

MARCH/APRIL 2023

ZAGREB

for YOU

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Festival of Lights Zagreb

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Zagreb shines yet again

Once again, the Festival of Lights kicks off springtime in Zagreb. City squares, promenades and facades get a new spark; in over 30 locations light artists will illuminate city symbols and night skies with spectacular scenes. On from March 15 through 19, Zagreb's Festival of Lights is the perfect invitation to have fun outdoors on spring evenings. The Promenade of Color, Glowing Starlight, Night Dew, Lumineoles or Disco Street are just some of the spectacles that await. Wherever you start, just follow the light because - you're up for a memorable marvel.

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GO NATIVE

SMELL THE FLOWERS

Spend a day in nature and pick some wildflowers, like daisies, crocuses and primroses; don't touch the snowdrops, as they're endangered. In the city, visit the stalls of Splavnica and buy bunches of daffodils and hyacinths.

GET MOVING

Start with slow-paced walking and build up to a leisurely hike. Medvednica mountain huts will lure you in with their fab homecooked grub. If you feel ambitious, join the 10K street marathon Holjevka VIII on March 5; it kicks off at 11am from Bundek park.



EXPLORE

THIS YEAR'S WINES

Go to the Vinart Grand Wine Tasting at Lauba (March 3-4, all day) and explore this year's top Croatian and international wines. It's the best place to plan your wine year ahead.

CELEBRATE EASTER

Learn local Easter traditions, such as baking sweet Easter bread (*pinca*) and hand-painting Easter eggs (*pisanice*). Browse the National and University Library's digital collection of Easter greeting cards.



MONOVIEW

Meet your guide through Zagreb's hidden spots and riddles



Iva Silla, tour guide-interpretor and founder of Secret Zagreb

What's new in the pipeline at Secret Zagreb?

2023 will be the year of self-guided tours at Secret Zagreb. I'm currently working on the audio version of the Zagreb Ghosts and Dragons tour and some gamified self-guided explorations of the city. You can already try one out for free if you pick up the Secret Zagreb flyer from the Visitor Center.

Your bestselling spring tour...

Definitely the Badass Women of Zagreb. After all, it's perfect for March, which happens to be Women's History Month.

What do you love about early spring in the city?

I keep falling for that spring feeling of new beginnings. I'm one of those people who can't even think straight when the birds start chirping. Places where you can sense nature awakening are my favorite ones, like the Zagreb Botanical Garden, where spring comes

first. I can't help but smile when I notice the flower buds and blossoms of the magnolia tree at Tomislav square. And there are the hikes to Medvednica mountain – a must for my family.

Share your three favorite spots to experience in springtime.

I'm a huge fan of hidden pockets of nature in Zagreb, like the 15-minute hike from the whale monument in Podsused to the medieval ruin of Susedgrad. In April, I love to sneak into the Upper Town courtyards; that's when they fill up with fragrant lilac flowers. Another favorite of mine is to step out onto the balcony of the amazing National Museum of Modern Art and enjoy a different perspective of Zrinjevac park.

What excites you about the 2023 season in Zagreb?

Zagreb is getting rediscovered and I keep noticing new details in the most familiar streets, which I look forward to sharing with visitors. This June, it's going to be ten years since the first Secret Zagreb tour – a major milestone for me. I'll be offering a 10% Zagreb4You discount code for anyone who joins the tour in March and April.



1 Vraz promenade THE SECRET LIFE OF FORESTS

2 Jägerhorn hotel FLORESCENCE

2 Hrvatski velikani square URBAN GARDEN

4 St. Catherine's church NEW RADIANCE

5 Croatian Association of Fine Artists ANTI-MEANDAR

6 Strossmayer promenade (west) COLORFUL PROMENADE

7 Lotrščak tower LIGHT OF AWAKENING

8 J. J. Strossmayer square GLOWING STARLIGHT

9 Mažuranić square OH WHY DO I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL?

10 Dežman passage GLITCH GARDEN

11 Zagreb Dance Centre CIRCLES

12 Zrinjevac music pavilion NEON CIRCLES

13 Zrinjevac park AMONG THE CLOUDS

14 Old Vlaška street LIGHT VISION

15 Kurelčeva street ITALIAN FLAG

16 European square ANOOKI (KISS)

17 Croatian National Theatre THE TRANSFORMATION

18 Mimara Museum ODD DYNAMICS

** Zagreb Tourist Board is not responsible for changes in schedule, performers, program, prices or the cancellation of the event by the organizers.*

COOL TURE +



ZAGREBDOX, the international festival of documentary film, is on from March 26 through April 2. World's best documentaries compete in international and regional categories. The winner gets an automatic nomination for the European Film Academy award. @zagrebdox.net



BRUCE DICKINSON, the frontman of Iron Maiden performs with the Zagreb Philharmonic in the Dražen Petrović Hall. This unique concert, where the frontman of the famed heavy metal group performs the repertoire of Deep Purple with 74 orchestra musicians, takes place on March 24.



MAP OF LIGHTS

23 LASER SHOW

The show by Prolight and Atomic Dance Factory dance ensemble couples movie music with light and laser effects at the summer cinema.

25 DUBRAVKA'S TRAIL PLAYGROUND

All fans of fun, play and joy will relish blissful moments in this magical park lit up with spotlights.

19 Ban Josip Jelačić square THE SPIRIT OF NATURE

20 King Tomislav square LUMINEOLES

21 Strossmayer promenade (east) ABSORBED BY THE LIGHT

22 Lotrščak tower LIGHTHOUSE

23 Tuškanac Summer Stage LASER BLOCKBUSTER

24 Histrionic Summer - (Opatovina playground) DANCING SIMETRIX

25 Dubravka's trail NEON PLAYGROUND

26 Atrium MGZ LUMIA

27 Ribnjak GLOBOSCOPE

28 Ribnjak LUMINOUS HORSES

29 Ribnjak METEORITES

30 Opatovina TWISTED

31 Ribnjak EGGOTRICK

32 Tuškanac garage OUTSIDE OF WALL

33 Dolac market ANOOKI (APPARITION)

Dubravka's trail

Lotrščak tower

Ilica

Republic of Croatia square

Ribnjak park

European square

Ban Jelačić square

Zrinjevac park

24 DANCING SIMETRIX

A multimedia installation that simultaneously uses movement, sound and light, i.e. dance, music and painting.

22 TOWER LIGHTHOUSE

To mark the start of the festival, one of the main city symbols, Lotrščak tower will be illuminated to look like a lighthouse.

26 LUMIA

Art created with light - don't miss the magical play of different shapes that keep changing their appearance and color.

festivalsvjetlazagreb.hr

INTERNATIONAL RECORD FAIR, with 30 exhibitors and over 30,000 records, takes place inside the hall of the Classic Gymnasium on Križanićeva street. Exhibitors are expected from all over Europe, and as far as England. If you like LPs, visit on March 19 from 10am till 6pm.



LAIBACH, the iconic Slovenian band, takes the stage at Tvornica Kulture (the Culture Factory) on March 14 as part of their European tour. @tvornicakulture.hr

PLACE2GO, the international tourism fair in its 10th edition is on from March 24 through March 26 at the Zagreb Arena. @place2go.org

PAINTER ZLATAN VEHAHOVIĆ exhibits *An Atlas of a Smaller World* at the National Museum of Modern Art. @nmmu.hr

ZG EARTHQUAKE, HELLO 193, an exhibition about the consequences of the 2021 earthquake is on at Klovićevi Dvori Gallery. @gkd.hr

DIGITAL ART IN CROATIA 1968-1984 is on at the Nikola Tesla Technical Museum. @tmnt.hr



ANJA MUTIĆ

writes for *BBC Travel*,
the *Washington Post*
and many more.

Follow her at @everthenomad

Keep the fire going

I write this on Valentine's, a day to celebrate love in all the forms it takes. It's mid-February and the sunlight is shining bright. While the sun has teeth, as we say in Croatia, and it's still cold out, I can smell whiffs of spring in the air. It makes me ruminate all the relationships in my life, including the one I have with Zagreb. It's not without its ups and downs, truth be told, but after several decades and a long complex history, I can't imagine it any other way.

So, what do I do to keep us going? I try to keep the fire burning. On my daily walks, I pay attention to shapes and patterns. New ones I haven't noticed and those I know already but which may have shifted slightly. On random roams through the city streets, I look for signs that keep our conversation alive. Cities speak to us, you see.

One day, it was a beautiful poem by Anaïs Nin someone wrote on a tiny, tattered piece of paper and glued to the building wall I pass by every day. It felt like Zagreb talking to me. A message.

I remain curious. What's fresh at Kva-trić, my local market, this morning? I pay attention. What is new in the neighborhood that wasn't here just a month ago, except the chirpier birdsong in Maksimir park and colorful flower buds on the ground. Zagreb has awakened from its winter slumber, and spring is around the corner. I wonder what out-of-the-ordinary moments it may bring. As long as the fire keeps burning and the flowers blooming...

Go bird-watching on the Drava river



There are more than 400 bird species in Croatia but birding as an activity only took off recently. The small town of Prelog in the Međimurje region, which lies on an oxbow lake of the Drava river, is among Croatia's pioneers. Settle at the Prelog marina and sink into the mesmerizing sounds and sights of nature. Spring is the best time for spotting birds in action, especially the migratory ones en route home.



Tip: Travel further north to Donji Kraljevec and visit the Rudolf Steiner Memorial House, designed according to his anthroposophy principles.



ANDREA PISAC

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

Honestly, dogs are welcome

Last year around Christmas I adopted a rescue dog and my life changed for good. Most of the time I am in a bubble of sweet puppy love. But as soon as I have to go back to my adult life tasks, I am missing a dog map of the city.

The biggest task for newly minted dog parents is to teach their pup to come back to them from free play. The dog park at Jarun is a perfect place to start teaching them. In this vast fenced area, your furry baby can play with other dogs and run back to you whenever you rustle a bag of treats. If you prefer quiet time with just your best friend, take long walks in the semi-wild woodland of Maksimir park. Dog fun doesn't stop during bad weather either. Take your pooch to the Zagreb City Museum or the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum; both are dog-friendly, provided you follow their dog etiquette.

Dining out with a pup in tow has become easier, too. Duksa pizzeria is known for its pet hospitality while Otto and Frank bistro on Tkalča even has a resident bulldog to greet you.

Most of us worry that having a dog will stop us from doing things we love. Instead of skipping your Saturday morning coffee in the city center, bring your pup along and let them meet your crowd.

Tip: Take your dog to Velvet café; you can spend some quiet time reading while they watch the world go by.

Outdoor Zagreb

GET BACK IN SHAPE

After the long winter of being cooped up, it's time to stretch our legs and get back in shape. Spring calls for outdoor fun; fortunately, every Zagreb neighborhood has something to offer. Let strolling be your starting level, but aim to pick up speed with jogging, running, hiking or cycling, and even climbing staircases in the city center.



1. Tuškanac

If you want to stick to the center of Zagreb, explore the Tuškanac neighborhood that borders a lush semi-wild forest. Some walking paths, such as Dubravka's trail, meander through thick woodland and make you forget the urban hustle and bustle.

2. Adrenaline Park

Ideal for quick outdoor exercise, this park next to Miramarska street will get your heart racing. Think of it as a gym in the open air and have a go at various fun workout machines. The Botanical Garden is nearby so you can do your cool-down there.

3. Sava river banks

The north bank of the Sava is a popular spot for jogging and running. Trails are made of grass or tarmac so your knees will thank you. The wide expanse offers gorgeous views of the river and beyond. On sunny days, this means you get to enjoy burning-red sunsets.

4. Jarun

There are miles of walking and cycling paths all around Jarun lakes. Put on your rollerblades and make the most of fast asphalted trails. These are also ideal for cycling. A horse-riding club is nearby if you prefer to break into a gallop.

5. Maksimir

Incredibly versatile, Maksimir park is a magnet for people of all fitness levels. Stroll along with friends, take your dog for a brisk walk or get pumped with speed walking in the more densely forested corner of the park. You can cool down by meandering along several lakes. Let the water and serene landscapes bring your heart rate down.

6. Medvednica

Zagreb's mountain is criss-crossed with countless walking and hiking trails. You can start at the foot and hike up until you reach a hut offering a bowl of beans. There's a gentler trail along the mountain ridge connecting Puntijarka and Grafičar huts. If you want a proper adrenaline rush, try the transversal biking route that takes you on a 74-km-long return journey.

NUMBERS

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THE MOST USEFUL CARD

With Zagreb Card, tourists get free transport and access to six attractions, plus ticket discounts for 56 locations. The daily card is 98KN, a three-day card is 135KN. @zagrebcard.com



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Zagreb



Veliki Tabor



Novigrad on Dobra river

CROATIA RALLY TAKES OFF FROM ZAGREB

Third year in a row, Zagreb and much of central Croatia welcome the world's best drivers. From April 20 through 23, Croatia Rally gathers a hundred rally drivers who will race for the WRC champ title, cheered on by hundreds of thousands of fans from the region. Zagreb is the race start. Not to be missed. All info @rally-croatia.com

4 days of racing

20 speed tests

100 competitors

300+ kilometers of rally routes

310 thousand spectators in 2022

105 million € of tourism income

400 media reps

2000 people organizing

FIRST & LAST MINUTE

Witness the return of spring

In early spring trees in Zagreb can grow leaves overnight. Walk along the chestnut tree-lined Strossmayer promenade and catch that lovely sense of the city waking up. Take in the electric green color of treetops and the tiny but persistent chestnut flower buds. For more spring observations, walk along the streets of Zeleni Val (Green Wave), all lined with fab old trees.

Find a way to remember Zagreb

Relaxing with your coffee on a sun-kissed terrace might be the only memory of Zagreb you need. In which case, spend your time café-crawling along Tkalčićeva street. But if you want to take back home something tangible, explore the souvenir shops that line the cobbled Radićeva street. Take your pick between craft liqueurs and home décor items to books and hand-harvested salt.

TASTE OF ZAGREB

powered by Taste of Croatia



Radishes bring spring to the table

It may not grace menus too often, but radish has its benefits and an important role. Of all the vegetables, it's the main messenger of Easter and spring: As soon as it warms up, bundles of their red rounds swarm market stalls all over the city. Served with ham, eggs and spring onions, they make an inevitable festive quartet. We most often munch on them raw, when they are succulent, crunchy and piquant. As such, radishes star in many salads and sandwiches, or as a side to cheeses and charcuterie. Chopped up, they add a dash of spring to Zagreb's favorite spread of fresh cheese and cream, and a sprinkle of seasonality to potato salads. Pickled radishes aromatize many quick dishes. Like other root vegetables, radish is tasty when lightly spiced and oven-baked; radish chips are a yummy novelty. Its leaves are also healthy – they can be used for pesto, cream soups or in stews. The sprouts are often found in creative sandwiches and salads, and as garnish in modern cuisine. As we near the warmer part of the year, the radish is on a roll; see where it leads you.



Bundle of radishes €1.50, Dolac market

4am

THE WAREHOUSE FOR PARTY PEOPLE

Club Depo lives up to its party warehouse rep. Well-known to partiers, the club inside Katran, a former factory on Radnička road, puts on its first big spring event. On March 24, Hard Instruction from Germany, joined by local DJs, performs a seven-hour program, for all eager to dance till dawn. [@depo_klub](https://www.instagram.com/depo_klub)

What a start of the tourism season in Zagreb! January was record-breaking, with 35% more visitors than last year: almost 58,000 people. Even more importantly, the numbers surpassed the unparalleled pre-pandemic 2019, meaning that the Croatian capital is now a year-round city break destination for visitors from all over the world.

Most foreign visitors to Zagreb come from Italy, Germany and USA, as well as the neighbouring countries.



PLAY FOODSIE

Spring cleansing doesn't have to be boring. Yes, antioxidants in fresh fruit and veg are a must but spruce them up with comfort-inducing ingredients. Think wild asparagus with eggs and prosciutto or dandelion salad seasoned with glugs of pumpkin seed oil. Shell your young peas for the creamy and aromatic *risi bis*; while you're at it, sip on fragrant lilac shandy. You won't find it in shops or bars, but you can always make your own lilac syrup.

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