



# Dubrovnik & Southern Dalmatia

What can you say about Dubrovnik that hasn't already been said? Lord Byron's 'jewel of the Adriatic' has been quoted endlessly, and Bernard Shaw's 'paradise on Earth' is a well-worn saying. Dubrovnik leaves most people speechless; its beauty is gobsmacking, its setting a knockout. Not that it's a secret, quite the contrary: too many people know of its beauty and thousands of tourists walk squashed along the main street throughout the year, gazing, gasping, snapping. It's one of the world's hottest tourist destinations.

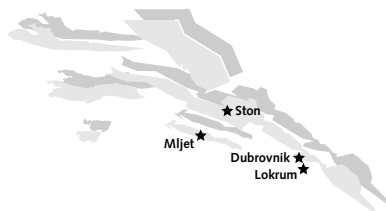
Dubrovnik is also a great launching place for expeditions to the surrounding region, which is equally, though less famously, gorgeous. There is an array of lush islands, including Korčula (the largest), which produces excellent white wines, *pošip* and *grk*; a flurry of smaller unpopulated and paradisaical islands; and the idyllic national park on Mljet. The mountainous Pelješac Peninsula is famous for its *postup* and *dingač* reds, the legendary seafood of Ston and the gorgeous gardens at Trsteno.

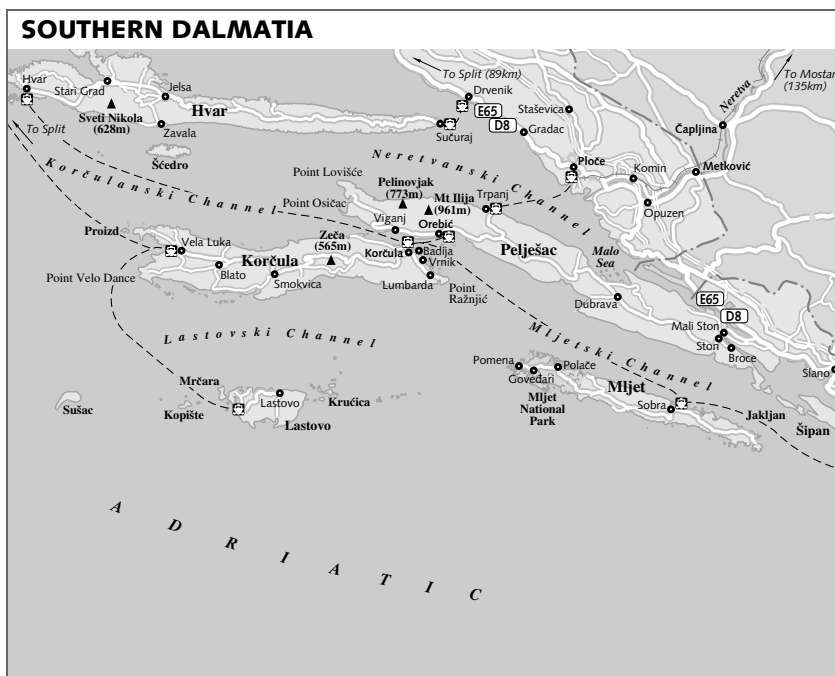
Steeped in sunshine and bathed in mild sea breezes, the coastal belt stretches from Ploče in the north to the Montenegrin border in the south. With the exception of Korčula Island, the county largely follows the borders of the old independent Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik).

The lure of Dubrovnik has given a boost to the entire region as hotels spread outwards from the walled city, creating a 'Dubrovnik Riviera'. Unlike other parts of the Adriatic coast, however, there are no mega-resorts or sprawling tourist settlements, which has discouraged mass tourism but makes individual travel especially rewarding.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Revelling in the most lovely and touristy of activities: seeing **Dubrovnik** (p267) from its city walls
- Having a drink and watching the open sea from one of Dubrovnik's **Bužas** (p274)
- Escaping the crowds and sunbathing at **Lokrum** (p276)
- Spending a few days on **Mljet** (p277), as close as Croatia gets to a verdant paradise
- Trying the oysters in **Ston** (p290)





## DUBROVNIK

pop 45,800

Regardless of whether you are visiting Dubrovnik for the first time or you're returning again and again to this marvellous city, the sense of awe and beauty when you set eyes on the Stradun never fades. It's hard to imagine anyone, even the city's inhabitants, becoming jaded by its marble streets and baroque buildings, or failing to be inspired by a walk along the ancient city walls that once protected a civilised sophisticated republic for five centuries, and that now look out onto the endless shimmer of the peaceful Adriatic.

Although the shelling of Dubrovnik in 1991 horrified the world, the city has bounced back with characteristic vigour to again enchant its visitors. The hedonistic can pamper themselves in one of the city's fine hotels or enjoy a refreshing plunge into the sea. History buffs can trace the rise and fall of Dubrovnik's commercial empire in museums replete with art and artefacts. A local symphony orchestra and a busy concert season delight music-lovers. Whether it's the

relaxed Mediterranean lifestyle, the interplay of light and stone, the fresh sea breezes or the remarkable history, Dubrovnik is suffused with an ineffable magic that makes it one of the world's great destinations.

### HISTORY

The story of Dubrovnik begins with the 7th-century onslaught of barbarians that wiped out the Roman city of Epidaurum (site of present-day Cavtat). The residents fled to the safest place they could find, which was a rocky islet separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. Building walls was a matter of pressing urgency due to the barbarian invasions; the city was well fortified by the 9th century when it resisted a Saracen siege for 15 months.

Ragusa had help from the powerful Byzantine Empire, under whose protection it remained from the 7th to the 12th century. Meanwhile, another settlement emerged on the mainland, stretching from Zaton in the north to Cavtat in the south, and became known as Dubrovnik, named after the *du-brava* (holm oak) that carpeted the region.



The two settlements merged in the 12th century, and the channel that separated them was paved over to become Placa.

By the end of the 12th century, Dubrovnik had become an important trading centre on the coast, providing an important link between the Mediterranean and Balkan states. From the hinterlands, cattle and dairy products, wax, honey, timber, coal, silver, lead, copper and slaves were exported, along with Dubrovnik products such as salt, cloth, wine, oil and fish.

Dubrovnik came under Venetian authority in 1205, finally breaking away from its control in 1358. Although the city thereafter acknowledged the authority of the Croatian-Hungarian kings and paid them tribute, it was largely left alone to do what it did best – make money.

By the 15th century the Respublica Ragusina (Republic of Ragusa) had extended its borders to include the entire coastal belt from Ston to Cavtat, having previously acquired Lastovo Island, the Pelješac Peninsula and Mljet Island. It was now a force to be reckoned with. The city turned towards sea trade

and established a fleet of its own ships, which were dispatched to Egypt, Syria, Sicily, Spain, France and later Turkey. Through canny diplomacy the city maintained good relations with everyone – even the Ottoman Empire, to which Dubrovnik began paying tribute in the 16th century.

Centuries of peace and prosperity allowed art, science and literature to flourish. Marin Držić (1508–67) was a towering figure in Renaissance literature, best known for his comic play *Dundo Maroje*. Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638) was another Dubrovnik poet-dramatist whose greatest work was the epic *Osman*. To the world of science, Dubrovnik gave Ruder Bošković (1711–87), who produced a seminal work in the field of theoretical physics, as well as numerous tomes on optics, geography, trigonometry and astronomy. Composers, poets, philosophers and painters turned Dubrovnik into a major cultural centre on the Adriatic.

Tragically, most of the Renaissance art and architecture in Dubrovnik was destroyed in the earthquake of 1667, which killed 5000 people and left the city in ruins, with only the Sponza Palace and the Rector's Palace surviving. The city was rebuilt in a uniform baroque style with modest dwellings in rows and shops on the ground floor. The earthquake also marked the beginning of the economic decline of the town, accentuated by the opening of new trade routes to the east and the emergence of rival naval powers in Western Europe.

The final coup de grâce was dealt by Napoleon whose troops entered Dubrovnik in 1808 and announced the end of the republic. The Vienna Congress of 1815 ceded Dubrovnik to Austria, where the city maintained its shipping but succumbed to social disintegration. It remained a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918 and then slowly began to develop its tourism industry.

Caught in the cross-hairs of the war that ravaged former Yugoslavia, Dubrovnik was pummelled with some 2000 shells in 1991 and 1992, suffering considerable damage. All of the damaged buildings have now been restored.

## ORIENTATION

The city extends about 6km from the mouth of the Rijeka River in the west to the cape of Sveti Jakov in the east, and includes the promontory of Lapad.

**DUBROVNIK**

0 500 m  
0 0.3 miles

**A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

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**Geography & Landmarks:** Lapad Bay, Riječka, Kopča, Dubrovnik Old Harbour, Obala Stepana Radka, Marka Marojice, Old Matijeve, Adriatic Sea, Jadranska Cesta, Cetina, Kono, Vukovarska, Ana Staričević, Bara Josipa Jelaca, Kneza Branimira, Iva Vojnović, Spilski Kono, Petra Bačica, B. Bačica, Budva, Dubrovnik, Gornji, Petra Knežević IV, To Banje Beach (100m), To Staro Dubrovnik Beach (300m), To Camping Makovska (7km), Porto (7km), Čilipi Airport (10km), To Banje Beach (100m), To Staro Dubrovnik Beach (300m).

**Inset Map:** Dubrovnik Old Town Map (p.264)

**Map Labels:** 13 • Copicahana Beach, 14 • Nika • Meda Pucica, 15 • Kanižani • Stari Grad, 16 • Sarajliće Vrata Zvonimira, 17 • Maska • Vukovarska, 18 • Vokalnica, 19 • Ispod Pitke, 20 • Maska • Vukovarska, 21 • Setaliste k Tomislava, 22 • Dalmatinka, 23 • Vukovarska, 24 • Ana Staričević, 25 • Bara Josipa Jelaca, 26 • Kneza Branimira, 27 • Iva Vojnović, 28 • Spilski Kono, 29 • Petra Bačica, 30 • B. Bačica, 31 • Budva, 32 • Dubrovnik, 33 • Gornji, 34 • Petra Knežević IV, 35 • To Banje Beach (100m), 36 • To Staro Dubrovnik Beach (300m), 37 • To Camping Makovska (7km), 38 • Porto (7km), 39 • Čilipi Airport (10km), 40 • To Banje Beach (100m), 41 • To Staro Dubrovnik Beach (300m).

## DUBROVNIK: DESTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION

Many remember the incredible TV footage of the shelling of Dubrovnik. Although now in the past, the memory of the city's year at war is still fresh in the minds of locals – you'll see reminders of it on the several plaques through the old town.

Shells struck 68% of the 824 buildings in the old town, leaving holes in two out of three tiled roofs. Building facades and the paving stones of streets and squares suffered 314 direct hits and there were 111 direct hits on the great wall. Nine historic palaces were completely gutted by fire, while the Sponza Palace, Rector's Palace, St Blaise's Church, Franciscan Monastery and the carved fountains, Amerling and Onofrio, sustained serious damage. The total destruction was estimated at US\$10 million. It was quickly decided that the repairs and reconstruction would be done with traditional techniques, using traditional materials whenever feasible.

Dubrovnik has since regained most of its original grandeur. The great town walls are once again intact, the gleaming marble streets are smoothly paved and famous monuments such as the 15th-century Onofrio Fountain and the Clock Tower have been lovingly restored. Damage to Sponza Palace, Rector's Palace, St Blaise's Church, the cathedral and various 17th-century residences has been repaired with the help of an international brigade of specially trained stoneworkers.

This leafy residential suburb with rocky beaches contains the hostel and most of the town's hotels. The old walled town lies south-east of Lapad at the foot of Srđ Hill, halfway between Gruž Harbour and the cape of Sveti Jakov. The entire old town is closed to cars and is divided nearly in half by the wide street Placa, also referred to as Stradun.

Pile Gate is the western entrance to the old town and the last stop for local buses from Lapad and Gruž. The eastern gate is Ploče, which leads to the town beach and several luxury hotels along Frana Supila. The Jadrolinija ferry terminal and the bus station are a few hundred metres apart at Gruž, which is about 2km northwest of the old town. To get to the old town from the bus station take buses 1a, 1b, 3 or 8. To get to Lapad take bus 7.

The city boundaries also include the Elafiti Islands (Šipan, Lopud, Koločep, Olibe, Tajan and Jakljan).

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Algebra** (Map p264; ☎ 323 217; Placa 9; ☎ 9.30am–8pm Mon–Sat) Books and souvenirs and souvenir books, plus English-language guides to the city and region.

**Algoritam** (Map p264; ☎ 322 044; www.algoritam.hr; Placa 8; ☎ 9am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat) A good selection of English-language books.

### Internet Access

**Dubrovnik Internet Centar** (Map p262; ☎ 311 017; Dubrovačkih Branitelja 7; per hr 20KN; ☎ 9am–9pm)

**Netcafé** (Map p264; ☎ 321 125; www.netcafe.hr; Prijeko 21; per hr 30KN; ☎ 9am–11pm) A wonderfully

friendly café with a fast connection and good services: CD/DVD burning, wi-fi, photo printing and transferring, and so on.

### Left Luggage

**Garderoba** (per day 15KN; ☎ 5.30am–9pm) At the bus station.

### Medical Services

**Hospital** (Map p262; ☎ 431 777; Dr Roka Mišetića)

### Money

You can change money at any travel agency or post office. There are numerous ATMs in town, and near the ferry terminal and bus station.

### Post

**Branch post office** (Map p262; Dubrovačkih Branitelja 2; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat)

**Lapad Post Office & Telephone Centre** (Map p262; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 21; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat)

**Main post office** (Map p264; cnr Široka & Od Puća; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat) In the old town.

### Tourist Information

**Tourist office** (www.tzdubrovnik.hr; ☎ 8am–8pm Jun–Sep, 8am–3pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat Oct–May) bus station (Map p262; ☎ 417 581; Obala Pape Ivana Pavla II 44a); Gruž Harbour (Map p262; ☎ 417 983; Obala Stjepana Radića 27); Lapad (Map p262; ☎ 437 460; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 25); old town (Map p264; ☎ 323 587; Široka 1); old town 2 (Map p264; ☎ 323 887; Ulica Svetog Dominika 7); Pile Gate (Map p264; ☎ 427 591; Dubrovačkih Branitelja 7) Maps, information and the indispensable *Dubrovnik Riviera* guide.



## Travel Agencies

**Atlas Travel Agency** ([www.atlas-croatia.com](http://www.atlas-croatia.com)); ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, to 1pm Sun) Gruž Harbour (Map p262);

☎ 418 001; Obala Papa Ivana Pavla II 1); Pile Gate (Map p262; ☎ 442 574; Sv Đurđa 1) In convenient locations, this agency is extremely useful for general information, excursions and finding private accommodation.

**OK Travel & Trade** (Map p262; ☎ 418 950; okt-t@du.t-com.hr; Obala Stjepana Radića 32; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, to 1pm Sun) Near the Jadrolinija ferry terminal.

## SIGHTS

### The Old Town

Due to its confined space and neat street grid, Dubrovnik's old town naturally lends itself to a walking tour. We've listed points of interest in a logical way here so that you can wander

at your own pace and discover the city at your leisure.

### PILE GATE

The natural starting point to any visit to Dubrovnik, this fabulous city gate (Map p264) was built in 1537. Crossing the drawbridge at the gate's entrance, imagine that this was once actually lifted every evening, the gate closed and the key handed to the prince. Notice the statue of St Blaise, the city's patron saint, set in a niche over the Renaissance arch. As you pass through the outer gate you come to an inner gate dating from 1460, and soon after you're struck by the gorgeous view of the main street, **Placa**, or as it's commonly known, **Stradun**, Dubrovnik's pedestrian promenade. It

<b>INFORMATION</b>			
Algebra.....	1 B2	Revelin Fort.....	23 D2
Algorithm.....	2 C2	Serbian Orthodox Church & Museum.....	24 B2
Main Post Office.....	3 B2	Sponza Palace.....	25 C2
Netcafé.....	4 B2	St Blaise's Church.....	26 C3
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<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>			
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Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin.....	8 C3	Synagogue.....	29 C2
Clock Tower.....	9 C2	Treasury.....	(see 8)
Dominican Monastery & Museum.....	10 C2	War Photo Limited.....	30 B2
Dubrovnik Summer Festival.....	11 B2	<b>SLEEPING</b>	
Ethnographic Museum.....	12 A3	Apartments Amoret.....	31 B3
Franciscan Monastery & Museum.....	13 B2	Fresh Sheets.....	32 B3
Jesuit College.....	(see 27)	Hotel Star Grad.....	33 B2
Little Onofrio Fountain.....	14 C3	Karmen Apartments.....	34 D3
Maritime Museum.....	15 D3	Pucić Palace.....	35 C3
Memorial Room of the Defenders of Dubrovnik.....	(see 25)	Rooms Vicelić.....	36 B2
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Morning Market.....	17 C3	Buffet Skola.....	37 B2
Onofrio Fountain.....	18 A2	Chihuahua Cantina Mexicana.....	38 D1
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Ploče Gate.....	21 D2	Fresh.....	40 B2
Rector's Palace.....	22 C3	Gil's.....	41 D2
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stretches right down to the end of the old town and at its eastern end it widens out into **Luža Square**, formerly used as a marketplace.

### ONOFRIO FOUNTAIN

One of Dubrovnik's most famous landmarks, **Onofrio Fountain** (Map p264) was built in 1438 as part of a water-supply system that involved bringing water from a well 12km away. Originally, the fountain was adorned with sculpture, but it was heavily damaged in the 1667 earthquake and only 16 carved masks remain with water gushing from their mouths into a drainage pool.

### ST SAVIOUR CHURCH

This **church** (Crkva Svetog Spasa; Map p264; Placa) was built between 1520 and 1528 and was one of the few buildings to have survived the earthquake of 1667. It's open for occasional exhibitions and concerts.

### FRANCISCAN MONASTERY & MUSEUM

Over the door of the **Franciscan Monastery & Museum** (Muzej Franjevačkog Samostana; Map p264; ☎ 321 410; Placa 2; adult/concession 20/10KN; 🕒 9am-6pm) is a remarkable pieta sculpted by the local master Petar and Leonard Andrijić in 1498. Unfortunately, the portal is all that remains of

the richly decorated church that was destroyed in the 1667 earthquake. Inside the monastery complex is the mid-14th-century **doister**, one of the most beautiful late-Romanesque structures in Dalmatia. Notice how each capital over the dual columns is topped by a different figure, portraying human heads, animals and floral arrangements.

Further inside you'll find the third-oldest functioning pharmacy in Europe, which has been in business since 1391. The pharmacy may have been the first pharmacy in Europe open to the general public. Before leaving, visit the monastery museum with its collection of relics, liturgical objects, paintings, gold work and pharmacy items such as laboratory gear and medical books.

### WAR PHOTO LIMITED

One of the better photography galleries you're likely to come across in your gallery life, **War Photo Limited** (Map p264; ☎ 326 166; www.warphotold.com; Antuninska 6; admission 30KN; 🕒 9am-9pm May-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Oct & Apr) has changing exhibitions that are curated by the gallery owner and former photojournalist Wade Goddard. The gallery is open from April to October and has up to three exhibitions over that period relating to the subject of war seen

from various perspectives. The 2008 season saw Ron Haviš's powerful and disturbing images of the Yugoslav war in 'Blood & Honey', Bruce Conner's Myanmar exhibitions 'On the Way to An Ambush' and 'Child Soldier', and many other collections by award-winning international photographers. Highly recommended.

### SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH & MUSEUM

Dating from 1877, the **Serbian Orthodox Church & Museum** (Muzej Pravoslavne Crkve; Map p264; ☎ 323 283; Od Puča 8; adult/concession 10/5KN; 🕒 9am-2pm Mon-Sat) is a fascinating collection of icons dating from the 15th to 19th century. In addition to portraits of the biblical family originating in Crete, Italy, Russia and Slovenia, there are several portraits by the illustrious Croatian painter Vlaho Bukovac.

### ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Sitting in the 16th-century Rupe Granary, the **Ethnographic Museum** (Etnografski Muzej; Map p264; ☎ 323 013; Od Rupa; adult/student 35/15KN; 🕒 9am-2pm Sun-Fri) contains exhibits relating to agriculture and local customs.

### SYNAGOGUE

The oldest Sephardic and second-oldest **synagogue** (Sinagoga; Map p264; ☎ 321 028; Žudioska 5; admission 10KN; 🕒 10am-8pm Jun-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) in Europe dates back to the 15th century. Inside is a museum that exhibits religious relics, documentation on the local Jewish population and WWII remains.

### ORLANDO COLUMN

The Orlando Column (Roland's Column; Map p264) is a popular meeting place that used to be the place where edicts, festivities and public verdicts were announced. Carved in 1417, the forearm of this medieval knight was the official linear measure of the Republic – the ell of Dubrovnik, which measures 51.1cm.

### CLOCK TOWER

The Clock Tower (Map p264) dominates Luža Sq and makes an elegant punctuation point at the end of Placa. First built in 1444, it was restored many times, most recently in 1929, and is notable for the two bronze figures in the bell tower that ring out the hours.

### SPONZA PALACE

The 16th-century Sponza Palace (Map p264) was originally a customs house, then a minting

house, a state treasury and a bank. Now it houses the **State Archives** (Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku; ☎ 321 032; admission 15KN; 🕒 8am-3pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat), which contain a priceless collection of manuscripts dating back nearly a thousand years. This superb structure is a mixture of Gothic and Renaissance styles beginning with an exquisite Renaissance portico resting on six columns. The 1st floor has late-Gothic windows and the 2nd-floor windows are in a Renaissance style, with an alcove containing a statue of St Vlaho. Also inside is the **Memorial Room of the Defenders of Dubrovnik** (🕒 10am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat), a heartbreaking collection of portraits of young people who perished between 1991 and 1995.

### LITTLE ONOFRIO FOUNTAIN

On Luža Sq, this **fountain** (Map p264) is part of the same water project as its larger cousin to the west. It was built to supply water to the square's marketplace.

### ST BLAISE'S CHURCH

This imposing **church** (Crkva Svetog Vlaho; Map p264; Luža Sq; 🕒 morning & late-afternoon Mass Mon-Sat) is one of Dubrovnik's most prominent. Built in 1715 to replace an earlier church destroyed in the earthquake, it was constructed in a baroque style following the church of St Mauritius in Venice. The ornate exterior contrasts strongly with the sober residences surrounding it. The interior is notable for its marble altars and a 15th-century silver gilt statue of the city's patron, St Blaise, who is holding a scale model of pre-earthquake Dubrovnik.

### RECTOR'S PALACE

The Gothic-Renaissance **Rector's Palace** (Map p264; ☎ 321 437; Pred Dvorom 3; adult/student 35/15KN, audio guide 30KN; 🕒 9am-6pm) was built in the late 15th century and adorned with outstanding sculptural ornamentation. It retains a striking compositional unity despite being rebuilt many times. Notice the finely carved capitals and the ornate staircase in the atrium, which is often used for concerts during the Summer Festival (p268). Also in the atrium is a statue of Miho Pracat, who bequeathed his wealth to the Republic and was the only commoner in the 1000 years of the Republic's existence to be honoured with a statue (1638). We may assume that the bequest was considerable. The palace was built for the rector who governed Dubrovnik, and it contains the



rector's office, his private chambers, public halls and administrative offices. Interestingly, the elected rector was not permitted to leave the building during his one-month term without the permission of the senate. Today the palace has been turned into a **museum** with artfully restored rooms, portraits, coats of arms and coins, evoking the glorious history of Dubrovnik.

### CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

Built on the site of a 7th-century basilica that was enlarged in the 12th century, the **Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin** (Stolna Crkva Velike Gospe; Map p264; Poljana M Držića; ☎ morning & late-afternoon Mass) was supposedly the result of a gift from England's King Richard I, the Lionheart, who was saved from a shipwreck on the nearby island of Lokrum. Soon after the earlier cathedral was destroyed in the 1667 earthquake, work began on this new cathedral, which was finished in 1713 in a purely baroque style. The cathedral is notable for its fine altars, especially the altar of St John Nepomuk made of violet marble. The cathedral **treasury** (Riznica; ☎ 411 715; adult/child 10/5KN; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5.30pm Sun) contains relics of St Blaise as well as 138 gold and silver reliquaries largely made in the workshops of Dubrovnik's goldsmiths between the 11th and 17th centuries. Among a number of religious paintings, the most striking is the polyptych of the Assumption of the Virgin, made in Titian's workshop.

### ST IGNATIUS CHURCH & AROUND

Built in the same style as the cathedral and completed in 1725, the **St Ignatius Church** (Crkva Svetog Ignacija; Map p264; Uz Jezuite; ☎ late-evening Mass) has frescoes displaying scenes from the life of St Ignatius, founder of the Jesuit society. Abutting the church is the **Jesuit College** at the top of a broad flight of stairs leading down to Gundulićeva Poljana, a bustling **morning market** (Map p264; ☎ 6am-1pm). The monument in the centre is of Dubrovnik's famous poet, Ivan Gundulić. The reliefs on the pedestal depict scenes from his epic poem, *Osman*.

### DOMINICAN MONASTERY & MUSEUM

If you return to the Sponza Palace and follow Ulica Svetog Dominika to Ploče Gate, you'll find the **Dominican Monastery & Museum** (Muzej

Dominikanskog Samostana; Map p264; ☎ 322 200; off Ulica Svetog Dominika 4; adult/child 20/10KN; ☎ 9am-5pm). It's a real architectural highlight of a transitional Gothic-Renaissance style and has a rich trove of paintings. Built at the same time as the city walls in the 14th century, the stark exterior resembles a fortress more than a religious complex. The interior contains a graceful 15th-century cloister constructed by local artisans after the designs of the Florentine architect Massa di Bartolomeo, and a large, single-naved church with an altarpiece by Vlaho Bukovac. The eastern wing contains the monastery's impressive art collection, which includes paintings from Dubrovnik's finest 15th- and 16th-century artists. Notice the works of Nikola Božidarević, Dobrić Dobričević and Mihajlo Hamzić.

### The City Walls & Forts

No visit to Dubrovnik would be complete without a leisurely walk around the powerful **city walls** (Gradske Zidine; Map p264; adult/child 50/20KN; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Apr-Oct, 10am-3.30pm Nov-Mar), the finest in the world and Dubrovnik's main claim to fame. Built between the 13th and 16th centuries, they are still intact today.

The first set of walls to enclose the city was built in the 13th century. In the middle of the 14th century the 1.5m-thick walls were fortified with 15 square forts. The threat of attacks from the Turks in the 15th century prompted the city to strengthen the existing forts and add new ones, so that the entire old town is now contained within a curtain of stone over 2km long and up to 25m high. The walls are thicker on the land side – up to 6m – and range from 1.5m to 3m on the sea side. The round **Minčeta Tower** (Map p264) protects the northern edge of the city from land invasion, while the western end is protected from land and sea invasion by the detached **Lovrjenac Fort** (Map p262). Pile Gate is protected by the **Bokar Tower** (Map p264), and the **Revelin Fort** (Map p264) protects the eastern entrance.

The views over the town and sea are great, so be sure to make this walk the high point of your visit. The entrance to the walls is immediately to the left of Pile Gate when you enter the city. You can also enjoy Shakespeare's plays, which are staged on the Lovrjenac Fort terrace during the Summer Festival.

The **Maritime Museum** (Map p264; ☎ 323 904; adult/child 35/15KN; ☎ 9am-6pm), inside St John

Fort, traces the history of navigation in Dubrovnik with ship models, maritime objects and paintings.

## East of the Old Town

### MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The **Museum of Modern Art** (Map p262; ☎ 426 590; Frana Supila 23; admission free; 🕒 10am-7pm Tue-Sun) is great for those interested in contemporary Croatian artists, particularly the local painter Vlaho Bukovac.

## ACTIVITIES

### Swimming

It's tough to know where to swim in Dubrovnik, what with all those walls and harbours. There are several city beaches, but many take a boat to the Elafiti Islands (p276).

**Banje Beach** (Map p262) is the main town beach, just beyond the 17th-century Lazareti (p274), outside Ploče Gate. Although many people rent lounge chairs and parasols from the nearby EastWest Club, there's no problem with just flinging a towel on the beach. A nearby beach is **Sveti Jakov** (Map p262), a 20-minute walk down Vlaho Bukovac or a quick ride on bus 5 or 8 from Frana Supila at the old town's northern end. It's a good, local beach that doesn't get rowdy or too busy, and has showers, a bar and a restaurant.

Beaches past Pile Gate include the pebbly **Sulići** (Map p262) and the rocky **Danče** (Map p262). There are also two tiny coves, one right next to Orhan restaurant (p273) and the other a two-minute walk from the restaurant, down the beach-level narrow streets.

Another excellent place for swimming is below the two Buža bars (p274), on the outside of the city walls. Diving is off the rocks, there are steps to help you get in and out, and there's some cemented space between the rocks for sunbathing. It's a very atmospheric place but there's not much shade here, so bring a hat and strong sun protection.

**Lapad Bay** (Map p262) is brimming with hotel beaches that you can use without a problem. The largest public beach on Lapad is outside the Hotel Kompas. A little further on is **Copacabana Beach** (Map p262) on Babin Kuk peninsula, a good shallow beach with a toboggan for kids. If you're a naturist, head down to **Cava** (Map p262), signposted near Copacabana Beach.

## Diving & Boating

The waters around Dubrovnik offer excellent diving opportunities.

**Navis Underwater Explorers** (Map p262; ☎ 099 350 2773; www.navisdubrovnik.com; Copacabana Beach) offers a full range of dives, courses and diving services. The main diving site is the wreck of the *Taranto*. **Blue Planet Diving** (Map p262; ☎ 091 899 973; www.blueplanetdiving.com; Masarykov Put 20) is inside Hotel Dubrovnik Palace and offers the same services.

Whether you're just dipping into the sport or you're an experienced kayaker, **Adriatic Kayak Tours** (Map p262; ☎ 091 722 0413; www.adriatickayaktours.com; Zrinsko Frankopanska 6) has a kayak tour for you. There are multiday tours available that cover Lokrum Island and the Elafiti Islands; you can also go white-water rafting on the Tara River canyon and kayaking in Kotor Bay in Montenegro. The main office is in Gruž, and it also has a booking office on Banje Beach during the summer months.

## TOURS

**Dubrovnik Walks** (☎ 095 806 4526; www.dubrovnikwalks.com) conducts 1½-hour guided walks of the old town in English daily at 10am and 5pm (90KN). It also offers 1½-hour walks of Dubrovnik's walls and forts daily at 9.30am and 3.30pm (140KN), also in English. The meeting place is in front of the Latino Club Fuego (p274) and no reservation is necessary. A combination ticket for both tours costs 200KN.

**Amico Tours** (Map p262; ☎ 418 248; www.amico-tours.com; Od Skara 1) offers day trips to Mostar and Međugorje (390KN), Montenegro (390KN), Albania (990KN), Korčula and Pelješac (390KN), and the Elafiti Islands (250KN), as well as numerous kayaking, rafting and jeep-safari day trips (590KN).

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The **Dubrovnik Summer Festival** (Map p264; ☎ 326 100; www.dubrovnik-festival.hr; Od Sigrate 1) is the most prestigious summer festival in Croatia and has taken place every year since 1950. For five weeks in July and August, a program of theatre, concerts and dance is presented on open-air stages throughout the city. The opening ceremony takes place on Luža Sq and usually includes fireworks and a band. In addition to attracting the best national artists and regional folklore ensembles, the program usually

includes one or two big-name international artists. Theatre productions feature the plays of Marin Držić, Shakespeare, Molière and the Greek tragedians. Tickets range from 50KN to 300KN and are available from the festival office on Placa or on site one hour before the beginning of each performance. You can also reserve and buy them online.

**Libertas Film Festival** ([www.libertasfilmfestival.com](http://www.libertasfilmfestival.com)) takes place between 29 June and 4 July with films being screened in the open air at old town venues. A real treat. Check the website for the program.

The **Feast of St Blaise** (3 February) is another citywide bash marked by pageants and processions. **Carnival** festivities heralding the arrival of Lent in February are also popular.

## SLEEPING

Most of Dubrovnik's hotels are gathered in the Lapad and Ploče areas, though there are a few gorgeous (and pricey) places to stay in the old town. The more expensive resort hotels are located east of town.

### Private Rooms

If you're on a budget, you'll have little choice but to go for private accommodation, but beware of the scramble of private owners at the bus station or Jadrolinija ferry terminal: some provide what they say they offer, others are scamming. Try to pin down the location in advance or you could wind up staying a considerable distance from town. If the ones listed here are all booked up, it's a good idea to try booking through any of the travel agencies (p264) or the tourist office (p263). If you rent a room or apartment from someone at the bus station, make sure that their house sports a blue *sobe* (rooms available) sign. Otherwise, they are renting illegally and you are unprotected in case of a problem.

Expect to pay about 200KN to 220KN for a room in the high season. There are also apartments available starting at about 500KN for a studio. It's a very good idea to book in advance, especially in the summer season.

**Begović Boarding House** (Map p262; ☎ 435 191; <http://begovic-boarding-house.com>; Primorska 17; dm low-high €14-19, s €25-32, d €32-40; 🏠) This is one of Dubrovnik's favourite private room options, mainly because of the wonderful hospitality offered by the Begović family. The rooms are basic and comfortable, there's a lovely communal terrace and garden, and you're close

to all that Lapad has to offer. It's a 20- to 25-minute walk to the old town. The owners will pick you up for free from the bus station and by arrangement from the airport. Breakfast is not included, but is available at extra cost, and internet access is free. The family also organises fishing picnics (250KN), which are a wonderful way to spend the day.

**Apartments Silva Kusjanović** (Map p262; ☎ 435 071, 098 244 639; antonia\_du@hotmail.com; Kardinala Stepinca 62; per person 100KN) Sweet Silva has four large apartments that can hold four to eight beds. All have terraces with gorgeous views and it's possible to barbecue.

**Apartments & Rooms Biličić** (Map p264; ☎ 417 152; [www.geocities.com/apartments\\_bilicici](http://www.geocities.com/apartments_bilicici); Privežna 2; s low-high €18-25, d €36-50, apt €50-100; 🏠) One of the few options near the old town, this is a great place to stay. The rooms are bright, clean and pleasant, with TVs and views of the gorgeous garden, which has a lovely open-air kitchen where you can make your own breakfast. The private bathrooms are across the hall from the rooms. There is a four-person apartment, too. It's a 15-minute walk to Pile Gate. The friendly owner, Marija, is a good source of local information.

**Rooms Vicelić** (Map p264; ☎ 098 979 0843; [www.dubrovnik-online.com/rooms\\_vicelic](http://www.dubrovnik-online.com/rooms_vicelic); Antuninska 9 & 10; r low-high €50-80) Two houses sit on a stepped alley within the heart of the old town. The location is the real charmer here; the rooms are modern or a bit ramshackle but cute. Most rooms in number 9 have high ceilings and a straightforward modern decor, with comfy beds, TVs and en suite shower, toilet and kitchenette. Those in number 10 are more shabby-chic; note that one ground-floor room has an upstairs bathroom, no real windows and bang-your-head concrete beams, while all share a mid-floor kitchenette and a two-seat sitting area.

**Villa Klaić** (Map p262; ☎ 411 144; [www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/VillaKlaic-Dubrovnik-14432](http://www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/VillaKlaic-Dubrovnik-14432); Šumetska 11; d from €200; 🏠 🍷) Many of Dubrovnik's hundreds of homestays have friendly owners, but few are as wise, interesting and worldly as Milo Klaić, the owner of excellent Villa Klaić. This must be the only budget accommodation in Dubrovnik to offer guests a private outdoor swimming pool. Although high above the centre, the old city is just 15 minutes' walk away. All rooms have good private bathrooms; room No 7, with sheepskin-style throw carpets and a great shower, sits aloof near the pool.

## Camping

**Solitudo** (Map p262; ☎ 448 200; www.camping-adriatic.com; per person/site 49/55KN; ☽ mid-May–mid-Oct) This pretty and renovated camping ground is on Lapad promontory within walking distance of the beach.

**Camping Matkovića** (off Map p262; ☎ 485 867; Mlini; per adult/site 40/50KN; ☽ May–Oct) is next to **Porto** (off Map p262; ☎ 487 078; Mlini; per adult/site 45/55KN; ☽ May–Oct), 7km south of Dubrovnik. Both are small, near a quiet cove. It's best to call first. To get here, take bus 10 or 16 to Srebreno, which will leave you almost at the gate to both grounds.

## Old Town & Around

**our pick Fresh Sheets** (Map p264; ☎ 091 799 2086; beds@gottfresh.com; Sv Šimuna 15; per person €25; 📍) A brand new place run by Jon and Sanja from Fresh (p272), Fresh Sheets offers one double room and four individually decorated apartments – Lavender, Rainforest, Sunshine and Heaven – with each sleeping two to four people. The decoration ranges from brightly painted walls and colourful bed-throws to pristine and airy white interiors. The atmosphere is lively and the hosts cater mainly to backpackers and party-loving people. The location is excellent – very close to Buža (p274) – and you get free internet and wi-fi and, when the Fresh bar's kitchen is open, a free smoothie every day.

**Apartments Amoret** (Map p264; ☎ 091 530 4910; www.dubrovnik-amoret.com; Dinke Ranjine 5 & Ristićeva 2; apt €50–120; 📍) Six artistically appointed apartments and rooms are tucked away within two old town houses (Amoret 1 and Amoret 2) that date back to the 16th century. Each is different but all are lovingly decorated to create some of the most charming accommodation anywhere in Dubrovnik.

**our pick Karmen Apartments** (Map p264; ☎ 323 433, 098 619 282; www.karmendu.com; Bandureva 1; apt €55–145; 📍) One of the best accommodation choices in the whole of Dubrovnik, this collection of apartments is run by Marc Van Bloemen, an Englishman who has lived in Dubrovnik since the age of 11 and is therefore a fount of information on the city. Set inside an old stone house in the middle of the old town, the four apartments are beautifully decorated with original artwork and imaginative use of recycled materials, all made by Marc's artist mother. There are small, one- to two-person apartments, as well as two for three or four people; apartment No 1 has views of the har-

bour. Book well in advance because it all gets booked up by June.

**Hotel Stari Grad** (Map p264; ☎ 322 244; www.hotelstariograd.com; Palmotićevo; s low-high 650–1180KN, d 920–1580KN; 📍) Staying in the heart of the old town in a lovingly restored stone building is an unmatched experience. The eight rooms here are elegantly and tastefully furnished to feel simple and luxurious at the same time. There is a marvellous view over the town from the rooftop terrace, where you can have your breakfast. Book in advance in the summer and note that there is a 10% extra charge for one-night stays.

**Pucić Palace** (Map p264; ☎ 326 222; www.thepucicpalace.com; Od Puča 1; s low-high €206–315, d €290–505; 📍) Right in the heart of the old town and inside what was once a nobleman's mansion, this five-star hotel is Dubrovnik's most exclusive and hottest property. There are only 19 rooms, all exquisitely decorated and featuring Italian mosaics, Egyptian cotton and baroque beds. Many flush couples wed at the 1st-floor terrace's tiny chapel. The rooftop restaurant Defne (p273) is one of the city's finest, and the Café Royal downstairs serves breakfast à la carte.

**Hotel Hilton Imperial** (Map p262; ☎ 320 320; www.hilton.com; Marjana Blazića 2; d from €250; 📍) The luxury Hilton is a restoration of the 19th-century Hotel Imperial, Dubrovnik's finest establishment when the city was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Located right outside Pile Gate, the hotel offers decor that is modern but warm and inviting, with cheerful Mediterranean colours. Business travellers to Dubrovnik will appreciate the conference rooms, secretarial services and audiovisual equipment, while leisure travellers can take advantage of the fitness room, indoor pool and fine dining offered at the hotel's Restaurant Porat.

**our pick Hotel Bellevue** (Map p262; ☎ 330 000; www.hotel-bellevue.hr; Petra Čingrije 7; d from €250; 📍) A five-minute walk west from Pile Gate, Hotel Bellevue's location – on a cliff that overlooks the open sea and the lovely bay underneath – is pretty much divine. The rooms are beautifully designed, the balconies overlook said sea and bay, and the breakfast, which can be eaten on your balcony, is wonderful. Despite being closed for much of 2007, Bellevue is once again (since reopening in June 2008) top dog in Dubrovnik's high-end hotel scene. Its restaurant, Vapor,

is top notch, too, with excellent seasonal products, fish, meat and a wide range of Croatian wines.

## Lapad

Most of the less-expensive hotels are in Lapad, as well as a few more luxurious establishments. It's quite a pleasant place to stay, away from the droves of tourists that flood the old town. It's also a mixed residential and tourist neighbourhood, and weekends are full of strolling locals and their kids, so you really get the feeling of being part of the city. The main road is Šetalište Kralja Tomislava, while the pedestrian tree-lined Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira makes a lovely stroll past stalls and outdoor cafés. Nika i Meda Pucića is a cliffside path, shaded by a pine forest and dotted with cafés and bars. It's prime strolling ground on Sunday.

A walk along the coast past the Hotel Kompas leads to lots of spots for stretching out along the rocks and taking a swim. After about 1km you'll come to the Hotel Neptune and a series of package-tour hotels. Bus 6 runs between Pile Gate and the bus stop in Lapad near the post office, though you can walk it easily in 20 minutes.

**YHA Hostel** (Map p262; ☎ 423 241; dubrovnik@hfhhs.hr; Vinka Sagrestana 3; per person low-high 85-120KN) Basic in decor, the YHA Hostel is clean and, as travellers report, a lot of fun. If you are allowed to choose a bed (rare), the best dorms are rooms 31 and 32. They cost the same as any other but share a 'secret' roof terrace with a refreshingly lovely view. Rates include breakfast. To get here head up Vinka Sagrestana from Bana Josipa Jelačića 17.

**Vila Micika** (Map p262; ☎ 437 332; www.vilamicika.hr; Mata Vodapića; s low-high 150-210KN, d 300-420KN; (P)) This is a simple, well-run establishment. The rooms are painted in soft colours and equipped with TVs and modern bathrooms. There's a pleasant outdoor terrace, and it's only 200m to the Lapad beaches. Micika has a few clauses: prices do not include breakfast (€8 per person extra), and add 30% to stays shorter than three days and 73KN for air-con.

**Hotel Adriatic** (Map p262; ☎ 437 302; www.hoteli.maestral.com; Masarykov Put 9; s low-high €40-80, d €68-140) This large hotel has simple but serviceable rooms and is close to the beach. Front rooms are more expensive and overlook the sea but could be noisy.

**Hotel Sumratin** (Map p262; ☎ 438 930; www.hotels-sumratin.com; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 31; s low-high 290-460KN, d 460-760KN; (P)) The socialist-style reception (large, brightly lit and decked out in dark wood) gives way to pretty decent rooms with terracotta carpets and spacious beds. Many rooms have small balconies, too. The Sumratin is well located on the main Lapad drag near all of the beaches.

**ourpick Hotel Zagreb** (Map p262; ☎ 430 930; www.hotels-sumratin.com; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira 27; s low-high 400-660KN, d 700-1060KN; ☺) Under the same ownership as Hotel Sumratin, Hotel Zagreb is the more stylish sister, set inside a lovely, salmon-coloured, 19th-century building. The rooms are large, the beds comfy, and there are flat-screen TVs, paintings with marine motifs, and large creamy bathrooms.

**Hotel Uvala** (Map p262; ☎ 433 580; www.hoteli.maestral.com; Masarykov Put 6; d €120-170; (P) ☺ ☺) A newly renovated four-star hotel that's decked out with a lovely reception, indoor and outdoor pools and a comprehensive spa. The service is friendly and it's a comfortable place, very close to the beach. It's unfortunate, however, that the rooms are a bit of a let-down, with their glum browns and whites.

**Hotel Lapad** (Map p262; ☎ 432 922; www.hotel-lapad.hr; Lapadaska Obala 37; d from €130; ☺ Jun-mid-Oct; ☺ ☺) Renovated in 2008, Hotel Lapad is inside a lovely old limestone building, with swanky new rooms that are all sharp corners, sleek lines and modern furnishings. There's no beach access but the hotel runs a daily boat to a remote beach near Zaton for a small charge.

**ourpick Villa Wolff** (Map p262; ☎ 438 710; www.villa-wolff.hr; Nika i Meda Pucića 1; s low-high 1533-1879KN, d 1606-1898KN; (P) ☺ ☺) A gorgeous boutique hotel right on the lovely seaside promenade, Villa Wolff only has six rooms, all beautifully outfitted, bright and airy. The suites have their own balconies and there is a verdant garden that guests use for sunbathing.

## Gruž Harbour

**Hotel Petka** (Map p262; ☎ 410 500; www.hotelpetka.com; Obala Stjepana Radića 38; s low-high €55-106, d €80-144; (P) ☺) Hotel Petka is opposite the Jadrolinija ferry terminal, with 104 business-oriented rooms, each with TV, phone and minibar. It's good if you need to catch an early morning ferry.

## Ploče

The best luxury establishments are east of the old town along Frana Supila within walking distance of the city centre.

**Hotel Grand Villa Argentina** (Map p262; ☎ 440 555; www.gva.hr; Frana Supila 14; d from €200; P ♻️ 🚰) This is a large hotel accompanied by two villas: Villa Orsula and the recently built Villa Sheherezade. The latter is presented in fully blown Arabian Nights style, with golds and crimson, tonnes of patterns and carved wood. Villa Orsula is a more classic affair, but richly decorated nonetheless. The main hotel offers luxury suites as well as sleek, well-serviced modern rooms, some of which overlook the sea. There's an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, but the swimming is excellent from the rocks next to the hotel.

**Hotel Excelsior** (Map p262; ☎ 353 353; www.hotel-excelsior.hr; Frana Supila 12; s/d from 1640/1890KN; P ♻️ 🚰) This is possibly Dubrovnik's biggest hotel extravaganza. Recently closed for a €10 million refit, the legendary Excelsior opened again in 2008 to many bated breaths. Like Argentina, there is now an adjacent boutique villa, Villa Odak, whose rooms are gorgeously understated (as are those in the main building). There is also an indoor and outdoor swimming pool and a palm-tree terrace.

## EATING Old Town & Around

You have to choose carefully when it comes to the old town's restaurants. Many ride on the assumption that you're here just for a day (as many of the big cruiser passengers are) and that you won't be coming back. Rather than looking for somewhere to eat on the Stradun, go to the side streets, where you'll find plenty of good places to eat and snack (see our recommendations following). Also be highly discerning when choosing to eat on Prijeko, where many of the offerings can be overpriced.

**Smuti Bar** (Map p264; ☎ 091 896 7509; Palmotićevo 5; smoothies 18-25KN) Perfect for breakfast smoothies and nice big mugs of coffee (at a bargain 10KN), this is the breakfast sister of Nishta (right). The friendly staff speak English.

**Buffet Skola** (Map p264; ☎ 321 096; Antuninska 1; snacks from 20KN) For a quick bite between sight-seeing spots, you can't do better. Fresh cheese, local tomatoes and local ham are some of the ingredients stuffed into the heavenly homemade bread here.

**Fresh** (Map p264; ☎ 091 896 7509; www.igotfresh.com; Vetraničeva 4; wraps from 20KN) A mecca for young travellers who gather here for the smoothies, wraps and other healthy snacks, as well as drinks and music in the evening (see p274).

**Nishta** (Map p264; ☎ 091 896 7509; Prijeko 30; mains from 30KN) When this 100% vegetarian restaurant opened in Dubrovnik (an unprecedented case), the baffled locals asked the owners what they served. 'Everything except meat', they said, and the locals concluded that they must be serving nothing. Hence the name Nishta, which means 'nothing' in Croatian. Alas, you're in the Balkans, what do you expect? Head here for a refreshing gazpacho, a heart-warming miso soup, Thai curries, veggies and noodles, and many more nonmeat delights.

**Pizzeria Baracuda** (Map p264; ☎ 323 160; Nikole Božidarevića 10; mains from 35KN) A Dubrovnik old-timer, this is a friendly pizzeria near the Orthodox Church, with tables outside on a quiet courtyard. Don't expect Italian-style pizza perfection, but it's cheap, the portions are generous, and with a crisp, cold beer in your hand it's a real treat.

**Kamenice** (Map p264; ☎ 421 499; Gundulićeva Poljana 8; mains from 40KN) It's been here since the 1970s and not much has changed; not the socialist-style waiting uniforms, nor the simple interior and the massive portions of mussels, grilled or fried squid, griddled anchovies and *kamenice* (oysters). And the owners have, incredibly, seen no need to up their prices. The terrace is on one of Dubrovnik's most gorgeous squares.

**our pick Lokanda Peskarija** (Map p264; ☎ 324 750; Ribarnica bb; mains from 40KN) Located on the Old Harbour right next to the fish market, this is undoubtedly one of Dubrovnik's best eateries. It satisfies on every level: the quality of the seafood dishes is unflinching, the prices are good and the location is gorgeous. Locals queue along with tourists for the wonderful baby squid, the substantial risottos and the juicy mussels. Sip a glass of *dingač* and try the *rožata*, a Croatian version of crême brûlée, while you watch the boats bob on the silky waters.

**dub** (Map p264; ☎ 426 319; www.dub-loungebar.hr; Brsalje 1; breakfast from 50KN) If you fancy a big breakfast while overlooking the city walls and Pile Gate from a breezy terrace, dub is the place. Vegetarian, meaty and egg breakfasts come with salads, fresh juices and coffee or tea, but only before noon. The lounge

chairs and sofas are very comfortable, so you can come here for an afternoon snack or an evening cocktail, too.

**Orhan** (Map p262; ☎ 414 183; Od Tabakarije 1; mains from 50KN) Orhan is beautifully located on a rocky cove, overlooking the city walls. It specialises in fish and seafood, but the quality of the cooking has suffered from restington-itslaurelitis in the last few years, so opt for something simple and enjoy the view.

**Revelin** (Map p264; ☎ 322 164; Ulica Svetog Dominika bb; mains from 60KN) There are few places in Dubrovnik with such a wonderful location and good prices as the Revelin. A restaurant and bar in the summer, and bar and club in the winter, this place has a terrace spreading under an old pine tree by Ploče Gate, overlooking the harbour. It serves good pastas (try the crayfish tagliatelle with a tangy tomato sauce) and meat dishes, such as veal medallions and lamb shanks.

**Wanda** (Map p264; ☎ 098 944 9317; www.wandarestaurant.com; Prijeko 8; mains from 70KN) Single-handedly saving the reputation of Prijeko restaurants, Wanda is truly one you can go to for reliably good upmarket dining. The menu is Italian, with wonderful dishes such as zucchini stuffed with prawns, osso bucco and saffron risotto, and a heady stew of prawns, scallops, lobster, clams, mussels and fish. The ingredients are fresh, local and seasonal, and the setting elegant and relaxed.

**Defne** (Map p264; ☎ 326 200; Od Puča 1; mains from 70KN) Pucić Palace's (p270) top-floor restaurant is one of the old town's classiest. The Turkish chef makes sure you get some good kebabs on the menu (posh kebabs, that is, with fresh mint and lavender sauces), but he mainly focuses on Dalmatia's fish and seafood. Try the octopus carpaccio starter, served with black *tagliolini* and truffle – a piece of heaven in your mouth – or the gorgeous lobster with white risotto. The wine list is impeccable.

**Proto** (Map p264; ☎ 323 234; www.esculap-teo.hr; Široka 1; mains from 80KN) Sister restaurant to the painfully classy Nautika, Proto is an equally elegant affair with understated flavours and simple fresh ingredients. The fish is top-notch (try the fish soup) and the lobster is a feast. The sauces are light and balance the dishes perfectly. Book in advance.

**Gil's** (Map p264; ☎ 322 222; www.gilsdubrovnik.com; Ulica Svetog Dominika bb; mains from 120KN) Uber-posh, super-expensive and gloriously glitzy, Gil's is a Russo-French affair of, you guessed it,

Russian dosh and French taste. As such, it's aimed at Dubrovnik's creamiest tourists (and locals) who want to dine on Sevruga caviar (360KN), seashell *panna cotta*, exquisite black truffle risotto with veal glacé, raw red tuna julienne, black ravioli with lobster sauce, and other dizzyingly delectable dishes. The wine cellar is the chef's pride and joy, with 6000 carefully chosen bottles, and the setting is the best in Dubrovnik – overlooking the harbour from within the walls, with a gorgeous terrace upstairs. If you've got the dough, this is the place to spend it.

Self-caterers have the privilege to use the local food **market** (Map p264; Gundulićeva Poljana; ☎ 6am-1pm), which sells fresh local and seasonal products every morning.

## Lapad

Lapad's main drag, Šetalište Kralja Tomislava, is packed with cafés, bars and restaurants. Some restaurants are tourist traps, so check the menu well before you commit, though most are decent places much enjoyed by the locals.

**Sedna** (Map p262; ☎ 352 000; www.hotel-kompas.hr; Petra Čingrije 7; pizzas from 26KN, omelettes 30-35KN) The Hotel Kompas bar-pizzeria is a great and unpretentious spot for breakfast, lunch or dinner. You can sit on a terrace overlooking the beach and Lapad Bay, while the locals buzz around, drinking coffees and chatting on sunny mornings and afternoons.

**Konoba Atlantic** (Map p262; ☎ 435 726; Kardinala Stepinca 42; mains from 45KN) It's not terribly atmospheric at the outdoor tables here, since it's next to a bus stop. Install yourself indoors, however, and you can sample superb homemade pastas, vegetarian lasagne and gnocchi with rabbit sauce.

**our pick** **Levanat** (Map p262; ☎ 435 352; Nika i Meda Pucića 15; mains 45-120KN) One of the best spots in the whole city, Levanat overlooks the sea from the pine-laden hill between Lapad Bay and Babin Kuk. The food is innovative and equally gorgeous, with seafood and unusual sauces, fresh ingredients and delicious vegetarian options.

**Taraca** (Map p262; Šetalište Kralja Zvonimira; mains from 50KN; ☎ Jun-Sep) Under Hotel Sumratin, in the pine-shaded courtyard, this is a large-scale people's restaurant that grills everything: meat, fish and vegetables. Sit on one of the plastic chairs, let your kids run wild, and enjoy the lively atmosphere.

**Blidinje** (Map p262; ☎ 358 794; Lapadska Obala 21; mains from 70KN) A great local that's not frequented by many tourists, Blidinje has fabulous views of Gruž Harbour from its terrace. The food is aimed primarily at carnivores, so use the opportunity to taste lamb or veal slow-cooked under hot coals – but make sure you ring in and order at least two hours in advance. Then, order some good red wine and settle in for the evening.

## Plače

**Chihuahua Cantina Mexicana** (Map p264; ☎ 424 445; Hvarska 6; mains from 30KN) No matter how good the local cuisine is, sometimes you just want to bury your face in a plate of empanadas. This is a lively, young place and the punters come for the quesadillas, tacos and enchiladas, as well as a cool bottle of Corona.

## DRINKING

Summer in Dubrovnik is a fabulous time. You sit under the stars, sipping beer, cocktails or wine, everyone's dressed up and ready to stay up, and there's a great buzz in town. Most people head for the old town; Lapad is a place for families and quieter fun, but pleasant nonetheless.

**Troubadur** (Map p264; ☎ 412 154; Bunićeva Poljana 2) A legendary Dubrovnik venue, you've got to have at least one drink at the Troubadur. There are live jazz concerts in the summer on most nights – often (though not always) played by Marko, the owner, and his jazz band. The atmosphere is excellent and anyone who's anyone in town comes to hang out here.

**ourpick Buža** (Map p264; Ilije Sarake) Another must-have-drink place, the Buža (literally 'hole') started out as just a simple place on the outside of the city walls, facing out onto the open sea. It served drinks in plastic cups to blissful punters, with only a white metal fence and a straw awning to protect you from the elements. It's stayed pretty much the same (though it now has real glasses), but it's become a city attraction, with increased prices to match. Find it by following the 'cold drinks' sign along the city walls.

**ourpick Buža II** (Map p264; Crijevićeva 9) Sister to the more frazzled original Buža, this one is lower on the rocks, with a snazzier look and good swimming from the rocks. A great place to spend the day.

**Fresh** (Map p264; ☎ 091 896 7509; www.igotfresh.com; Vetranicićeva 4; cocktails from 35KN) All of Dubrovnik's backpackers head over to Fresh in the evening, when the smoothies and wraps are replaced by cocktails, beers (lots of two-for-ones), music and a great party atmosphere.

**Karaka Irish Bar** (Map p264; ☎ 324 014; Između Polača 7) The Emerald Isle is well represented here with Irish draught beer on tap, Irish music in the evenings and a happy hour from 3pm to 7pm. You can even watch UK sporting events beamed in by satellite.

**EastWest Club** (Map p262; ☎ 412 220; Frana Supila bb) By day this outfit on Banje Beach rents out beach chairs and umbrellas and serves drinks to the bathers who come here to relax and rehydrate. When the rays lengthen, the cocktail bar opens and a smart-casual set admires the sunset over a long, cool drink.

**Hemingway Cocktail Bar** (Map p264; Pred Dvorom) A massively popular venue opposite the Rector's Palace, Hemingway's has the longest cocktail list in Dubrovnik – old Ernest would have been proud! Dressed-up youngsters like to hang out here and it gets pretty packed on weekend nights.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Nightclubs

**Latino Club Fuego** (Map p264; Pile Brsalje 11) Despite the name, you'll find a range of dance music that includes techno and pop. The atmosphere is relaxed with no glowering bouncer and no rigid dress code.

**Lazareti** (Map p262; ☎ 324 633; Frana Supila 8) Dubrovnik's best art and music centre, Lazareti hosts cinema nights, club nights, live music, masses of concerts and pretty much all the best things in town.

### Cinemas

**Sloboda Cinema** (Map p264; ☎ 321 425; clock tower) This is the most centrally located cinema in Dubrovnik. Posters outside advertise the nightly showings.

**Open-Air Cinema** (Map p262; Kumičića, Lapad) In two locations, it is open nightly in July and August with screenings starting after sundown (9pm or 9.30pm). Also at Za Rokom in the old town (Map p264).

**Lazareti** (Map p262; ☎ 324 633; Frana Supila 8) Come here for the free art-film seasons hosted by a group of local film enthusiasts throughout the year. International and local films are projected



onto the 19th-century walls of the Lazareti complex, once a quarantine barracks.

## Live Music

**St Blaise's Church** (Map p264; Luža Sq; admission free) Open-air folklore shows are conducted in front of the church at 11am on Sundays through May, June and September.

**Dubrovnik Orchestra** (☎ 417 101) The orchestra regularly gives concerts in the atrium of the Rector's Palace and at various other sites around town.

**Dubrovnik String Quartet** (Map p264; St Saviour Church, Plača) The quartet gives concerts throughout autumn on Monday night in St Saviour Church. Look for posters around town or ask at the tourist office.

## SHOPPING

You'll find souvenir stores all over Stradun, selling Dalmatian marine details, stripy tops, anchors and the like.

**Maria** (Map p264; ☎ 321 330; www.maria-dubrovnik.hr; Ulica Svetog Dominika bb) Take a few deep breaths before you step into this shop, for you are sure to swoon at the sight of soft Miu Miu leather bags, lacquered Alexander McQueen shoes and gorgeous Marni dresses. The prices are international, of course, and the service is friendly, too, which is always a pleasant surprise.

**Sheriff & Cherry** (Map p264; ☎ 324 888; www.sheriff-andcherry.com; Đorđićeva 4; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat) One of the few trendy boutiques in town, this Zagreb-based shop stocks all the major fashion labels, such as Paul & Joe, Cheap Mondays, Anya Hindmarch and Dries Van Noten, among many, many others.

**Photo Gallery Carmel** (Map p264; ☎ 091 577 7157; www.photogallerycarmel.com; Zamanjina 10; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat) A newly opened photography gallery that hosts work by local and international artists. Prints are for sale.

**Djardin** (Map p264; ☎ 324 744; Miha Pracata 8; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) A sprawling jewellery shop where you can get lost for hours.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Daily flights to and from Zagreb are operated by **Croatia Airlines** (Map p264; ☎ 413 777; www.croatiaairlines.hr; Brsaljce 9; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat). The one-way fare is about 400KN but can run higher in peak season. There are

also nonstop flights to Rome, London and Manchester from April to October.

## Boat

In addition to the **Jadrolinija** (Map p262; ☎ 418 000; www.jadrolinija.hr; Gruž Harbour) coastal ferry north to Hvar, Split, Zadar and Rijeka, there's a local ferry that leaves Dubrovnik for Sobra and Polače on Mljet (50KN, 2½ hours) throughout the year. In summer there are two ferries a day. There are several ferries a day year-round to the outlying Elafiti Islands of Koločep, Lopud and Šipan.

Ferries also go from Dubrovnik to Bari, in southern Italy; there are six a week in the summer season (346KN to 477KN, nine hours, 11pm Friday to Wednesday) and two (Friday at 3.30pm and Monday at 11pm) in the winter months.

**Jadroagent** (Map p262; ☎ 419 000; Obala Stjepana Radića 32) books ferry tickets and has information.

## Bus

Daily buses from Dubrovnik include the following:

Destination	Fare (KN)	Duration (hr)	Daily services
Korčula	95	3	1
Mostar*	100	3	2
Orebić	80	2½	1
Rijeka	400	13	2
Sarajevo*	200	5	1
Split	120	4½	14
Zadar	250	8	7
Zagreb	250	11	7-8

\*Bosnia & Hercegovina

For international buses, see p308. In a busy summer season and on weekends, buses out of Dubrovnik **bus station** (Map p262; ☎ 060 305 070; Obala Pape Ivana Pavla II 44a) can be crowded, so book a ticket well before the scheduled departure time.

Split-Dubrovnik buses pass briefly through Bosnian territory, so keep your passport handy for border-crossing points.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Čilipi international airport is 24km south-east of Dubrovnik. The Croatia Airlines airport buses (30KN) leave from the main bus

### CROSS-BORDER JAUNTS

Dubrovnik is an easy bus ride away from Montenegro's gorgeous towns of Kotor, Herceg Novi and Budva. All three have wonderful old town centres, with curving marble streets and pretty architecture, while Kotor is on one of Europe's largest fjords, Kotor Bay. If you really want to take your time and explore the region, you should rent a car, but there's a daily 11am bus to the Montenegrin border, from where a bus takes you to Herceg Novi (80KN, two hours) and on to Kotor (120KN, 2½ hours) and Bar (150KN, three hours), stopping at Budva on the way. EU, US, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian citizens don't need a visa to enter Montenegro; other nationalities should check with their relevant embassy.

There are also buses to Mostar (see p275), giving you a chance to glance at Mostar's Old Bridge and dip your toe into the world of Bosnia and Hercegovina. It's quite difficult to go for a day on public transport, but Amico Tours (p268) organises day trips.

station 1½ hours before flight times. A taxi costs about 220KN.

### Bus

Dubrovnik's buses run frequently and generally on time. They make an excellent alternative to hassling with Dubrovnik's increasingly burdened traffic and parking scene. The fare is 10KN if you buy from the driver, but only 8KN if you buy a ticket at a *tisak* (newsstand). Timetables are available at the station and at [www.libertas.dubrovnik.hr](http://www.libertas.dubrovnik.hr).

### Car

The entire old town is a pedestrian area so a car is mainly valuable for trips out to Lapad and throughout the region. Bear in mind that traffic on the roads leading to the old town can be heavy in summer. Car-rental companies include the following:

**Budget Rent-a-Car** (Map p262; ☎ 418 998; [www.budget.hr](http://www.budget.hr); Obala Stjepana Radića 24)

**Gulliver** (Map p262; ☎ 313 313; Obala Stjepana Radića 31)

**Hertz** (Map p262; ☎ 425 000; [www.hertz.hr](http://www.hertz.hr); Frana Supila 9)

**OK Travel & Trade** (Map p262; ☎ 418 950; [okt-t@du.t-com.hr](mailto:okt-t@du.t-com.hr); Obala Stjepana Radića 32) Near the Jadrolinija ferry terminal.

## AROUND DUBROVNIK

Dubrovnik is an excellent base for day trips into the surrounding region. You can hop over to the Elafiti Islands for a day of peaceful sunbathing, head to the beautiful islands of Korčula and Mljet for some good food and wine, and check out the heady smell of Trsteno's gardens. Cavtat is a

quieter alternative to Dubrovnik, good for a lovely day's worth of sights, swimming and yummy food.

### LOKRUM ISLAND

A ferry shuttles half-hourly in summer to lush Lokrum Island (80KN return), a Unesco-protected national park. It's a beautiful, peaceful place, where most visit to get away from the hustle of Dubrovnik. Note that no one can stay overnight. The rocky **nudist beach** (marked FKK) is a delight for naturists, and there is a **botanical garden** and the ruins of a medieval **Benedictine monastery**. You can swim off numerous rocks. It's heavenly.

Snack at **Lacroma** (snacks from 20KN), a bar two minutes' walk uphill from the harbour. There is live guitar music, too, so you can chill out with a coffee before the boat arrives. More substantial food can be had at **Konoba Lokrum** (mains from 50KN), the Benedictine monastery restaurant, where you eat among the old ruins. The food is the usual combo of seafood, meat, pastas and risottos.

### ELAFITI ISLANDS

A day trip to one of the islands in this archipelago northwest of Dubrovnik makes a perfect escape from the summer crowds. The most popular islands are **Koločep**, **Lopud** and **Šipan**, which are accessible by daily Jadrolinija ([www.jadrolinija.hr](http://www.jadrolinija.hr)) car ferry. From Dubrovnik you can take a fast boat to Koločep (11KN, 20 minutes), Lopud (11KN, 35 minutes) or Šipan (16.50KN, 1¼ hours) on Saturday mornings. A good way to see all three islands in one day is to take the 'Three Islands & Fish Picnic' tour offered by Amico Tours (p268).

Koločep is the nearest island and is inhabited by a mere 150 people. There are several

sand-and-pebble beaches, steep cliffs and sea caves, as well as centuries-old pine forests, olive groves, and orange and lemon orchards.

Lopud is 25 minutes further and has a number of interesting churches and monasteries dating from the 16th century, when the inhabitants' seafaring exploits were legendary. Lopud village is composed of stone houses surrounded by exotic gardens. You can walk across the spine of the island to beautiful and sandy **Sunj beach**; there is a little bar there that serves griddled sardines and other types of fish. No cars are allowed on the island.

Šipán is the largest of the islands and was a favourite with the Dubrovnik aristocracy, who built houses there in the 15th century. The boat lands in **Šipanska Luka** in the north-west of the island, which has the remains of a Roman villa and a 15th-century Gothic duke's palace. Eat at **Kod Marka** (☎ 758 007; Šipanska Luka; mains from 50KN), where you'll have gloriously prepared seafood.

## MLJET ISLAND

pop 1237

Of all the Adriatic islands, Mljet (mil-yet) may be the most seductive. Much of the island is covered by forests and the rest is dotted with fields, vineyards and small villages. The north-western half of the island has been named **Mljet National Park**, where the lush vegetation and gentle coves are unmarred by development schemes, large resorts or virtually any other tourism trappings. It's an unspoiled oasis of tranquillity that, according to legend, captivated Odysseus for seven years. We're sure he didn't regret a moment.

## History

Ancient Greeks called the island 'Melita' or 'honey' for the many bees humming in the forests. It appears that Greek sailors came to the island for refuge against storms and to gather fresh water from the springs. At that time the island was populated by Illyrians, who erected hill forts and traded with the mainland. They were conquered by the Romans in 35 BC, who expanded the settlement around Polače by building a palace, baths and servants' quarters.

The island fell under the control of the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century and was later subjected to the 7th-century invasions of Slavs and Avars. After several centuries of regional rule from the mainland, Mljet was

given to the Benedictine order in the 13th century, which constructed a monastery in the middle of Veliko Jezero. Dubrovnik formally annexed the island in 1410.

Although Mljet's fortunes were thereafter tied to those of Dubrovnik, the inhabitants maintained their traditional activities of farming, viticulture, husbandry and seafaring. Except for seafaring, the traditional activities are still the foundation of the economy. Establishing the national park in 1960 helped bring tourism to Mljet, but the islanders are content to keep visitors down to manageable levels. Priorities here are peace and quiet.

## Orientation & Information

The island is 37km long, and has an average width of about 3km. The main points of entry are Pomena and Polače, two tiny towns about 5km apart. Tour boats from Korčula and the Dubrovnik catamarans arrive at Polače wharf in the high season. There's a good map of the island posted at Polače's wharf. Pomena is the site of the island's only conventional hotel, Hotel Odisej. Jadrolinija ferries stop only at Sobra.

Govedari, the national park's entry point, is between Pomena and Polače. The **national park** (adult/concession 90/30KN) measures 54 sq km and the entry price includes a bus and boat transfer to the Benedictine monastery. If you stay overnight on the island you only pay the park admission once.

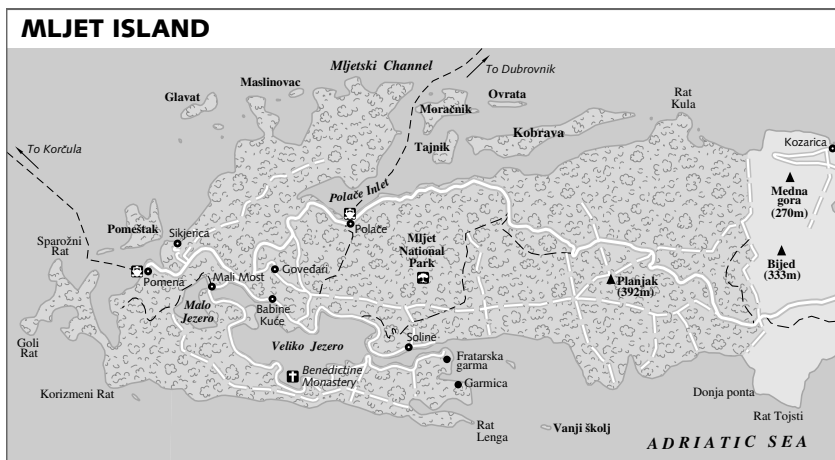
The **tourist office** (☎ 744 186; www.mljet.hr; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-1pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) is in Polače and there is an ATM next door. There's another ATM at the Hotel Odisej in Pomena.

The administrative centre of the island is at Babino Polje, 18km east of Polače, where there is another **tourist office** (☎/fax 745 125; www.mljet.hr; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) and a post office.

## Sights

The highlights of the island are **Malo Jezero** and **Veliko Jezero**, the two lakes on the island's western end connected by a channel. Veliko Jezero is connected with the sea by the Soline Canal, which makes the lakes subject to tidal flows.

In the middle of Veliko Jezero is an islet with a **Benedictine monastery**. The monastery was originally built in the 12th century but has been rebuilt several times, adding Renaissance and baroque features to the Romanesque structure. It contains the **Church of St Mary**



(Crkva Svete Marije), which was built around the same time. In addition to building the monastery, the Benedictine monks deepened and widened the passage between the two lakes, taking advantage of the rush of sea water into the valley to build a **mill** at the entrance to Veliko Jezero. The monastery was abandoned in 1869 and the mill housed the government's forest-management offices for the island until 1941. It was then converted into a hotel, which was trashed during the 1990s war. Now it contains a pricey but atmospheric restaurant.

There's a boat from Mali Most (about 1.5km from Pomena) on Malo Jezero that leaves for the island monastery every hour at 10 minutes past the hour. It's not possible to walk right around the larger lake as there's no bridge over the channel connecting the lakes to the sea. If you decide to swim it, keep in mind that the current can be strong.

Poljače features a number of remains dating from the 1st to 6th centuries. Most impressive is the **Roman palace**, probably dating from the 5th century. The floor plan was rectangular and on the front corners are two polygonal towers separated by a pier. On a hill over the town you can see the remains of a late-antique **fortification** and northwest of the village are the remains of an early **Christian basilica** and a 5th-century **church**.

## Activities

Renting a bicycle is an excellent way to explore the national park. You can rent from a **private operator** (☎ 098 428 074) in Mali Most, at the

Hotel Odisej in Pomena or at the harbour in Poljače. The price is 20/100KN per hour/day. If you plan to cycle the 5km between Pomena and Poljače, be aware that the two towns are separated by a steep mountain. The bike path along the lake is an easier and very scenic pedal, but it doesn't link the two towns. You can also get a **Mini Brum** (☎ 745 084), a small electric car, from Sobra, Poljače and Pomena. Prices start at 260KN for five hours.

You can rent a **paddle boat** and row over to the monastery, but beware you'll need quite strong arms.

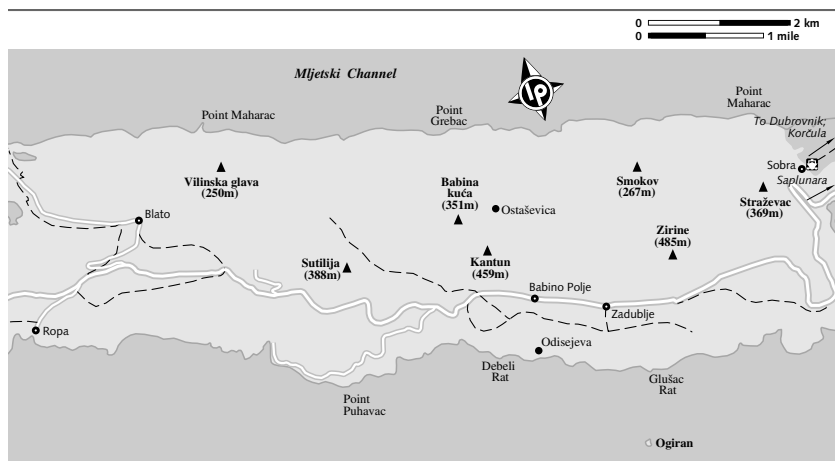
The island offers some unusual opportunities for **diving**. There's a Roman wreck dating from the 3rd century in relatively shallow water. The remains of the ship, including amphorae, have calcified over the centuries and this has protected them from pillaging. There's also a German torpedo boat from WWII and several walls to dive. Contact **Kronmar Diving** (☎ 744 022; Hotel Odisej).

## Tours

See p264 (Dubrovnik) and p283 (Korčula) for agencies offering excursions to Mljet. Tours last from about 8.30am to 6pm and include the park entry fee.

## Sleeping

The Poljače tourist office arranges private accommodation for 250KN per double, but it is essential to make arrangements before arrival in the peak season. There are more *sobe* signs around Pomena than Poljače, and practically



none at all in Sobra. A number of the restaurants listed on right rent out rooms.

There's no camping permitted inside the national park but there are two camping grounds outside it.

**Marina** (☎ 745 071; Ropa; per person/site 25/47KN; ☽ Jun-Sep) A small camping ground in Ropa, about 1km from the park.

**Camping Mungos** (☎ 745 300; Babino Polje; per person/site 30/62KN; ☽ May-Sep) Not very shady but well located, this camping ground is not far from the beach and the lovely grotto of Odysseus (Odisejeva pećina).

**Stermasi** (☎ 098 939 0362; Saplnara; apt low-high €30-45; 🍴) An excellent choice for those wanting to self-cater and get away from it all. Seven well-equipped, bright apartments sleep two to four people; two have their own terrace and the rest have a private balcony. Saplnara is pretty isolated, though, on the eastern side of the island, but you get the bonus of being near the only sandy beaches on Mljet. There's also an excellent restaurant attached (see right).

**Soline 6** (☎ 744 024; [www.soline6.com](http://www.soline6.com); Soline; d low-high €45-75) This hotel is a more interesting choice. It's the only accommodation within the national park and is designed with waterless toilets, solar heating and organic waste composting. You'll have to do without electricity though.

**Hotel Odisej** (☎ 744 022; [www.hotelodisej.hr](http://www.hotelodisej.hr); Pomena; s low-high 354-599KN, d 436-820KN; 🍴) The only conventional hotel option on the island, this is a modern structure in Pomena,

which has decent enough rooms and offers a range of activities.

## Eating

The restaurants on Mljet serve good quality fish and seafood, but also the unexpected surprise of kid and lamb. A lot of dishes are done 'under the bell' – cooked from top and bottom under hot coals. Fresh fish costs about 300KN per kilogram. A tip for boaters: you can moor at any of the restaurants for free if you eat there.

**our pick Stermasi** (☎ 098 939 0362; Saplnara; mains from 50KN) Phone Stermasi two hours in advance and head over to Saplnara for a dinner or lunch you'll remember for the rest of your life. Octopus and kid under the bell (200KN and 260KN respectively) are possibly the most delicious, sticky, aromatic and juicy you'll ever taste. Alternatively, you can just turn up and order the spaghetti with lobster (280KN) or, if that's not delicious enough, try the heavier option of wild boar with gnocchi. Then go and digest it all on the nearby sandy beach.

**Melita** (☎ 744 145; [www.mljet-restoranmelita.com](http://www.mljet-restoranmelita.com); St Mary's Island, Veliko Jezero; mains from 60KN) A more romantic (and touristy) spot can't be found on the island – this is the restaurant attached to the church on the little island in the middle of the big lake. The menu is packed with the usual fish, seafood and meat dishes, but it's the setting that counts.

**Triton** (☎ 745 131; Sršenovič 43, Babino Polje; mains from 70KN) Another place for under-the-bell meat, Triton mainly focuses on kid,

though there is also veal on offer. Don't miss its amazing homemade spirit collection (though beware if you're driving – it's potent stuff!).

**Mali Raj** (☎ 744 115; Babine Kuće 3, Govedari; mains from 80KN) Lovely and simple, Mali Raj serves more kid under the bell (order a day in advance), plus fish and seafood in a lovely setting by the sea. It's in Govedari, near the Polače harbour.

## Getting There & Around

Jadrolinija ferries stop only at Sobra (32KN, two hours) but the **Melita catamaran** (☎ 313 119; www.gv-line.hr; Vukovarska 34, Dubrovnik) goes to Polače (70KN) after Sobra (50KN) in the summer months, leaving Dubrovnik at 9.45am daily and returning from Polače at 4.55pm, making it ideal for a day trip. Tour boats from Korčula also arrive at the Polače harbour in the high season.

Boat tickets are sold at the **tourist office** (Map p262; ☎ 417 983; Obala Stjepana Radića 27, Dubrovnik) at Gruž Harbour or on board, but it's wise to buy in advance as the boats fill up quickly.

From Sobra, you can get to Pomena (1½ hours) on a bus; from Polače you can either cycle or walk to Pomena.

## CAVTAT

pop 1930

If it weren't for little Cavtat, there'd be no Dubrovnik. Well, at least not the Dubrovnik we know and love. The inhabitants of this originally Greek settlement fled from the Slavs and set up shop in Dubrovnik, establishing the city in 614. But Cavtat is interesting in itself. A lot more 'local' than Dubrovnik – read, not flooded by tourists on a daily basis – it's lively and has a charming beauty. Wrapped around a pretty harbour that's bordered by beaches, it's a great place to stay.

## History

Originally a Greek settlement called Epidaurus, Cavtat became a Roman colony around 228 BC and was later destroyed during the 7th-century Slavic invasions. Throughout most of the Middle Ages it was part of the Dubrovnik republic and shared the cultural and economic life of the capital city. Cavtat's most famous personality was the painter Vlaho Bukovac (1855–1922), one of the foremost exponents of Croatian modernism.

## Orientation & Information

The old town is by the harbour; several gargantuan tourist complexes lie on the eastern edge, along the town's best beach.

**Atlas Travel Agency** (☎ 479 031; www.atlas-croatia.hr; Trumbićev put 2; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, to 1pm Sun) For excursions and private accommodation.

**Post office** (Kneza Domagoja 4; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat) Near the bus station.

**Teuta** (☎ 479 778; Trumbićev put 3) Changes money, books excursions and finds private accommodation. Also offers internet access.

**Tourist office** (☎ 479 025; www.tzcvat-konavle.hr; Tiha 3; ☎ 8am–6pm Jul & Aug, 8am–3pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat & Sun Sep–Jun)

## Sights

Several sights make the city well worth a stop. The Renaissance **Rector's Palace** (☎ 478 556; Obala Ante Starčevića 18; adult/student 10/5KN; ☎ 9am–1pm Mon–Fri), near the bus station, houses a rich library (which belonged to 19th-century lawyer and historian Baltazar Bogišić), as well as lithographs and a small archaeological collection. Next door is the baroque **St Nicholas Church** (Crkva Svetog Nikole; admission 5KN; ☎ 10am–1pm) with wooden altars.

The **birth house of Vlaho Bukovac** (Rodna Kuća Vlaho Bukovca; ☎ 478 646; Bukovca 5; admission 20KN; ☎ 10am–1pm & 4–8pm Tue–Sun), Cavtat's most famous son, is at the northern end of Obala Ante Starčevića. The early-19th-century architecture provides a fitting backdrop to the mementos and paintings of Croatia's most renowned painter. Next door is the **Monastery of Our Lady of the Snow** (Samostan Snježne Gospe; Bukovca), which is worth a look for some notable early Renaissance paintings.

A path leads uphill from the monastery to the cemetery, which contains the **mausoleum** (admission 5KN; ☎ 10am–noon) of the Račić family, built by Ivan Meštrović. The elaborate monument reflects the sculptor's preoccupation with religious and spiritual concerns.

## Sleeping & Eating

For private accommodation try Atlas (above) or one of the other travel agencies around the town centre.

**Villa Kvaternik** (☎ 479 800; www.hotelvillakvaternik.com; Kvaternikova 3; r low-high €85–178, ste €127–193; ☎) Five stylish rooms and a suite make this one of the loveliest places to stay in Cavtat. The hotel is in a 15th-century villa in the centre of town.

**Hotel Cavtat** (☎ 478 246; www.iberostar.com; Tiha bb; s/d 640/910KN; P ♻️) The Cavtat has 94 rooms in the town centre overlooking the beach. The warmly decorated rooms are in very good condition and have satellite TV.

**Restaurant Kolona** (☎ 478 269; Put Tihe 2; mains 60-110KN) A verdant terrace and the freshest fish in town. Order the mussels *buzara* (a sauce of tomatoes, white wine and herbs).

**Leut** (☎ 478 477; Trumbićev put 13; mains from 60KN) and **Galija** (☎ 478 566; Vuličićeva 1; mains from 60KN) are the top-end, high-flyer favourites, boasting innovative cuisine and the most exquisite seafood and fish. Galija has some well-priced and mighty tasty pastas. Book in advance.

### Getting There & Away

Bus 10 runs hourly to Cavtat (15KN, 45 minutes) from Dubrovnik's bus station, or you can take a boat (return 80KN, three daily) from the Lokrum boat dock, near Ploče Gate.

### TRSTENO

Just 13km northwest of Dubrovnik sits Trsteno, a verdant haven that once served as Dubrovnik's aristocratic gardening grounds. Trsteno came into its own during the 16th century, when Dubrovnik's noblesse paid extra attention to the appearance of their gardens both in the city and here, and Ivan Gučetić, a Dubrovnik aristocrat, planted the first seeds of his garden and the Trsteno gardening trend. Sadly, many of Dubrovnik's gardens haven't survived the ages, except for those remaining in Trsteno.

Ivan Gučetić's descendants maintained their garden throughout the centuries, until the land was taken over by the (former Yugoslav and now Croatian) Academy of Sciences, which turned it into an **arboretum** (☎ 751 019; admission 12KN; 🕒 8am-8pm Jun-Sep, to 5pm Oct-May). The garden has a gorgeous Renaissance layout with a set of geometric shapes made with Mediterranean plants and bushes (lilac lavender, green rosemary, fuchsia bougainvillea), while citrus orchards perfume the air. It is only partially landscaped, though – quite a bit of it is just wonderfully wild. You'll notice a section that's burned down – this is the result of a Yugoslav army shell falling onto the garden in 1991, and of a summer fire in 2000. Don't miss the two **plane trees** at the entrance to Trsteno – each is over 400 years old and around 500m high and has a 15m diameter.

You can stay at the local camping ground, **Autocamp Trsteno** (☎ 751 060; www.trsteno.hr/camping.htm; per person/tent 25/20KN), which is well equipped and has a nice bar, too. The beach is rocky and small, though there are coves to be found if you explore.

To get to Trsteno, take any bus (40 minutes, 12 daily) bound for Split from Dubrovnik's bus station. Buses stop at the plane trees.

## KORČULA ISLAND

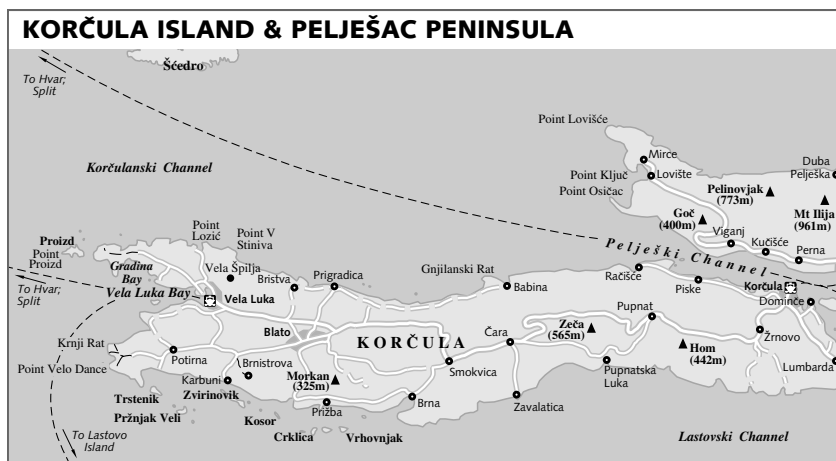
pop 17,038

Korčula is rich in vineyards, olive groves, small villages and hamlets. The island's dense woods led the original Greek settlers to call the island Korkyra Melaina (Black Korčula). Its main settlement, Korčula Town, is a gorgeous grid of marble streets and impressive architecture. The steep southern coast is dotted with quiet coves and small beaches, while the flatter northern shore is rich in natural harbours. Tradition is alive and kicking on Korčula, with age-old religious ceremonies, folk music and dances still being performed to an ever-growing influx of tourists. Oenophiles will adore visiting Korčula and sampling its wine, especially the dessert wine made from the *grk* grape cultivated around Lumbarda.

Korčula is separated from the Pelješac Peninsula by a narrow channel. It is the sixth-largest Adriatic island, reaching nearly 47km in length and 5km to 8km in width.

### History

A Neolithic cave (Vela Špilja) near Vela Luka, on the island's western end, points to the existence of a prehistoric settlement on the island, but it was the Greeks who first began spreading over the island in the 6th century BC. Their most important settlement was in the area of today's Lumbarda around the 3rd century BC. Romans conquered the island in the 1st century, giving way to the Slavs in the 7th century. The island was conquered by Venice in AD 1000 and then passed under Hungarian rule. It was briefly part of the Republic of Dubrovnik before again falling under Venetian rule in 1420, where it remained until 1797. Under Venetian rule, the island became known for its stone, which was quarried and cut for export by skilled local artisans. Shipbuilding also flourished despite Venetian attempts to restrict competition with its own shipyards.



After the Napoleonic conquest of Dalmatia in 1797, Korčula's fortunes followed those of the region, which changed hands among the French, Austro-Hungarians and English before becoming a part of Yugoslavia in 1921.

## Getting There & Around

### BOAT

The island has two major entry ports – Korčula Town and Vela Luka. All the Jadrolinija ferries between Split and Dubrovnik stop in Korčula Town. Jadrolinija runs a passenger boat daily from June to September from Split to Vela Luka (27KN, two hours), stopping at Hvar. There's also a fast boat, the **Krilo** ([www.krilo.hr](http://www.krilo.hr)), running from Split to Korčula (55KN, 2¾ hours), stopping at Hvar. It leaves daily in summer and three to five times a week between October and May. It also leaves from Prigradica, near Blato. For further information, contact **Marco Polo Tours** (Map p284; ☎ 715 400; [www.korcula.com](http://www.korcula.com); Biline 5) in Korčula or **Split Tours** (Map p219; ☎ 352 553; [www.splittours.hr](http://www.splittours.hr); Gat Sv Duje bb) in Split.

There's a regular afternoon car ferry between Split and Vela Luka (35KN, three hours) that stops at Hvar most days (although cars may not disembark at Hvar). Six daily buses link Korčula Town to Vela Luka (28KN, one hour), but services from Vela Luka are reduced on the weekend.

You can also take a car ferry from Ploče to Trpanj (103KN, 30 minutes, three or four daily), then drive across the Pelješac Peninsula to get the car ferry from Orebić to Dominče

(58KN, 15 minutes). Prices are for a car and driver.

From Orebić, look out for the passenger launch (15KN, 15 minutes, at least four daily Monday to Friday year-round), which will drop you off near Hotel Korčula right below Korčula Town's towers. The car ferry is the only option on weekends. On Saturday, the ferry connects with the bus from Lumbarda, but on Sunday it only meets the morning bus from Korčula Town.

### BUS

There's one bus every day to Dubrovnik (87KN, three hours) and Zagreb (195KN, 12 hours). The bus to Dubrovnik can fill up in the summer; an advance reservation is recommended.

## KORČULA TOWN

### pop 3000

Loved by holidaying families for its peaceful atmosphere, Korčula Town is a thing of beauty. The marble streets are dotted with Renaissance and Gothic architecture and its fascinating fish-bone layout was cleverly designed for the comfort and safety of its inhabitants: the western streets were built straight in order to open the city to the refreshing summer *maestral* (strong, steady westerly wind), while the eastern streets were curved to minimise the force of the winter *bura* (cold northeasterly wind). The town cradles a harbour, overlooked by round defensive towers and a compact cluster of red-roofed houses.





There are rustling palms all around and several beaches are an easy walk from town, though, this being a favourite family island, you'll want to get out of town to more remote beaches if you want some peace. Korčula Town is the best place to base yourself for day trips to Lumbarda, the islet of Badija, the town of Orebić on the Pelješac Peninsula, and Mljet Island.

## History

Although documents indicate that a walled city existed on this site in the 13th century, it wasn't until the 15th century that the current city was built. Construction of the city coincided with the apogee of stone-carving skills on the island, lending the buildings and streets a distinctive style. In the 16th century, carvers added decorative flourishes such as ornate columns and coats of arms on building facades, which gave a Renaissance look to the original Gothic core. People began building houses south of the old town in the 17th and 18th centuries as the threat of invasion diminished and they no longer needed to protect themselves behind walls. The narrow streets and stone houses in the 'new' suburb attracted merchants and artisans, and this is still where you'll find most commercial activity.

## Orientation

The big Jadrolinija car ferry usually drops you off below the walls of the old town of Korčula in the eastern harbour unless there's too much wind, in which case the ferry ties up

in the western harbour in front of the Hotel Korčula and the tourist office. The passenger launches to Orebić also tie up in the western harbour. The bus station (no left-luggage office) is south of town past the marina, on the way to the large hotels.

Most people head to the beaches of Orebić, but the waters around town are clean enough to swim from any point. There's a small cove next to the large Governor's Gate, and rocky beaches around the hotels and around the Sveti Nikole promenade southwest of the old town.

## Information

There's an ATM at HVB Splitska Banka. You can change money there, at the post office or at any of the travel agencies.

**Atlas Travel Agency** (☎ 711 231; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) There are a couple of these agencies in town, and they use the same phone number. It represents American Express, runs excursions and finds private accommodation.

**Eterno** (☎ 716 538; www.eternotravel.com; Put Sv Nikole bb; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) This friendly agency finds private accommodation, organises excursions and has internet access (25KN per hour).

**Hospital** (☎ 711 137; Kalac bb) About 1km past the Hotel Marko Polo.

**Kantun Tours** (☎ 715 622; www.kantun-tours.com; Plokata 19 Travnja bb; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, to 1pm Sun) Organises private accommodation and excursions and also has internet access (25KN per hour).

**Marko Polo Tours** (☎ 715 400; www.korcula.com; Biline 5; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) Organises accommodation and excursions.

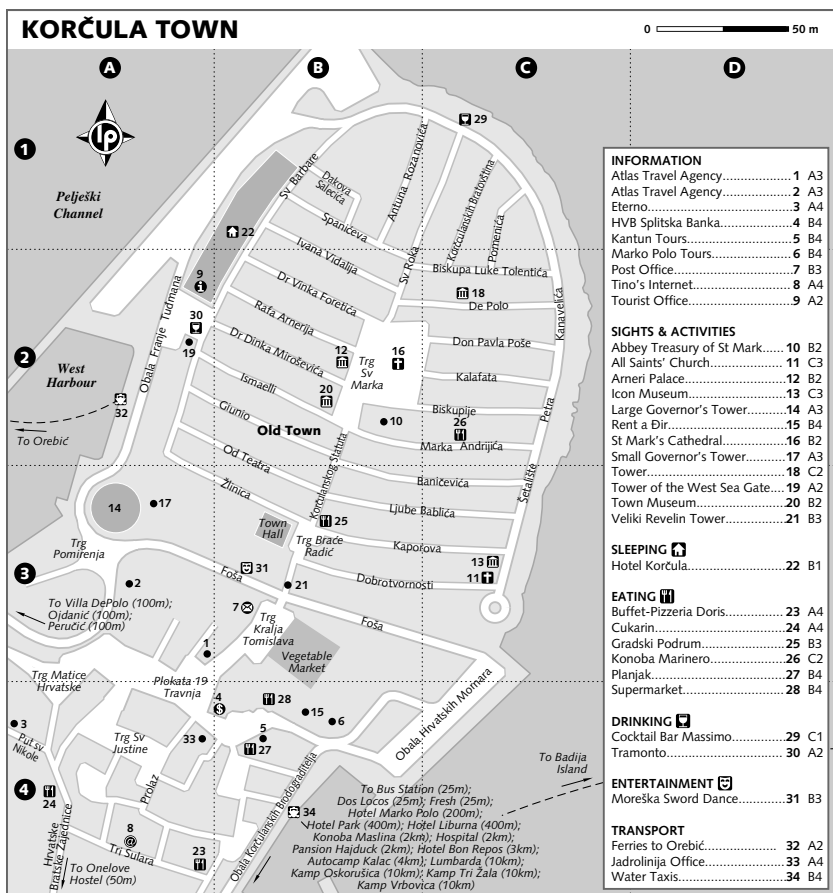
**Post office** (☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) Hidden next to the stairway up to the old town; there are telephones here.

**Tino's Internet** (☎ 091 509 1182; Tri Sulara; per hr 30KN; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun) Tino's has another outlet at the ACI Marina, also open long hours.

**Tourist office** (☎ 715 701; www.korcula.net; Obala Franje Tuđmana bb; ☎ 8am-3pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-1pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat Oct-May) On the west harbour; an excellent source of information.

## Sights

Take a closer look at the remaining walls and towers that make the sea approach to the town particularly striking. On the western harbour, the **Tower of the West Sea Gate** has an inscription in Latin from 1592 stating that Korčula was founded after the fall of Troy. Nearby are the conical **Large Governor's Tower** (1483) and the



**Small Governor's Tower** (1449) that protected the harbour and the Governor's Palace, which used to stand next to the town hall.

The entrance to the old city is through the **Veliki Revelin Tower** southern land gate. Built in the 14th century and later extended, the tower is adorned with coats of arms of the Venetian doge and Korčulan governors. There was originally a wooden drawbridge here, but it was replaced in the 18th century by the wide stone steps that give a sense of grandeur to the entrance. The only remaining part of the town walls stretch west of this tower.

Other sightseeing is centred on **Trg Svetog Marka** (St Mark's Sq), dominated by the magnificent **St Mark's Cathedral** (Katedrala Svetog Marka; Statuta 1214; ☞ 9am-9pm Jul & Aug, Mass only Sep-Jun).

This 15th-century cathedral was built from Korčula limestone in a Gothic-Renaissance style by Italian and local artisans. Over the solemn portal, the triangular gable cornice is decorated with a two-tailed mermaid, an elephant and other sculptures. The **bell tower** that rises from the cathedral over the town is topped by a balustrade and ornate cupola, beautifully carved by the Korčulan Marko Andrijić.

The interior of the cathedral features modern sculptures in the **baptistry**, including a piety by Ivan Meštrović. The ciborium was also carved by Andrijić and behind it is the altarpiece painting *Three Saints* by Tintoretto. Another painting attributed to Tintoretto or his workshop, *The Annunciation*, is on the

baroque altar of St Antony. Other noteworthy works include a bronze statue of St Blaise by Meštrović near the altar on the northern aisle, and a painting by the Venetian artist Jacopo Bassano in the apse of the southern aisle.

The **Abbey Treasury of St Mark** (☎ 711 049; Statuta 1214; admission 15KN; 🕒 9am-8pm Mon-Sat May-Nov) in the 14th-century Abbey Palace next to the cathedral is also worth a look. Past the anteroom with its collection of icons, you enter the **hall of Dalmatian art** with an excellent selection of 15th- and 16th-century Dalmatian paintings. The most outstanding work is the polyptych of *The Virgin* by Blaž Trogiranić. There are also liturgical items, jewellery, furniture and ancient documents relating to the history of Korčula.

The **Town Museum** (Gradski Muzej; ☎ 711 420; Statuta 1214; admission 15KN; 🕒 9am-9pm Jun-Aug, 9am-1pm Mon-Sat Sep-May) is in the 16th-century Gabriellis Palace opposite the treasury. It traces the history and culture of Korčula throughout the ages, beginning with a tablet recording the Greek presence on the island in the 3rd century BC. The stone-carving collection follows the development of that craft with sculptures and stonemason tools, and the shipbuilding hall displays tools and models of local ships. There's also an archaeology collection with prehistoric objects, and an art collection with furniture, textiles and portraits. Explanations are in English.

Before leaving the square, notice the elegantly ornamented **Arneri Palace** next door to the museum and extending west down the narrow street of the same name.

It's said that Marco Polo was born in Korčula in 1254 and, for a small fee, you can climb the **tower** (Ulica De Polo; admission 15KN; 🕒 9am-9pm Jul & Aug) of the house that is supposed to have been his. A planned restoration will turn it into a museum. There's also an **Icon Museum** (Trg Svih Svetih; admission 10KN; 🕒 10am-noon & 5-7pm Mon-Sat). It isn't much of a museum, but it has some interesting Byzantine icons painted on wood on gold backgrounds, and 17th- and 18th-century ritual objects. Visitors are let into the beautiful old **All Saints' Church** (Crkva Svih Svetih) next door as a bonus. This 18th-century baroque church features a carved and painted 15th-century rood screen and a wooden late-18th-century pieta, along with a wealth of local religious paintings.

In the high season, water taxis at the Jadrolinija port collect passengers for visits

to various points on the island as well as **Badija Island**, which has a 15th-century Franciscan monastery and a naturist beach.

## Activities

You can rent a bike at Kantun Tours (p283) or a motorcycle (200KN for 24 hours) or boat (540KN per day) from **Rent a Dir** (☎ 711 908; www.korcula-rent.com; Biline 5). For some beach activity, head to Orebić (p288).

## Tours

The agencies on p283 can set you up on an island tour, a trip to Mljet, a rafting tour and a handful of other excursions.

## Festivals & Events

**Holy Week** celebrations are particularly elaborate in Korčula. Beginning on Palm Sunday, the entire week before Easter is devoted to ceremonies and processions organised by the local religious brotherhoods dressed in traditional costumes. The townspeople sing medieval songs and hymns, Biblical events are re-enacted and the city gates are blessed. The most solemn processions are on Good Friday when members of all the brotherhoods parade through the streets. A schedule of events is available at the tourist office, but keep in mind that these are religious events and spectators are expected to be discreet about photos.

## Sleeping

### CAMPING GROUNDS

There's one large and several small camping grounds. The largest camping ground, **Autocamp Kalac** (☎ 711 182; fax 711 146; per person/site 50/46KN; 🕒 Jun-Sep), is an attractive site behind Hotel Bon Repos in a dense pine grove near the beach.

About 10km west of town near Račišće are three small camping grounds that offer more privacy and access to uncrowded beaches. They are all open from June to mid-September and cost about 90KN per person, including a tent and car:

**Kamp Oskorušica** (☎ 710 747)

**Kamp Tri Žala** (☎ 721 244; trizala@vip.hr)

**Kamp Vrbovica** (☎ 721 311)


### HOSTELS



**Onelove Hostel** (☎ 716 755; www.korculabackpacker.com; Hrvatske Bratske Zajednice 6; dm 100KN) Prepare for hedonism at this South African/Croatian-run hostel, where, according to travellers,

good-looking girls and heavy boozers get priority bookings. It's all grog, dance, stay up all night and party, so don't say you haven't been warned.



## HOTELS

Korčula's hotel scene is on the bulky and resort side, but the hotels listed here are decent. Overhauls may happen during the lifespan of this book. The following are all owned by **Korčula Hotels** ([www.korcula-hotels.com](http://www.korcula-hotels.com)).

**Hotel Park** (☎ 726 004; per person low-high €28-47; ) This concrete behemoth would never win any architectural prizes, but it boasts its own beach and many of its rooms come with balconies and sea views.


**Hotel Bon Repos** (☎ 726 800; per person low-high €45-60;  ) Outside town on the road to Lumbarda, it has manicured grounds and a large pool overlooking a small beach. The hotel complex is so large you could get lost trying to find the reception, but the rooms are quite comfortable.



**Hotel Korčula** (☎ 711 078; Obala Franje Tuđmana 5; per person low-high €55-80;  ) Positioned on the western harbour, it has the most character of all the hotels and a wide terrace where you can linger over coffee. The mediocre rooms vary in size; try to get one with a sea view. There's no lift and you'll have to carry your bags to your room.

**Hotel Liburna** (☎ 726 006; Put Old Luke 17; per person low-high €55-88;  ) There's a pool, tennis courts and opportunities to windsurf from the concrete beach here, but the rooms are fairly bland.

## PRIVATE ROOMS

If you don't fancy staying in any of the big hotels, a more personal option is a guest house. Atlas Travel Agency and Marko Polo Tours (see p283) arrange private rooms for around 250KN to 350KN for a double, or you could try one of the following.

**Villa DePolo** (☎ /fax 711 621; tereza.depolo@du.t-com.hr; d low-high 240-290KN; ) In the residential neighbourhood close to the old town and 100m west of the bus station, this guest house has four modern, clean rooms, some with sea views. Note that there is a 30% extra charge on one-night stays.

**Pansion Hajduk** (☎ 711 267; olga.zec@du.t-com.hr; d from €40;  ) It's a couple of kilometres from town on the road to Lumbarda, but you get a warm welcome, air-conditioned rooms

with TVs and even a swimming pool. If you're going on foot, go past the Hotel Marko Polo for about 1km, passing the fire station, and you'll see it on the right. The hotel restaurant is also worth the walk.

Other guest houses nearby for about the same price include **Peručić** (☎ /fax 715 938; tonci.perucic@du.t-com.hr), with great balconies, and the homely **Ojđanić** (☎ /fax 711 708; roko-taxi@du.t-com.hr). The owner of the latter, Ratko Ojđanić, also has a water taxi and lots of experience with fishing trips around the island.

## Eating

You can pick up picnic and other basic supplies at the supermarket.

**Cukarin** (☎ 711 055; Hrvatske Bratske Zajednice; cakes from 10KN) You've got to try Korčula's pastries such as *cukarini* (sweet biscuit), *klajun* (walnut pastry), *amareta* (round, rich cake with almonds) and *harubica* (carob biscuit) – they're all prepared on site, explaining the long queues in the mornings.

**Fresh** (☎ 091 799 2086; [www.igotfresh.com](http://www.igotfresh.com); 1 Kod Kina Liburne; snacks from 20KN) Right across from the bus station, Fresh is fab for breakfast smoothies, lunch wraps, or beers and cocktails in the evening. It's sister to Dubrovnik's Fresh (p272).

**Buffet-Pizzeria Doris** (☎ 711 596; Tri Sulara; mains from 35KN) Simple but tasty dishes are served up indoors or outdoors on a shaded terrace. The grilled vegetable platter is a welcome vegetarian treat.

**Planjak** (☎ 711 015; Plokata 19 Travnja; mains from 50KN) Meat lovers should head here for the mixed grill and proper Balkan dishes, served on a covered terrace.

**Konoba Marinero** (☎ 711 170; Marka Andrijića; mains from 50KN) Right in the heart of the medieval old town, the friendly and marine-themed Marinero is family-run and cosy. The sons catch the fish and the parents prepare it according to a variety of traditional recipes.

**Konoba Maslina** (☎ 711 720; Lumbarska cesta bb; mains from 50KN) It's well worth the walk out here for the authentic Korčulan home cooking. The multibeane soup is a standout. It's about a kilometre past the Hotel Marko Polo on the road to Lumbarda, but you can often arrange to be picked up or dropped off in town.

**Gradski Podrum** (☎ 711 222; Kaporova; mains from 70KN) Situated just inside the southern gate, this restaurant serves fish Korčula style (poached with potatoes and topped with a

## SWORD DANCES

One of the island's most colourful traditions is the Moreška sword dance, performed in Korčula since the 15th century. Although the dance is probably of Spanish origin, Korčula is now the only place it is performed. It tells the story of two kings – the White King (dressed in red) and the Black King – who fight for a princess abducted by the Black King. In the spoken introduction the princess declares her love for the White King and the Black King refuses to relinquish her. The two armies draw swords and 'fight' in an intricate dance accompanied by a band. Enthusiastic townspeople perform the dance, which takes place outside the southern gate. Although traditionally performed only on Korčula's town day, 29 July, the dance now takes place every Monday and Thursday evening in July and August (and sometimes in June and September, too).

Kumpanija dances are also held around the island regularly, in Pupnat, Smokvica, Blato and Čara. This dance also involves a 'fight' between rival armies and culminates in the unfurling of a huge flag. It's accompanied by the *mišnice* (a local instrument like a bagpipe) and drums.

fresh tomato sauce). Pasta and seafood dishes are also reasonable.

## Drinking

**Cocktail Bar Massimo** (☎ 718 878; Šetalište Petra Kanavelića) It's original, you have to grant them that. This bar is lodged in a turret and accessible only by ladder; the drinks are brought up by pulley. You get a lovely view of the cathedral.

**Fresh** (☎ 091 799 2086; [www.igotfresh.com](http://www.igotfresh.com); 1 Kod Kina Liburne; snacks from 20KN) A party atmosphere develops at this little kiosk in the evenings, when happy hours and two-for-one offers kick in.

**Tramonto** (☎ 098 192 1048; Ismaelli 12) Fantastic sunsets are to be savoured as you sip cocktails at this terrace bar. It's popular with locals, tourists and yachters alike. The music is relaxed and the vibe easygoing.

**Dos Locos** (☎ 091 528 8971; Šetalište Frana Kršinića 14) The craziest place in town (as the name suggests), as well as the youngest, with loud music and music videos projected on the side of a building. Just behind the bus station.

## Entertainment

Every visitor to Korčula in summer inevitably winds up at the Moreška sword dance (see boxed text, above), held at 9pm Monday and Thursday in July and August by the old town gate. Tickets cost 100KN and can be purchased on the spot or from any travel agency. If you can work out the transport, the Kumpanija dances in the villages of Pupnat, Smokvica, Blato and Čara make a fun night out, but as yet there's no bus that makes the run.

## Getting There & Away

For information on getting to and from Korčula Town, see p282. There's a **Jadrolinija office** (☎ 715 410) about 25m down from the West Harbour.

## LUMBARDA

Surrounded by vineyards and coves, Lumbarda is a laid-back village around a harbour on the southeastern end of Korčula Island. The sandy soil is perfect for the cultivation of grapes, and wine from the *grk* grape is Lumbarda's most famous product. Greeks were the first to settle the island, followed by Romans. In the 16th century, aristocrats from Korčula built summer houses around Lumbarda, and it remains a bucolic retreat from the more urbanised Korčula Town. The town beaches are small but sandy. A good beach (Plaza Pržina) is on the other side of the vineyards beyond the supermarket.

## Information

The post office is next door to the **tourist office** (☎ /fax 712 005; [www.lumbarda.hr](http://www.lumbarda.hr); 🕒 8am-noon & 4-8pm mid-Jun-Jul, 8am-10pm Jul-mid-Sep, 8am-noon & 4-8pm mid-Sep-Oct, 8am-2pm Mon-Fri Oct-mid-Jun), which is up the street from the bus stop and finds private accommodation.

## Sleeping & Eating

There are several small, inexpensive camping grounds up the hill from the bus stop.

**Pansion Marinka** (☎ 712 007, 098 344 712; [marinka.milina-bire@du.t-com.hr](mailto:marinka.milina-bire@du.t-com.hr); d low-high 150-230KN) This is a working farm and winery situated in a beautiful setting within walking distance of the beach. The owners turn out excellent wines and liqueurs, catch and smoke their own fish

and are happy to explain the processes to their guests, who are invited to participate if they like. They rightly bill their farm as 'a place where you can forget all your problems'.

**Hotel Borik** (☎ 712 215; www.hotelborik.hr; s/d 300/570KN) This hotel is set back from the road on a small hill in the centre of town and is definitely quiet. Rooms are simple.

**More** (☎ 712 068; mains from 70KN) A lovely sea-front restaurant, More has a terrace thick with vine leaves and a kitchen that produces the island's best lobster and other seafood.

## Getting There & Away

In Korčula Town, water taxis wait around the Jadrolinija port for passengers to Lumbarda. You'll only pay about 50KN depending on the number of passengers. Buses to Lumbarda (10KN, 15 minutes) run about hourly until mid-afternoon, but there's no service on Sunday. The bus stops in the town centre.

## VELA LUKA

Vela Luka, at the western end of Korčula, is a simple, sober port town that has little of interest for visitors. If you do decide to stay, know that there are no beaches around town, but small boats can take you to the idyllic offshore islands of Proizd and Osjak.

Surrounded by hills covered with olive trees, most of the town is engaged in the production and marketing of Korčula's famous olive oil. Because of the town's large sheltered harbour, the fishing industry also thrives.

## Orientation & Information

Most of the town and nearly all commercial activity is clustered around the harbour.

**Atlas Travel Agency** (☎ 812 078; www.atlas-velaluka.com; Obala 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) On the quay and near the bus station; finds accommodation.

**Tourist office** (☎ /fax 813 619; www.tzvelaluka.hr; Ulica 41; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Sat Jun-Sep, 8am-3pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) Coming from Korčula Town, it's at the entrance to town.

## Sights & Activities

There isn't a lot to see at Vela Luka, but if you have some time to kill you should take a look at the Neolithic **Vela Špilja** (admission 5KN) cave, which is spacious enough to make cave-dwelling seem like a viable accommodation option. Signs from town direct you to the cave, which overlooks the town and

harbour. Opening hours for the cave vary, so check with the tourist office first.

For a total veg-out at the beach, nothing beats the offshore islands of **Proizd** and **Osjak**. The clear, blue water and white stones of Proizd are dazzling, while Osjak, the larger island, is known for its forest. Bring plenty of sunscreen as there is little shade. There are inexpensive eating options on both islands. Several small boats leave each morning in July and August and pick you up in the afternoon. The bay of **Gradina**, 5km northwest of Vela Luka, is another lovely, peaceful spot graced with a few beaches. You'll need your own wheels though.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Camp Mindel** (☎ 813 600; www.mindel.hr; per adult/site 25/40KN; ☎ May-Sep) There's no bus service to this camping ground 5km west of Vela Luka so you'll need your own transport.

**Hotel Dalmacija** (☎ /fax 812 022; www.humhotels.hr; Obala bb; s/d 460/615KN) This is one of several hotels in Vela Luka managed by Hum Hotels. Rooms have cool Mediterranean colours and it's on the waterfront.

**Pod Bore** (☎ 813 069; Obala 5; mains from 60KN) This spacious restaurant with an outdoor terrace offers a pleasant view over the harbour, and the food isn't bad either.

## Getting There & Away

For information on getting to and from Vela Luka, see p282.

# PELJEŠAC PENINSULA

## OREBIĆ

pop 1489

Orebić, on the southern coast of the Pelješac Peninsula (Map pp282-3) between Korčula and Ploče, has the best beaches in southern Dalmatia – wide, sandy coves bordered by groves of tamarisk and pine. Only 2.5km across the water from Korčula, it's a perfect day trip from Korčula or an alternative place to stay. After enough lazing on the beach, you can take advantage of some excellent hiking up and around Mt Ilija (961m) or poke around in a couple of churches and museums. Mt Ilija protects the town from harsh northern winds, allowing Mediterranean vegetation to flourish. The temperature is usually a few degrees warmer

than Korčula; spring arrives earlier and summer leaves later.

## History

Orebić and the Pelješac Peninsula became part of Dubrovnik in 1333 when it was purchased from Serbia. Until the 16th century, the town was known as Trstenica (the name of its eastern bay) and was an important maritime centre. In fact, the town is named after a family of sea captains who, in 1658, built a citadel as a defence against the Turks. Many of the houses and exotic gardens built by prosperous sea captains still grace Orebić and its surroundings. The height of Orebić seafaring occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries when it was the seat of one of the largest companies of the day: the Associazione Marittima di Sabioncello. With the decline of shipping, Orebić began exploiting its tourist attractions to bolster the local economy.

## Orientation & Information

The ferry from Korčula ties up in the town centre, just steps from the tourist office. The bus stop (no left-luggage office) is at the end of the ferry dock, and the main commercial street, Bana Josipa Jelačića, runs parallel to the port. There's a beach west of the dock, but the best beach is the long stretch at Trstenica cove, about 500m east of the dock along Šetalšte Kneza Domagoja.

**Orebić Tours** (☎ 713 367; [www.orebic-tours.hr](http://www.orebic-tours.hr); Bana Josipa Jelačića 84a; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Finds private accommodation, changes money and books excursions.

**Post office** (Trg Mimbeli bb) Next door to the tourist office.

**Tourist office** (☎ /fax 713 718; [www.tz-orebic.com](http://www.tz-orebic.com); Trg Mimbeli bb; ☎ 8am-8pm Jul & Aug, 8am-1pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) Also finds private accommodation, changes money and dispenses information.

## Sights & Activities

The **Maritime Museum** (☎ 713 009; Obala Pomoraca; admission 10KN; ☎ 10am-noon & 6-9pm Mon-Fri, 7-9pm Sat), next to the tourist office, is interesting enough for a peek. There are paintings of boats, boating memorabilia, navigational aids and prehistoric finds from archaeological excavations in nearby Majsan. Explanations are in English.

Orebić is great for **hiking**, so pick up a map of the hiking trails from the tourist office. A trail through pine woods leads from Hotel Bellevue to a 15th-century **Franciscan monastery** (admission 5KN;

## THE RIGHT KIND OF WIND

If you're into windsurfing, head over to Viganj, a village that sits on the south-western end of Pelješac and faces Korčula Island. It has some of the best windsurfing in Croatia. The village is a tiny thing, with few visitors except for those who are affected by the windsurfing frenzy. There are several places where you can rent out equipment in the village and tons of beach bars come alive during the summer. Try **Karmela 2** (☎ 719 097) for bizarre frolics and beach parties.

☎ 8am-noon & 5-7pm) on a ridge 152m above the sea. From their vantage point, Dubrovnik patrols could keep an eye on the Venetian ships moored on Korčula and notify the authorities of any suspicious movements. The village of **Karmen** near the monastery is the starting point for walks to picturesque upper villages and the more daring climb to the top of **Mt Ilija**, the bare, grey massif that hangs above Orebić. Your reward is a sweeping view of the entire coast. On a hill east of the monastery is the **Lady of Karmen Church** (Gospa od Karmena), next to several huge cypresses, as well as a baroque **loggia** and the **ruins** of a duke's castle.

## Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office or Orebić Tours find private rooms (from 150KN per person) as well as studios and apartments.

All the modern resort complexes are west of town and run by **HTP Orebić** ([www.orebic-htp.hr](http://www.orebic-htp.hr)). There's one good camping ground.

**Glavna Plaža** (☎ 713 399; [www.glavnaplaza.com](http://www.glavnaplaza.com); Trstenica; per adult/site 25/50KN; ☎ Apr-Sep) This family-run camping ground overlooks the long, sandy Trstenica beach and there are also apartments available (375KN).

**Hotel Bellevue** (☎ /fax 713 148; [www.orebic-htp.hr](http://www.orebic-htp.hr); Svetog Križa 104; r per person from 400KN; ☎ ☎) On a rocky beach, it's the closest resort to town. Facilities include tennis courts and water sports on the hotel beach.

**Restoran Amfora** (☎ 713 719; Kneza Domagoja 6; mains from 50KN) This family-run restaurant is a local favourite for its fantastic seafood dishes.

## Getting There & Away

If you're coming from the mainland, there are three or four daily ferries (seven in

summer) from Ploče to Trpanj, which connect with a bus to Orebić. Korčula buses to Dubrovnik, Zagreb and Sarajevo stop at Orebić. For more bus and ferry information, see p282.

## STON & MALI STON

pop 740

The two settlements of Ston and Mali Ston are 59km northwest of Dubrovnik on an isthmus that connects the Pelješac Peninsula with the mainland. Formerly part of the Republic of Dubrovnik, Ston was and is an important salt-producing town. Its economic importance to the Republic of Dubrovnik led, in 1333, to the construction of a 5.5km wall, the longest fortification in Europe. The walls are still standing, sheltering an appealing cluster of medieval buildings in the town centre. Mali Ston, a little village and harbour situated about 1km northeast of Ston, was built along with the wall as part of the defensive system and is now known for the oyster beds along its bay. Both Ston and Mali Ston are major gastronomic highlights, turning out the best seafood in Croatia.

### Orientation & Information

The bus stop is located in the centre of Ston, near the tourist office, bank and post office. The **tourist office** (☎/fax 754 452; [www.tzo-ston.hr](http://www.tzo-ston.hr); Peljestki put 1; 🕒 7am-1pm & 5-7pm Mon-Fri, 7am-1pm Sat Jul & Aug, 7am-3pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) has a small selection of brochures and can arrange private accommodation.

### Sights & Activities

The major sight in Ston is the 14th-century **walls** (admission free; 🕒 10am-dusk) that stretch from the town far up the hill. The clear Pelješac air allows for magnificent views out over the peninsula.

There are no beaches in town but it's an easy walk to Camping Prapratno, 4km southwest of town, where there's a cove and a **pebble beach**.

### Sleeping & Eating

Each of the hotels listed here has an excellent restaurant, but there are also a few other possibilities for sampling the superb seafood.

**Camping Prapratno** (☎ 754 000; fax 754 344; per adult/site 28/48KN; 🚻) This camping ground 4km southwest of Ston is right on Prapratno Bay and offers tennis and basketball courts as well as swimming facilities.

**Vila Koruna** (☎ 754 359; [www.vila-koruna.hr](http://www.vila-koruna.hr); s/d 500/660KN; 📞) In an old house on the harbour of Mali Ston, this six-room hotel provides warm, personal service and comfortable rooms with TV and phone, as well as a restaurant downstairs.

**Ostrea** (☎ 754 555; [www.ostrea.hr](http://www.ostrea.hr); s/d half board 800/1200KN; 📞) Rooms are on a grander scale in this harbourside hotel in Mali Ston, containing modern bathrooms, computer terminals and minibars.

**our pick Kapetanova Kuća** (☎ 754 452; mains from 75KN) Near the Ostrea hotel, this is one of the most venerable seafood restaurants in the region. The oysters and mussels are to die for.

**Bella Vista** (☎ 753 110; mains from 75KN) On a cliff overlooking Prapratno Bay, this friendly restaurant serves up delicious seafood platters and has a marvellous view of the bay.

### Getting There & Away

Three daily buses go from Dubrovnik to Orebić, stopping at Ston and Mali Ston (59KN, 1½ hours). The one daily Dubrovnik-Korčula bus also travels via Mali Ston and Ston (67KN, two hours).

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