

A Culinary & Cultural Adventure in Croatia
September 7—15, 2018
Hosted by Onward Travel

ISTRIAN Immersion

ONWARD TRAVEL 
EST 2014



The beautiful Croatian peninsula of Istria, jutting out from the Northwest of the country into the Adriatic Sea across from Venice, is widely considered by “those in the know” to be one of the world’s most perfect culinary paradises.

The peninsula has two distinct faces: one of those is typified by dense forests, fertile fields and hilltop towns, the inner peninsula known as “Green Istria.” Here the Mediterranean climate encourages world class winemaking, the forests are full of truffles and other mushrooms in the autumn, olive oil producers, cheesemakers and beekeepers proliferate, and of course the scenery and hilltop vistas are stunning. Then there’s the coastline, known as “Blue Istria.” Here the cuisine is all about seafood, and the atmospheric coastal towns, with perfect blue waves lapping at their shores, are bursting with history from Byzantine chapels to Roman ruins.

We’ll spend a full week in Istria, and after our first restorative night at a luxurious seaside resort, our home base will be a charming stone villa positioned in the center of Green Istria with valley views, a swimming pool, and lots of cozy spaces. The pace of this week is a relaxing one, with afternoons spent visiting winemakers, learning about history and cooking up a storm punctuated with free time to unwind at the villa. We’ll be accompanied throughout our travels by two wonderful local guides who will bring us behind the scenes at their favorite places. From the hilltops to the seaside, vineyards to Roman ruins, there’s nowhere else quite like Istria...



Imagine yourself...

Truffle hunting in the Motovun Forest

Cruising through the bright blue waters along Istria’s rocky coastline

Visiting local wineries with a sommelier guide

Welcome to Croatia!

DAY 1: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 7

- Cruise through the bright blue waters and admire the coastline
- Dine on a gourmet feast while looking out at the Adriatic Sea

Arrive at Zagreb Franjo Tuđman Airport, Croatia's largest international hub, late this morning and your Onward Travel guide will be waiting for you along with professional, private transportation and a packed lunch to enjoy en route - we're ready to whisk you off to the coast. From the airport we'll head straight for Design Hotel Navis, a two hour drive away, just north of the genteel seaside resort town of Opatija. Located on the Northeastern coast of the Istrian peninsula, Opatija is the gateway to Istria and was the favored summer getaway of the Austro-Hungarian elite during the reign of that empire in the 19th and early 20th century.

Upon arrival you'll check in to your stylish seaview room with a balcony and spend the afternoon relaxing by the pool or the beach, or you can take the hotel's complimentary on-demand shuttle ten minutes into the center of town to walk along the *Lungomare*, a legendary coastal promenade built in 1911 during the town's aristocratic heyday.

In the late afternoon we'll walk down to the hotel's dock and hop on a private boat, where we'll pop a few bottles of Istrian bubbly as we explore the beautiful rocky coast and bright blue waters from the best vantage point possible, the sea. Then, at a table overlooking the Adriatic Sea, our group will enjoy a wonderful three course meal featuring local Istrian delicacies prepared for us by the hotel's chef. Drift off to sleep tonight to the rhythm of the waves.

Meals Lunch, Dinner

Subotina Truffle Festival

DAY 2: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 8

- Welcome the beginning of white truffle season at a local festival
- Check in at our home for the next six nights, Villa GiGi

After a leisurely morning with a luxurious buffet breakfast at the hotel we'll set out for the Subotina Truffle Festival in the Northern Istrian town of Buzet. Each year on the second Saturday of September the locals welcome the white truffle season with this day of revelry, culminating in the preparation of a giant omelet with 2018 eggs this year, and at least 10 kg of truffles!

OnwardTravel.co Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Hudson Valley, New York

In the afternoon we'll transfer to our wonderful stone villa perched on a hilltop near the town of Tanjin. You'll enjoy swimming in the pool, helping yourself to a beer on draught, or lounging outside with a good book and a nice view out over the Lim Valley. The owner of the villa, Mr. Voltić, will be waiting to greet us upon our arrival, and he'll be our own personal chef throughout the week as well. Tonight he will prepare a classic, homestyle Istrian dinner for us complete with the best seasonal ingredients and of course plenty of wonderful local Istrian wine.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner



Our home base for the week, Villa GiGi is made for relaxation

Colosseum to Kitchen

DAY 3: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 9

- Gain local insight from Goran the Historian and Goran the Chef
- Stare up in awe at a 2,000 year old Roman amphitheatre

This morning the owner of our villa will prepare breakfast for us, as he will each other morning of our stay. Then, a wonderful local guide will arrive at our villa to take us away as we begin a day of sightseeing and culinary fun. Let's call him Goran the Historian, because another Goran will cross our path in a few hours. Goran the Historian is an expert on Istrian history and culture and we'll have a great time exploring Pula with him. Istria's largest city is located on the southern tip of the peninsula, jutting out into the Adriatic. It was once a busy Roman settlement, and even today it is still full of 2,000 year old ruins from that time. Most stunning is the Roman amphitheatre, one of the greatest remaining structures of its kind in the world.

DAILY ITINERARY istrian immersion: september 7—15, 2018

Late morning, we'll find ourselves at the market in Pula, where the other Goran will meet us. Let's call him Goran the Chef. Goran the Chef will guide us through Pula's energetic daily market, bursting with fresh produce and local food artisans, and we'll pick up some ingredients along the way because we are going to see him later.

After our market tour you'll be have some free time for lunch and exploring, and then we'll meet back up to go check out whatever's on at the Istrian Museum of Contemporary Art during a private tour there.

In the afternoon, we'll depart Pula for a neighboring town where Goran the Chef keeps his kitchen. Goran the Chef is one of the foremost experts on Istrian food and food culture and in addition to being a chef he is also a sommelier. We'll spend a most delightful afternoon and evening with him, making handmade Istrian pasta and other specialties, drinking wine, and learning about local food culture. We'll all sit down for dinner together in Goran the Chef's dining room to enjoy the fabulous Istrian feast we've prepared.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

On the Wine Trail

DAY 4: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 10

- Visit three unique local wineries and meet the winemakers
- Enjoy dinner in a traditional Istrian restaurant called a *konoba*

Relax at the villa this morning, take yourself on a little hike, or sleep in! We have nothing planned this morning but a little leisure time. We'll enjoy a light lunch at the villa before we take off for the wine region of northwestern Istria, just south of the Slovenian border. We'll visit three different wineries here, all of them family owned and counted among the best producers in the country.

All that wine drinking will surely make us hungry, so we'll sit down in the early evening to dinner at a *konoba*. A *konoba* is basically the Istrian version of a tavern, a local place serving hearty food typical of the region. But Istria's abundance of fresh and supremely high quality ingredients means that the local tavern concept is naturally taken to another level, and our meal at the *konoba* will be one to remember.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Istria, Green and Blue

DAY 5: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- See Medieval frescoes in a tiny church not usually open to tourists
- Spend an evening as you like in romantic seaside Rovinj

Goran the Historian will meet us at the villa this morning and we're off once again to explore Istria. We'll spend the morning in Poreč, an atmospheric coastal town most famous for the 6th century Euphrasian Basilica there, one of Europe's best examples of intact Byzantine art. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Goran will explain its importance in the early days of Christianity.

After Poreč we'll stop back at the villa for lunch and then Goran will take us to a little church just down the road in a small village. Inside the church are magnificent 15th century frescoes. They aren't generally available to the public but he knows the old lady who has the keys, so this is a special treat for our group. The we'll stop by scenic Pazin Gorge for an optional one mile walk as we make our way to the romantic seaside town of Rovinj.

When most people think of Istria, they think of Rovinj, and the town is sure to steal your heart. Goran will take us on a walking tour, giving us an insider's understanding of this unique place. By now the afternoon will be over and you're free for the next few hours to shop, enjoy a drink and dinner, and explore Rovinj, before we depart together for the villa.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



The scenic tasting table at Kozlovic Winery

The Finer Things in Life

DAY 6: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- Eat oysters freshly plucked from the bay
- Visit small batch wine producers with an expert on Istrian wine

Mid-morning we're headed back to Blue Istria, this time to Limski Bay where an oyster farmer awaits us. We'll learn about the natural oyster cultivation that has been taking place in these waters for decades, and enjoy oysters as fresh as they get. The only thing to do after that is sit by the sea and enjoy a seafood feast for lunch, so we will do just that!

Then we'll set out with Goran the Chef (and Sommelier) for a very special afternoon of wine tasting. He'll take us to his favorite places where he knows the winemakers for an insider's look at Istrian wine that is sure to be a trip highlight. Tonight, back at the villa, we'll uncork some bottles from the afternoon's wine expedition and enjoy a rustic Istrian dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Truffles!

DAY 7: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 13

- Head into the forest on a truffle hunting adventure
- Visit two of Europe's most enchanting Medieval hilltop towns

We're going truffle hunting today! Our adventure starts at the hilltop home of a local family who has been in the truffle business for generations. First we will learn about their family history and the art of truffle hunting, and then we're headed into the forest with the truffle sniffing dogs to unearth as many of these subterranean gems as we can. When we get back to the house it'll be time for lunch, and we'll enjoy a scrumptious homemade truffle-themed meal that is sure to be one for the memory banks!

After lunch, Goran the Historian will meet us in Motovun, one of the most famous towns in Istria. A Medieval settlement perched on a hilltop with sweeping views, Motovun is often called the capital of Istrian truffles. Our next stop, Groznanj, is another hilltop Medieval town but this one is known as an artists colony. Exploring them with Goran will be a trip highlight. It's our last night at the villa tonight, and we'll bring back some truffles, so Mr. Voltić can make us something extra special for dinner and we'll enjoy it along with the wines we've collected throughout the week.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Capital City Exploration

DAY 7: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 14

- Spend a free afternoon in the vibrant center of Zagreb
- Toast and laugh over one last dinner with our travel group

After breakfast this morning we'll bid farewell to Istria and make our way to Zagreb, Croatia's lively and sophisticated capital city, a three hour drive away. Upon arrival at our centrally located boutique hotel you are free to spend the afternoon as you like. Shop in some of the city's creative boutiques, visit the fun Museum of Broken Relationships, or maybe the Archaeological Museum or even the Mushroom Museum are more your speed! All of these are a short walk from the hotel.

We'll regather in the early evening to go out on the town for one last dinner together. Over an upscale modern European meal we'll raise a glass to all the fun we've had exploring magical Istria together.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Doviđenja!

DAY 9: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 15

Breakfast at the hotel is included with your stay this morning and shuttle service to ZAG Airport will be arranged for all travelers depending on flight schedules. Head home with new friends and happy memories. *Doviđenja!*

Meals Breakfast



Fresh truffles shaved over scrambled eggs, a traditional Istrian delicacy

TRIP INFORMATION

Istrian immersion

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| BEGINS | Franjo Tuđman Airport, Zagreb, Croatia (ZAG) 12:00 Noon on Friday September 7, 2018 |
| ENDS | Hotel Jägerhorn, Zagreb Saturday September 15, 2018 Airport shuttle service will be arranged <i>No activities are scheduled on September 15</i> |
| MOBILITY | The tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones. If you have limited mobility, we can accommodate you, but it is essential to let us know at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided. |
| TRIP LENGTH | 9 days, 8 nights |
| TOUR DATES & PRICE | September 7–15, 2018 Double Occupancy \$3,150 per traveler Single Supplement <i>Please inquire</i> Please note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Croatia. No visa is required for US citizens. Please ensure that your passport is valid at least three months past the dates of travel. |

Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- One night accommodations in Opatija at Design Hotel Navis *****, six nights accommodations at an Istrian villa, and one night accommodations in Zagreb at Hotel Jägerhorn ***.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, six lunches, and seven dinners. Expect fantastic gourmet experiences, wine and beer included, of course!
- Local guide services throughout the tour to truly understand Istria and Croatia. Plus your Onward guide, Kat, at your service.
- Activities, classes, experiences and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

AIR TRAVEL:

Air travel is not included in the trip price, but Onward Travel is happy to help you make arrangements.

Please select an itinerary landing at ZAG Airport before 11:35 AM on 9/7. You may depart any time you like on 9/15.

Please confirm with Onward Travel that the trip is a "go" before booking non-refundable airfare.



Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment. \$1250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by July 1, 2018.

TRIP INFORMATION Istrian immersion

About Onward Travel

Onward Travel is a boutique travel planning company that carefully crafts itineraries to create an authentic, engaging trip that exposes the destination and roots travelers to the place.

Onward was founded by two sisters, inspired by their family's cooking school on a farm in Bucks County, PA that has offered culinary-focused travel to customers for over two decades.

About Istria in September

September is the perfect time to visit Istria. Summer will linger enough that we can still swim in the pool at the villa, but the busiest crowds have come and gone. Fresh produce will be everywhere, but fall is approaching which means grapes on the vine and the beginnings of truffle season. Expect highs in the high 70's during the day and lows in the low 60's at night, so plan to bring layers and as always, be prepared for possible rain. Onward Travel will provide packing notes in advance of the trip.

Miscellaneous Travel Information

- Passports are required for American citizens travelling to Croatia. Visas are not required. Note your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the date of travel.
- To determine the current exchange rate, Google "USD to HRK."
- Travel Protection: Onward Travel recommends that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. Travel protection plans include coverage for Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. For more information on the recommended plans or to enroll, contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 32-0704. For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308294

Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests.

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