

Traditional Events and Customs in Croatia



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Dubrovnik Summer Festival



The summers in Dubrovnik have been marked for over fifty years by the most significant cultural event in Croatia - **the Dubrovnik Summer Festival.**

The Dubrovnik Summer Festival was founded in 1950. From July 10th to Aug 25th , the forty-five day event is filled with music, drama, folklore performances and concerts held on city's squares, terraces of the fortresses and in the churches and palaces.





Performances of world's names of theatre, ballet and classical music have made Dubrovnik Summer Festival become the most significant Croatian heritage brand.



Unique ambiance of indoor and open air venues of the historical City of Dubrovnik makes a perfect stage for many theatre, music, opera and dance performances.



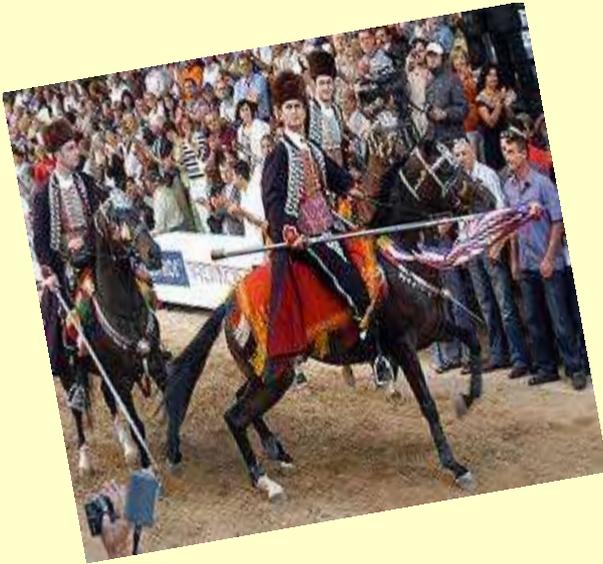
The Sinjska Alka



The **Sinjska Alka** is a unique jousting tournament in today's Europe. It takes place in Sinj, a small town in continental Dalmatia, some 40 km north of Split. It commemorates the 1715 victory over the Turks.



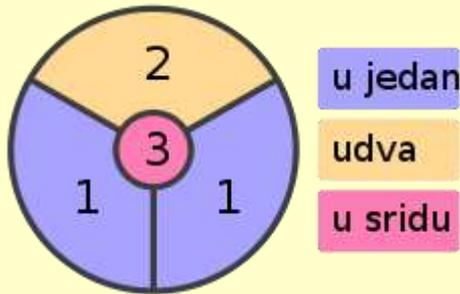
Definitely, Alka is a spectacular event which is visited by a large number of people every year. It takes place under the auspices of the President of the Republic.



Every first Sunday in August, unless otherwise determined, the procession of the Alkari (the contenders) and their squires emerges in the upper part of the tournament field in the overwhelming splendour of their ancient arms and uniforms.



Using a lance 290-300 cm long, the Alkars must hit the alka in full gallop. The alka is made up of two concentric rings of which the outer has diameter of 131,7 mm and the inner 35,1 mm.



Scoring in alka: bottom segments are worth 1 point, top segment is worth 2 points, and the central ring is worth 3 points.



The Sinjska Alka was inscribed in 2010 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Carnival Festivities



Carnival takes place in February and it is a tradition that goes way back. Our carnivals are famous for colorful parades and inventive ideas.

The most famous Croatian carnival is the one in Rijeka, which is a combination of traditional European carnivals, with Venetian and Austrian characteristics combined with Slavic folklore the result of which is an amazing carnival event.





Burning of the carnival dummy is the final act of the carnival, a spectacle in which the culprit for all the evil in town is sentenced to the punishment of being burned at the stake.



Annual carnival bell ringers' pageant from the Kastav area. ZVONČARI, whose rituals evoke fertility at the end of winter, were registered on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

Croatian and European Film Festival in Pula



The festival was founded in 1954 and over the past decades it has gained significant international recognition . The festival has often served as a launch pad for new films before they are screened in cinemas around the country.

Croatian and European Film Festival, except for displaying works of Croatian film, offers regular international programs as well as many unique thematic programs and retrospectives.



Since 1955, **The Grand Golden Arena** has been awarded for the best achievements in film production.



The Moreška Sword Dance in Korčula



Moreška is a romantic war dance with swords which is supposed to have first come to Korčula from Spain in the 16th century. It is still deeply rooted in Korčula and it is unique in the whole world.

It can be summarized as a story about a fight for a girl and in that sense it has its roots in the traditional Mediterranean stories and legends,



After the short dramatic action which develops through the dialogue between Moro and Bula, and later with the White King as well, the armies of both kings confront.



Moro, the Black King's son (Arab) takes by force and imprisons the White King's (Christian) fiancée, Bula...



The Metković Boat Marathon Race



The boat marathon race is an amateur sports competition of the 'ladjas', traditional indigenous craft in the Neretva Valley. It is held annually on the second Saturday in August, under the auspices of the President of the Republic, organized by the Association of the Neretvian boatmen. The first marathon was held in September, 1998.



Traditional Neretvian boat ('ladja')

Each rowing crew consists of 10 rowers, a drummer and a cox, or oarsmen. There can be a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 18 persons in each squad. Anyone who is willing may form part of the crew: men, women, children.

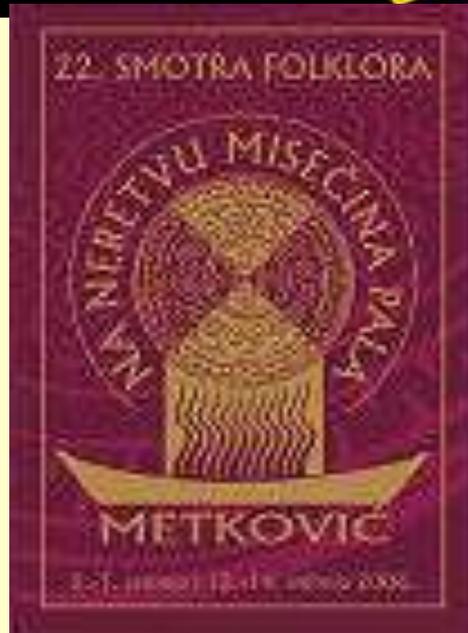




The winning team gets the gold medal, winning the transitional *Duke Domagoj* shield (weighing 27 kilograms) and a small shield in permanent ownership as well as a cash prize. Runner-up and third-placed teams receive medals, small shields in permanent ownership and cash prizes.



The Folklore Festivals in Croatia



Moonlight on the Neretva River



This is an event that takes place in the town of **Metković**. It is a traditional review of folklore ensembles from the six counties of coastal and island Croatia.



An expert panel of judges nominates the best groups which go on to participate at national-level reviews.





The Djakovo embroideries



Djakovo is the host town of a folklore festival, known as ***The Djakovo Embroideries***, which has been held at the beginning of July every year since 1967. Its name describes the festival. There are about 70 folklore groups taking part in this event, comprising around 4,000 performers. Each costume worn by the participants is bedecked with the different style of embroidery – 1,000 of them. A mobile exhibition of colours in the form of festival procession of all participating groups moves through the town like some living rainbow.



The **Vinkovačke jeseni** Folklore Festival

«Vinkovačke jeseni» is a folklore festival of national importance, and also the largest festival of its kind in this part of Europe.



This festival is showing the way to the youth population by involving them in a large number of folklore ensembles and festival activities,

The festival offers a unique display of cultural legacy not only of local people, but also of entire Croatia and a number of foreign countries.



ŠPANCIRFEST

Street Festival in Varaždin



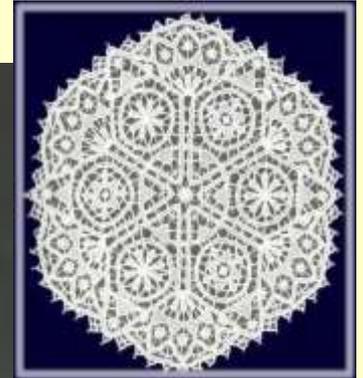
Špancifest takes place between 26 August and 4 September in a baroque city of Varaždin. It is a festival with street events, world music, traditional arts and crafts, local cuisine and other goodies, childrens' town, etc.

During the festival there are a lot of participants from all over the world such as clowns, street and mime performers, folk dancers and musicians, world music and jazz bands, hip hop collectives, rock bands, etc.





Paška Čipka: Lacemaking on the Island of Pag



Lace is the ultimate achievement in textile art, an individual work of human hands made from flax, cotton, silk, agave, silver and gold threads. Its roots, as opposed to embroidery which comes from the East, are clearly in the West.



Lace-makers of Pag did their teg (work) without any drawings. Each woman used works from her mother and grandmothers as example, adding a personal touch, something unique and special. Each lace is a symbol of the anonymous, modest and self-sacrificing life of its maker.

In 2009, UNESCO recognised lacemaking in Croatia as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

RAFTING ADVENTURE ON THE CETINA RIVER



Most tourists are impressed by the beautiful Cetina river. The adrenalin that the adventure gives you will certainly entice you to return to the place where the scenery is gorgeous and the water is crystal clear and clean and full of fish.



The river has a lot of waterfalls and rapids where your adrenaline is at its highest level. Rafting on the Cetina river is an adventure that lasts between 3 and 4 hours but memories about it last forever...



TRADITIONAL HVAR'S NEW YEAR REGATTA



In New Year's regatta there are a couple of categories in which contestants can compete, for example, “optimist”, “laser standard” and “laser radial”. The very racing is held at small archipelago near Hvar, which is perfectly suited for this. The whole event lasts for several days and ends with a big New Year party,



Klapa multipart singing of Dalmatia

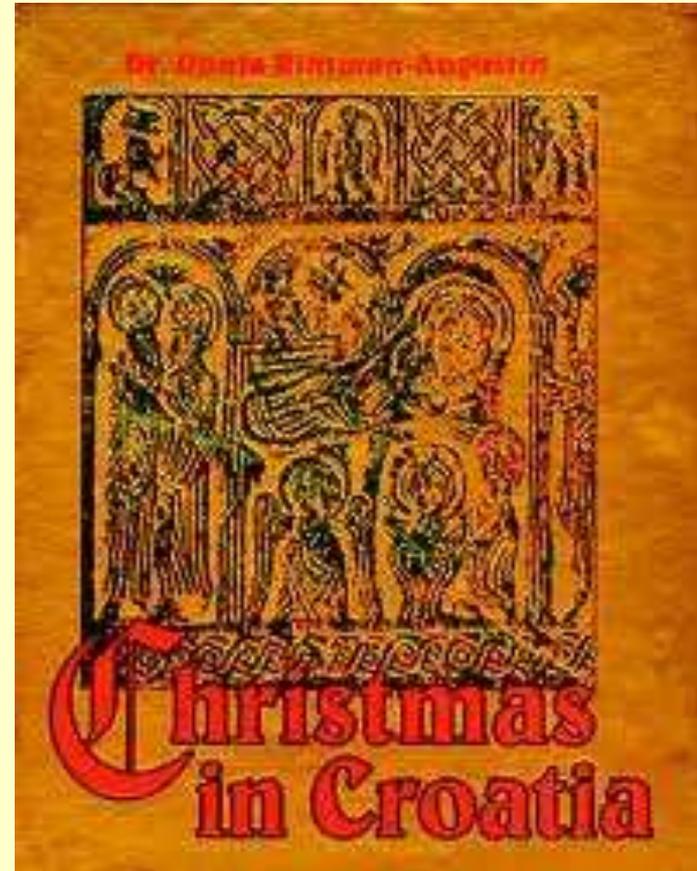


Klapa singing is a multipart singing tradition of the southern Croatian regions of Dalmatia. Multipart singing, a capella homophonic singing, oral tradition and simple music making are its main features. The leader of each singing group is the first tenor, followed by several tenori, baritoni and basi voices. During performances, the singers stand in a tight semicircle. The first tenor starts the singing and is followed by the others. The main aim is to achieve the best possible blend of voices. **In 2012, inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**

HOLIDAYS IN CROATIA

CHRISTMAS TIME

Since the ninth century, Christianity has been the dominant religion in the country. Like in most Western nations, Christmas is celebrated here on 25th December but the preparations for the festival begin since the beginning of the Advent.





Christmas bread



Christmas desserts



**Gingerbread
heart**



Women of the house traditionally start baking cookies and cakes since the beginning of the Advent.



It is also on Christmas Eve that the Christmas tree is set up and decorations made in every home though many families begin the process days in advance.

On Christmas Day, Croats wish each other 'Sretan Bozic' which is the Croatian way of saying "Merry Christmas".

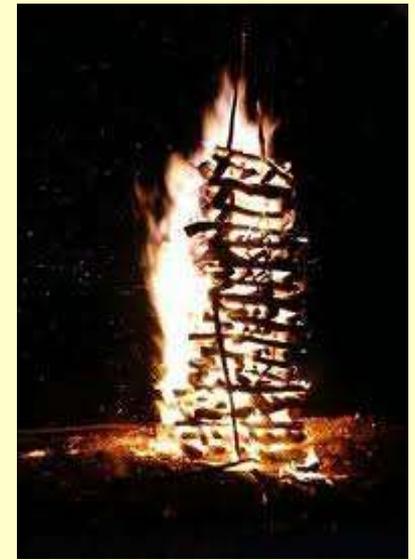


One of traditions that is still followed today, is sowing the Christmas wheat that stands for life and fertility



One of the most important parts of Christmas is giving presents.

EASTER



In central Croatia, villagers build huge bonfires known as **KRIJESOVI**



In many towns, there are ceremonies and processions every night.

The branches are decorated with ribbons and flowers and woven into wreaths or crosses known as *poma*.

They are taken to church to be blessed. After the blessing, the poma are hung around the house as protection against bad luck and evil spirits.

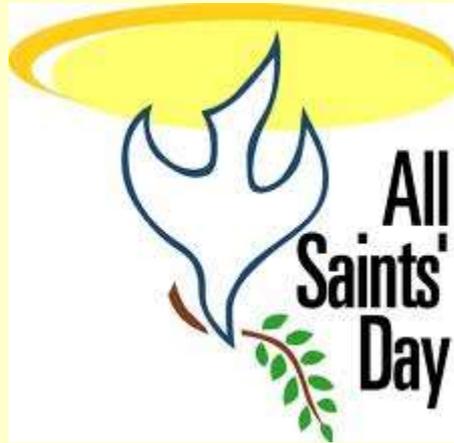
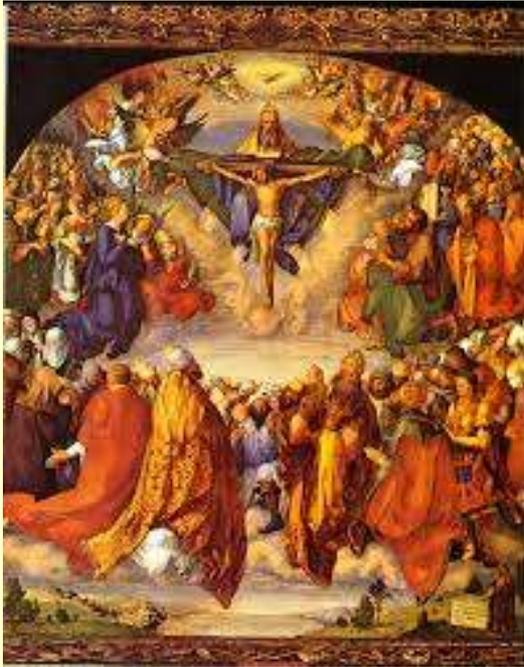




One of the oldest traditions in Croatia is decorating and painting Easter eggs, called 'Pisanice'.



ALL SAINTS' DAY



On All Saints Day people in Croatia go and visit the graves of their closest and beloved ones. They bring flowers and light candles.



People walk around a cross made of thousands of candles lit on **All Saints' Day**.

