



**HOT TICKET**

# The Adriatic

The gateway to Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro, this amazing region is the place everyone's talking about

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The charming Sveti Stefan islet lies off the coast of Montenegro



## Dubrovnik – as seen on screen

For the last few years, fans of TV series *Game of Thrones* have been flocking to Dubrovnik for a chance to witness its top filming locations. Visitors to the ‘real’ King’s Landing, **Bokar Fortress**, will discover that it offers an excellent view of another location – **Lovrijenac Fortress** – while die-hard *GOT* viewers will

recognise the pretty cove of **Pile** as Blackwater Bay. Originally a granary, the 16th-century **Ethnographic Museum** building in Dubrovnik’s old town doubles as something far less salubrious in the show – a brothel! The palace garden at King’s Landing, meanwhile, is portrayed by beautiful **Trsteno Arboretum** (pictured above

and right) a spot with sweeping views over the Adriatic. Imagine you’re Lady Olenna, Queen of Thorns, sitting regally among the foliage. Just off the coast of Dubrovnik, mysterious **Lokrum Island** provides the setting for the city of Qarth – in reality, its strangest inhabitants are the local peacocks.



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ACTIVE  
ADVENTURES

From its rugged coastline to its wild waters, the Adriatic coast could have been designed with explorers in mind...

For bubbling waterfalls and freshwater pools, try Krka National Park in Croatia – a short way from Sibenik.

Know any white-water sports enthusiasts? Tell them to check out Slovenia's Soca Valley.

The breezy waters around Korcula in Croatia are perfect for windsurfing.

Keen walkers should look to Kotor in Montenegro and the Croatian city of Split for rambling aplenty.

## Unsung heritage heroes

*Split, Dubrovnik and Korcula may hold the region's biggest UNESCO World Heritage Sites, but a trio of less-heralded listings also await.*

01 In Croatia, **Sibenik's Cathedral of St James** dates back to the 15th century and is a dramatic stone creation showcasing the skills of architects from both sides of the Adriatic. The striking frieze is decorated with 71 sculpted faces, and it boasts remarkable examples of Gothic and Renaissance styles.

02 Further south in Kotor (pictured below) the expansive **Bay of Kotor** – the closest the Med has to a fjord – is another overlooked UNESCO gem. And for those looking to forge ahead of the World Heritage curve, the old Montenegrin capital of Cetinje is on UNESCO's tentative list.

03 **Trogir** in Croatia can thank its immaculately preserved architecture and history for its place on the World Heritage List. It is central Europe's best-preserved Romanesque-Gothic complex – and the secret is finally out.

*The dreamy town of Kotor in Montenegro was named top city in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2016 list.*



## Eat like a local..

**WHEN IN CROATIA** make time for *ručak* (lunch) – it’s the most important meal of the day for locals. Be warned though, Croatians tend to eat lunch relatively late. If you can’t wait, pick something from a *marende* menu instead – the smaller portions are ideal for a late morning brunch.

**GO TO MARKET** for a taste of local produce. In Dubrovnik, Gruž is the place for fresh fruit, veg and seafood straight off the boat. In Slovenia, Ljubljana’s Central Market is where locals meet to shop and socialise. Wander the covered marketplace and

watch the world go by while nibbling ready-to-eat goodies, such as fresh bread, biscuits and dry-cured meats.

**INDULGE A SWEET TOOTH** in Bled, a pretty resort near Koper in Slovenia. The local speciality is *Blejska kremna rezina*, a delectable cream slice. After you’ve indulged, you can walk it off with a lovely lakeside stroll.

**STOP FOR A BREW** and sample one of the region’s local beers. In Montenegro, a crisp Nikšičko Pivo will wash down some air-dried ham nicely; in Croatia, ask for a *Hajdučko*, named after the popular football club in Split.

### VERY FINE WINES

Adriatic wines have long been underrated but these award-winning bottles are now getting their due...

Making a comeback is Dubrovnik’s Malvasia, which is distinct from the Malvazija you will find in Rijeka.

In Split, Sibenik and Korcula, gateway to the Peljesac Peninsula, it is all about another white, Pošip, and the mighty red Plavac Mali.

You won’t search long for a wine bar in Ljubljana; once seated, order Vinakoper’s ruby-coloured Refosco.

Montenegro sees the rare indigenous vranac grape conjure up a smooth, dry red wine.

**True story:**  
Slovenia’s Predjama Castle near Koper holds the Guinness World Record as the planet’s largest cave castle.





## It's easy being green



Head inland to Ljubljana and you'll soon see why this bijou Slovenian city has been named as European Green Capital 2016. A day in the life sees locals cycling the car-free centre, sifting through organic produce at the huge Central Market and relaxing in city parks that ease into unspoilt countryside. Visitors can explore the green credentials of the capital for themselves with a hire from one of the city's bike stations. A short cruise along the willow-strewn Ljubljanica River also provides a window into this seriously eco-conscious hideaway.



### Explore the Adriatic coast



## Stage left

The Roman amphitheatre in Pula is so impressive that the Venetians are believed to have considered dismantling it stone by stone and carting it across the Adriatic to be rebuilt in their own city. Thankfully for Croatia's visitors, the arena still stands in Pula. Originally a battleground for gladiators and knights, it now hosts exhibitions and summertime performances.

► **These cities are firmly on our travel wish list – which destinations are on yours?**

