waterfall	waterfront	obala
vrh	summit	weekday/ workday	radnim/danom
		wind	vjetar

Organisation of the walks

The walks are **grouped** according to the car tour from which they are accessible, by individual walking bases, islands or national parks, and from south (Dubrovnik) to north (Rijeka). This is shown on the fold-out touring map. Each walk starts from a town or village and can be reached by public transport. The walks are circular, linear and out and back.

At the top of each walk you will find essential information: distance and *walking time (without stops)*, grade, equipment, transport, nearest accommodation and, in almost all cases, alternative shorter walks. *Do check your walking times against mine on a short walk before venturing on a long hike.*

Below is a key to the symbols on the walking maps.

	trunk road		spring, waterfall		castle, fort
	secondary road		restaurant		cave
	minor, town or unmade road		monastery.church		quarry
	jeep track		chapel.cross, shrine		campsite
	path, trail		walk start, waypoint		building
	main walk		cemetery		mountain refuge
	alternative walk		picnic tables		monument
	adjacent walk		best views		transmitter, mast
	short 'picnic' walk		bus stop		picnic suggestion
	height in metres		car parking		mill
			ferry port		tower



ELAPHITI ISLANDS: *Introduction*

Conventionally, this small archipelago between Dubrovnik and Mljet embraces Koločep, Lopud and Šipan (and 10 uninhabited islets); the name is derived from the Greek word for ‘deer’, suggesting they may once have lived here. Here, we’ve added tiny Lokrum, closest to Dubrovnik, to ensure it’s not overlooked (see Walk 1 overleaf). Walking (and/or cycling) is the only feasible way of getting to know them all beyond the small settlements around their ferry ports, served from Dubrovnik direct and via the other islands. All four support dense pine-oak woodlands; cultivated land on anything more than a domestic scale is confined to Šipan (Short ‘picnic’ walk 5 on page 35), on a broad plain between its two hamlets.

Lopud is the most populous and has the largest range of facilities; the other three are more peaceful, though not bereft of restaurants, and accommodation (except Lokrum). All four can be explored via a network of paths, signposted more or less helpfully, to viewpoints, historic sites — churches and forts — and beaches. Though the walks described are neither long nor difficult, each island is definitely worth at least a full day’s visit.


Walk 1 (Lokrum): TOUR OF LOKRUM FROM PORTOČ

Distance/time: 5.1km/3.1mi;
1h40min

Grade: ● easy, with approximately 115m/377ft ascent; on signposted trails and paths

Equipment/map: see page 46; sandals or walking shoes, swimming things, Lokrum Reserve map (1:5,000)

Refreshments: available near the ferry landing, beside The Dead Sea and in the old monastery

Transport: passenger  from Dubrovnik old town harbour (see page 164). Keep in mind the time of the last departure.

Nearest accommodation: Dubrovnik

Short walk: Southern circuit; 2km/1.2mi; 50min. ● Easy; equipment/access as above. Follow the walk to ③, then go on to the ferry: leaving the **monastery**, go straight ahead instead of left.

The small wooded island of Lokrum, just 15 minutes from Dubrovnik is, in its northern reaches, a relatively peaceful refuge from the crowds, and a fascinating place to visit in its own right. The rocky coastline is delightful, with small sheltered coves, an unusual natural swimming pool (a depression in the limestone rock hollowed out by water



erosion), and some cliff-lined inlets. A Unesco Special Forest Vegetation Reserve since 1976, Lokrum supports an unusually diverse range of trees and plants, including many Mediterranean and some Australian species. There is plentiful evidence of the island's long and eventful history, dating from the 12th century. It is a No Smoking island; this prohibition and the plentiful fire hydrants testify to the ever-present high fire risk. The main beach is designated FKK, for naturists only. At the Visitor Centre above the jetty you can hire an audio guide to more than a dozen features of interest. Lokrum's intricate network of paths is generally well signposted; nevertheless, there's some potential for confusion, unless of course, you're using the following notes.

Start out just above the ferry wharf at **Portoč** (●): bear left along a shady trail signposted to TOILETS. Turn right at a junction towards PIGEONS CAVE and THE

DEAD SEA (4min) and 90° up to a left turn, ascending gently. At a T-junction turn left for THE DEAD SEA (15min). Keep to the wide path, gaining height to a junction where Pigeons Cave is nearby to the left and The Dead Sea to the right.

Pigeons Cave (①) is an impressive lookout on the edge of a chasm. Return to the main path and continue towards THE DEAD SEA.

Make a right turn at an unsigned junction with a red fire hydrant, and another at the next, marked junction (30min). Dodging the ubiquitous, tame, greedy peacocks, press on to **The Dead Sea**. Here, a few minutes later, is the best opportunity for a swim, but not in wild weather when the surge through a rock fissure turns the Sea into a surfers' delight. For a break, there are seats beside the (real) sea wall on your left.

To continue, go past the playground and, having visited the **monastery** (③), emerge on its eastern side (*from where the Short walk returns*), bear left around it to a junction beside the **Church of the Annunciation**; the plain interior is visible through a barred window. From here you can

The Benedictine monastery



56 Landscapes of Croatia

explore the **botanical garden** (4; 40min), home to a wide variety of exotic species (most are labelled). Since the garden is criss-crossed with paths, it's easiest to return to the entrance and then bear right through an olive grove. At the next three junctions, the destination is **FORT ROYAL** — right, left and left, initially very steeply, up the so-called **Path of Paradise to Fort Royal** (5; 1h). Flights of steps take you up to the top and the splendid panoramic view.

Exit on the north side, pass a roofless stone building on the left and go through a gap in a stone wall. Soon signposts direct you towards **SKALIKA** and **LAZARET**.

Descend, with a good view of the Old Town walls, to a junction (1h5min). Turn right, down to the wall of the unfinished 16th-century **quarantine compound** (6). Go round a corner to a junction and descend; steps on the left lead to **Skalica** (7), a small cove with views of a corner of Dubrovnik old town and the Mt Srđ massif, and more picnic and swimming potential (1h12min).

Back on the main path, follow it past the **Triton cross** (8; a memorial to the victims of an 1859 maritime disaster), past steps on the left to another picnic spot (1h23min), and back to **Portoč** (1h40min).





SUNFLOWER LANDSCAPES

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Croatia

Fourth edition

area covered by this book



walking map



touring map



This book features **walks** and **car tours** from Dubrovnik in the far south to the Opatija Riviera in the north. It covers coastal and inland areas, 11 islands, four national parks and two nature parks. Contrasts and diversity are the key: miraculous waterfalls and stony uplands, modern tourist resorts and timeless old villages. Each island's distinctiveness is best discovered on foot — from Rab's peerless beaches to Mljet's forests and lakes. The ever-present sea is a constant source of fascination, and the colours everywhere are more intense than in higher latitudes.

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