28/11/2026 — 07/01/2027

BEST CHRISTMAS CITY BREAK IN EUROPE 2026 ★ ZAGREB ★

#AdventZagreb

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ADVENT ZAGREB



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The best Advent in Europe



The wait is almost over. Advent Zagreb kicks off on the last weekend in November, and the city has a new title to celebrate. European Best Destinations has named Zagreb the best Christmas city break destination for 2026. Alongside favourites like the Ice Park, Advent at Zrinjevac and Fuliranje, there's plenty more to discover, including new activities for little ones at Mažuranić square. The entire Upper Town and the Lower Town's Green Horseshoe become one festive walking route. Run with Santa, dance or skate in the parks, sing along on a tram, or simply stop and soak up the atmosphere. Find the full programe at adventzagreb.hr.



JULIEN DUVAL

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Zagreb Soloists Advent Concerts

Zagreb City Museum, December 3, 6, 10 and 13 at 6 p.m.

The Zagreb Soloists continue their tradition of Advent concerts at the Zagreb City Museum. At each of the four concerts, they will be joined by a young musician. Admission is free, with advance reservations required at press@zagrebacki-solisti.com.

Zagreb Chamber Orchestra Advent Concerts

Church of St. Joseph and the Croatian Journalists' Association

The Zagreb Chamber Orchestra brings its Advent concerts to two historic venues. The first takes place at the Church of St. Joseph on November 29, followed by three concerts at the Croatian Journalists' Association on December 5, 13 and 19, featuring renowned Croatian and international soloists.

Ivan Filipović Chamber Choir Advent Concerts – Zagreb Voices

Church of St. John the Baptist, November 29; Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua, December 13; Church of St. Francis of Assisi, December 29

The Ivan Filipović Chamber Choir's Zagreb Voices concerts bring together classical music, choral works and traditional Croatian Advent and Christmas songs. The program premieres contemporary choral arrangements drawn from Croatia's musical heritage.

Music at St. Mark's Church

St. Mark's Church, December 13, 20 and 24 (Midnight Mass on December 24)

Classical and sacred music echoes within the historic walls of St. Mark's Church as part of this Advent tradition. Admission is free.

Advent with the Opera at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb

Republic of Croatia Square, in front of the Croatian National Theatre, December 5 at 5:30 p.m. and December 7 at 7 p.m.



Young soloists perform opera and Advent music with piano accompaniment from the balcony of the Croatian National Theatre. The two half-hour concerts bring festive melodies to the square for residents and visitors alike.

FESTIVE MUSIC

To Zagreb from Christmas Balconies

Balcony by the Stone Gate, balcony at Tkalčićeva 33 and Croatian National Theatre balcony

The six-piece brass ensemble Ad Gloriam Brass performs from Zagreb's balconies, bringing a European flair to a program of classical music, film themes and Christmas songs.

Festival of Advent and Christmas Songs

Society of University Professors and Other Scholars, Greek Catholic Co-Cathedral of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Church of St. Peter the Apostle, St. Mark's Church, Church of St. Blaise, Stone Gate and the terrace of Cravaticum, the Cravat Museum

The 11th edition of the festival brings Advent and Christmas music from different genres and eras to six venues across the city, from classical pieces and traditional Croatian klapa singing to festive pop songs. The program also includes a children's concert.

Zagreb Advent Postcards

Oktogon, Neboder and Sisters Baković Passage

The Vox vocal quartet performs Croatian and international Advent music in the heart of Zagreb. Their short, unannounced pop-up concerts surprise passersby with a touch of Advent magic.

Advent under Lanterns

Lotršćak Tower

Join the lamplighter and carolers by Lotršćak Tower every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday until Christmas Eve. Help light the gas lamps and sing along to Christmas carols in the Upper Town.

The City's Advent Symphony

Radićeva St. – Tomićeva St. – Stone Gate – Bloody Bridge – Mažuranić Square

Take a festive stroll through Zagreb accompanied by Christmas carols performed by the Kralj Music and Arts Studio. The City's Advent Symphony runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at various locations in the heart of Zagreb.

Music Patrol – Zagreb Promenade

Ljubljanica Tram Depot and Zrinjevac Park

The ZET Orchestra's Music Patrol surprises passengers at selected locations across the city on Saturday morning. The trip sets off from Ljubljanica at 10 a.m. and concludes in Zrinjevac Park.

Flash Mob on the Tram

Zagreb trams

Surprise flash mob concerts on Zagreb's trams are a Christmas tradition. Sing along with a choir during a ride through the Lower Town.

ONE-DAY EVENTS

Advent Run

Streets of Zagreb, December 6 at noon

Zagreb Advent Run, a cos-

tumed race for the whole family, once again supports a charitable cause as part of Croatia's national campaign for the early detection of high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Choose between a 5 km and a 10 km route.

The Nutcracker Live Screening
Republic of Croatia Square, in front of the Croatian National Theatre, December 19, 2026, at 6 p.m.
Watch a live screening of the world's most frequently performed classical ballet in front of the Croatian National Theatre. Enjoy the beloved Nutcracker in an ambitious version by the celebrated Russian ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev.

Christmas Eve Choirs – Midday Advent Melodies
Ban Josip Jelačić Square, December 24 at 11 a.m.
Zagreb's choirs return to Ban Josip Jelačić Square to perform timeless Christmas favorites together, accompanied by guitar and piano.

WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES

A Christmas Story at the Ethnographic Museum
Mažuranić Square 14
The Ethnographic Museum's festive program includes an exhibition of Pannonian nativity scenes from Gradišće (Burgenland) and an exhibition marking 30 years of Croatian Christmas nativity scenes being displayed in Rome and the Vatican. You can also make your own nativity scene using corn husks and wool.

Advent at the Zagreb City Museum
Opatička 20
The Zagreb City Museum's Advent program includes A Christmas Story, an exhibition of Advent greeting cards and festive objects, as well as Zbigecani blagdani guided tours and Advent wreath-making workshops. Children can enjoy theater performances for St. Nicholas Day, and quiz enthusiasts can join a special edition of KviZg.

Advent at the Croatian Natural History Museum
Demetrova 1
The Croatian Natural History Museum brings together science, art, music and entertainment. The program includes lectures and screenings exploring the mysteries of the universe, interactive science and creative workshops, theater performances and Advent concerts in the museum atrium.

Advent at Obrtnički prolaz
Ilica 49
Step into a Christmas fairy tale at Matica hrvatskih obrtnika on Ilica. Discover handmade souvenirs and seasonal workshops led by master craftspeople, accompanied by Christmas carol concerts in the association's gallery.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Teatrino Klincolino
Antun, Ivan and Vladimir Mažuranić Square
The children's puppet theater stages more than 30 performances at this year's Advent, bringing popular and lesser-known children's stories to life on Mažuranić Square.

Live Nativity
Opatovina Park, December 19–23 and 26–30, January 1 and 6
Young members of the Cenacolo Community created this traditional Nativity reenactment and perform it with the help of their parents and friends. Performances take place at 4, 5 and 7 p.m.

The Magic Within
Marko Marulić Square, December 18 to January 1
A light projection transforms the Croatian State Archives into a stylized Christmas house. The display brings together the distinctive architecture of the Archives and the neighboring FKIT and PMF buildings.

Very Merry Square
Ban Josip Jelačić Square
The Christmas tree on Ban Josip Jelačić Square is the city's central holiday symbol. Snow-covered pines and twinkling lights turn the square into a winter wonderland, with the Manduševac Fountain forming a festive Advent wreath.

LumiLicious
Antun, Ivan and Vladimir Mažuranić Square, December 6 to January 1
Mažuranac comes alive with Christmas magic. Stroll through snow-covered pine groves and step into a world of imagination among oversized Christmas decorations. An interactive audiovisual installation invites children to bring two playful digital characters, LUMI and LICI, to life.

Croatian National Theatre – Layers of Christmas
Republic of Croatia Square
This Advent, the Croatian National Theatre is dressed in Christmas decorations. Republic of Croatia Square becomes a glowing forest, perfect for holiday photos.

Let It Glow
Flower Square
Lavish decorations, sparkling installations and interactive elements blend the charm of old Zagreb with a modern Christmas atmosphere. A dedicated photo spot provides a setting for memorable holiday pictures.

Advent Open House Zagreb
December 9 and 16
Advent Open House Zagreb opens the doors to some of the city center's most striking buildings, many of which are usually closed to the public. Expert-led tours in Croatian and English invite visitors to reflect on the city's architectural heritage. Register at Open House Zagreb.

Bells at Oktogon
Oktogon, December 13 to 29
At Zagreb's Oktogon, a sound installation of 24 bells plays an atmospheric rendition of "Imagine" every hour on the hour.

Polar Worlds
Grič Tunnel
New scenes inspired by glaciers and crystal formations transform Grič Tunnel into an imaginary polar landscape. Experience the tunnel in a whole new light.

Moon Garden
Bela IV Park
Step into the enchanting Moon Garden in Bela IV Park. Make a wish on the moon as you take in an unforgettable view of Zagreb.

Winter Nocturne
Grič Park and Strossmayer Promenade
Inspired by the stars and Chopin's nocturnes, Winter Nocturne brings a festive winter atmosphere to Grič Park. Take a seat on one of the benches anytime during Advent.

Bells and Bell Towers of Croatia – A Symphony of Peace and Togetherness
Palace of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), Nikola Šubić Zrinski Square 11
Saša Šekoranja presents drawings and video installations of bell towers from across Croatia. Their bells come together in an Advent symphony celebrating togetherness, love and festive joy.

ADVENT AT HOTELS

Hilton Hotels
DoubleTree, Garden Inn and Canopy
Enjoy festive decorations, a warm atmosphere, signature cocktails and special offers at Hilton's Zagreb hotels.

Hotel Jägerhorn
Ilica 14
A small, idyllic Advent hideaway awaits in the passage of Hotel Jägerhorn, Zagreb's oldest hotel.

Advent Bachata Congress
Hotel Diplomat and Zrinjevac Park
From December 11 to 14, the international dance congress brings together hundreds of bachata and salsa dancers from around the world. A free dance program takes place in Zrinjevac Park on December 13 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Fooling Around
Esplanade Hotel
Fooling Around – Christmas Station is the latest edition of a Zagreb Advent favorite. The Esplanade Hotel's Oleander Terrace becomes a Christmas destination, with a covered, heated glasshouse that serves as a cozy Christmas living room by day and turns into the Christmas Disco Club at night.

CITY CENTER LOCATIONS

EU Advent
Europe Square
EU Advent brings a new theme, A City That Loves, to Europe Square. Performances by female vocalists, DJ sets and stand-up comedy nights make the square a central Advent venue.

Baš Naš Time Machine
Ban Josip Jelačić Square
Until January 7, past and present meet on Ban Josip Jelačić Square. Baš Naš Time Machine invites all generations to come together in the heart of Zagreb.

Advent at Zrinjevac
Zrinjevac Park
Thousands of twinkling lights, music from the pavilion, the aromas of winter treats and charming Advent stalls return to Zrinjevac. This year, the park becomes a poetry walk, with verses by Croatian poets about love, Christmas and Zagreb coming to life beneath centuries-old plane trees.

Fuliranje
Strossmayer Square
Through January 7, Fuliranje transforms Josip Juraj Strossmayer Square into an open-air winter living room. Creative workshops, activities for children and families, live music, theater and educational programs come with a rich selection of food and drinks.

Ice Park
King Tomislav Square
Framed by the Art Pavilion and thousands of twinkling lights, Ice Park returns as a favorite winter meeting place. Take your first steps on the ice or spend the evening with friends over music and winter treats. The open-air rink once again hosts The Nutcracker on Ice.

Caffe de Matoš – Advent in the Upper Town
Strossmayer Promenade and Gradec Plateau
On Strossmayer Promenade, Caffe de Matoš features daily performances by young bands in collaboration with Glazbena kuća. A dedicated photo spot offers sweeping views of Zagreb.
On Gradec Plateau, Caffe de Matoš revives the spirit of old Zagreb with thousands of lanterns, red chalets and an enchanting forest overlooking the illuminated city.

The Great ZbiGatsby on Stross
Strossmayer Promenade, west end
Catch a glimpse of old Zagreb along the city's most romantic promenade. Tak imam te rad – The Great ZbiGatsby on Stross brings the warmth of festive gatherings together with the charm and elegance of the 1920s and 1930s.

NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATIONS

Jinglingz
Kvaternik Square
The Jinglingz festival at Kvatrić brings friends and families together for live music from Thursday to Saturday and children's workshops every weekend of Advent.

EVERYTHING ABOUT ADVENT

infozagreb.hr
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#Zagreb #VisitZagreb

**The Zagreb Tourist Board is not responsible for the decisions of the organizers regarding changes in dates, performers and program or in case of event cancellation. Please follow the latest announcements from our organizers and official channels.*



ANJA MUTIĆ

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

When the lights come on

In December, darkness comes early to Zagreb. By 4.30pm, the sky over the rooftops turns a deep inky blue. It's tempting to head home, pull the curtains and call it a day. Don't. That early dusk is my favorite hour of the season.

It's the moment the city switches on. One by one, the lights flicker to life across Zrinjevac, strings of bulbs glow above the stalls and windows warm up with a soft golden shine. The cold still stings your fingertips, but somehow it stops mattering. People slow their pace, pause, point things out to each other. Couples stop for photos, kids press their noses to the stalls.

I love walking through the center just as this happens, when the day crowd is heading home and the evening crowd hasn't fully arrived. For a few minutes, the city feels like it's between shifts. Then the music starts, the smell of frying dough and mulled wine drifts down the street, and Zagreb slips into its festive evening self.

Winter days may be short, but the nights are long and full of sparkle. So this Advent, don't rush indoors when the sun sets. Stay out. The best part of a winter day in Zagreb starts after dark.

***Tip:** Be in the Upper Town just before sunset, when the lamplighters make their rounds, lighting its old gas lamps by hand.*

Experience small-town Advent in Samobor

30 min from Zagreb

Escape Zagreb's festive crowds and discover the neighborly spirit of Advent in Samobor. Here, Christmas feels like a celebration among friends, with decorations lovingly collected from attics, homemade treats and music spilling into little streets. Wander through the historic center, mingle with locals over mulled wine and sample Samobor's famous *češnjovke* sausages and *kremšnita* custard cake. It's Christmas with a personal touch.



***Tip:** For a different flavor of small-town Advent, visit Velika Gorica or head to Jastrebarsko, where you can raise a glass of Plešivica bubbly to the festive season.*



ANDREA PISAC

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

Honestly, learn to winter

Every Christmas, we perform the grand *generalka*, scrubbing our homes spotless, only to invite nature back in as Christmas trees, mistletoe and holly. My dog Tesla finds this obsession with boundaries hilarious. She marches in with muddy paws, bringing half the garden along.

Lately, I've been spending more time in the countryside, where nature refuses to stay politely outside. Leaves sneak in from the porch, firewood scatters debris and the crackling fire rewards me with warmth and a generous helping of ashes. I've stopped fighting this invasion. After all, city life already bleaches nature enough: we cool the summer, banish winter darkness and expect every day to feel much the same.

But here's my biggest surprise. I've stopped complaining about short winter days. Tesla wakes me with the first light, just as the deer arrive to graze. Come evening, I happily trade the TV for a book beside the fire. I've discovered wintering, the art of letting the season set the pace. Even bare trees know when to call it a day. Why shouldn't we?

And really, what would Advent be without darkness? Those Christmas lights need something to twinkle against.

***Tip:** Take an early morning walk along the Sava embankment. Watch the rising sun paint one side of the sky while the moon finishes its night shift on the other.*

ADVENT WEEKEND

3 DAYS OF LIGHTS, BITES AND FESTIVE CHEER

DAY 1 – FRIDAY: Light up the city

Drop your bags and head straight for Zrinjevac, the beating heart of Advent. Under plane trees strung with lights, grab a cup of mulled wine and a paper cone of *fritule*, the sugar-dusted doughnut bites no Zagreb Christmas is complete without. Let the music carry you towards the main square, where the Advent wreath glows above the Manduševac fountain. End the night with a glass of local wine at one of the cozy bars around Flower square. Pace yourself – this is only the start of the weekend.



JULIEN DUVAL

Ban Jelačić square

DAY 2 – SATURDAY: Up and about

Start the day the local way at Dolac, where farmers sell cheese, honey and homemade sausages under the red umbrellas. Then claim a café table for *špica*, Zagreb's Saturday ritual of slow coffee and people-watching. Ride the funicular, one of the world's shortest, up to the Upper Town and take in the rooftop views from Strossmayer promenade, all decked out for the season. Pop into the Museum of Broken Relationships to warm up. As dusk falls, keep wandering around – the Upper Town is at its most magical after dark.



JULIEN DUVAL

Upper town

DAY 3 – SUNDAY: Slow down

Sunday is made for slowing down. Start at Mirogoj, one of Europe's most beautiful cemeteries, where candles flicker beneath ivy-clad arcades and the winter silence feels almost sacred. Then settle in for a long Sunday lunch and order *štrukli*, the baked dough with cottage cheese and cream that's a Zagreb classic. Walk it off on the winding paths of Tuškanac forest park, just steps from the Upper Town, where the city's festive buzz fades into crisp, wintry calm. Chances are, you'll be planning your return.



Štrukli

NUMBERS

HELP 112

24-HOUR PHARMACIES

Ban Jelačić square 3, +385 1 48 16 198
Ilica 301, +385 1 37 50 321
Grižanska 4, +385 1 29 92 350
V. Holjevca 22, +385 1 65 25 425
Ozaljska 1, tel. +385 1 30 97 586

TAXI

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(MON - SUN: 07.00 - 00.00)

All ZET tickets

	from a kiosk	from a driver
30 minutes	**0,53** €	**0,80** €
60 minutes	**0,93** €	**1,33** €
90 minutes	**1,33** €	**1,99** €
Night ride	**1,99** €	**1,99** €
Day pass	**3,98** €	
Three day pass	**9,29** €	
Funicular	**0,66** € **one-way**	

NIGHT TRAMS*
31 Črnomerec – Sava bridge
32 Prečko – Borongaj
33 Dolje – Savišće
34 Ljubljanica – Dubec
*running from 11.30pm to 4am

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ZAGREB'S ADVENT MENU: FESTIVE FAVORITES



EMICA ELVEB/PIXSELL

Zagreb's Advent menu brims with comfort and festive aromas. From fasting to feasting, these seasonal classics will keep you warm, well-fed and merry throughout December.



Sarma
The queen of Croatian winter food. These sauerkraut rolls stuffed with minced meat are stewed until tender and tangy. They cure everything—from cold hands to holiday hangovers.

Sausages
From smoky to spicy, sausages are an Advent street food staple. Eat them hot in a bun from a festive stall, or cold with mustard and pickles.

Bakalar
This traditional cod stew, *na mornarski* (sailor-style), is slow-cooked with potatoes and olive oil for Christmas Eve. Silky and savoury, it's Croatian fasting done right.

Roast turkey with *mlinci*
The star of Christmas Day. Zagorje-style turkey comes with thin, soft-baked pasta sheets soaked in pan juices. It's the dish that gets everyone to the table – on time.



Christmas sweets
Enjoy a slice of traditional walnut roll (*orehnjača*), but exercise restraint around fragrant, boozy *fritule* (mini doughnuts). They're seriously addictive.

Mulled wine
No Advent stroll is complete without *kuhano vino*. Red is classic, white is trendy, both spiced and steamy. Sip beneath the festive lights and let the cinnamon work its magic.

QuiZG

Questions

1. Zrinjevac is the symbol of Advent; what's the nickname of the fountain that is the symbol of the park?
a) The Head
b) The Mushroom
c) The Flower

2. What is the average temperature in Zagreb in December?
a) 1
b) 2
c) 3

3. Zagreb has been named Europe's Best Christmas Market three times. Where did it rank on Time Out magazine's 2026 list?
a) First
b) Second
c) Third

Answers

1 b Designed by Hermann Bollé, installed in 1893, the fountain is known as The Mushroom. It was also called Bollé's Head while it leaked water.
2 b The average temperature in Zagreb in December is 2.2°C; the maximum 22°C.
3 a Zagreb ranks first on Time Out's list of Europe's best city break destinations.

Saints of Advent

Before Advent calendars counted down to Christmas, saints' feast days marked the season. In Zagreb, their stories still mingle with folk wisdom, rituals and a little magic.



St Andrew
(November 30)
Known as the first apostle, St Andrew and his day mark the beginning of Advent. This is when we light the first Advent candle and turn on our holiday lights.



St Barbara
(December 4)
Known as *Little Christmas*, St Barbara's feast was traditionally the day to sow Christmas wheat. Strong green shoots promised prosperity in the coming year.



St Nicholas
(December 6)
The patron saint of children and sailors is Zagreb's favorite gift-giver. Overnight, he fills children's polished boots with sweets and presents. Naughty children might find a golden twig instead, courtesy of his fearsome companion, Krampus.



St Lucy
(December 13)
Her name means light, fitting for a saint celebrated during the darkest days of the year. The 12 days from her feast to Christmas were once used to predict the weather for the next 12 months.

Zagreb Cathedral
With twin spires originally reaching 108 meters, Zagreb Cathedral has long dominated the skyline. Damaged in the 2020 earthquake, its towers are being restored. The cathedral reopened to worshippers on Christmas Eve 2025.

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