The city of Zagreb, capital of Croatia, on the historic and political threshold between East and West, illustrates both the continental and Mediterranean spirit of the nation it spearheads. Zagreb is the cultural, scientific, economic, political and administrative centre of the Republic of Croatia, and is home to the Croatian Parliament, Government and President. Its favourable location between the Pannonian plain, the edge of the Alps and the Dinaric range has allowed it to become a crossing point for mass international communication. The city is protected from the cold northern winds by the mountain of Medvednica and opens up to the rest of the world thanks to a spacious plain and the Sava river. Zagreb, with a population of nearly one million, contains almost a quarter of the entire population of Croatia. Over the centuries, the city was inhabited by people coming from all over Europe; and, in recent years, by people coming from different parts of Croatia, ensuring a rich cultural
life. Zagreb is a safe city whose doors are always open; a city with a tumultuous history teeming with interesting personalities; a city that warmly invites all those who wish to get to know it, and a city that will surely fulfill your expectations. In this city, you can easily meet remarkable people, make new friends and enjoy special moments. The façades of Zagreb's buildings reflect the ebb and flow of history, while its streets and squares bear witness to the coming together of the many cultures that have shaped the identity of this laid-back capital. The best thing to do is when you first arrive is to take in Zagreb's wonderful atmosphere, which, as many claim, is only surpassed by the legendary beauty of the local womenfolk.
Archeological discoveries dating back to around 35,000 B.C. during the Stone Age have been discovered in the vicinity of present-day Zagreb, while later finds show evidence of the Illyrians' arrival in this part of Europe. The Celts later moved in from the far north, presumably in the fourth century B.C. They were succeeded by the Romans who built a large urban centre called Andautonia and whose remains have been preserved in the archeological park of Šćitarjevo.

Zagreb as we know it today, which is to say its historical centre, dates back to the Middle Ages, and the settlements on two hills: secular Gradec, today known as the Upper Town; and ecclesiastical Kaptol.

The first written record of Zagreb dates back to 1094 when the Hungarian king Ladislav established the Kaptol diocese on his way to the Adriatic Sea. The Zagreb Cathedral still dominates the skyline with its neo-Gothic style, while the Renaissance walls surrounding it are rare preserved examples of their kind in this part of Europe. During the Mongol invasions of central Europe another historic event occurred here, and one that would greatly impact on Gradec, the other half of Zagreb's core. In the mid-13th century the Tatars ravaged Hungary and their king Béla IV fled to Zagreb.
where its citizens provided him with a refuge. In gratitude, in 1242 Béla gave Gradec a charter proclaiming it a free royal city. His generosity is symbolically reenacted every day by the blasting of the cannon at noon from the Lotrščak tower overlooking central Zagreb. In the Middle Ages bells were sounded to warn the citizens to return to the fort as the gates to the city were about to be closed and locked. The only gate preserved from the Middle Ages, Kamenita vrata, was burned down in the first half of the 18th century. Miraculously, the only thing saved in the fire was an icon of the Virgin Mary that still occupies its prime spot in the wall. Our Lady of Kamenita Vrata is celebrated as the patron saint of Zagreb and her feast is on the 31st of May when a ceremonial procession is organised. The occasion is also used as the City of Zagreb Day.

The two hills, adversaries in the Middle Ages, were separated by the Medveščak creek and its mills. The creek valley sat along the present-day street of Tkaličićeva and it still runs underneath it, out towards the river Sava.
In time the threats of attack subsided and the city started to spread out around the valley. A trading centre below the two settlements evolved into what is now the main square of Ban Josip Jelačić. This is the heart of the city and a meeting point for all Zagreb citizens. There is also a legend of how the city was named. On a sunny day, a brave governor, exhausted and thirsty from battle, asked a girl named Manda to ladle (zagrabiti) him out some water from the spring. This became Manduševac and the city became Zagreb.
The unified city of Zagreb

The twin settlements on the hills prospered. Baroque mansions and churches were built in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Jesuit order built St. Catherine’s Church, considered one of the best preserved examples of Baroque ecclesiastical splendour. In the second half of the 17th century, Zagreb became a university centre, one of the longest existing in Europe.

In the meantime, Zagreb also became the seat of government. Differences between the ecclesiastical city and the free royal borough slowly disappeared and the two finally merged in 1850 to form the unified city of Zagreb, with a population of 15,000. The new city’s position enabled unhindered growth and Zagreb soon spread around the valley of the river Sava.
The development of industrial production, commerce, transport and banking during the second half of the 19th century made their mark on the city's appearance. In 1862 Zagreb expanded to the railway that has connected it with all other central European capitals to the present day. This is when the city started to develop along gridlines. The town-planning scheme strictly outlined that all streets must be straight and of the same width, and all buildings of the same type and height. Spacious squares and monuments in the neo-styles of the 19th century are seen among the many parks.
and green spaces that comprise the appearance of present-day Zagreb. Praška leads us away from the main square to the so-called Green Horseshoe. This series of open green spaces, not unlike the Ring in Vienna, is formed in the shape of the letter ‘u’ and contains important institutions of public culture. The ratio of greenery to the urban architecture, fountains and pavilions was carefully planned out. This is where the main railway station, Glavni kolodvor, is located, as well as the Academy of Sciences and Arts, the University Library, the National Theatre, noblemen’s palaces and numerous colleges. Yellow-tinted façades and lines of wild chestnut trees echo the era when Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy. The old Upper Town evolved into a systematically organised area with clearly defined sections of greenery and carefully located monuments. Building entrances around the Lower Town provide a link between public thoroughfares and the private sphere of residential courtyards. This atmospheric mix of small town and luxurious Central-European metropolis raised Zagreb to the level of contemporary cities to be reckoned with during the nineteenth century.
Modern times

The historic events of the 20th century transformed the map of the world and left a mark on the lives of citizens of Zagreb. In 1918, after the World War I, Croatia severed all bonds with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, a new state formed by the south Slav peoples. The population of Zagreb increased and new districts emerged in the eastern and western parts of the city, while impressive residences were built in the foothills of Sljeme. In this early part of the 20th century, Zagreb developed close links with other European centres of art, culture and science.

It was at this point that the first radio station in this part of Europe
began to broadcast; the Zagreb Stock Exchange opened; the first automatic telephone exchange was built, as well as the city’s first skyscraper. Modern times continued to change the everyday life of local citizens until the outbreak of World War II.

After the war Croatia, with Zagreb as its capital, became one of the six republics of Yugoslavia. The post-war years lead to the further expansion of the city. It finally spread over the south bank of the river Sava with the construction of residential blocks. For centuries, the Sava had been flooding the valley while protecting citizens from medieval invasion and serving as a link to distant lands. From the mid-20th century it became the border between the old town of Zagreb and Novi Zagreb. Today there are twelve bridges connecting north and south, new and old. The Zagreb Fair, a venue for international business conventions, moved across to the south bank of the river. Pleso airport was built in the valley; around town, office blocks sprang up, along with a new National and University Library.

In 1991 the Croatian Parliament proclaimed the independence of Croatia as a sovereign state. Zagreb became the capital of a newly
independent European nation, in a society of free and equal citizens. The Parliament of Croatia and the Government have their seat in the Upper Town, the oldest secular centre of the city, where historic decisions have been made for centuries. In the new millennium, the city of Zagreb is the business centre of the region, a place for multilingual business communication, political debate and cultural exchange. Business quarters just outside metropolitan Zagreb are a response to the demands of modern life. Zagreb continues to be as involved in events in Europe and the world, as it always has done.
Green Zagreb

You can find spaces for recreation almost anywhere around Zagreb. Also within easy reach we find Medvednica, a popular destination for outings. Right in the city centre, parks, streets and squares intersect with green spaces and gardens. Landscaped in the 19th century, Strossmayer Promenade in the Upper Town is where you can enjoy a romantic panorama of Zagreb accompanied by the poet A.G. Matoš, in sculpture form. Further evidence of 19th-century urban planning is provided by the so-called Green Horseshoe. This line of eight green squares created by Lenuci serves as the axis of the Lower Town. One of the most popular is Zrinjavec, known for its row of plane
trees brought in from Trieste more than a century ago. Fountains, a music pavilion and busts of notable figures take us back to that time. There is also a **meteorological display** which citizens of Zagreb use to check the time, the daily temperature, local air pressure and humidity.

Those arriving by train are first greeted by lovely views of **King Tomislav** square, named after the first Croatian king; the Art Pavilion and Zagreb Cathedral. The **Art Pavilion**, venue for special cultural events, was originally the Croatian Pavilion at the Millennium Exhibition in Budapest in 1896. Its innovative iron construction made it possible to transport it to its present location and for it to open to the Zagreb public two years later. Nearby nestles another green oasis, the **Botanical Gardens**, containing one of the most splendid plant collections in Europe, with some 10,000 varieties. Behind the walls of the Cathedral you'll find **Ribnjak**, 'Fishpond', a park where clergymen used to catch fish for their Friday meal.
In the eastern part of the city stretches spacious **Maksimir**. Zagreb’s biggest park was landscaped in the 19th century, in what was considered the English style. It later became home to many animals when a **zoo** was opened here in the first half of the 20th century. Outside the limits of the city centre, up on the hill, stands the main cemetery of **Mirogoj**. Its monumental arcades, pavilions and domes were designed in the late 19th century by prominent architect Hermann Bollé. One of the most beautiful cemeteries in Europe and the resting place for many public figures, Mirogoj is a lovely park in its own right, as well as an open-air art gallery.
Zagreb enjoys a rich cultural life. Around 30 theatres are active in the city, some with regular programmes, some occasional. Along with some 30 museums, a large number of galleries and many theatre, music and dance festivals all combine to make Zagreb a city of art. From classical to alternative, from amateur to professional, from private to public, these different artistic outlets reflect the high level of cultural awareness. The Croatian National Theatre is the national home of ballet, opera and drama. Of all the concert halls, the most prominent is the Vatroslav Lisinski, named after the composer of the first Croatian opera. Operettas and musicals, rock and pop operas can be found in the Komedija Theatre; quick-witted humour and
The Arts, Culture and Events

Satire are staged at Kerempuh, and contemporary productions are shown at Gavella, ZKM, ITD, and EXIT. It would be impossible to list every venue, let alone suggest the best – find one that suits you. Zagreb hosts many international cultural events. The World Festival of Animated Film Animafest is the second oldest of its kind in Europe. The Music Biennial, the Dance Week Festival and Eurokaz, an international festival of modern theatre, bring performers from around the world to the stages of Zagreb.

As we have already seen, the history, art and culture of Zagreb, Croatia and Europe are reflected in the architecture around the city, as well as in its varied museums. The Archeological Museum contains the mysterious mummy of a woman from Thebes in Egypt, wrapped in linen – the longest text in Etruscan still to be decrypted. The Zagreb City Museum brings a modern interpretation of historical events in the city from prehistoric times to the present day. The Museum of Arts and Crafts was founded together with a school in the same discipline in the second half of the 19th century, both established to preserve the traditional values of craftsmanship. A unique collection from different areas and
periods has been on display at the Mimara Museum since the University Games were held in Zagreb in 1987. The Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters houses a collection of works by famous painters and is an essential stop for connoisseurs of European art from the 15th to 19th centuries. Nearby we find the Modern Gallery, in which works by every significant artist from the 19th and the 20th centuries are exhibited. Zagreb has also entered the 21st century with a new building for the Museum of Contemporary Art, now opening to the public. In the Upper Town, the Klović Gallery is housed in a former Jesuit monastery. For emotion, raw life and symbolism, visit the Museum of Naïve Art, with its display of works by non-academic painters. Nearby is the Atelier Meštrović, a gallery where sculptor Ivan Meštrović used to live and create work that marked the 20th century just as profoundly as Rodin’s. The circular pavilion that is now the Hall of Croatian Artists was built on the basis of his idea. These are only some of the venues and events to give you the flavour of the rich cultural life of the city.
Blue is the colour of Zagreb. It is found on the coat of arms, on city trams, buses and the funicular, while the shirts of its sportsmen are also the same colour. The people of Zagreb have always been passionate about sport, especially football. Dinamo, the football club with the most trophies in Croatia, also has blue as its team colour.

Centres for recreation and professional sports can be found all around the city. The Cibona Basketball Club plays in a sports hall named after the legendary player Dražen Petrović. In addition, what used to be a branch of the Sava river is now the Jarun Recreational Sports Centre, built for the 1987 University Games.
Here you’ll find cycle paths, footpaths and sports courts for everyone to use – international rowing competitions take place on the lake. At Jarun there is also small patch of undisturbed nature, home to several hundreds of species of birds, fish, water animals and insects. A large catfish called Jura might just be an urban myth but anglers who fish here do hope to catch something big. In summer, Jarun is referred to as the Zagreb Sea, as its beaches fill with sun worshippers.

Sport carries on through the winter. At the beginning of the year Zagreb hosts the **Ski World Cup**, justifying another of its names, **White Zagreb**. Only half-an-hour from the city’s main square of **Ban Josip Jelačić** we find the highest peak of Medvednica Mountain, **Sljeme** (1035 metres), which holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Zagreb. This is where famous Croatian skiers and siblings Ivica and Janica Kostelić trained for their many medals and trophies. Their promotion of the ski run at Sljeme led to it being included in the World Cup schedule. Sljeme is also a favourite place for outings, whatever the season.
Lifestyle, Gastronomy and Shopping
Lounge culture

Zagreb can be described as a city with the biggest lounge. The moment the sun appears in the sky in spring, restaurant, café and coffeehouse terraces open for custom. Streets become promenades, places to get a cup of coffee, relax or have a business meeting. A combination of Mediterranean cordiality and northern business sense make any visitor feel welcome. The traditional **International Folklore Festival**, the global festival of street performers **Cest is d’Best**, outdoor summer concerts on **Zrinjevac, St. Martin’s Day** and many other open-air events increase the feeling of communality.
Lounging in cafés has been a long tradition in this city. The Zagreb Green Horseshoe and the main square of Ban Josip Jelačić have always been hubs of social life in Zagreb. Nowadays, this has spread across the whole city centre, around the pedestrianised zone and even further. People from all walks of life can find something of interest here. Cafés around Ban Jelačić, or simply ‘Square’ as it is often referred to, attract prominent figures. Preradović, also known as Flower Square, is loved by artists and young people, as well as an older crowd. Tkalčićeva, once the border between Gradec and Kaptol, used to be full of pubs and served as the red-light district, but nowadays it is a trendy destination for rendezvous and relaxation for the whole family. The romantic among you can take the funicular on Ilica, the shortest one in the world used for public transportation – you’ll reach the Upper Town in 55 seconds.

All of these locations form part of the phenomenon known as Špica. Every Saturday around noon people of all ages come to the centre because that is the time and place to see and be seen. The ritual is always the same: people slowly sip coffee, read the Saturday papers, stop off at Dolac market to pick up fresh produce and then go home to prepare lunch. In every neighbourhood there is a favourite meeting place where regulars feel welcome and where everybody knows your name.
The gastronomic selection in Zagreb comprises a rich combination of many cuisines. History and geography have had a great impact on menus here. Although the people of Zagreb gladly cook at home, there are many places in town where you can find specialities of inland Croatia as well as Mediterranean and international cuisine.

**Štrukli** is one of the authentic dishes anyone in Zagreb would recommend. There are several different ways of preparation so it can be cooked or baked, sweet or salty. **Turkey with mlinci pasta strips** is one of the traditional meals of inland Croatia. There is also **Zagreb steak**, a piece of fried veal filled with cheese and ham, somewhat similar to its renowned Vienna counterpart. For breakfast you should try fresh cream with cheese bought directly from the producer, the so-called *kumica*, from villages around Zagreb. Another feature of the city are its open-air food markets. Almost every neighbourhood has one but the **Dolac**, near the Cathedral, is the best known. This is where producers sell fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and fish daily.
Dolac is a unique place, the so-called 'The Belly of Zagreb', where lovers of good food come to find seasonal products from all parts of Croatia. There you will encounter a mass of colours, smells and sounds. During the day eateries by the market offer cheap, fast, home-made dishes. There are cake shops and bakeries on every corner. We recommend you visit one of the numerous restaurants that offer regional cuisine. You should certainly try Zagreb strudel with apples, cheese or cherries, and there is also kremšnita, the most famous creamcake made in the nearby town of Samobor. We should not leave without mentioning the praised wines made from grapes grown near Zagreb.

Even though beer is the most popular drink, wine has always been very important in Zagreb, and proof is in the celebration of St. Martin's Day. The holiday of this patron saint of wine falls on the 11th of November.
An original souvenir from a visit to Zagreb is a tie, a must-have item of clothing in the business world and an authentic Croatian product. In the 17th century Croatian soldiers used to tie elegant scarves around their necks, a fashion later picked up by the French – the rest is history. One of the most important inventions of the 20th century, the fountain pen, was actually designed in Zagreb. Its inventor, engineer Eduard Slavoljub Penkala, patented the world’s first mechanical pencil in 1906 and in 1907 he patented the first fountain pen. He produced them in Zagreb and exported them to 70 countries around the world. This pioneer of modern times has about 80 inventions to his name, even
some in the field of aeronautics. In 1910, only a couple of years after the Wright Brothers, Penkala designed Croatia's first aeroplane. The aromatic biscuit paprenjak, once made by the women of old Zagreb, is another original souvenir. It is an unusual combination of honey, walnuts and pepper and a reminder of the contrasts we find in Zagreb. The licitar, a traditional, colourfully adorned biscuit made from honey dough, originates from central Croatia and the lowlands. As it is heart-shaped, it should be given as a symbol of love and affection for special occasions.

Red Šestine umbrellas, a part of traditional local attire, protect the traders at the Dolac market from sun and rain. They too form a prominent part of the city's identity. For those interested in antiques and works of art, there is a market every weekend at Britanski trg. Zagreb is a city where you can browse in small traditional shops or at contemporary boutiques on the most famous street in the city, Ilica – or look for something in the main shopping malls. Zagreb is a city that always holds a special place in the hearts of those who visit it.
Zagreb is the capital of the Republic of Croatia

**Population:** 779,145 (2001)

**Area:** 641 km²

**Altitude:** Zrinjevac 122m, Grič 158m, Sljeme 1035m

**Climate:** continental - average summer temperature 20˚, average winter temperature 1˚

**Time zone:** Central European Time

**International phone code:** Croatia +385; Zagreb (0)1

**Currency:** kuna (kn)

**Distances to:** Vienna 370 km, Budapest 350 km, Venice 380 km, Dubrovnik 600 km, Paris 1,400 km, London 1,600 km.