



THIS WEEK...

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Croatia – the World’s Top Adventure Nation



Coming Soon to D.C.: Croatian Vocal Ensemble *Klapa Sinj*



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ADVENTURE – Croatia Tops List of “Next Year’s Must-See Places”

National Geographic Adventure has named Croatia the top "adventure nation" and proclaimed it first among "next year's must-see places". This is based on the first annual survey that the monthly magazine has ever conducted among its staffers and writers. (Page 3)

“There are **islands**, 1,246 by one count, scattered like marbles atop what astronauts claim is the **bluest sea** on the planet, the **Adriatic**”

- Jon Bowermaster

“On the last day of the Creation **God** desired to crown His work and thus created **Kornati Islands** out of tears, stars and breath.”

- George Bernard Shaw

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Slovak President Says Croatia Ready to Join EU, NATO



Croatian President Stjepan Mesić received praise, for political and economic moves, from Slovakian President Ivan Gasparovič. [Photo: Večernji list]

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, Nov 3 – During his two-day visit to Slovakia Croatian President Stipe Mesić met with his Slovakian counterpart Ivan Gašparovič who praised Croatia as the most developed country in the region, saying also that Croatia is ready to join the European Union and NATO. Gasparovič also stressed the case of the fugitive General Ante Gotovina must not be the reason for discounting accession talks between Croatia and EU, adding that he believed that Croatia has done its best to locate Gotovina. Gasparovič praised Croatia for its economic progress, and added that it could serve as an example to his country in some areas, as in the case of road infrastructure projects. President Mesić said that Slovakia, a country that has integrated with the EU swiftly in terms of economy and culture, served as example to Croatia regarding EU integration. President Mesić said that Croatia would greatly appreciate the assistance of Slovak negotiators in its accession talks.

Lithuania Willing to Help Croatia in EU Entry Negotiations

VILNIUS, Lithuania, Nov 4 – Lithuania is willing to send a group of experts to Croatia to help it with its experience in negotiations with the EU, Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas said after talks with Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. Brazauskas said that his country was willing to help Croatia in every possible way because the Lithuanian government has good experts who maintained excellent contacts with the EU and the European Commission. Sanader said Croatia is interested in Lithuania's experience from EU entry negotiations and expected cooperation because it was important to hear how countries that joined the EU last year had led the negotiations. He said Lithuania has supported Croatia on its path to the EU from the start and thanked Brazauskas for the support.

New National Anti-Corruption Program Presented

ZAGREB, Croatia, Nov 24 – The Croatian Justice Ministry presented a new draft national program on the fight against corruption which, unlike the current program would focus on the implementation of anti-corruption measures and not only on the adoption of laws regulating those measures.

According to Justice Minister Škare Ožbolt, the national program on preventing corruption between 2006 and 2008 will attach special attention to the judiciary, legislation, local self-government and political parties, namely the areas of social life which the citizens believe are the most corrupted. The minister said the draft program with concrete anti-corruption measures, goals and deadlines would soon be sent to the government and added she expected the parliament to adopt it by consensus by the end of this year.

Support for EU Membership on Rise

ZAGREB, Croatia, Nov 3 – Support for Croatian membership in the EU has risen by 1 percent and the number of opponents of EU membership has dropped nearly 4 percent. Over half of respondents believe Croatia will become an EU member by 2009. A monthly *Večernji list* poll shows that support for membership in the EU is on the rise. In the last poll, just after the decision on the beginning of negotiations between the EU and Croatia was made, 50.7 percent of those polled supported in the EU membership. In a poll conducted on October 26 and 27, the number of those favoring entry into the EU rose to 51.6 percent. Further good news is that the number of opponents dropped from 34 to 30.4 percent. The paper suggests that, if positive trend continues, it will be proof that Euro skepticism in Croatia was mostly triggered by the delay in the process. Analyst expect though that support may waver, particularly when the negotiations start for real. Then, support will largely depend on the public perception of the success of Croatian negotiations.

Croatia to Proclaim 2006 Year of Nikola Tesla



Nikola Tesla [Photo: Večernji list]

ZAGREB, Croatia, Nov 3 – The Croatian government requested parliament to proclaim 2006 the year of Nikola Tesla, a famous inventor, electrical engineer and scientist who was born in the Croatian village of Smiljan, in 1856. The year of Nikola Tesla, who was trained for an engineering career at the Technical University at Graz and the University of Prague, and who earned his reputation as a scientist while working in the United States will be marked by many events. Croatia is also reconstructing the house in which he was born in the village of Smiljan near the town of Gospić. There are plans to erect a monument in his honor in Zagreb. Tesla died in 1943 in New York. Some of his inventions include the telephone repeater, rotating magnetic field principle, induction motor, alternating-current power transmission, radio and fluorescent lights.

Croatia Ranked 27th in UNCTAD Report on Effects of Trade on Development, Living Standards



GENEVA, Switzerland – Croatia is ranked 27th on a list of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which is a part of an annual report on trade and development, comparing the effects of foreign trade and export on living standards in 110 countries.

Denmark is ranked first, and is followed by the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Canada, France, Belgium and Australia. Of the new European Union members, Cyprus has the best ranking and occupies the 21st position. Slovenia is ranked 22nd, Hungary 26th, and Estonia and Poland 29th and 30th respectively.

For the full UNCTAD Trade and Development Index (TDI) and Country Rankings, please visit:

<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3582&lang=1>

Croatia Among 20 Most Globalized Countries

WASHINGTON, D.C. - According to a report by the political magazine *Foreign Policy* and consulting firm A.T. Kearney, Croatia is the 16th most globalized country in the world, out of 62 countries that were included in the globalization index research. Singapore is the most globalized country and is followed by Ireland, Switzerland, the United States and the Netherlands. The report, published this month, is based upon data from 2003.

In the study, globalization is measured by factors that include global integration in the economic, political, technological and personal contact areas of the studied countries, whose gross domestic product amounts to 85 percent of the world GDP, and whose population is 85 percent of the total world population.

In the European countries that are expected to become members of the European Union in the coming period, which includes Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, a significant rise in direct foreign investments has been noted, according to the research. In Croatia, there has been a rise of at least 50 percent in direct foreign investments in the year 2003. Additionally, in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, overall trade has increased by 26 to 36 percent, while in the countries whose entrance into the European Union was expected in 2004, such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, direct foreign investments decreased as a result of the fall of the level of price competitiveness in each country.

For more information about the 2005 Globalization Index, please visit:

<http://www.atkearney.com/main.taf?p=5.4.1.116>

Wild Horizons – Top 10 Adventure Nations in 2006:

CROATIA - “Destination No. 1”

Where's hot for '06? In the first annual, semi-scientific poll, National Geographic Adventure surveyed its staffers and writers. The result: this A-list of next year's must-see places.

1. **CROATIA** - So hot in 2005 that it was hard to book a flight. For next year, Kornati National Park tops our list.



“On the last day of the Creation God desired to crown His work and thus created Kornati Islands out of tears, stars and breath.” -George Bernard Shaw [Photo: T-portal]

2. **Argentina** – There's still no better travel value in the world than Patagonia at devaluated peso prices.
3. **Mongolia** – Big, safe, and full of wonders like the Gobi and glistening Lake Hovsgol. A must.
4. **Botswana** – The underappreciated Okavango Delta is among the richest eco-regions in the world. A definite for the safari cognoscenti.
5. **India** – Sikkim is the new Nepal, Kerala is the Venice of the East, and India's tourist infrastructure is getting better with each passing year.
6. **South Africa** – With other parts of the nation learning from Cape Town, Africa's adventure original is worth another look.
7. **Thailand** – a year after the tsunami, there's still help needed – and miles of uncrowded beaches to explore.
8. **China** – The Chinese are discovering the natural beauty of their own Sichuan and Yunnan. You should too.
9. **Ecuador** – The Amazon has long attracted attention, but now Ecuador's dazzling coastline is turning heads.
10. **Mozambique** – Safaris in Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and sea kayaking the Barazuto archipelago are putting Mozambique back on the map.

For the complete article, please visit:

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0511/trips/adventure_travel_top_ten.html

National Geographic Adventure – “Exploring the New Croatia”

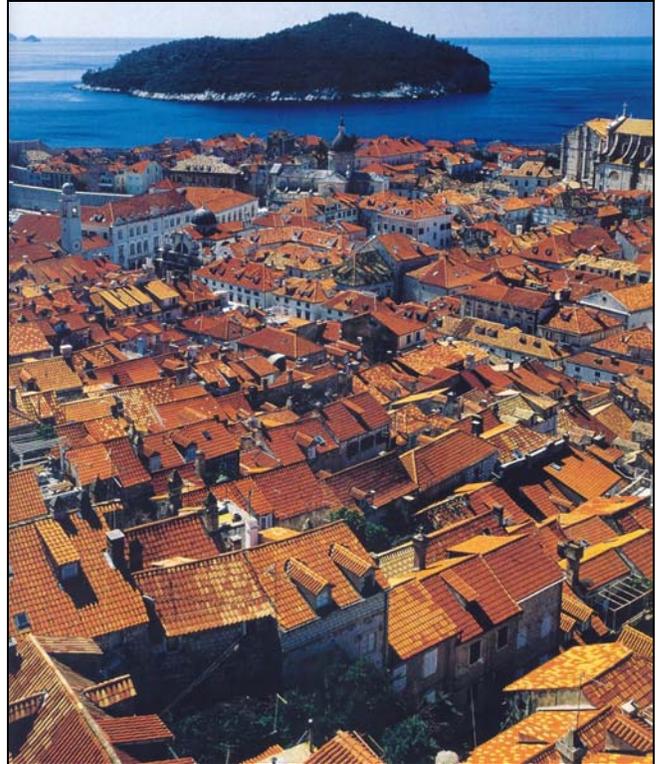
NEW YORK, N.Y., Nov 1 - "With some 1,200 islands scattered across the Adriatic Sea, Croatia is best seen by boat. And though most visitors will probably choose to avoid a five-week, 400 mile expedition like ours, it's very possible to catch the highlights in a few days," writes National Geographic reporter and expedition member Jon Bowermaster. In its November 2005 Adventure Travel issue, the magazine named Croatia as the first among the top 10 adventure nations for 2006.



The karst waterfalls of Plitvice Lakes National Park [Photo: Večernji list]

He singles out the islands as must-see points of interest, especially the Kornati archipelago and the island of Mljet, located on the group's kayaking expedition from the central Dalmatian city of Zadar to Dubrovnik, near the southern tip of Croatia. Bowermaster and his team, which included photographer Peter McBride, are inspired by the warmth of the Mediterranean sun - and of the locals they meet along the way - as well as the craggy, rugged beauty of the coastline and the clear azure waters of the Adriatic, that astronauts claim is the bluest sea on the planet.

Island-hopping their way south, stopping in picturesque secluded towns along the way, the expedition quickly learns to appreciate the majestic power of unique Adriatic winds, each of which is, notes Bowermaster, "known intimately by the locals." Winds are, according to the author, one of the few hazards of sea kayaking in Croatia.



The red tile roofs of Dubrovnik are Croatia's most hallowed tourist attraction. [Photo: Peter McBride]

"Hallelujah," exclaimed one expedition member as they approached ancient Dubrovnik from the sea, while another noticed its Camelot-of-the-sea resemblance, with its "red tile roofs and winding 80-foot limestone walls giving the impression of a mystical fortress rising out of the waters." Despite its sometimes-turbulent past, the author concludes that Croatia is a survivor. Just like - may we add - the members of this challenging, yet rewarding kayaking expedition on the Croatian coast.



National Geographic Adventure expedition glides past a picture perfect Adriatic island. [Photo: Peter McBride]

For more Croatia photographs by Peter McBride and video from the expedition, please log on to:
<http://www.nationalgeographic/adventure.com>

Introducing *Klapa Sinj*

On the occasion of their upcoming U.S. tour and performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 2005, we have the pleasure to present the vocal ensemble *Klapa Sinj*.

For over twenty years now *Klapa Sinj* has been one of the most revered singing ensembles in Dalmatia. Founded in 1982 in order to carry on and promote Croatia's musical legacy, its success has continued due to the extraordinary musical talent of its members who developed a wholly distinct performance style and even contributed a number of new compositions to the existing canon of the Klapa music. *Klapa Sinj's* resume includes numerous albums and frequent concert appearances across the European continent. Their crowning achievement came during the recent festivals of a *cappella* music in Verona, Bolzano and Prague where *Klapa Sinj* won top prizes. Their repertory consists of a remarkable variety of traditional tunes and songs, and the joy with which they still approach each performance is audible in the beauty of the harmony created by so many disparate and singular voices. *Klapa Sinj's* accomplishments are a standing testament to the fact that the magic of music can still, even if for a moment, change the world for the better. [Nenad Bach]



Cover of the latest album released by *Klapa Sinj*. [Photo: Nenad Bach]

For more information about *Klapa Sinj* and its U.S. Tour, please visit:

<http://www.croatianworld.net/CROWNframes.htm?http://www.croatianworld.net/Letters/5400.htm>

News in Brief...

- Croatian President Stjepan Mesić sent a letter to the head of the Islamic community in Croatia, Sevo Omerbašić, extending his best wishes for Ramadan Bairam, the Muslim holiday that marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.
- **This week there were no new cases of bird flu.** Laboratory tests on three dead swans found at Slavonski Brod and dead pheasants found at Županja, Eastern Croatia, have returned negative results for the bird flu virus, the Ministry of Agriculture said in statement. Over the past month the Centre for Poultry Farming of the National

Veterinary Institute has received 2,270 samplers for analysis and is yet to test 670 of them. All tests other than those performed on swans from two fish ponds in Grudnjak and Našice have returned negative results for the avian virus.



Croatia effectively responds to bird flu challenge. [Photo: Večernji list]

- Prime Minister Sanader pledges **strict measures** against the grey economy and the grey market in particular. He reminded that according to unofficial estimates some 400,000 people work illegally in the country, and the country loses some 11 billions Kuna annually due to grey economy.
- Croatia's Foreign Affairs and European Integration Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović went on a working visit to Australia. During her visit, Minister Grabar-Kitarović will hold talks with Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and other Australian officials.
- The Croatian Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and a project called "Enterprising Croatia" have signed a letter of intent to improve enterprise performance and promote job creation. The purpose of a "Enterprising Croatia" is **to promote job creation and sustainable economic growth** by increasing business sales and exports and promoting strategic investments in Croatia.
- The City of Zagreb and the Government of the Republic of Croatia will jointly finance the building of a Jewish Cultural Center in the heart of Zagreb, where a synagogue once stood.
- Croatia's export of good in January – September this year was USD 6.48 billion, while the import of goods was USD 13.68 billion. The export of goods in this year's first nine months went up 7.7 percent from the same time in 2004, while the increase in import went up 9 percent.
- Three international specialized trade fairs – INFO, INTERLIBER, and EDUCA Plus - will take place at the Zagreb Trade Fair Centre from November 8 - 12, featuring about 500 domestic and foreign exhibitors in all.

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