

## Zadar

Zadar is the main city in Northern Dalmatia with over 76,000 inhabitants. Most famous for its Old Town, set in a peninsula that is completely pedestrianized, the town has numerous Roman and other wonderful sights so is a delight to visit.



The town is also very easy to reach, whether flying in from elsewhere in Europe (it has its own airport) or if travelling from other places in Croatia as there are good bus connections (as well as internal flights to other places in Croatia).

Zadar is perhaps sometimes overlooked as a place to visit in Croatia, possibly because it's slightly out of the way of the delights further south in Dalmatia. However, it really is a charming town and you won't regret spending some time here. Why not start your holiday in Zadar, before heading further down the coast? With evidence of a settlement in the area from as far back as the 9th century BC, Zadar developed well under the control of the Romans when they conquered the region in the 2nd century BC - the layout of town, its city walls and gates, and important buildings were all constructed during this period.

From the end of the 9th century, Zadar fell under some sort of control of Croat rulers from the interior, where a Croatian state had emerged. This period saw a migration of Croat citizens to Zadar and the town became reasonably successful in trade. Its emergence also saw Venice see it as a threat, meaning that Zadar was attacked - and liberated - numerous times, before it was finally sold off to Venice by the Hungarian King Ladislas of Naples in 1409. Under Venetian rule, Zadar was subjected to attacks from the Ottomans, so city defences were fortified as the building of new walls commenced in the 16th century. Although economically the town stagnated somewhat - Zadar was only allowed to export to Venice - it grew culturally with a number of poets and writers emerging during this time. Following the fall of Venice, and after a brief eight year rule under the French, Austria conquered Dalmatia in 1813 and established Zadar as the administrative centre of Dalmatia. The town underwent an age of Italianisation with Italian becoming the main language. This period also saw an upsurge in some Slavic nationalisation in the town. After World War I, Zadar was occupied by the Italian army in 1918 and then officially given - together with the islands of Lastovo and Palagruza - to Italy by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920. This time, a period of forced Italianisation was put in place with some of the population of Zadar moved to places in Yugoslavia, and Italian citizens moved in. After World War II, the town was given to Yugoslavia in 1947 (although had been liberated by partisans in 1944). After Croatia declared independence in 1991, Zadar suffered considerably during the ensuing four year war. The town was periodically shelled and was in fact cut off from Zagreb (with the only link being via the island of Pag) as the surrounding area was occupied by rebel forces. Much of the area around Zadar was liberated in January 1993, although some attacks on the town continued until the end of the war in 1995.