

**CIT**  
Conference & Incentive Travel

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## CROATIA

# Four seasons in... Croatia

Take to the slopes in winter, sample the culture and culinary delights of Dubrovnik in spring, explore the 1,244 islands in summer and taste Istrian truffles in autumn. By *Jennifer Taylor*

### Winter in Zagreb



Renowned for its Gothic churches, baroque palaces, historic Upper Town and abundance of museums, the Croatian capital is the perfect city for a culture-inspired winter event.

Up to 900 guests can don evening

dress for a reception in the Great Reading Room at the art deco Croatian State Archives. The classicist-style Illyrian Hall can host a reception for 200.

Get spectacular views of the city on the Zagreb Funicular or from the rotating dome at the Vertigo bar at the 158-room Antunovic Hotel Zagreb, just five miles from the city centre. Ideal for larger events, the hotel boasts 20 meeting rooms, with one that can accommodate 900 delegates.

Stay at the heart of the action in the 123-room Palace Hotel Zagreb, just five minutes' walk from the historic centre. Its Strossmayer restaurant is ideal for a formal reception for 120. Also in the heart of the city, the 237-room Hotel Dubrovnik has nine multi-purpose halls, the largest holding 200 delegates. For incentives, take to the slopes of Medvednica mountain, 20 minutes from Zagreb, which hosted the Audi FIS World Cup ladies' and men's skiing slalom at Sljeme peak in January.



**Dizzy heights**  
(left) rotating dome at the Vertigo bar; (above) the art deco Croatian State Archives

### Spring in Dubrovnik



Beat the summer crowds and head to Dubrovnik in spring, when the medieval walled city's Film Festival takes place.

Up to 350 can enjoy a beach gala dinner at the Vala club in Dubrovnik Palace Hotel & Spa on the Lapad peninsula. It has 308 bedrooms and eight meeting rooms, the largest of which holds 750 delegates.

Nestled in lush greenery at the Babu Kuk peninsula and with cutting-edge architecture, the 401-room Valamar Lacroma Dubrovnik has a 1,200-capacity conference hall and seven meeting rooms.

Enjoy the outdoors at Radisson Blu's Dubrovnik Sun Gardens Resort in Orasac, just 80 minutes from Dubrovnik by shuttle boat. With 201 rooms, it has a range of sports activities and nine meeting rooms including one for 850. "The delegates thought the hotel was stunning," says Kim Burrows, project manager at Grass Roots Eventcom.

For a day trip, head to Peljesac Peninsula, 37 miles north-west of Dubrovnik for wine and oyster tasting, which "showcases the great quality of food and wines which are unknown to many guests from abroad", says Marina Raic, director of DMC Idea Events & Travel in Croatia.



**Stunning** (left) the entrance to Radisson Blu's Sun Gardens Resort; (above) Vala club in Dubrovnik Palace Hotel

## CROATIA

### Summer in Central Dalmatia



Summer is the time to head to the coast and explore some of Croatia's 1,244 islands, including Hvar Island and Bisevo Island's blue grotto in Central Dalmatia.

The islands are accessible from Split, the region's largest city and home of the 1,700-year-old Diocletian's Palace, a Unesco World Heritage site that can host up to 300 buffet-style. Book accommodation ten minute's walk away at the 128-room Atrium Hotel which has four flexible meeting rooms, with capacities for up to 400 people.

Alternatively, head to the 381-room Le Méridien Lav in Podstrana, five miles south of Split, where the Spalatum restaurant can seat up to 350 people plus 150 more on the terrace. It is set on the beachfront, and guests can sip cocktails at the hotel's private marina and make use of its outdoor sports facilities, including pool and beach tennis.

A 55-minute catamaran journey will transport guests from Split to Bol, on Brač Island, where the 306-room Bluesun Hotel Elaphusa has five conference halls named after islands in central and southern Dalmatia. The largest is the 800-capacity Brač hall. The nearby beach restaurant, Borak, can host a 400-person gala dinner.



**Beach business** (top) Le Méridien Lav in Podstrana; (above) Bluesun Hotel Elaphusa on Brač Island

### Autumn in Istria



Autumn is truffle season in Istria, with highlights including the Motovun Truffle Festival, the Tuberfest and Buzet's Truffle Weekend. Wine and olive oil tastings are also popular at this time.

Milo Gabric, account director for Goose Communications, which delivered the first drive of the new Bentley Continental GTC in the Istrian Peninsula, says truffle tasting in the medieval hilltop town of Motovun was "a truly unique experience".

Up to 100 guests can sample the region's wine, cheese and olive oil at Agrolaguna Porec, the largest producers of wine in Istria and of olive oil in Croatia. Groups can also visit historical monuments including the Euphrasius Basilica in Porec and the amphitheatre in Pula.

The 241-room Park Plaza Histria Pula is set to reopen under the Park Plaza Hotel brand in May 2012. Less than three miles from Pula, its congress hall will hold up to 700 guests.

Launched in July 2011, the 248-room Hotel Lone is Croatia's first member of Design Hotels. Close to the sea, it is ten minutes' walk from picturesque Rovinj and a few minutes' from the Adris Exhibition & Convention Centre, which has capacity for 2,000 delegates. For a rural Istrian experience, take a cooking course using regional products including truffles at La Parenza in Buje.



**Designed to please** (top) Design Hotels' first Croatian hotel, Hotel Lone; (above) Park Plaza Histria Pula

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