

Days 1 and 2 – Croatian Heritage Tour and Cruise 2016 This year our tour will run from May 19 to June 2, 2016. We begin our tour in Dubrovnik, once known as Ragusa. You will find many families (most of them in Bosnia) whose names, RAGUZ or RAGUS, which are taken from old Ragusa.

The city of Dubrovnik (Latin: *Ragusa*) was built on maritime trade. In the Middle Ages it became the only city-state in the Adriatic to rival Venice. Supported by its wealth and skilled diplomacy, the city achieved a remarkable level of development during the 15th and 16th centuries. Furthermore, Dubrovnik was one of the centers of the development of the Croatian language and literature, home to many notable poets, playwrights, painters, mathematicians, physicists and other scholars.

Today Dubrovnik is a gem of Croatia's tourism, an elite destination and one of the most beautiful towns in the Mediterranean. Dubrovnik used to be an independent republic, surviving mostly on trade. It managed to survive many centuries, with constant threats to its territory, particularly from the mighty Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. As early as 19th century, it was discovered by celebrities as a place to be seen. George Bernard Shaw once said that "those who seek paradise on Earth should come to Dubrovnik and find it". Royalty, presidents and diplomats have all favored the city. The late Pope John Paul II was a fan of Dubrovnik and was even made an honorary citizen. Out of the 23 top luxury hotels in Croatia in 2010, 12 were located in Dubrovnik.

Dubrovnik is steeped in stunning architecture and sculptural detail, and boasts spectacular churches, monasteries, museums, and fountains. A multitude of typical towns and excursions include: The Elaphiti Islands, the attractive town of Cavtat, the Konavle valley, Mljet Island, Korčula Island, Ston and Pelješac Peninsula. The neighbouring towns of Kotor and Perast in Montenegro or Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina also make for intriguing day trips.

And Ragusa was said to be the first to recognize American Independence in 1776.

Being one of the most enlightened cultural, artistic and commercial centers in its time, it produced many famous people. These include well-known comedy playwright and poet Marin Držić, who wrote the play "Dundo Maroje". Ivan Gundulić was another well known poet, from Dubrovnik. Marin Getaldić (Getaldus) is another famous citizen of Dubrovnik, the physicist and mathematician – his famous parabolic mirror is today kept in the Maritime Museum in Greenwich. One of the first books on world economic literature, "On Trading and the Perfect Merchant", was written in mid 15th Century by Benko Kotruljević, in Dubrovnik. This early microeconomic scientific dissertation is in use even today – he was the first to establish the double-entry bookkeeping.

In Ellis Island records one will find at least 681 immigrants declaring Dubrovnik as their "former residence". The name changed to Dubrovnik sometime after WW I, prior to that it would have been called Ragusa. Also when our ancestors listed their former residence, often time it would be the municipal or parish center and not the actual village they were from. For example, my Grandfather listed Ozalj as his former residence, which was the municipal and parish center, but he was actually from a tiny village called Vini Vrh, Grape Hill.



We fly from our home cities via Frankfurt or some other European city direct to Dubrovnik



The airport is located approximately 9 miles from Dubrovnik city centre, near Cilipi. The airport is the second largest in Croatia in terms of passenger numbers and with the longest runway. Once we land we will be greeted and taken to our hotel. After our arrival we will have time to freshen up



Above one of our previous tour groups with our guide Alen Miocevic right is a view of the old town walls

We will have time to explore the old and new parts of Dubrovnik, perhaps taking the cable car to the top of Mt Srd, which offers a spectacular view of Old Town and the Adriatic as seen below. At the top of Mt Srd we may visit the Museum dedicated to the Croatian War of Independence.



Or perhaps if the folklore Lindjo is performing on Friday night we can take in a show.



Left is Stradun, main street of old town Dubrovnik, center one of the many streets in old town filled with greenery, right ladies from our group enjoy one of the many cafes in old town



Fresh Adriatic seafood is delicious and plentiful as is the never ending lovely views in old town Dubrovnik



Left every year we see the man selling handmade heart necklaces at Onofrio Fountain, center woman making authentic Lepoglava Lace, right entrance to the museum

We all like to buy souvenirs and there are plenty in Dubrovnik, but the Stradun is filled with shops selling what I would consider junk souvenirs. Look for those selling real traditional items such as those found at Medusa gift shop or even those made by the lady making lace.



Left Medusa Gift shop, 18 Prijeko St, right Stradun at night



Left our group from 2007 at Onofrio with the Heart Man, right Old Town walls at the Adriatic



Left view of the old harbor of Dubrovnik, right we attend Mass at Old Town Cathedral

We will have most of day 2 in Dubrovnik. While we board our boat, MS Splendid, we will spend the night in the Gruž Harbor at Dubrovnik overnight. See map below





We spend the night at Gruz Harbor, Dubrovnik aboard the MS Splendid (above)



Map above shows the route we follow aboard the MS Splendid

Tomorrow we head north toward Mljet Island National Park (below) and the Island of Korcula

