

Zagreb

Overview

Zagreb is the capital of Croatia as well as the country's centre of business, industry and tourism. With a population of nearly 1 million it is also Croatia's largest city, covering an area of approximately 650 square kilometres. Situated on the banks of the Sava River, a major tributary of the more famous Danube, Zagreb is fast becoming a tourist hotspot attracting visitors from all over the world who come to see the wonderfully historic town and take advantage of the relative cheapness of a European city.

Lovers of history and beautiful architecture will not be disappointed with Zagreb as the city has many well respected and fascinating museums and buildings. Art lovers are well catered for with some particularly interesting art galleries the most well known being the Mimara Museum which houses over 3500 works of art from some of the most famous artists in the world dating back to prehistoric times. Other galleries include the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Pavilion and the Croatian Museum of Naïve Art. The city's ancient history is celebrated in the Archaeological Museum, home to the Zagreb Mummy which features the oldest Etruscan inscription known in the world.

If staying inside isn't really your thing head down to one of Zagreb's fantastic outdoor spaces such as Maksimir Park located in the Lower Town. The park is a great spot to take the family and enjoy a picnic or simply to stroll through the picturesque scenery. For exercise enthusiasts the park has dedicated jogging and cycling tracks but if you fancy a swim the Jarun Lake is open to water lovers throughout the summer. Zagreb's other popular lake, Lake Budek, plays host to many of Zagreb's shows and events.

The historic funicular railway carries passengers the short distance from the Lower Town to the Upper Town into the medieval heart of the city. Also the cultural centre of Zagreb the Upper Town (Gornji grad to locals) is where the largest concentration of restaurants can be found. Amongst the international food chains and "on the go" restaurants Zagreb has some gems of eateries serving up traditional Croatian cuisine. Mainly made up of hearty meat dishes Croatian cooking is wonderfully like good home cooked food, fantastic in the winter when the cold wind whips through the city.

The café culture is big in Zagreb and it is not uncommon to find locals sitting in cafés for hours sipping on freshly made coffee. The Mediterranean atmosphere comes alive in the city in summer with tables lining the streets; however the winter brings everything inside. In Zagreb it's coffee by day but the bars are buzzing at night. With many bars located in the Upper Town exploring different venues is easy and whether you like to chill out in plush surroundings watching the rich and famous or dance the night away to alternative music there is something for everyone.