

CROATIA CONTINUES TO ATTRACT MORE VISITORS THAN EVER



Until recently, Croatia was a country on the fringes of Europe. It was only in 1991 that it declared its independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

But Croatia has come a long way since those early days of independence. It is now an acceding state of the European Union, with full membership expected by July 2013. And after heavy investment in infrastructure and tourism in the last two decades, it has also emerged as one of Europe's leading tourist destinations. Croatia is now ranked the 18th most popular tourist destination in the world, and Cosmos holidays alone have just celebrated their 4000th Croatia customer!

It's easy to understand this surge in popularity. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the rolling back of Communism, portions of Central and Eastern Europe that were previously closed to UK visitors slowly opened up. And one of those that benefitted the most was Croatia. At only 2.5 hours flying time from the UK, Croatia is close enough for weekend city breaks. But it also has enough to keep visitors entertained for a fortnight or more. The country blends historic towns and cities with beautiful natural landscape, and boasts the spectacular Dalmatian coast which falls into the Adriatic Sea.

Particularly popular visitor spots include the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dubrovnik, a beautiful walled city with terracotta roofs shining in the sun, and the Dalmatian island of Hvar. The ancient city of Split, another coastal location, is also very popular. The former site of the palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, visitors can still wander the well-preserved ruins when they want a break from the glorious Mediterranean sunshine.

To make the most of this surge in popularity, holiday providers have been eager to develop their Croatian operations. Phil Boggan, Cosmos' Director of Product, said: "Since the launch of summer '12, there has been incredible growth as we have expanded and diversified the programme to meet demand. We have broadened our product range to include more of the Croatian islands [...] and expanded the choice of hotels in the most popular resorts along the Dalmatian Coast. Our sales to Croatia have quadrupled year-on-year as we benefit from the key changes to our flying programme as well as the wider variety of hotels and apartments we have introduced to cater for couples, families and weekenders."

Croatia holidays offer great value and the ability to experience the many sides of this diverse and fascinating country.

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