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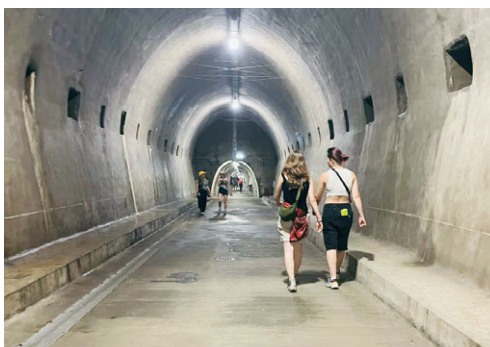
Let's dance at Zrinjevac

Summer evenings are made for the best of parties, such as the traditional one in August at Zrinjevac. The dance party in the park is perfect for all generations, with concerts at the Music Pavillion and dance workshops for beginners – so let's all dance at Zrinjevac.

NATURAL AIR-CONDITIONING BENEATH THE UPPER TOWN



It's an odd warning in the middle of summer but make sure not to catch a cold while exploring the Upper Town. This applies solely to its coolest spot, the Grič Tunnel which connects Mesnička and Radićeva streets. When it's 35°C outside, it's below 20°C in the tunnel – the thick stone walls beneath the Upper Town and constant air circulation create natural air-conditioning. Entry to the tunnel is free, and it's open daily from 9am to 9pm.



GRIČ TUNNEL INFO

2 entrances -
Mesnička 12 and
Radićeva 19

Passage width:
3.2 meters

Hall width:
5.5 meters

Tunnel length:
350 meters

STREET SMART IN ZAGREB



Ask a local where to go and chances are they won't name a landmark. They'll name a street. "Let's meet on Tkalča." "Walk down Martićeva." "There's a great restaurant in Teslina." Before long, you'll be talking the same way.

Tkalčićeva – or simply Tkalča – is where Zagreb comes to socialise. Once the stream separating the medieval towns of Gradec and Kaptol, it's now a lively stretch of café terraces, bars and restaurants. Come for a morning coffee, settle in for lunch or join the evening buzz. If Zagreb has an outdoor living room, this is it.

From there, wander along **Ilica**. The city's longest and best-known street is classic Zagreb: blue trams rattling past Austro-Hungarian façades, independent boutiques sitting alongside shops that have been here for generations, and courtyards tucked behind

heavy wooden doors. Slow down and peek inside – you never know what you'll find.

Radićeva changes the pace as it climbs towards the Upper Town. Craft shops, galleries and centuries-old houses line the way, while just around the corner the Stone Gate reminds you that Zagreb's history is never far away.

Hungry? Locals will probably point you towards **Teslina**. Over

the years it has become one of the city's favorite foodie streets, packed with inventive bistros, cocktail bars, wine spots and pastry shops.

For Zagreb's creative side, head to **Martićeva**. Independent design stores, galleries, concept shops and funky cafés have made it a favorite

gathering place for artists, designers and anyone who enjoys discovering somewhere just beyond the obvious.



And don't overlook tiny **Tomićeva**. It's home to Zagreb's beloved Funicular, the world's shortest public funicular railway, linking Ilica with the cobbled Upper Town in just over a minute.



TIP: Learn a few street names instead of ticking off landmarks. It's the quickest way to feel less like a visitor and more like you know Zagreb.

COOL + TURE

ORGAN VIDA photography festival runs until September at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The group exhibit by 11 finalists is titled *Good Luck in the Whirlwind*, presented along a solo show by French photographer Julie Béne. @msu.hr

BAD BLUE BOYS celebrate 40 years of supporting Dinamo on August 30 at Maksimir Stadium. The line-up features Zagreb's iconic bands: Prljavo Kazalište; Pips, Chips & Videoclips; Jura i Film and Psihomodo Pop. #bbbdinamo

PRI MUZEJU, the summer gatherings in the atrium of the Zagreb City Museum, are on until the end of September. Evening concerts and parties at Opatička 20 last until midnight. More info and program @mgz.hr

AMADEO SUMMER STAGE brings top classical, jazz and world music performances to the Upper Town. Evening concerts in the Croatian Natural History Museum begin on August 29 and last through mid-September. Seating is limited. @scenaamadeo.hr

The exhibition of **CROATIAN-MADE TOYS** is on view at the Croatian School Museum gallery until September. @hsmuzej.hr

MIA AKRAP exhibits at Trotoar Gallery until September 5. @trotoar-galerija.hr

BUILDINGS IN THE GARDEN, an exhibition at the Botanical Garden, runs until September 1. @botanickivrt.biol.pmf.hr

SPACES OF COLLABORATION, an exhibition at the Ethnographic Museum, is open until August 23. @emz.hr



CHECK
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CULTURE
IN ZAGART



MONOVIEW

Markets, meals and memories

Your perfect Zagreb breakfast? I'm not really a breakfast person, but I never say no to a flaky butter croissant still warm from the oven. Zagreb's artisan bakeries have become incredibly good, so it's one of those simple pleasures I'll happily make time for.

Which Zagreb market stall do you never walk past? Every Zagreb market – and there are more than 20 of them – has stalls run by vendors who've been there for years, forming warm, almost family-like bonds with the people who shop there. The markets are about much more than buying produce. They're places where life is shared, from news of births, weddings and farewells to the perfect recipe for artichokes.

What's one Croatian ingredient everyone should try? Extra-virgin olive oil from Istria or Dalmatia. The best ones are peppery, grassy and so full of character that they deserve to be treated like an ingredient in their own right, not just something you cook with.

Where do you go when you need to reset over a meal? I most like those



Ana Ugarković, chef, cookbook author and one of Croatia's most beloved food storytellers

traditional taverns, which are unfortunately slowly disappearing. For Dalmatia-inspired food, I go to Marenda at Kunišćak, and for a bit of northern flair, I like going to Izletišće Zelenjak at Zelenjak in Zagorje.

If Zagreb had a flavor, what would it taste like? It would taste like *ajngemahtes*, Zagreb's comforting chicken soup. It's the flavour of

home, family lunches and the kind of dish that instantly makes everything feel a little better.

What do you love about Zagreb in August? I love the "no rush" energy on the streets, even during work-days. It is the time to really enjoy the city.

Share your secret hideaways in and around Zagreb? Maksimir is my favorite, a wonderful nature's oasis. It may be an obvious choice, but once you're walking beneath those old trees or sitting beside the lakes, it's easy to forget you're only minutes from the city centre.

QuiZG

Questions

- 1 What is the average speed of Zagreb trams?
a) 11 km/h
b) 13 km/h
c) 15 km/h
- 2 Around 30 streams flow through Zagreb into the Sava river. Which is the longest?
a) Vrapčak
b) Kustošak
c) Črnomerec
- 3 Which was the first skyscraper in Zagreb?
a) The skyscraper at Ilica 1
b) Ibler's "Wooden" skyscraper
c) The Radovan building

Answers

- 1 **b**, the average speed of Zagreb trams is 13 km/h, and the speed of buses is 18 km/h.
2 **a**, Vrapčak stream runs from its source at Medvednica to the mouth of the Sava for 25 kilometres.
3 **c**, the nine-storey building at the corner of Gundulićeva and Masarykova is officially the first skyscraper in Zagreb. At 35 meters tall, it was built in 1933 in just 79 days.

GO NATIVE

Don't miss it!



MARIN TOMAŠ

DANCE BENEATH THE TREES

Dance Party at Zrinjevac, organized by the Zagreb Tourist Board, brings the Music Pavilion to life every Friday and Saturday throughout August. The program starts with free dance lessons at 6 PM, followed by live concerts at 8 PM. Swing, salsa, tango or waltz – whether you know the steps or not, you'll soon find yourself dancing beneath the plane trees.

MAKE SOMETHING BY THE RIVER

Green River Fest (throughout August, Savski nasip near Hendrix Bridge) pairs summer by the Sava with pottery and painting workshops, art bazaars, poetry evenings and live music. Come for the river, leave with paint on your fingers and fresh inspiration.

FOREST AT PLAY

Zaigrani Šumom (Playful in the Forest) (25 & 28 August, Grmošćica forest park) invites families to spend an afternoon making nature-inspired art together. Guided by educators and artists, children create while parents rediscover one of Zagreb's loveliest woodland corners.

MEET THE NIGHT SHIFT

International Bat Night (29–30 August, Veternica cave) opens the fascinating world of bats through guided cave tours and encounters with experts. Discover why these tiny night flyers are among nature's most valuable creatures.



ANJA MUTIĆ

writes for *BBC Travel*,
the *Washington Post*
and many more.
Follow her at @
everthenomad

When Zagreb hits snooze

If you arrive in Zagreb during the first two weeks of August, you might wonder where everybody's gone. Every August, Zagreb performs its favorite disappearing act. As soon as summer holidays begin, thousands of locals swap the city for the Adriatic, leaving behind quieter streets, empty trams and cafés where finding a table is suddenly easy.

Here's the surprise: August might just be Zagreb's best-kept secret. Without its usual bustle, the city settles into a low-key rhythm. The locals who stay behind know how to do August properly. Mornings start early before the heat kicks in, afternoons stretch lazily beneath leafy terraces, and evenings belong to outdoor concerts, open-air cinemas, festivals and long walks once the sun begins to soften.

Perhaps that is Zagreb's little summer trick. When much of Europe is jostling through crowds, Zagreb becomes the kind of place where doing very little feels like the perfect plan. By the second half of the month, people gradually trickle back. But for a brief window each summer, Zagreb is slower and more relaxed than at any other time of year.

Tip: Visit in the first half of August if you love seeing cities at their most relaxed. Then claim a shady café terrace and settle into Zagreb's slowest, sleepest rhythm of the year.

Take a špancir through Varaždin

Every August, Varaždin's Baroque streets burst into life during Špancir-fest, Croatia's most celebrated street festival. A špancir isn't simply a walk. It's the gentle art of strolling with enough time to see – and be seen. Musicians, acrobats, artists and craftsmen fill the historic streets, while elegant palaces, hidden courtyards and lively café terraces become part of the stage.



f/ŠPANCIRFEST

Tip: Join the locals for coffee at the historic Ritz House, and order a *varaždinski klipić*, the town's distinctive savoury pastry.



ANDREA PISAC

Global anthropologist and Zagreb writer with a twist. Follow her at @travelhonestly.com

Honestly, read like a local

Every city teaches you how to read. London taught me to read on the Tube, shoulder to shoulder with strangers pretending we were alone. Zagreb taught me something entirely different. Not so much where to read, but how to read.

Step into a Zagreb café and you'll often find newspapers spread across the bar. Borrow one and linger over your coffee. Another guest may ask if you're finished with the sports pages, while two old friends in the corner quietly tackle the crossword together. The waiter keeps your glass of water topped up but never rushes your morning ritual.

And what about that book you packed for Croatia? Open it, take a sip of coffee and lean back. Don't count how many pages you can fit into a café break. Instead, place your bookmark where the chapter ends and let the reading take as long as it may. Reading here isn't about shutting the world out. It's simply another way of being in it.

Once you've learned that rhythm, take your book to a shady bench or a park. Borrow the spot for an afternoon. The pages will wait whenever your eyes wander to the trees, the people or simply the pleasure of lingering.

Tip: Skip the international news for a morning. Pick up *Jutarnji list* or *Večernji list* and practise reading Zagreb before you read your novel.

THE GREEN RING AROUND ZAGREB

Zagreb County wraps the capital in old towns, vineyards, farms and country estates. Drive for less than an hour and city streets give way to Baroque squares, wine hills, therapeutic oil spas, traditional kitchens and long lunches under open skies. Here are five escapes around Zagreb's green ring.



Samobor

Samobor is the classic escape, but it earns the title. Stroll past pastel façades and café terraces, cross the Gradna stream and climb towards the medieval old town ruins. Then return to the square for a *kremšnita*. In Samobor, even a short walk somehow ends with custard.



Ivanić-Grad

Ivanić-Grad is home to Naftalan, a wellness centre known for its use of a rare medicinal oil used to treat skin and rheumatic conditions. Swim in its pools, then head to Kezele farmstead for *kotlovina*: meat and vegetables slowly braised in a wine-based sauce over an open fire.

Vrbovec

From August 28 to 30, Vrbovec hosts the 45th **Kaj Su Jeli Naši Stari**, one of Croatia's best-loved traditional food festivals. Try the local *vrbovečka pera* pastry, then visit the regional museum. Croatia's pioneering journalist Marija Jurić Zagorka was born just outside town.

Krašograd

Krašograd is made for an unhurried country afternoon. Begin with lunch at Domačica restaurant, whose large terrace overlooks the lake, then stroll around the estate, enjoying its spacious parkland, peaceful paths and open countryside.

Sveti Ivan Zelina

Zelina's hills belong to *kraljevina*, a crisp local white wine. According to legend, countess Marija Ana Erdödy sent bottles to her friend Ludwig van Beethoven in Vienna. Fact or folklore, it's still the perfect excuse to visit one of the many family wineries scattered across the surrounding vineyards.

NUMBERS

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BABY BOOM AT THE ZOO

Zagreb Zoo has welcomed its newest star – a baby pygmy hippopotamus, born to parents Inola and Otto. Until autumn, it will nurse and splash in the pool, waiting to be named by the public, just like its older sister Lotti three years ago. This continues the baby boom at the Zagreb Zoo in Maksimir park; the first Chinese leopards born in Europe, the offspring of Odilija and Tadzik, were born here. Curious visitors are kindly asked not to disturb the babies.



ZOO ZAGREB



TASTE OF ZAGREB

powered by Taste of Croatia



Fruit jam session

Summer's explosion of fruit is as sweet as it is short. Fortunately, making jam and preserves is an easy way to capture the flavors of strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, sour cherries, figs, apricots, peaches, plums, even rosehips, hawthorn berries and mulberries – of anything that is juicy and a bit sweet. The secret lies in slowly simmering completely ripe fruit, adding as little as possible. And it's no longer just a grandmother's craft. A good homemade preserve is far more than a spread. Apricot and plum jams remain the classic filling for homemade pancakes and rolls of all sorts. A spoon of good jam enriches a semolina pudding or porridge, jellies or even ice cream. They add zest when layered into sponge cakes or baked into fruit crumbles and

bring new life to traditional desserts like *zlevanka*. Jam provides an intriguing counterpoint to firm and aged cheeses. The challenge is finding the right combination – ideally in good company, over a bottle of wine.



Wirtshaus pancakes with homemade apricot preserve – €6)

PLAY FOODSIE

Thinking more about drinks than food is perfectly normal during the Zagreb summer. But, as mama would say, never drink on an empty stomach. Follow the older generation: dilute red wine into *bevanda* and white into *gemišt*. No matter whether your water goes into the wine or stays beside it, a generous jug on the table is Croatia's favorite hangover prevention. Come evening, try a Crocktail, the first Croatian cocktail, blending maraschino liqueur with sour cherry juice and citrus.



FIRST THING



Plant your feet first

If you're still hot and sticky from your journey, head to Zrinjevac park and press pause. Find a spot on its carpet-like lawn beneath towering plane trees. Kick off your shoes and let the cool grass take the edge off the heat. Then settle near one of the twin fountains at the park's northern end. Their fine spray has a way of making you forget it's well over 30°C.

LAST THING



A splash for the road

Before the journey home, give yourself one last holiday ritual. Climb up to the Šalata neighborhood and spend an afternoon at Zagreb's beloved open-air pool. Swimming here feels wonderfully old-school: tall trees, warm stone, shimmering water and the city spreading below. For a few hours, Zagreb swaps its continental manners for a distinctly Mediterranean state of mind.

4am

Dance till sunrise on three floors

Croatia goes hardstyle – the dance party across three floors at Bunker in Ilica starts on August 4. The club opens at 11pm, and dancing goes till the break of dawn in the very city center, with non-stop music by top DJs guaranteed. #outbunker

The number of visitors to Zagreb continues to grow year after year, with Croatia's capital consistently ranking as the country's most visited urban destination according to the latest official figures. Most international visitors come from the United States, Germany and Italy, followed by neighbouring countries. They stay for an average of two days, much like travelers visiting other European city break destinations. For many foreign visitors, the city's biggest draws are the Upper Town, Ban Jelačić square and Zrinjevac park, along with the nearby Medvednica Nature Park.



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Editors:

Anja Mutić, Andrea Pisac

Contact: info@30stupnjeva.com

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