

Journeys to Legendary Destinations  
at the Crossroads of Europe & Asia

## Women's Travel Group: Balkans 2019

### Croatia • Bosnia & Herzegovina • Montenegro

September 27-October 6, 2019  
(as of January 29, 2019)



### Overview Daily Itinerary

Day 1, Fri, Sep 27	Arrive Split, Croatia
Day 2, Sat, Sep 28	Split • day trip to Trogir
Day 3, Sun, Sep 29	Split • catamaran to Hvar
Day 4, Mon, Sep 30	Hvar

206.624.7289 ♦ 800.424.7289 ♦ Fax: 206.624.7360  
85 South Washington Street, Suite 210, Seattle, WA 98104  
info@mircorp.com ♦ www.mircorp.com

Seattle ♦ Moscow ♦ St. Petersburg ♦ Irkutsk ♦ Ulan Ude ♦ Kiev ♦

Day 5, Tue, Oct 1	Hvar • ferry to Split • drive to Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina
Day 6, Wed, Oct 2	Mostar • drive to Dubrovnik via Ston & Stolac
Day 7, Thu, Oct 3	Dubrovnik
Day 8, Fri, Oct 4	Dubrovnik • drive to Budva, Montenegro via Perast, Cetinje
Day 9, Sat, Oct 5	Budva • drive to Dubrovnik, Croatia
Day 10, Sun, Oct 6	Depart Dubrovnik

### **Descriptive Daily Itinerary**

#### **Day 1, Fri, Sep 27      Arrive Split**

Arrive to Split via international flights or from the Zagreb pre tour and transfer to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

*Meals: (in flight), D*

#### **Globo Hotel**

*The four star Hotel Globo sits near Split's city center. Each room is ensuite with satellite TV, a minibar and air conditioning.*

#### **Day 2, Sat, Sep 28      Split • day trip to Trogir**

**Split** is the second largest city in Croatia and is located on the Dalmatian Coast. The scenery of Split ranges from palm-lined promenades to ancient Roman ruins. The city became famous in the 3rd century when the Roman emperor Diocletian chose Split for the location of the palace he would eventually retire to. The palace ruins still stand today; they are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and are complemented by the ruins of the nearby village of Salona, which was deserted by the Romans in the 7th century.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of **Diocletian's Palace** was built in the 3rd century by the Roman emperor Diocletian as a residence for his upcoming retirement. The large-scale structure was, however, completely abandoned by the Romans not long after its construction and remained untouched for centuries. Finally, in the 7th century, nearby residents inhabited the protective walled structure while seeking refuge from invading barbarians. Since then, the population of the palace has remained steady, and the residents and businesses within the palace still make up old town Split today. The complex, which includes 220 remaining buildings, is the centerpiece of the city, and its marble covered structures are remarkably well-preserved and functional. Observe life within the palace walls, which has evolved to become a fascinating combination of old and new.

Built over Emperor Diocletian's 3rd century marble and limestone mausoleum, the **Cathedral of St. Duje** with its monumental 11th century bell tower is a symbol of the city. The original mausoleum retains its 24 columns and its dome, once covered with mosaics. The carved cathedral doors are a fine example of Romanesque sculpture.

The **small temple across from the Cathedral** was originally dedicated to Jupiter, and displays a narrow statue of the god under the barrel vault ceiling. A headless black granite

sphinx guards the entrance to the temple, which was used as a baptismal during the Christina era.

**Trogir** is a beautifully-preserved island town west of Split founded by Greek colonists in the 3rd century BC. Its medieval walled Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site filled with Gothic and Romanesque churches, palaces and public buildings.

One of Trogir's finest sights is its **Cathedral of St. Lawrence**, known locally as Sveti Ivan, St. John's, after a 12th century bishop. Built over several centuries, the massive stone church was begun in the 13th and not finished until the 17th. Celebrated Croatian master sculptor Radovan carved the church's main portal, encrusted with figures of animals, angels, saints and ordinary people.

*Meals: B, D*

### **Day 3, Sun, Sep 29      Split • catamaran to Hvar**

Transfer to the pier for the ferry to Stari Grad. The coach will board the ferry with the group and the ferry ride is about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

On the northern end of Hvar at the end of **Stari Grad Bay**, the town of **Stari Grad** has a population of about 2,000. The town's oldest section is included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Stari Grad Plain, a fertile area that has been cultivated since prehistoric times. The ancient Greeks began systematic agriculture here in the 4th century BC, and their walled fields, roads and stone structures still remain as evidence.

Transfer to Hvar for dinner and overnight.

*Meals: B, D*

#### *Amfora Hotel*

*The four star Amfora hotel is conveniently located about ten minutes walking distance from the historic center of Hvar. All rooms feature the standard amenities, and the property includes a pool with waterfalls and Mediterranean gardens.*

### **Day 4, Mon, Sep 30      Hvar**

The **island of Hvar** lays claim to the most sunny days in Croatia, and its Mediterranean climate encourages the growth of wine grapes and palms. The medieval town of Hvar, the largest on the island, boasts the oldest municipal theater in Europe, established in the arsenal building in 1612. The center of the city's activity is the 13th century St. Stephen's square, which is surrounded by St. Stephen's Cathedral, a small harbor, and a border of restaurants, cafes and galleries.

Towering **high above the Old Town**, Hvar's massive stone fortress was built on the site of an earlier Byzantine citadel that can be traced back to the 6th century. Construction of the newer medieval fortifications began in 1282, and the fortress was later strengthened by the Venetians



in the late 16th century. Although today it can be reached by car, many choose to hike up the hillside to the fortress — it's well worth the trek to the top, where you'll be generously rewarded with breathtaking views over the red-roofed city and the Pakleni Islands in the distance.

This afternoon, enjoy a **wine tasting** at one of the exclusive cellars.

*Meals: B, D*

**Day 5, Tue, Oct 1                    Hvar • ferry to Split • drive to Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina**

This morning, take the ferry back to Split and transfer overland to Mostar. The ferry ride will be about 1 hour and 30 minutes, and upon arrival to Split you will drive about 150km to Mostar. The drive will be about 2 hours.

**Mostar** was founded in the 15th century and became an important Ottoman regional center until the late 19th century. Named after its Old Bridge, Stari Most, the town passed from the Ottomans to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late 19th century. After WWI, it became a part of newly-formed Yugoslavia. Engulfed in war after Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in 1992, the town was shelled repeatedly. Its Old Town, including its namesake bridge, was all but destroyed. After the war ended, UNESCO and donor nations launched a five-year project to rebuild the historic Old Town and the bridge in an effort to heal the deep ethnic divide that characterized the destruction. The resulting reconstruction was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005.

*Meals: B, D*

*Bristol Hotel*

*Located in the center of Mostar, the comfortable Hotel Bristol features a restaurant serving regional and international cuisine, a bar and a cafe with a summer terrace. Rooms include air conditioning, minibar, satellite TV and Internet access.*



**Day 6, Wed, Oct 2                    Mostar • drive to Dubrovnik via Ston & Stolac**

Finish your touring visits in Mostar this morning, then set out for **Stolac**. Stolac is a town in Herzegovina whose robust Ottoman architecture includes mosques, mausoleums, commercial centers, a mill and residences. The nearby Badanj Caves display cave drawings though to be from 12,000-16,000 BC. The town and its archaeological sites are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List.

The little town of **Ston** (population around 500) was an important military fort of the maritime Republic of Dubrovnik. Admire its 14th century wall, its three miles making it the second longest ancient wall in Europe, after Hadrian's Wall in Scotland. Its 41 towers and seven bastions were meant to protect Ston's valuable salt works; salt has been produced here for over 4,000 years.

Drive along the coast until you reach Dubrovnik, where you will enjoy dinner and overnight.

#### Hotel Lero

*Located near both the beach and a sports center, the Hotel Lero offers two restaurants, swimming pool, an aperitif bar, tavern, massage and hair salon. Rooms include air conditioning, minibar and TV.*

#### **Day 7, Thu, Oct 3                      Dubrovnik**

Spend the day getting to know Dubrovnik on foot; the walled town does not allow vehicles. A walk along the town's ramparts is a lovely way to get a feel for this medieval city. **Take a leisurely walk on the wide city walls** that have protected Dubrovnik since the 13th century. Punctuated by sturdy square fortresses and round towers, the walls encircle the Old Town, and afford wonderful views of land and sea.

Dubrovnik's beautiful 17th century **Assumption Cathedral** was built in the Roman baroque style over the remains of several former churches destroyed by earthquakes. A wonderful three-panel painting of the Assumption of the Virgin by Titian adorns the altar. Next door is the Cathedral Treasury, displaying more than 200 sacred objects, including a purported fragment of the True Cross.

**Tour the Franciscan Monastery and its church.** Much of the original ensemble, built in the 14th century, was destroyed in the huge earthquake of 1667, but a beautiful Pietà, sculpted by noted masters Petar and Leonard Andrijić, remains. The fine columns of the cloister colonnade also survived the earthquake. The baroque altar and pulpit of the church date from 1713.

Consecrated in 1315, Dubrovnik's massive **Dominican Monastery** is located in the northeastern quarter of the Old Town. Built in Gothic-Renaissance style, its imposing, stark exterior appears more like a fortress than a church, yet once inside reveals a graceful monastic ensemble and gardens filled with palm and orange trees. Like many buildings in the city, the monastery was heavily damaged during the 1667 earthquake and needed extensive reconstruction, yet its lovely 15th century cloister, designed by master Florentine architect Maso di Bartolommeo, managed to survive. Also inside the monastery is a museum with an impressive collection of works by Croatian and Venetian artists, including Lovro Dobričević, Nikola Božidarević, and Titian.

**Board the cable car up to Srd Hill** for the finest views of the city and the blue Adriatic. It is said that from the top you can see for 37 miles.

*Meals: B, D*

**Day 8, Fri, Oct 4                      Dubrovnik • drive to Budva, Montenegro via Perast, Cetinje**

Transfer overland to Kotor, Montenegro today with touring en route. Your first stop will be in **Perast**. The lovely baroque seaside town of Perast claims a population of just over 350 today. In its heyday under the Venetian Republic, however, nearly 2,000 people lived and worked here. The city has 16 baroque palaces and 17 old Catholic Churches from the 17th and the 18th centuries.

Board a small boat bound for the little artificial islet of **Our Lady of the Rocks in Kotor Bay**. According to legend it was built up over the centuries by sailors who threw rocks into the bay here in thanks for successful voyages. On the tiny island stands the atmospheric old Catholic Church, built of stone in 1632.

Continue to **Cetinje**. Founded in the 15th century as the capital of what later became Montenegro, Cetinje became the home of the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan as well. Its earliest monastery was destroyed by the Turks in 1692, and today's "New Cetinje Monastery" was begun in 1701. Montenegrin education and culture were nurtured here. Admire the 19th century royal residence, Biljarda, or Billiard House, built in the style of a medieval castle.

The 18th century iteration of the **Monastery of St. Peter**, also known as the New Cetinje Monastery, is a strongly-built stone fortress of an edifice – thought advisable at the time, since the monastery had been destroyed three times in the past. Enshrined in one of its chapels are a piece of the True Cross and the right hand of John the Baptist, uncovered occasionally for veneration.

End the day with dinner and overnight in **Budva**. 2,500-year-old Budva was the former Yugoslavia's most popular beach resort. Today it is Montenegro's most popular beach resort, with miles of Dalmatian Coast beaches and beautiful red-roofed buildings. An early Roman city, Budva was part of the city-state of Venice during the 15th century. Today it is an up-to-the-minute yachting and sailing resort, frequented by a chic and well-heeled international assortment of travelers.

*Meals: B, D*

*Avala Hotel*

*Located right on the beach and near Budva's Old Town, the Avala Hotel features an indoor and outdoor pool, a large spa and fitness center, two restaurants and wonderful views. Rooms are furnished with flat-screen TV, WiFi and bathrobes.*

**Day 9, Sat, Oct 5                      Budva • drive to Dubrovnik, Croatia**

Spend the morning exploring Kotor. The small city of Kotor, with a population of some 13,500 souls, is a double UNESCO site. Its first UNESCO listing, in 1979, is in honor of its harmonious

architecture, its lovely setting on the Bay of Kotor, and its historical role in the waxing and waning of the Venetian city-state. In 2017, the city was included on a list of six properties making up the “Venetian Works of Defense between the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar. Its well-preserved medieval walls, stretching three miles above the city, delineate its Old Town, where narrow alleyways connect palaces and churches, including the 12th century Cathedral of St. Tryphon.

This afternoon, return to Dubrovnik.

*Meals: B, D*

*Hotel Lero*

*Located near both the beach and a sports center, the Hotel Lero offers two restaurants, swimming pool, an aperitif bar, tavern, massage and hair salon. Rooms include air conditioning, minibar and TV.*

**Day 10, Sun, Oct 6          Depart Dubrovnik**

The tour concludes today with transfers to the airport for international departures.

*Meals: B (time permitting)*

**LAND TOUR COSTS**

**\$3,995 land tour cost per person, double occupancy**

**\$1,075 single supplement**

**EARLY BIRD RATES (deposits received on or before April 14, 2019)**

**\$3,895 land tour cost per person, double occupancy**

**\$875 single supplement**