

KVARNER FACT-SHEET

Various information brochures can be obtained from Croatian tourism offices free of charge. More information about the Kvarner region is available at www.kvarner.hr.

IN SHORT

- The Kvarner tourist region includes some of Croatia's most diverse natural landscapes: coast, islands and highlands.
- The name Kvarner comes from the Latin word *Quaternarius* meaning "four cardinal points".
- Thanks to the favourable climate on the coast, winter health tourism started developing as early as 1880, later shifting to the summer months.

GEOGRAPHY

The Kvarner region connects the Istrian peninsula in the west with the Croatian Littoral in the east, and includes the Gorski kotar highlands and the Primorje littoral. This is where Central Europe turns into the Mediterranean. The harsh hill country with its fortresses, castles and baroque churches flows into a Mediterranean landscape with fashionable coastal towns, harbours, beaches, islands and stone houses.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Thanks to its sheltered and appealing geographic location, Kvarner Bay has always attracted the interest of settlers and invaders. As early as 1200 BC, the Illyrian tribe of Liburnians settled on the Kvarner coast and traded in amber. The remains of the walls of their hill forts are still visible today.

They were followed by the Greeks, Romans, Ostrogoths, Slavs, Franks, Byzantines, Hungarians, Venetians and Austrians. These all left indelible traces of their civilisations. Today, the Kvarner region has 278 protected cultural monuments, including 177 historical zones and 161 buildings and complexes. Interested visitors can read the history of the region from these monuments as if from a book.

CLIMATE

Kvarner Bay has one of the mildest climates in the Adriatic. It is sheltered from the cold northern winds by Mount Učka, and has 2,000-2,300 hours of sunshine a year. Thanks to its favourable location and sufficient rainfall in the autumn, lush Mediterranean vegetation thrives on the coastal strip between Opatija and Lovran.

Air temperatures

Coast: Jan 5.2°C / July 23°C
Islands: Jan 7.3°C / July 23.8°C
Mountains and hinterland: Jan – 1.2°C / July 16.8°C

Sea temperatures

In summer up to 26°C, in winter ca. 10°C. Annual average: 16°C.

Winds



The *Bura*: A dry, cold wind usually from the north-east, mostly in winter. Most commonly it brings clear weather.
The *Jugo*: A warm and humid wind from the south-east. It often brings rain.
The *Maestral*: A common daily wind from the west or north-west which brings mild, clear weather and makes the midsummer heat bearable.

Precipitation

Coast: 1,548 mm a year
Islands: 976 mm a year
Mountains: 2,486 mm a year (Risnjak 3,579 mm)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Water quality is better than in certain other Adriatic areas due to the sparse population and scarcity of industry. Numerous beaches have been awarded the Blue Flag (a mark of cleanness, quality of service and a preserved environment).

NATIONAL PARK

Risnjak: unique flora and fauna in a relatively small area.

NATURE PARK

From its massif, Učka Nature Park (160 km²) offers breath-taking views of Kvarner Bay and the islands of Krk, Rab, Cres and Lošinj (the Apsyrtides).

FLORA & FAUNA

- The Kvarner region is home to Croatia's most diverse flora, with more than 2,700 different plants: bamboo, palms, agaves, chestnuts, figs, olives, sage, rosemary, basil, laurel, myrtle, mint, etc.
- A variety of bird species that are considered to be under threat in Europe nest here: the golden eagle, peregrine falcon, griffon vulture, black grouse, owls, etc.
- In relation to their size, the islands of Krk, Cres and Rab are home to the largest number of mammals in the Mediterranean region, and also to all large European predators.
- Approximately 140 dolphins live in the waters off the islands of Cres and Lošinj.
- 140 butterfly species, lynxes, bears, wolves, chamois, moufflons, eagles, snipes and the world's largest recorded trout populate the mountainous hinterland.

FESTIVALS

In February, people on the coast and in the hinterland of the Opatija Riviera celebrate carnival. The **Rijeka International Carnival** is one of Europe's biggest and most popular carnivals, with international groups, regional customs and more than 120,000 spectators. The highlight of the Rijeka Carnival are the Bell-Ringers from Halubje, who have been added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (www.tz-rijeka.hr).

Cherry Festival: In June, Lovran hosts a number of events celebrating a local variety of cherry which is of a very high quality (www.tz-lovran.hr).

At the end of June (30/6-1/7), Vrbnik on the island of Krk hosts the **Žlahtina Festival**. *Vrbnička Žlahtina* is a wine with geographically protected status (www.vrbnik.hr).

In mid-July (13-17/7), Opatija hosts **Kaisernacht**, a historical and cultural festival (www.opatija-tourism.hr).

At the end of July (25-27/07), Rab celebrates its traditional medieval festival **Rapska fjera** (www.tzg-rab.hr).

In July and August, visitors to the island of Cres can enjoy the **Lubenice Classical Music Evenings** in a highly original atmosphere.

At the beginning of August (8-10/8), the island of Krk is home to **The Krk Fair**, the origins of which date back to 1524 (www.tz-krk.hr).

In mid-August (10-18/8), there is the historically inspired **Rose of Vinodol** event, in which the 12 candidates revive local winemaking customs (www.tz-vinodol.hr, www.tz-novi-vinoloski.hr).

At the end of August, Crikvenica organises its famous **Fishermen's Week** (www.tzg-crikvenice.hr, www.ribarski.net).

Marunada – Chestnut Festival: As with cherries in June, the Lovran region celebrates its excellent sweet chestnuts in the autumn (www.tz-lovran.hr).

The year-round event entitled **Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj** takes on every imaginable form: from flower arrangements, potpourris, liqueurs, juices, cakes and fragrant decorations to a variety of culinary specialities prepared in different ways with the indigenous plants of the island (www.tz-maliLošinj.hr).

On 31 December, the people of Fužine and thousands of guests see out the old year and celebrate the beginning of a new, successful one (www.tz-fuzine.hr).

MOUNTAINS

The hinterland of the Kvarner region covers a large portion of Croatia's mountainous areas and is characterised by lush forests, crystal clear lakes, raging mountain torrents, and countless caves and other karst formations. The Gorski kotar area is home to the Risnjak National Park and the highest peak of the region, Risnjak (1,528 m).

Compared to the coast, tourism in the highlands is rather undeveloped. The area is considered a treasure trove for nature lovers and explorers.

COAST

Opatija Riviera

The elegant Opatija Riviera between Lovran and Volosko in the north-eastern part of Kvarner Bay developed after the construction of the Trieste-Abbazia/Matulji railway in 1884, which connected Vienna to the Adriatic in only 5 hours, transforming this area in no time at all into one of the most attractive destinations of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. Fashionable luxury villas, grand hotels, sanatoria and a 12-km-long seafront promenade today still provide a reminder of this era.

Crikvenica Riviera

Fishing villages along the mainland coast developed during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy into fashionable health and bathing resorts. The Archduke Josef allegedly had the coastal town of Crikvenica personally converted into a spa because he was on bad terms with his brother, the Emperor Franz Josef I, and no longer wanted to share his summer retreat in Opatija. The first bathing establishment was opened here as early as 1888. With all their diversity, the adjacent towns of Jadranovo, Selce and Dramalj are also worth visiting.

Novi Vinodolski Riviera

The Riviera of the town of Novi Vinodolski (*Vinodol* means wine valley) stretches along the southern part of the Kvarner coast. The medieval cultural and political centre of the Principality of the Frankopan family, it is a town steeped in history. Novi Vinodolski with its evergreen vegetation, lush forests in the immediate hinterland, and favourable Mediterranean climate, was one of the first holiday resorts on Kvarner.

THE ISLAND WORLD OF KVARNER BAY

Large holiday islands: Krk (Croatia's largest island), Rab, Cres and Lošinj

Smaller islands: Susak, Unije, Ilovik, Košljun, Goli otok, Plavnik, Male and Vele Srakane

Island of Lošinj

The island of Lošinj, known since the 18th century as a climatic health resort, is today a popular destination for water sports enthusiasts. Mali Lošinj, the largest town on the Adriatic islands, lies in the largest bay of the archipelago. The houses of Lošinj sea captains from the 15th and 16th centuries border the harbour basin. Four kilometres further along, at the foot of the historical Arboretum forest park, there is the town of Veli Lošinj, which was first mentioned in 1398. The name *Veli* means big, while *Mali* means small (although now it is the other way round).

Island of Cres

Evergreen cypresses, centuries-old olive groves, blooming lavender and quaint villages shape the second largest of the Adriatic islands. A search for mass tourism here is in vain. Tourism is restricted to four tranquil places. Despite this, Cres has a wide range of tourist and sport activities to offer and is considered to be a paradise for boating and diving enthusiasts. In summer, the historical small town of Osor, located on the spot where Cres is connected to the island of Lošinj by a swing bridge, transforms into a venue for classical music.

Island of Krk

At approximately 410 square kilometres, Krk is the largest Adriatic island, located in Kvarner Bay to the south-east of Rijeka. It is connected to the mainland by a spectacular toll bridge and is regarded as *the* leisure destination among Kvarner's islands. The island has excellent tourism infrastructure. In the northern part, there is Rijeka Airport (RJK), which has air connections to Europe, mainly in the summer but some of which are all-year-round.

Island of Rab

The island of Rab, known for its scenic beaches, is located between the islands of Krk and Pag and covers an area of approximately 94 square kilometres. Rab has been a popular tourist destination since the Austro-Hungarian era. The centre of the island, the town of Rab, ranks among the most beautiful places on the Croatian coast. Its scenic old part is characterised by four church towers and magnificent renaissance buildings.

Islet of Košljun

The small island of Košljun in the cove of Punat on the island of Krk is ideal for short trips. The Franciscan monastery (1447) has more than 30,000 works in its library. The ethnographic museum is also well worth visiting.

Island of Susak

A sand layer of 10 metres covers the limestone bedrock of the island, which in the past was known for its wines.

Island of Ilovik

Wine, olives, fruit and flowers thrive in the mild climate of this island located south of Lošinj. Approximately 350 inhabitants live in an area of nearly 6 km².

Island of Unije

The largest of Kvarner's small islands is mountainous, has sparse vegetation, and has steep cliffs in the west. The inhabitants earn their living from gardening and fishing.

Island of Goli otok

The former Yugoslavian prison island has only been accessible since 1989, and is today an Eldorado for adventurous explorers.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

1844 – The Rijeka patrician, Iginio Scarpa, constructed the Villa Angiolina holiday home in Opatija, thus laying the foundations for the development of tourism in the region. At that time, Opatija was just a small fishing village formed around a Benedictine abbey and the church of St. James (Opatija means *abbey* in English).

1878 – The Merzljak family had the first wooden bathing establishment built in Novi Vinodolski.

1884 – The first modern hotel, the Hotel Kvarner/Quarnero in Opatija, was opened.

1885 – The first tourists came to Mali Lošinj on the island of Lošinj. These were Dr. Conrad Clar from Austria and his ill son, who got well again on the island.

1889 – On 4 March, Opatija was declared a health resort by the Emperor Franz Joseph.

TOURISM TODAY

Kvarner is a well-developed tourist region with approximately 180,000 accommodation facilities, 100 hotels, 38 campsites and 16,000 private accommodation facilities.

An important part of the tourism offer are the 19 harbours for sailing tourism, including 8 modern and well-equipped marinas with almost 3,000 berths at sea and 2,000 on land.

In recent years, the Opatija Riviera has continued its tradition as a health resort with the opening of various wellness hotels and facilities.

GASTRONOMY

Kvarner boasts a wide range of culinary specialities:

- Kvarner scampi, particularly appreciated by gourmets
- Lamb (pre-sale lamb) from the islands
- Cherries and sweet chestnuts from Lovran
- First-class olive oil
- Mushrooms, fruits of the forest, game and frogs from the hinterland
- Cheese: Grobnik sheep's milk cheese and Škripavac (cow's milk cheese)
- Pasta speciality: Šurlice from the island of Krk

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE RATE

The national currency is the Croatian kuna (kn). 1 kuna = 100 lipa.

Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 kuna.

Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 lipa; 1, 2, and 5 kuna.

100 kn = € 13.19 (as of February 2012)

€ 100 = 758.43 kn (as of February 2012)

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

Currency can be exchanged at the daily exchange rate in official exchange offices (banks, exchange offices, post offices, hotels, tourist agencies, campsites).

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS FOR AUSTRIAN, GERMAN AND SWISS CITIZENS

Identity card or passport

For Austrian citizens, the document can have expired for up to 5 years.

DISTANCES FROM RIJEKA

Berlin:	1,120 km
Frankfurt:	920 km
Munich:	519 km
Salzburg:	400 km
Vienna:	460 km
Zurich:	777 km
Venice:	250 km
Zagreb:	184 km
Trieste:	80 km

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police	Tel: 92
Fire service	Tel: 93
Ambulance	Tel: 94
Road assistance	Tel: 987

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1 January:	New Year's Day
6 January:	Epiphany
	Easter Sunday and Easter Monday
1 May:	International Worker's Day
	Corpus Christi
22 June:	Anti-Fascist Struggle Day
25 June:	Statehood Day
5 August:	Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day
15 August:	Feast of the Assumption
8 October	Independence Day
1 November:	All Saint's Day
25-26 December:	Christmas holidays

KVARNER BAY – AN INVITATION TO WELLBEING

Like a graceful question mark between the Istrian peninsula and Dalmatia, the coastline of Kvarner Bay snuggles up to the sea. In front of it, in the middle of the deep blue Adriatic, lie its islands, like pearls scattered by a giant child while playing: Krk, Rab, Cres, Lošinj, Susak, Unije, Ilovik, Košljun, Goli otok, Plavnik, and Male and Vele Srakane.

The journey is shorter than one would expect. The bay and its sunny islands are quickly reached by well-built motorways or on one of the numerous international flights to Rijeka.

Many visitors have come here throughout history, shaping the land and bringing their cultures. The Liburnians traded here with amber as early as 1200 BC and left their stone forts. After the Illyrians came the Romans, Byzantines, Ostrogoths, Slavs, Franks and Hungarians. Coats of arms with the Lion of St. Mark tell the story of the Venetian conquest, and the traces of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy are visible at every turn. The region takes good care of its heritage: there are 278 protected cultural monuments, including 177 historical zones and 161 historical buildings and complexes.

The climate here is mild. The massif of Mount Učka acts as a shield against the storms from the west and north, while from the south comes the warm sea air. This results in up to 2,300 hours of sunshine a year, but at the same time enough precipitation for palms and lush green. Summer in Kvarner is sweet with laurel and thyme, rosemary and wild fennel.

The mild winters and warm yet not oppressively hot summers made Kvarner Bay a place for recovery and relaxation very early on. The pioneer was Iginio Scarpa, a merchant from Rijeka, who built a holiday house, the Villa Angiolina, in Opatija, which at that time, in 1844, was just a small fishing village built around the church of St. James. This was followed by the first wooden bathing area in Novi Vinodolski, the elegant Hotel Kvarner in Opatija and, after the first patients had been successfully healed on the island of Lošinj, the recognition of health resorts by the Emperor Franz Josef. When the new railway began transporting passengers from Vienna to Opatija in only five hours, this started a meteoric rise, including that of the Crikvenica Riviera, which at this time had already one of the most beautiful sandy beaches in the Adriatic, as well as the Riviera around the town of Novi Vinodolski, a historically significant place as early as the Middle Ages.

However, the excitement does not end at the coast. On the steep heights of Gorski kotar, among the lush forests, karst caves and mountain torrents, at an elevation of approximately 800 metres above Kvarner Bay, the Risnjak National Park boasts a wondrous diversity of flora and fauna. Kvarner's flora, with 2,700 plants, is the richest in Croatia, and this is also the place where many threatened and shy animal species have found a protected habitat: from the golden eagle, mufflon, bear, lynx, wolf and snipe to more than 140 butterfly species.

Finally, the Adriatic is a Mediterranean wonderland with excellent water quality. Many beaches have been awarded the Blue Flag eco-label. There is an abundance of fish and marine life: in the waters off the islands of Cres and Lošinj alone, there are approximately 140 dolphins. Lošinj is a classic among tourist destinations, where the hustle and bustle of the old town and harbour with its captains' houses from the Venetian Renaissance makes an appealing contrast with the pine forests and secluded coves. The island of Cres offers a tranquil experience of nature among lavender, cypresses and ancient olive groves. On the other hand, the island of Krk, connected to the mainland by a spectacular bridge, is regarded as a leisure destination *par excellence*: with first-class infrastructure, numerous holiday villages and Rijeka Airport. The smaller islands are great places for day trips for those in the know, like the islet of Košljun and its Franciscan monastery with more than 30,000



documents, Tito's former prison island of Goli otok, or the idyllic Ilovik or Unije. By contrast, the island of Rab, a real historical gem and the birthplace of naturism, invites you not only to enjoy swimming on natural beaches and sailing, but also to celebrate. In July, the lights go out and the torches are lit at the traditional *Rapska fjera* medieval festival.

Carnival, including the famous parades in Rijeka, is a reason to celebrate, as are the culinary specialities of the Kvarner region. Every June, Lovran celebrates the Cherry Festival, and in the autumn there is the Marunada Festival dedicated to sweet chestnuts. Small and large festivals in the area always include music, dance and local delicacies: sweet nutty Kvarner scampi, delicious pré sale lamb from the island pastures, aromatic peppery olive oil, mushrooms, berries, game, frogs from the hinterland, spicy cheeses like Grobnik sheep's milk cheese or *Škripavac* cow's milk cheese, and of course homemade *Šurlice* pasta and *Žlahtina* wine from the island of Krk with its geographically protected status. All those who like to join in the celebration are most welcome. It's in their own interest too. For Croats know that those who enjoy themselves will come again.

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OPATIJA – THE DIVA ON THE OPATIJA RIVIERA

The once legendary health resort of the Croatian Kvarner region is considered an architectural treasure trove that continues to develop its splendid tradition as a climatic spa.

The small church of St. James in the centre of Opatija is its historical origin and the source of its name (Opatija means *abbey* in English). This is where fleeing Benedictines constructed a Capuchin monastery around 1420, which stood alone on a wide area of land for about a hundred years. This was no special place until the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy between 1867 and 1918, when Abbazia, as it was known then, experienced an unprecedented building and tourism boom.

The cradle of all tourism-related activities is considered to be the Villa Angiolina, which today hosts the Museum of Tourism, the first and only one of its kind in Croatia. After the merchant Iginio Scarpa from Rijeka bought the property and the peninsula on which it stands in 1844, he had an unrivalled park with exotic plants laid out around it, and the plain house was transformed into a magnificent villa named after his late wife. He started inviting prominent people to glittering parties, which soon turned the villa into a popular meeting place.

As a consequence, more and more dignitaries honoured Abbazia with their presence. In 1860, the place was visited by the Austrian Empress Maria Anna. The key role in its rise was played by the Austrian Southern Railway Company, whose 1884 Vienna-Rijeka railway line connected the Imperial city with the Adriatic coast in just half a day's journey. 1884 saw the opening of the Hotel Quarnero (Hotel Kvarner) as the first luxury hotel on the eastern Adriatic coast. It also boasted a lung sanatorium. In 1889, Abbazia was officially declared a health resort. Renowned doctors praised the advantages of the local climate. Sanatoriums, bathing establishments and hotels sprang up like mushrooms, and aristocrats, industrialists and artists from all over Europe began strolling through the lush gardens, sauntering in the sea aerosol, enjoying the concerts of the spa orchestra and savouring the *Sachertorte*.

World War I brought Austria-Hungary to an end, but the numerous edifices and parks from that era have preserved their charm right up to the present day. Opatija has moved forward by seeing its future back in its heyday: in its favourable location between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, the luxuriantly beautiful natural landscape, the magnificent architectural achievements, and the feeling that one is somehow privileged here. More and more hotels have again put an accent on its suitable ambience for healthcare and wellbeing. In addition, most hotels in the region have pools where one can experience the pleasure of sea water all year round.

A truly unique attraction is the 12-km-long Lungomare promenade, which stretches along the coastline from Volosko via Opatija to Lovran. In 2011, the Lungomare celebrated its hundredth anniversary. The promenade leads past some of Opatija's most important landmarks: the harbour, the Lido Beach, the villas Angiolina and Amalia, the Hotel Kvarner, the Church of St. James, and the Villa Ariston, which accommodated famous people such as members of the Habsburg and Kennedy families, and also Coco Chanel.

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RIJEKA – THE HEART AND PORT OF A REGION

Its name means river, and much water has flown past its walls since ancient times. Rijeka is a pulsating city oriented towards the future, with its roots in the past.

It is the heart of the Kvarner region, but is nevertheless somewhat ignored by visitors on their way to the fine sandy and pebbly beaches. But despite its hustle and bustle as a busy port, the city of Rijeka has some beautiful beaches and hides many a cultural gem within its historical walls. As early as prehistoric times, the Celts linked five hills with a defensive wall on this favourable site between the mouth of the River Rječina and the Kvarner coast. Later, ancient Rijeka was conquered by the Romans, and then by the Franks under Charlemagne. In the Habsburg era, Rijeka, together with Trieste, was declared a free port, which was the beginning of a period in which the city bloomed.

Rijeka has many sights worth visiting, and a cosy stroll along the waterfront or the central Korzo pedestrian area with its boutiques and cafés makes one feel the diversity of the peoples who left their traces here and shaped the history of the city. Yet under the veil of history, modern life pulsates in Rijeka. The part of the city between St. Vitus' Cathedral, the *Rimski luk* Roman portal, the city tower and the Austro-Hungarian Marine Academy is good for strolling and shopping. International brands are present as are small, cool boutiques and designers. The city has installed free Wi-Fi on the Korzo. Visitors who stop for a break in one of the numerous cafés can surf the internet on their smartphone or tablet.

Those who need refreshment after a trip to Trsat Castle are advised to visit the town beaches. The Bivio is a long coastal strip with various sections. Here you can find rocks, pebbles, concrete, and also a beach for people with disabilities. The large Pećine Beach is also a busy strand with numerous bars; one can also rent umbrellas and deckchairs here. It is a good place to relax with its view over the shimmering sea, coastline, and islands in the distance.

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CRIKVENICA AND NOVI VINODOLSKI – A COAST TO FALL IN LOVE WITH

The view from Rijeka to the south is worth it with its beaches and historic towns strung together like pearls: the Crikvenica and Novi Vinodolski Rivas.

On the horizon, above the Adriatic blue appears the silhouette of the island of Krk: a bright point for visitors to the Crikvenica and Novi Vinodolski Rivas to look out for. The mighty Mount Velebit protects the stretched coastal landscape from the rough gusts of the *Bura* wind. With approximately 2,500 hours of sunshine a year, even winters here are pleasantly mild. After the Emperor's brother, Archduke Josef, had the first wooden bathing establishment constructed here, the coastal strip developed into a popular holiday and health destination.

A seafront promenade extends almost the entire length of the Crikvenica Riviera, from Slana in Selce to Cape Kačjak in Dramalj, inviting to lengthy strolls. Along the way, one can admire the oleander bushes and palms, laurel trees and rose hedges, and the Mediterranean gardens of the local people. But there are also many historical sights. The heritage of the periods of the Illyrians and Antiquity is as equally present as that of the Austro-Hungarian era. This region was long ruled by the Croatian nobles of the Frankopan family. In 1412, they had a Pauline monastery built at the stream of Dubračina. This was where the famous miniaturist Julije Klović went to school. The former monastery is today the Hotel Kaštel.

The Novi Vinodolski Riviera also has a long history. "The stone town" has a riviera of the same name with bathing establishments from Austro-Hungarian times. It stretches twenty kilometres along the coast, joining the Crikvenica Riviera in the south. This is a place where tradition and heritage are deeply embedded, and if you are interested in history, then Novi Vinodolski is the place for you. The town's laws were written down as early as 1288, and some of them remained in force until the late 19th century. In the history of legislation, these laws have been recognised as very advanced because they allowed no corporal punishment, which back then (the 13th century and later) was very rare, if present at all elsewhere.

During the famous Fishermen's Festival or the period of carnival, Kvarner shows its real face: colourful, diverse and brimming over with life.

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CRES – HOLIDAY DIVERSITY AND NOSTALGIA

The island of Cres in the Croatian holiday region of Kvarner is rich in historical sights, unique natural spectacles and a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities.

The island of Cres is located in the northern part of Kvarner Bay. At its southern end, it is connected to the island of Lošinj by a swing bridge. The approximately 250 km of coast of this mountainous island, 66 km long and 2 to 12 km wide, is very indented with numerous coves and pebble beaches, and also steep cliffs in the north and east. A beautiful panorama of Kvarner Bay can be enjoyed from the two highest peaks of the island: Gorice (648 m) and Sis (638 m).

A rather unusual natural phenomenon is the freshwater Lake Vrana. Its surface is above sea level, while its bottom is 74 metres below. A noticeable feature of Cres is the contrast between the northern part of the island, with its high dense forests, and the central and southern Mediterranean part with its barren pastures. In addition, Cres is one of the last nesting places of griffon vultures (Eco centre Beli: www.supovi.hr).

The island of Cres was populated as early as the Neolithic period, and today it boasts a strikingly rich cultural and historical heritage, which extends from the remnants of Liburnian forts through ruins from Antiquity and early Christian churches up to buildings from the Venetian period. The present view of the island's centre, the small town of Cres, has a medieval harbour, churches, monasteries, magnificent palaces and three historical town gates. Lubenice, a town with a bell tower and Gothic church (15th century), located on a steep cliff 387 metres above the sea, is also worth visiting. Its origins date back 4,000 years.

Although Cres is considered to be the most tranquil of Kvarner's islands, it is at the same time a diversified holiday destination. Bathing takes first place, and the most beautiful beaches can be found in the west. Some of them can be reached on foot (sometimes along centuries-old footpaths), and others only by sea (daily organised boat rides). In the interior of the island, there are approximately 100 km of well-marked hiking paths and varied bike trails.

This island is also rated particularly highly by food lovers for several reasons. Fresh fish, shellfish and seafood specialities are trademarks of Cres just like lamb and olive oil. The Mediterranean climate determines how they are prepared. This is usually done *na lešo*, that is, simply cooked in water and then seasoned with spices and olive oil.

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LOŠINJ – A MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND OF SUN AND VITALITY

Since the first spa visitor in 1885 up to the present holiday paradise, the island of Lošinj has been one of the most popular destinations in the Croatian holiday region of Kvarner, offering not only sun and sea, but also lots of recreational fun.

With more than 2,500 hours of sunshine a year and an area of 75 km², the island of Lošinj is one of the sunniest places in Europe and home to subtropical vegetation with palms, agaves, oleander, pines, citrus trees, sage and lavender. Separated from each other only by a tiny channel, the islands of Lošinj and Cres offer an exciting combination. While Lošinj is characterised by a vivid hustle and bustle, Cres offers more tranquillity and natural spaces.

With the development of seafaring in the 19th century, the small harbour town of Mali Lošinj developed into a town of seafarers and captains, and became the centre of the island. Tourism began on 21 January 1885, when the island was visited by two people who are today regarded as the first tourists. These were the Austrian scientist Conrad Clar and his ill son, who convalesced on the island. Since this time, the island has had a reputation as a health resort. It was officially given this status in 1882 by a decree of the Health Ministry of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Despite the beneficial Mediterranean climate, health tourism today plays only a minor role on the island, which is much more oriented towards visitors who enjoy bathing, water sports, boating, sailing, tennis and exploring nature (there are 220 km of hiking trails). The waters off the island of Lošinj are home to a population of approximately 120 dolphins, which have been studied in the entire Mediterranean area. The dolphin research institute *Plavi svijet* (Blue World) is located in Veli Lošinj. Since 1995, all sea mammals have been protected in Croatia. Scenically nestled in a cove, Mali Lošinj is the pulsating centrepiece of the archipelago, characterised by the colourful hustle and bustle of its restaurants, boutiques, ice cream parlours and cafés on the seafront promenade in the summer months.

A few minutes on foot from the harbour, there are quiet coves, and pebble and rocky beaches. Veli Lošinj, which was first mentioned in 1398 and whose name *Veli* actually means "big", while *Mali* means "small" (although now it is the other way round), is located 4 km from Mali Lošinj at the foot of the historical Arboretum forest park, which has more than 200 tree species. A baroque town plan has shaped this attractive small town with its beautiful villas and parks.

On 27 April 1999, an antique bronze statue of the Greek athlete Apoxyomenos (2nd-1st century BC) was found on the seabed between the islands of Lošinj and Orjule. It took 7 years to restore, and now the Lošinj Apoxyomenos is regarded as the most complete and best preserved of all 8 known versions of this statue. The Lošinj town administration has been eagerly working to open a museum for this valuable statue, where it will be displayed to the public.

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KRK – KVARNER'S GOLDEN ISLAND

The island of Krk in the Croatian holiday region of Kvarner is still today characterised by a traditional way of life. At the same time, it presents itself to visitors as a lively holiday oasis for the entire family.

The number seven runs like a golden thread through the history of the Kvarner island of Krk, which with an area of approximately 410 km² is the largest island in the Adriatic. The Illyrian tribes of Japodes and Liburnians and the Latin population were joined by the Croats in the 7th century. Krk successfully defended itself seven times from pirates, and its seventh prince, Prince Frankopan, was also the last prince of Krk. The seven historic forts on the island are now the seven administrative units: Krk, Omišalj, Malinska, Punat, Baška, Vrbnik and Dobrinj. In addition, there are seven variations of the Chakavian dialect and seven customs, dances and folk costumes.

Krk today has approximately 16,500 inhabitants living in 68 places. The town of the same name is the centre of the island. The coast is indented and has many coves and natural pebble beaches. In the interior, there are two lakes. The vegetation is dominated by forests, fruit, vegetables, vineyards and olive groves on the one hand, and rock gardens and pastures on the other. A distinctive feature of the local landscape is the terraced walls, which consist of loosely piled stones. The sporting and recreational activities on offer, in addition to (under)water sports and sailing, include typical ball sports and spectacularly scenic hiking and biking trails.

Due to its abundance of delicious seafood and produce from the land, Krk is often called *Insula Aurea*, which means "Golden Island". The local cuisine is based on fresh sea specialities, dishes prepared with homemade pasta, lamb, sheep's milk cheese, and *pršut* ham dried in the northern *bura* wind.

The richness of its folklore and customs can be felt at every turn on Krk, and the ancient wind instrument the *sopile* is still today an indispensable part of many festivals, ranging from humorous carnival events, the pastoral traditions in Vrbnik (the first Sunday in July) and the meetings of *sopile* players, to the summer folklore, classical music, opera, ballet and theatre festivals.

In 2011, a single discovery created a sensation beyond the island of Krk. In the town of Krk, in the immediate vicinity of the former Roman Forum, the remains of a temple of Venus (1st century BC) were found. In all of Europe, there are fewer than ten such places. The discovery is well preserved and has been covered with a thick glass screen to make it visible in all its splendour. The town of Krk has a tradition of town planning dating back 2,000 years, and many of the houses were constructed upon ancient ruins.

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RAB – AN ISLAND PARADISE IN THE SOUTH OF KVARNER BAY

The southernmost island of the Croatian holiday region of Kvarner has an appealing mixture of nature and entertainment. The historical sites, quaint coves and sandy beaches will transport you from your everyday life, while the attractive sport facilities, summer festivals and cultural events round off the offer of this beautiful island.

The island of Rab, the most southern of Kvarner's islands, is a popular holiday island with a pleasant Mediterranean climate. Separated from the mainland by the Velebit Channel, Rab represents an invisible border between the northern and central Adriatic, where Dalmatia begins and continental Europe meets the Mediterranean. A ferry line between Jablanac on the mainland and Mišnjak in the southern part of the island of Rab operates several times a day (travel time about 15 minutes).

The island's seven tranquil towns are home to approximately 9,500 inhabitants who make their living primarily from tourism, (organic) farming and fishing. The town of Rab, the main centre of the island, surrounded by its town walls and regarded as one of the most beautiful old towns in the Adriatic, overlooks the sea from its promontory, its townscape reminiscent of a sailing ship due to its four prominent bell towers. The stylish area between the cathedral and the churches hosts numerous classical music concerts, and the illuminated promenade creates a particularly attractive atmosphere during the summer events and fishermen's festivals. At the end of July, the Medieval Festival takes visitors on a journey back in time.

In addition to 2- to 4-star hotels and apartments, accommodation can be found in numerous private houses and two campsites set in idyllic locations. The bathing season runs from May to October, and almost all water sports are available during this period. In spring and autumn, the beautiful nature of the island is particularly attractive for hiking and cycling, and the mild climate is ideal for playing tennis in the open air. Due to its romantic and well-sheltered bays, the island of Rab is considered a paradise for boating and sailing enthusiasts, with two ACI marinas, private moorings in every town, and a wide range of services.

A truly unique atmosphere of adventure, fantasy and enchantment is created by the legendary medieval *Rapska fjera* festival (25 to 27 July) and the Rab Knight Games (9 May, 25 June and 15 August). "Rab: the Centre of the World" is an event dedicated primarily for children. From 1 to 4 July, professional puppeteers not only hold performances in the old part of the town, but also help children make hand puppets that act as living souvenirs to remind them of their holidays long after they return home.

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GORSKI KOTAR – LAND FOR EXPLORERS

High over the Adriatic, in the green landscape of Gorski kotar, one can find unspoiled nature and rare animal and plant species – a wild beauty away from the tourist trails.

Right behind the coast, the Kvarner region continues steeply uphill. But the ascent is worthwhile, for here, in the highlands of Gorski kotar, you will find some of Croatia's finest natural landscapes. From an elevation of approximately 800 metres, mountains spring up to heights of 1,500 metres. There is a continuous fresh breeze here. If you are looking for a change from the summer heat on the beaches, you will find it in the mountain torrents, forests and karst caves of the Gorski kotar region.

Karst does not mean barren here. On the limestone bedrock, there is a fine layer of humus, which together with the high level of humidity and frequent mists makes dense plant cover possible: the so-called "green karst". Various species of grass and juniper trees, beech and fir grow here. Winter, however, belongs to skiers. Around the highest mountain of the area, Bjelolasica, it is possible to explore Gorski kotar with your skis on.

You will also find untouched nature in Risnjak National Park, which was declared a national park as early as 1959. Although its highest peak, Veliki Risnjak (1,528 m), is only 15 km in a straight line from the busy coast, its hiking trails are nevertheless a journey to an almost unspoiled wilderness. This area is home to the bear, wolf, eagle and lynx, the latter of which gave the Park its name (*ris* means lynx). This is an unforgettable experience for all nature lovers.

Gorski kotar is a more tranquil, though somewhat harsher landscape than the lovely coast with its palms and coves. Yet this plateau still tells ancient stories of contrasts and encounters, of the enchantment of where the continent meets the sea.

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CAPTIONS

Number	Title	Photo credits
01	Map of the Kvarner region (marked in yellow)	Karte Renner & Partner
05	Opatija: Girl with a Seagull	Sergio Lussino
10	Opatija: Girl with a Seagull	Petr Blaha
15	Opatija: Emperor Franz Josef Promenade	Petr Blaha
20	Opatija: Villa Angiolina	Sergio Lussino
25	Opatija: Villa Angiolina	Petr Blaha
30	Opatija: Villa Madonna (today Admiral Casino)	Sergio Lussino
35	Opatija: Villa Isadora Duncan	Petr Blaha
40	Opatija: Emperor Franz Josef Promenade	Petr Blaha
45	Opatija: Grand Hotel Kvarner	Petr Blaha
50	Opatija: Hotel Miramar and excursion ship Blue	Hotel Miramar
55	Opatija: old view	Petr Blaha
60	Volosko harbour	TV Karner
65	View of Mošćenička Draga	Sergio Lussino
70	Rijeka	Valter Stojšić
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80	Rijeka: Capuchin church	Valter Stojšić
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100	Rijeka: Market	Sergio Lussino
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105	Crikvenica Riviera Novi Vinodolski	Weinhäupl
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195	Mali Lošinj	TV Lošinj
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210	Krk Baška	Weinhäupl
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